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Research Report 1555

# Spouse Employment in the Army: Research Findings

Jacquelyn Scarville

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The policy and program implications of spouse employment are also examined. Ways to maximize wives' employment options and reduce the negative impact of some aspects of Army life on employment are suggested. The report closes by suggesting future avenues of research.



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**Research Report 1555**

**Spouse Employment in the Army:  
Research Findings**

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## FOREWORD

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The Army Family Research Program (AFRP) is a 5-year program that supports the Army Family Action Plan through research that investigates the influence of family factors on Army outcomes such as retention and readiness. In addition, the AFRP produces demographic profiles of Army families and explores their adaptation to Army life.

This research is being conducted by the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Research Triangle Institute, Caliber Associates, HumRRO, and the University of North Carolina under contract MDA903-87-C-0540. It is funded by Army research and development funds set aside for this purpose under Management Decision Package (1U6S).

This report describes what is known from the AFRP and other sources about military wives' employment and its impact on families and military institutions. In addition, parallel research on wives in other branches of the military and on civilians is included as points for reference and comparison.



EDGAR M. JOHNSON  
Technical Director

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Ms. Ellen Borg supplied copies of AFRP documents and was a valuable source of information on the AFRP and its products.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Paul Gade, Chief of Personnel Utilization Technical Area (PUTA), for his overall direction and support.

## SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT IN THE ARMY: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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#### Requirement:

One of the major concerns expressed by Army spouses during this decade has been their difficulty in obtaining suitable employment while maintaining an Army lifestyle. This report reviews what is known about this problem in order to assist the Army Family Action Plan efforts to resolve this important family issue.

#### Procedure:

A major effort of the Army Family Research Program (AFRP) has been the primary and secondary analyses of the 1985 Department of Defense Survey of Officer and Enlisted Personnel, 1985 Department of Defense Survey of Spouses, the 1987 Annual Survey of Army Families as well as analyses of civilian (especially census) data sets. Findings from reports produced by AFRP researchers and others have been compiled to yield an integrated, detailed profile of the employment circumstances of Army wives. Although the focus is on the employment of Army wives in particular, service-wide and civilian data are used in the absence of Army-specific information. Comparisons and contrasts between Army and civilian wives are also outlined to give an indication of how military spouse employment differs from that of civilian wives.

#### Findings:

The research indicates that military wives suffer from considerable unemployment, underemployment, and low earnings. Aspects of the military lifestyle such as frequent relocations explain many of the employment outcomes observed among wives of military personnel. In addition, there is considerable evidence that increasing wife satisfaction with wages and other aspects of their jobs may result in increasing their support for their husband remaining in the Army.

#### Utilization of Findings:

The findings in this report are of use to policymakers and program directors who need information on the needs, concerns, and problems of Army wives seeking employment. This report may be of use in deciding needed spouse employment programs and services. Policymakers may also find it useful because it identifies those Department of Army policies that have a great influence on Army wife employment opportunities.

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT IN THE ARMY: RESEARCH FINDINGS

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## SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT IN THE ARMY: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Interest of the Military in Family Research

The relationship between the Army and the families of military members has been characterized by change. Similarly, the Army's understanding of its obligations to family members has also evolved over time. The Army's position has changed from one in which marriage and family formation were discouraged to one in which a sense of partnership between the military and its constituent families has been forged. One small part of the Army-family relationship consists of the position taken by the military institution regarding the paid employment of military spouses.

Although Army policy discouraged marriage among enlisted men through World War II, wives and children made important contributions to war efforts in their roles as paid (and unpaid) workers.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the employment of military family members can be traced as far back as the Revolutionary War, during which wives and children were employed by the Army to provide an array of services such as cooking, nursing, and carrying in exchange for half and quarter rations (Bell & Iadeluca, 1987). Although women most often engaged in what we now know as combat support activities, some women disguised themselves as men and engaged in battle; those that were discovered were discharged. Later, wives of non-commissioned officers (NCOs) continued to support military personnel by finding employment as laundresses or household servants for commissioned officers.

In addition, families made tremendous personal sacrifices in order to support and be near soldier husbands and fathers. For example, because housing near military installations was in short supply during World War II, Army wives lived in chicken coops, tents, cellars, trailers, and abandoned shelters (Bell & Iadeluca, 1987).

It was not until 1965 that the Army established the Army Community Service Agency in response to the increasing number of married soldiers and the realization that family problems influence soldier performance (Bell & Iadeluca, 1987). Since that time, the Army's commitment to family issues and concerns has increased dramatically, especially during the past decade. The Army has established the development and support of strong communities and families as priorities. In addressing the first Army Family Symposium conducted in October, 1980, Army Chief of Staff (CSA) E. C. Meyer succinctly described the importance of families to the Army: "We [the Army] recruit soldiers, but we retain families." More recently, CSA John A. Wickham, Jr. voiced the Army's sense of partnership with its constituent families and its commitment to family wellness and sense of community in the White Paper 1983 - The Army Family (Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, 1983).

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<sup>1</sup>For example, the Army discouraged its members from marrying by denying married men reenlistment, or denying family housing to married personnel (Bell & Iadeluca, 1987).

Although there is much literature on the work-family interface, oftentimes researchers focus on examining the influence of work and employment situations on family and personal life. However, not only do employment circumstances affect family life, but the reverse is also true; family factors affect employment circumstances (Bowen, 1985). This side of the literature has received much less attention. Army family researchers have developed a comprehensive research plan which examines both aspects of the work-family interface. The Department of the Army is especially interested in exploring the impact of family factors such as spouse employment and family adaptation on military outcomes such as retention and readiness.

#### Description of the Army Family Research Program (AFRP)

The AFRP is a five year integrated research program begun in November 1986 by the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) and the Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC) in response to research mandates in both the CSA White Paper 1983 - The Army family and The Army Family Action Plans (1984-1989). The objective is to support the Army Family Action Plan through research products that will: (1) determine the demographic characteristics of Army families, (2) identify positive motivators and negative detractors to soldiers remaining in the Army, (3) develop pilot programs and policy options to increase retention, (4) develop pilot programs to improve family adaptation to Army life and (5) increase operational readiness.

Research conducted under the AFRP clearly shows that family factors influence retention decisions of Army personnel. There is also preliminary evidence that family factors influence readiness. Indeed, Army family researchers found that 30% of an individual's commitment to an employing organization is determined by family factors such as a wife's support for retention, or family income (Bell, 1987). Spouse employment, in particular, has been demonstrated to influence the intention to remain in the military and is hypothesized to have a substantial impact on readiness. For example, research in several services has demonstrated a relationship between a wife's employment circumstances and her officer husband's likelihood of remaining in the military (Szoc, 1982). The Annualized Cost of Leaving Model (ACOL), developed as part of the AFRP, demonstrated that wife's income is an important consideration in the retention decision (Hogan, in press). Given this information, it is therefore in the interest of the military to examine spouse employment and other family factors which influence human resources and performance.

The purpose of this paper is to describe what is known from the AFRP and other sources about spouse employment and its impact on military families and institutions and to discuss future directions for Army programs, policies and research. To accomplish this goal, findings from various AFRP projects have been brought together. In addition, parallel research on other branches of the military and on civilians are included as points of reference and comparison.

## Changing Families and Concerns about Spouse Employment

There have been changes in family structure, and sex roles expectations during the past 3 decades which have affected both civilian and military communities. Nontraditional families such as step- and single-parent families have become much more common. In 1987, single parents represented about 4% of the Army population. Although most of these single parents were men, women were proportionately twice as likely to be the sole custodians of their children (Teplitzky, Hedlund and Nogami, 1987). In addition, sex role expectations have changed significantly for both men and women. A manifestation of this change in military and civilian communities has been the increasing tendency for wives to work outside of the home. As we shall examine in greater detail later, by 1987 the majority of Army wives were either employed or seeking employment. And, the number of families in which both parents are members of the military is also growing. Within the Army, dual military couples represent approximately 5% of the married population (Teplitzky, Hedlund, & Nogami, 1987).

Since these trends are likely to continue, the Army is interested in their consequences for military institutions. To investigate this, the Army has committed numerous resources to examining the multiple demands placed by military institutions and families on members of the Service. Research investigating the extent to which changing sex role expectations and increased spouse employment affect military outcomes such as retention and readiness are of particular concern.

In summary, the Army recognizes that it is in partnership with Army Families and that its missions, concept of service and military lifestyle affect the nature of this relationship (Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, 1983). It is, therefore, in the best interest of all parties to examine the impact of changing social trends on military institutions and the families that are part of it so that policies, programs and services can be developed to meet the needs of both the military and its constituent families.

### Data Sources

Spouse employment and the issues surrounding it will be examined by referring to several types of sources: large, representative surveys, smaller surveys conducted on specific, nonrandom subpopulations, reviews of the literature and field interviews.

Most of the data cited in this report comes from AFRP analyses of two large scale, military data sets. The Defense Manpower Data Center surveyed approximately 41,000 spouses of officer and enlisted personnel in all 4 branches of service in 1985. (See Appendix for descriptions of this and the following surveys.) Information on military spouses service-wide and on Army spouses, in particular, is taken from this source. More recent information on Army spouses and families is taken from the 1987 Annual Survey of Army Families (ASAF) which was analyzed as part of the AFRP. In addition, data on civilian families is from analyses of the March 1985 Current Population Survey (CPS) and from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The results of several small scale research investigations have also been included. Bowen (1986) examined a probability sample of over 400 Air Force couples. Ickovics and Martin (1987) examined the impact of employment status on the psychological well being of 278 Army wives. Manning and DeRouin (1981) sampled soldiers and wives of a single field battalion. The latter two surveys are based upon small non-random samples and consequently have limited generalizability.

Literature reviews are an important source of information. The following sources were used in this report: Research Triangle Institute, 1987; Military Family Resource Center, 1984; and Etheridge, 1989.

Information from exploratory site interviews conducted by AFRP researchers (Braddy, 1988; Styles, Janofsky, & Bishop, 1988) will also be used when appropriate. In addition, since there is much information in the civilian literature which sheds light on spouse employment and its consequences, this literature will also be used.

### Limitations

Before beginning the discussion on spouse employment, we must be clear regarding the limitations of this review. The focus is on illuminating spouse employment issues facing Army families in particular and military families more generally. And, since the majority of military families consist of a military husband and a civilian wife, this paper will focus on civilian wives of military personnel. In 1987, 88% of Army spouses were civilian wives, while only 3% were civilian husbands and the balance (8%) were active duty spouses (Coolbaugh, Perrine, & Griffith, no date). This discussion is limited to civilian wives married to military men because they tend to be significantly different from civilian husbands married to military women along several demographic characteristics. For instance, civilian wives of Army men tend to be younger, less educated, and less likely to have past military experiences than civilian husbands of Army women (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).

Although this review focuses on families in which the husband is a member of the military and the wife a civilian, there is a considerable body of Army research examining the problems and concerns of dual military families (e.g. Teplitzky, Thomas, & Nogami, 1987, 1988; Teplitzky, Hedlund, & Nogami, 1987; Pliske, 1988). The implications of dual military employment on families (e.g. child care) and on the military (e.g. performance, readiness, deployability and retention) are crucial issues facing military decision makers. There is evidence that although single and dual military parents perform at least as well as other military parents (Pliske, 1988), they have considerable concerns about child care, separations and relocations (Teplitzky, Thomas, & Nogami, 1988). In addition to being affected by the broader work-family issues which influence most employed wives, married women who are members of the military face unique employment conditions which have implications for both the family and the military. Their circumstances are best examined apart from those of civilian wives.

In addition, since this review cites data on Army wives and on military wives service-wide, it is important to clearly differentiate the two populations. Military wives or military spouses refers to women married to men in any of the 4 branches of service while Army wives are specifically labeled as such. This differentiation is of considerable importance since there are important interservice differences with respect to some aspects of military life. The fact that, for instance, Army families relocate more often than other military families or that Navy wives are more likely to have graduated from college than are wives from the other services may have important implications for spouse employment which remain hidden when considering the services as a single unit. Thus, the extent to which service-wide data reflects Army circumstances depends upon the correspondence between Army wives and those from other services on a particular issue.<sup>2</sup>

### Description of Military Wives

Having a military husband influences a wife's labor force participation and employment status (Schwartz, in preparation). Before examining this, however, a profile of Army wives may help us understand who these women are and what their families are like. Army wives tend to be young; approximately 77% are under age 34.<sup>3</sup> They are fairly well educated with 90% having completed at least a high school education and fully 43% having obtained at least some training beyond high school. Almost 40% of Army wives have some prior experience with the military, either as a former member, child of military parents, civilian employee of the military or because of a previous marriage to a military member. Over three-fifths (77%) have at least one child in the home and over half (51%) have a child aged 5 or younger.

In addition, there are important differences between Army officer's and enlisted men's wives, some of which have important implications for employment.<sup>4</sup> Officers' wives tend to be older (48% of officer's wives are 35 years of age or older versus 18% of enlisted men's wives), have more education (46% of officer's wives have at least a bachelor's degree vs. 8% of enlisted men's wives), and tend to be married longer (54% of officer's wives have been married for at least 10 years versus 27% of enlisted men's wives). Also, officer's wives are less likely to have a child aged 5 and under (39%) than are enlisted men's wives (53%).

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<sup>2</sup>The correspondence between Army and military data also depends upon the proportion Army wives comprise of total service wives. However, since the service-wide data sets used in this report (i.e. 1985 DoD survey of personnel and spouses) surveyed approximately equal numbers of wives in each service, this does not present interpretative difficulties.

<sup>3</sup>Data in this paragraph are from: Coolbaugh, Perrine and Griffith (no date), Griffith, Stewart and Cato, 1988 and Griffith, Gabel and Stewart, 1988.

<sup>4</sup>Data in this paragraph are from Griffith, Gabel and Stewart, 1988.

## Determinants of Labor Force Participation and Employment

The first step in reviewing spouse employment is examining the extent to which military wives have entered the labor force and their ability to find satisfactory employment once they have made the decision to work outside the home. This section begins by comparing military and civilian labor force participation and employment rates. It then examines the factors that influence these rates.

### Labor Force Participation

Labor force participation is defined as either being employed or actively looking for paid work. In the past two decades the labor force participation rate of women in both civilian and military communities has risen dramatically, especially among women with small children in the home (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988; Bureau of Labor Statistics, [BLS], 1987). The labor force participation rates for civilian wives rose steadily from 44.5% in 1975 to 54.3% in 1985 and 54.6% in 1986 (BLS, 1987). Particularly noticeable is the increase in the labor force participation of wives with small children in the home. In 1975, 37% of wives with children under age 6 were in the labor force as compared to 54% in 1985 (BLS, 1987).

Similarly, the labor force participation of military wives has also increased over time, although it still lags behind that of comparable civilian wives. In 1985, 52% of all military wives were in the labor force compared with 67% of comparable civilian wives (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988). In 1987, the percentage of Army wives in the labor force was 63%, while the remainder (37%) were outside the labor force. Wives may be outside of the labor force by choice (because of attitudes on paid employment) or because they either withdrew from the job market after an unsuccessful job search (i.e. they are discouraged workers) or because their personal or family situations prevent them from seeking and maintaining a paid job. Schwartz (in preparation) suggests that the lower participation of military wives relative to civilian wives is due to the military wife's greater likelihood that she is a "discouraged worker" who has dropped out of the labor force after an unsuccessful job search, the more frequent permanent change in station (PCS) moves that require more time to get settled into new surroundings or possibly the preference of military wives for home production.

### Employment versus Unemployment

Once having made the decision to enter the labor force, there is also little doubt that having a military husband influences whether a wife is employed or unemployed (Schwartz, in preparation; Schwartz, Griffith, & Wood, 1987). Of the 63% of Army wives who were in the labor force in 1987, 44% were in paid employment while 19% were unemployed (not currently in paid employment and actively seeking a paid job) according to Griffith, Stewart and Cato

(1988). This translates into an overall unemployment rate of 30%.<sup>5</sup> During the past decade, the unemployment rate of military wives has been estimated by researchers to double, triple or quadruple that of comparable civilian wives, depending upon the method and sample used (Research Triangle Institute, 1987 and CFSC, 1988).

Unemployment is higher among spouses of lower ranking members. The unemployment rate of wives of Specialists 4 and below was 44% while that of senior NCO's wives was 26% and that of officer's wives was 15%. Unemployment also appears to be increasing, especially among enlisted men's spouses. For example, the unemployment rate among all enlisted men's wives increased from 26% to 33% between 1985 and 1987. During the same period, officer's wives unemployment rate also increased from 15% to 18% (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988). The fact that enlisted men's wives have especially high unemployment rates points to the necessity of programs and services targeted at the special needs of these families (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).

Women work outside the home because of financial need or because of the intrinsic satisfaction (e.g. enjoyment, independence) they derive from paid employment. Research on civilian respondents suggests that working class wives are more likely to work out of financial necessity while middle and upper class wives are more likely to work for intrinsic reasons (Lowe & Krahn, 1985). AFRP findings suggest parallel phenomena among military wives. For example, the 1985 DoD survey asked employed military spouses why they worked outside the home. Economic need was most often cited by Army enlisted spouses as the reason for working (59%) while more officer's wives indicated that they worked for independence (54%), enjoyment (44%) or because they wanted extra money (44%).<sup>6</sup> Only 32% of Army officer's wives indicated that financial need was a major consideration in their decision to work outside the home. Similar proportions of women in both groups reported that they work because they always planned to work (36% enlisted men's wives, 39% officer's wives) or because they want to gain experience for a future career (36% enlisted men's wives, 33% officer's wives). Other research on military samples confirms the findings that economic and intrinsic factors are important contributors to the desire to obtain or continue paid employment (Ickovics & Martin, 1987).

The ASAF also investigated the extent to which wives without paid jobs wanted such work and the reasons some wives were not seeking paid employment. Of the Army wives who were not currently working for pay, over half (60%)

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<sup>5</sup>Unemployment rates are calculated by dividing the percentage of unemployed wives by the percentage of wives in the labor force.

<sup>6</sup>Although working for economic need and working because one desires extra money are both financial reasons explaining why spouses desire paid employment, they imply differing levels of urgency. Working for economic need implies that wives are making substantial contributions toward family financial obligations. Working for extra money implies that wives are working for greater disposable income and discretionary spending.

wanted a paid job.<sup>7</sup> The finding that the majority of women not working outside the home desire such employment suggests that a considerable proportion of wives are either unemployed, discouraged, or wives whose personal or family situations pose obstacles in seeking and maintaining a paid job. Unfortunately, there is little data on the proportion of discouraged workers among military wives. However, support for the suggestion that personal or family situations prevent some women from actively looking for work is found in analyses of ASAF data. Spouses who did not have a paid job were asked why they were not looking for work. An overload of family responsibilities was the most frequently mentioned reason for not seeking employment by these Army wives (54%). Women with children under the age of 11 were especially likely to cite excessive family responsibilities as a reason for not looking for a paid job. Other frequently mentioned reasons were inadequate training (16%), child care (15%) or transportation (14%) and no desire for paid work outside the home (24%).<sup>8</sup>

In addition, there were several important differences between officer's and enlisted men's wives on the reasons they were not looking for work outside the home. Although both groups agreed that excessive family responsibilities prevented them from looking for paid work (54% for both groups), enlisted men's wives were more likely to indicate that lack of child care, transportation and training was a problem (16% enlisted men's wives versus 5% officer's wives) while officer's wives were more likely to indicate that they did not want to work for pay (9% versus 19%).

The data on labor force participation, employment and the reasons wives are/are not seeking paid employment lead us to several conclusions. There are apparently many wives who, although not currently working outside the home, desire paid jobs. Many are actively seeking employment and are thus captured by the unemployment statistics. However, there appears to be good reason to suspect that some wives without paid jobs are either discouraged workers or women who dropped out of the labor force because of personal/family reasons. Either way, these women are not included in the unemployment rate. Therefore, it is possible that the labor force participation and unemployment rates of Army wives may be an underestimation of the actual percentage of wives who desire paid employment. The unemployment rates, in particular, probably underestimate the extent to which military wives are unable to obtain paid employment since they do not include women who have dropped out of the labor force after unsuccessful job searches or women whose personal or family situations prevent them from actively seeking employment. Also, the finding that an overload of family responsibilities and inadequate child care facilities, transportation and training prevented some from seeking paid employment suggests that there is an unmet need for family support services, especially among the families of junior enlisted men.

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<sup>7</sup>This 60% includes both women who were not in the labor force (i.e. not actively seeking employment) and women who were unemployed.

<sup>8</sup>Multiple responses were possible. Wives with young children (under age 5) were especially likely to cite family responsibilities as a reason for not seeking paid employment.

## Predictors of Labor Force Participation and Employment Status

There are demographic (education, race, work experience), family (ages and presence of children) and structural factors (geographic location, spouse employment programs, frequent relocations) that influence whether a military spouse will participate in the labor force and/or her likelihood of finding employment. Each of these sets of predictors will be examined in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

Demographic predictors. Education has a great influence on the labor force participation of both men and women, within and outside of the military. Schwartz, Griffith, and Wood (1987) report that among Army wives in 1985, spouses with higher levels of education are more likely to be in the labor force than wives with little formal education. For example, the labor force participation rates among Army enlisted men's wives were: 36% for spouses with less than 12 years of education, 51% for spouses with a high school diploma, 74% for spouses with some college, 72% for college graduates and 86% for spouses with more than 4 years of college (Griffith, LaVange, & Gabel, 1986). Labor force participation rates of Army officer's wives also increase as educational attainment increases.

Education not only effects the likelihood that a wife will be in the labor market, but it also affects the likelihood that once in the labor market, she will be employed. This relationship has been well-researched and supported in both military and civilian sectors (Schwartz, in preparation). Griffith, Doering, and Mahoney (1986) indicate that the greater the military wife's education, the more likely she is to be employed. Schwartz and colleagues' (1988) analysis of the same data indicate that among wives in the labor force, 65% of Army wives with less than a high school diploma, 79% of those who had attended college and 83% of those with graduate education had paid jobs.

In the Army, as in all other services, the wives of officers are likely to have more education than wives of enlisted personnel. In 1987, 35% of Army enlisted men's wives versus 79% of Army officer's wives had obtained at least some post-secondary education (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988). Therefore, educational differences explain, at least in part, the greater employment problems experienced by the wives of enlisted men.

Race is another factor influencing labor force participation and employment. Black women and women of certain other minority groups have historically had higher labor force participation rates than white women. Analyses of the 1985 DoD data supports what is found in the civilian sector; that black women are significantly more likely to be in the labor force than white women (Schwartz, Wood, & Griffith, 1988). Murray (1987) found that non-white military wives are about 25% more likely to participate in the labor force than white wives. Similarly, nonwhites are also more likely to be unemployed. Schwartz et al. (1988) found that Hispanics and other minority wives are significantly less likely to be employed than white wives.

Years of potential work experience (operationalized as age minus years of schooling minus 6) has a curvilinear relationship with both labor force

participation and the likelihood of employment. In other words, as years of potential experience increases so does the propensity to be in the labor market and employed until a certain point (about 30 years of age according to Schwartz et al., 1987), after which increases in years of experience are associated with declining labor market participation and employment (Schwartz, in preparation). Since military wives, on average, tend to be younger than civilian wives and thus have less time to accumulate work experience (Schwartz et al., 1987, point out that the average military wife is 29; the average civilian wife is 33), their youthful age generally reduces their likelihood of labor force participation and employment relative to civilian wives (Schwartz, in preparation).

Family predictors. The presence and ages of children in the household and the availability of child care are important predictors of labor force participation. Lowe and Krahn (1985) suggest that these variables (which are sometimes collectively referred to as family life stage) are the most important predictors of whether a wife chooses to be part of the labor force. Their regression analysis of 163 civilian, Canadian women indicates that the number of preschool age and school age children are negatively related to wives' labor force participation.

Similarly, ASAF findings indicate that women with no children are more likely to be in the labor force than those with children. Seventy eight percent of wives aged 29 or younger without children and 76% of wives at least 30 years of age either without children or with adult children are either employed or looking for paid work (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988). In contrast, the labor force participation of women with dependent children of various ages ranged from 49%-73%.

The data also indicates that among spouses with children in the home, the likelihood of labor force participation increases as the age of the youngest child present in the household increases. For example, the labor force participation rates of Army wives in 1987 were: 49% for wives whose youngest child was 0-2 years of age, 59% for those whose youngest child is between age 3-5, 69% for those whose youngest child was age 6-11 and 73% for those whose youngest child was between 12 and 17 years of age (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988). This pattern of increasing labor force participation as the age of the youngest child increases is observed even when officer's and enlisted men's wives are examined separately.

The presence of young children also influences employment status (whether one is employed or unemployed after having made the decision to enter the labor force). Women with young children (less than 2 years of age) in the household are not only less likely to be in the labor force than mothers of older children, they are also less likely to be employed (Schwartz, 1988). Data from the 1987 ASAF show that unemployment rates steadily decline as the age of the youngest child increases (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988).

A factor related to the presence of young children which also may influence wife's labor force participation/employment status is the availability of quality child care facilities. Research in the civilian sector indicates that 17% of the women not currently in the labor force would look for a job if

quality child care was available (Spitze, 1988). Similar evidence of the problematic nature of child care exists in the military community since many Army wives responding to the ASAF indicated that child care was a problem in seeking paid employment.

One might expect that husband's paygrade would be a significant predictor of labor force participation. However, there appears to be little consensus on the exact nature of this relationship. For instance, Schwartz' et al., (1988) analyses of the 1985 DoD spouse and member surveys found that the higher the husbands' wage, the less likely wives were to be in the labor market.<sup>9</sup> Curiously, Lowe and Krahn (1985) found that while the husband's income had no significant effect on wife's labor force participation, the husband's number of full time jobs and family monthly rent/mortgage payments did.

In contrast to the above findings, Murray (1987) found that among DoD enlisted men's wives, labor force participation increased as husband's paygrade increased.<sup>10</sup> There are several possible explanations for this positive relationship between labor force participation and husband's paygrade among enlisted men's spouses. Soldiers in higher paygrades are likely to be married to more highly educated or skilled women whose labor force participation is higher because of her educational attainment or training. In addition, wives of senior enlisted personnel are likely to be older and thus have had more time to accumulate work experience. Soldiers in higher paygrades and their wives are also likely to be at a different life course stage than junior soldiers and their families. The labor force participation of the wives of senior NCOs may be higher because their children are older. In summary, the personal and family characteristics of enlisted men's wives may explain the positive relationship between husband's paygrade and wife's labor force participation. Murray (1987) controlled for these effects in subsequent logistic regressions and found that increases in the member's paygrade increased the likelihood of spouse labor force participation slightly (about 5%) for officer's wives and had no effect among enlisted men's wives (Murray, 1987). Thus, the relationship between paygrade and labor force participation among enlisted men's wives is, indeed, mostly due to differences in personal and family characteristics.

Structural predictors. A structural factor which affects labor force participation is whether spouses reside in the continental U.S. or overseas. The labor force participation of spouses of military personnel varies by location and tends to be higher in CONUS than in OCONUS posts. According to data from the 1987 ASAF, the labor force participation of Army wives in CONUS locations is approximately 65% while that of wives in OCONUS locations is 60% (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988). Unemployment rates are similar for both

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<sup>9</sup>This might occur because women married to higher earning men are likely to be older and have more traditional attitudes about sex roles and the workplace than younger women married to men in the early career stages.

<sup>10</sup>However, Murray also found that the labor force participation of officer's wives remained constant across husbands' paygrades.

locations (30% CONUS, 31% OCONUS). Given the higher LFP in CONUS locations and similar unemployment rates, these findings suggest that some OCONUS spouses have become discouraged and dropped out of the labor force.

The influence of geographic location on whether a spouse is employed or unemployed, however, is unclear. On the one hand, employment is extremely limited for military wives living outside the U.S (Research Triangle Institute, 1987) and finding employment is quite difficult (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1986). On the other hand, although labor force participation is higher CONUS than OCONUS, there are only slight differences in the proportions of spouses employed and unemployed between the 2 locations (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1986). A probit analysis of the 1985 DoD data conducted by Schwartz, Wood, and Griffith (1988) failed to reveal a significant effect of location on employment status. Schwartz and colleagues (1987) also found that CONUS location was not a statistically significant predictor of whether a spouse was employed or unemployed. It appears that one important effect of OCONUS locations is that some wives become discouraged and either drop out or remain outside the labor force.

In addition to the above, other location factors such as proximity to population centers and time spent at the same location have also been found to positively increase the likelihood of labor force participation (Murray, 1987; Schwartz et al., 1988).

The presence of spouse employment programs is another structural factor influencing wives' labor force participation (Schwartz et al., 1987, 1988). AFRP analyses of the 1985 DoD survey indicate that 59% of the wives at installations with programs are either employed or looking for paid work, while only 46% of those at installations without programs are in the labor force (Bell, 1987).<sup>11</sup> According to Schwartz and colleagues (1988), simulation analyses suggest that spouse employment programs can increase the likelihood of labor force participation by about 20%. One such program is the Army Family Member Employment Assistance Program (FMEAP) whose objectives are to maximize employment opportunities for family members, provide job search support and guidance and provide assistance in overcoming the career problems resulting from frequent PCS moves (Barton, Chin, & Perrine, 1989). FMEAPs are jointly administered by the Army Community Services and the Civilian Personnel Office and offer such services as career counseling, employment information and referral, job hunting workshops, job banks and job clubs. Approximately 70% of all CONUS Army installations have spouse employment programs. Unfortunately, utilization and satisfaction indicators of FMEAPs are low. According to the 1987 ASAF report, FMEAP services were seldom used when an Army family member sought employment. Eighty four percent of spouses seeking

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<sup>11</sup>There are a variety of factors which may explain the higher labor force participation of posts with FMEAPs. For example, posts with programs may be nearer to urban population centers. Thus, labor force participation may be higher because of this and other factors which are not associated with FMEAP interventions.

employment had not used FMEAPs and, of those who had used the services (16%), less than half thought it was at all helpful. Civilian Personnel Offices, and military and civilian friends were more helpful in finding employment.<sup>12</sup>

Unemployment rates, however, appear to be unaffected by spouse employment programs. Indeed, Schwartz and colleagues (1987, 1988) were surprised to find that although labor force participation was higher at posts with programs, the presence of spouse employment programs did not significantly influence employment rates (76% versus 77% at posts with and without programs, respectively). Instead, the personal and family characteristics of the spouse (e.g. race, potential years of experience, rank of spouse, number of months at present location) seemed to be the main factors influencing whether a wife was employed or unemployed (Schwartz et al., 1988). Clearly, more research is needed on the interrelationships between the presence of FMEAPs and other similar programs, the spouse labor pool and the labor market environments at various installations. More research which outlines the characteristics of the most successful FMEAPs and similar programs is also needed.

Frequent relocations are characteristic of the military lifestyle. Comparison of the March 1985 Current Population Survey with the 1985 DoD data shows that while 22% of the civilian population moved at least once in the past 5 years, 79% of the military population made 1 or more moves (Schwartz et al., 1987). Army families, in particular, have high relocation rates; 81% of these families had at least one PCS move within the past 3 years (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988)

Frequent relocations cause problems to considerable proportions of Army wives seeking paid employment.<sup>13</sup> Over half (58%) of Army enlisted men's wives and 44% of officer's wives indicated that PCS moves posed problems in finding civilian employment (Griffith, LaVange, & Gabel, 1986).<sup>14</sup> Having to move was most often cited by all wives as the reason for leaving one's last job (Griffith, LaVange, & Gabel, 1986). The 1985 DoD data indicate that the longer a wife has been at one location, the more likely she is to be employed and employed in a job that uses her skills (Schwartz et al., 1988).

Frequent relocations also interfere with spouse employment by preventing wives from completing long term educational and training programs, obtaining

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<sup>12</sup>Utilization and perceived helpfulness is somewhat higher with the CPOs at respondent's current location. Forty one percent had used CPOs and about half found them to be at least somewhat helpful.

<sup>13</sup>There is also evidence that frequent relocations have a negative effect on retention intention (Farkas & Durning, 1979). A 1979 investigation of Navy personnel yielded evidence that frequent relocations were related to lower spousal support and increased family pressure for the military member to leave the Navy.

<sup>14</sup>While 44% of those surveyed felt that finding civilian employment was a problem associated with PCS moves, 16% felt it was not a problem, 7% did not know and for 33% of those sampled, the question was not applicable.

promotions, and advancing professionally (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988; Research Triangle Institute, 1987). Frequent moves are especially damaging to spouses in professional and managerial occupations because they interfere with career progression by reducing job tenure (Hogan, in press) and forcing workers to "start from the bottom" when looking for work at each new location or because they force spouses with specialized training into labor markets where there may be little demand for those particular skills. Many of these problems explain much of the higher unemployment and lower earnings found among military spouses relative to civilian spouses (Hogan, in press; Schwartz, in preparation). In addition, the employment difficulties caused by frequent relocations may result in wives becoming discouraged and leaving the labor force.

## Characteristics of Spouse Employment

The above sections examined some of the factors influencing military wives' decisions to enter the labor force and those factors influencing employment status once that decision had been made. However, having a husband who is a member of the military influences not only the spouse's labor force participation or employment opportunities but also affects other aspects of employment such as level of employment or earnings. This section will describe the characteristics of military wives' employment once it is obtained.

### Level of Employment

There are a considerable number of part-time workers among Army wives. In 1987, 32% of Army wives reported working part-time while 63% were full-timers, and 5% were self-employed. Although we do not have comparable rates for married women in the civilian sector, in 1987, 26% of all women worked part-time. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1989).

Whether a spouse works part- or full-time is related to the age of the children present in the home. Mothers of preschoolers are more likely to work part-time than mothers of teenagers or women without children in the home (Schwartz et al., 1988). Since Army wives are more likely to have young children in the home than civilian wives, the higher part-time employment rate among these wives is understandable.

Research also shows that, contrary to what one might expect, husband's income does not statistically influence the likelihood of working part- or full-time (Schwartz et al., 1987). The length of time at location, however, does significantly effect level of employment. The longer a spouse is at a given location, the more likely she is to change from part- to full-time employment (Schwartz et al., 1987). This finding has important policy implications given the frequent relocations of Army families.

### Occupational Distribution

The occupational distribution of military wives is different from that of civilian wives. There are proportionately more military wives in health, sales and service occupations and fewer in professional, teaching, clerical and manufacturing occupations (Hayghe, 1986; Schwartz, 1987) than in the civilian population. Army spouses with college degrees tend to be in teaching and other traditionally female professions; only 7% of the most educated wives (0.9% of all employed Army wives) are in traditionally male professions such

as law or medicine and approximately 13% are in clerical positions (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).<sup>15</sup>

Within the military, there are important differences in the occupational distribution of officer's versus enlisted men's wives. The relative status of jobs held by officer's wives is higher than that of jobs held by enlisted men's wives (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1986). For example, according to the 1987 ASAF, 52% of Army officer's wives were in professional or managerial positions while only 19% of Army enlisted men's wives held such jobs. Enlisted men's wives were much more likely to be in sales or service occupations (35%) than officer's wives (11%). Similar proportions of wives in both groups were in clerical occupations (approximately 27%). The higher status of officer's wives' occupations is consistent with the generally higher educational attainment of these wives relative to enlisted men's wives.

### Employment Sector

Overall, slightly more than one third (36%) of Army wives work for a federal agency and the majority (24%) work for the Department of the Army (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988). Location seems to be important in determining whether spouses work for the government since OCONUS spouses are more likely to have a federal job than CONUS spouses. Over half of OCONUS spouses (59%) have government jobs as compared to one fifth (22%) of CONUS spouses (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988). Language difficulties and restrictions on spouse employment due to status of forces agreements are likely to explain the higher percentage of OCONUS spouses working for the federal government.

Among enlisted men's wives, those married to soldiers in higher paygrades were slightly more likely to work for the government than those married to soldiers with lower paygrades. For example, 44% of wives of First Sergeants and above (E7-E9), 37% of Corporals' and Sergeants' wives (E5-E6), and only 24% of the wives of Specialist 4 and below work for a federal agency. There is no comparable difference among wives of officers (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988).

As one might expect, spouses working for federal agencies were more likely to be in clerical occupations and less likely to be in child development, operative, and sales occupations than wives in civilian employment (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).

Federal workers tend to work full-time. Almost three fourths of federal workers were employed full-time (74%) while over half (57%) of all other employed workers were (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).

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<sup>15</sup>This is in contrast to the 14.0% of all female workers in 1984 who were employed in professional specialties as reported by the Department of Labor (1985).

### Length of Job Search

In 1987, it took 4 months or more for 29% of currently employed Army spouses to find their jobs. Thirty four percent of currently employed spouses found their jobs in 1 to 3 months while 38% found their jobs in less than a month. Considerable proportions of Army spouses found jobs in less than a month in sales (44%), managerial (47%) and child development (42%) occupations (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988). Job searches tend to be shorter when the spouse is married to a Specialist 4 or below, is self-employed or working part-time, is seeking civilian employment or is located in CONUS (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).

### Underemployment

Underemployed workers have jobs with inadequate hours or wages or they have jobs which underutilize their education and skills (Ickovics, 1989). Unfortunately, employment statistics alone do not fully reveal the extent to which workers are underemployed.

However, there is evidence that underutilization of skills and education is a problem for military wives generally and for Army wives in particular (Braddy, 1988; National Military Wives Association, 1982). The National Military Wives Association (1982) reported that over half of the OCONUS wives included in their survey felt they were overqualified for their current jobs.<sup>16</sup> In 1985, employed Army spouses were asked to indicate the extent to which their current job utilized their training. Almost half (47%) of enlisted men's spouses and over one third (36%) of officer's spouses said their jobs used their skills somewhat, very little or not at all (Griffith, LaVange, Gabel, & Mahoney, 1986). More recently, Braddy (1988) notes instances in which spouses with baccalaureate or advanced degrees were forced to take GS-3 clerical positions because there were few other jobs available.

Among unemployed spouses, there is a widespread perception that appropriate work is definitely not available. For example, when unemployed Army spouses were asked whether they thought they could find paid employment at their present location that matches their skills, training and experience, over half (54%) of both enlisted men's and officer's wives felt that they will definitely not be able to find such employment (Griffith, LaVange, Gabel, Doering, & Mahoney, 1986). Employed spouses, when asked the same question, were more optimistic about the availability of appropriate employment.

AFRP scientists (Schwartz et al., 1988) analyzed the 1985 DoD data and discovered that level of education, time spent at same location, and race influenced the likelihood of underemployment. Specifically, spouses with more education, who were at the same location for longer periods of time and who were white were significantly less likely to be underemployed than those with lesser education, who were frequently relocated and who were black, Hispanic

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<sup>16</sup>The National Military Wives Association survey was a nonrepresentative, availability survey and thus cannot be generalized to all Army spouses.

or another minority. In an analysis of the same data, Murray (1987) found that underemployment among military wives was also related to occupation. Wives in sales, clerical or service jobs were more likely to report poor use of training than those in professional or managerial jobs.

In the absence of definitive data, we can only speculate on the reasons why spouses might be underemployed. Remote post location may mean that wives are in areas with weak economies or low local demand for specific occupations and services. Employer perceptions that military wives are 'temporary' employees, available for 3 years or less, may result in employer reluctance to either hire or train military wives. Work-family conflicts and the lack of family support services may force wives into part time instead of full time jobs. In any event, the consequences of underemployment for wives are lower earnings and increased frustration.

### Spouse Earnings

Spouse earnings must be cautiously examined since, as pointed out earlier, there are a considerable number of wives who work only part-time. Nevertheless, the earnings of military wives are significantly lower than those of comparable civilian wives. The 1985 DoD data indicate that the average military wife earned \$6470 that year while the average civilian wife earned \$8356 (Schwartz et al., 1987). The earnings of Army wives are also well below that of comparable civilian wives. In 1986, almost half of all employed Army wives earned less than \$5,000 per year (this figure includes part-timers). Although the remainder of Army wives earned more than \$5,000, their salaries were still small. Twenty one percent earned between \$5,000 and \$10,000 and 29% earned between \$10,000 and \$24,000 (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988).<sup>17</sup>

Examining annual earnings by rank of soldier shows that, in Army families in 1985, the spouses of enlisted men made considerably less than those of officers (\$6,380 versus \$8,408; CFSC, 1988). Almost three quarters (72%) of enlisted men's wives earned below \$10,000 while 54% of officer's wives had comparable earnings. Spouses of Specialist 4 and below were particularly likely to report low earnings. Two thirds of these Army wives made less than \$5,000.

The lower wage rates and annual earnings of military wives are explained by individual characteristics (i.e. they tend to be younger and thus have less time to accumulate work experience) and structural factors such as frequency of relocation and geographic location (Schwartz, in preparation; Hogan, in press). For instance, frequent work interruptions appear to account for much of the lower annual earnings of Army wives. In 1986, over half (54%) of Army

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<sup>17</sup>Unfortunately, these statistics do not take into account the fact that many wives worked either part-time (1-32 hours/week) or only part of the year. More meaningful earnings analyses would compare military and civilian earnings while controlling for the number of hours worked per week and/or the number of weeks worked per year.

wives surveyed had worked less than 39 weeks. Indeed, a full 39% had only worked half the year (26 weeks) or less. The impact of frequent job interruptions on earnings was also examined by Hogan (in press). His simulation analyses suggest that increasing tour length by 12 months and reducing frequency of PCS moves by 24% would increase spouse wages by an average of 6%. Despite anecdotal charges that there is wage discrimination against military wives, other analyses suggest that there is little evidence that once military wives are employed, they earn less than comparable civilian wives (Schwartz, in preparation). It appears that low annual earnings are due, at least in part, to specific aspects of the military lifestyle.

Spouse earnings are particularly important since research shows that spouses contribute substantially to total family income. Spouses of Army enlisted men contribute proportionally more to family income than wives of officers or civilians. Among Army spouses surveyed in 1985, spouses of enlisted men contributed 30% to family income while officer's wives contributed 22%. In contrast, civilian spouses earn approximately 24% of civilian family income (CFSC, 1988).

## Related Spouse Employment Issues

Increasing spouse employment has the potential to impact on several arenas of military life. For example, the Army has historically depended on military spouses to volunteer time to various social and community activities. A reasonable concern, therefore, is whether the employment of military spouses decreases their availability to engage in volunteer activities. Other concerns may be the impact of employment on wives': ability to cope with daily stresses, ability to manage in the soldiers' absence, satisfaction with the Army as a way of life, preference for husband to continue an Army career and opportunity to achieve personal goals. Since each of these factors has important implications for family wellbeing and soldier readiness and retention they are considered below.

### Volunteerism

Volunteerism is an established tradition within the Army community. Traditionally, wives (especially officer's wives) provided an array of services to military personnel and their families (Bell & Iadaluca, 1987). Analyses of the 1985 DoD survey indicated that, across services, officer's wives are much more likely to engage in volunteer work than enlisted men's wives (Griffith, Doering, & Mahoney, 1986). Similarly, analyses of Army families also demonstrate that officer's wives are more likely to engage in volunteer activities than enlisted men's wives (52% versus 18% in 1987) and that within both groups of wives, as husband's rank increases, the likelihood of the wife volunteering increases (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988). For instance, 11% of the wives of Specialists 4 and below volunteer while 27% of the wives of Sergeant First Class and above do so. Similarly, among officer's wives, 46% of wives married to a Lieutenant or Captain volunteer while 63% of those married to Majors or above volunteer (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988).

One concern is whether the increasing labor force participation of Army wives influences their desire or ability to engage in volunteer activities. Results from the 1987 ASAF indicate that neither spouse employment nor labor force participation are associated with the likelihood of volunteering (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988). Overall, employed spouses are as likely to volunteer as those without paid employment. The exception is that employed officer's wives are less likely to volunteer to military organizations than unemployed or non-labor force officer's wives. This reduces the rate at which employed officer's wives volunteer overall. Analysis of the 1985 DoD data indicate that while there was little relationship between employment and volunteerism among enlisted men's wives, for officer's wives "volunteer work is higher among women who are not in the labor force than it is for employed

or unemployed wives (Griffith, Doering, & Mahoney, 1986, p. 96).<sup>18</sup> These results are not surprising given that officer's wives experience the most intense pressure to volunteer. It may be that among this group only, wives who are employed and therefore have substantial time constraints, are the ones who do not engage in volunteer activities. It is also possible that officer's wives who are not in the labor force may hold more traditional attitudes toward meeting Army expectations for volunteering than those who are employed or seeking a paid job. Therefore, although in general, there may be little association between volunteerism and employment, among officer's wives only, it is predominantly those who have paid jobs who do not or cannot volunteer.

Although employment status alone does not appear to be associated with whether or not one volunteers (i.e. rank of the husband seems to strongly influence volunteerism), it does appear to be associated with the amount of time spent in volunteer activities. Murray (1987), for example, illustrates that among officer's wives, only 36% of those who say they volunteer frequently are in the labor force while 47% of those who volunteer infrequently are in the labor force and 55% of those who do not volunteer at all are either employed or seeking employment. In other words, the likelihood of labor force participation decreases as time spent volunteering increases.

The reasons given by spouses for why they do or do not volunteer yield important clues to the personal and family factors driving spouses' volunteer behaviors. Results from ASAF analyses underscore the importance of time when considering volunteerism and employment. Among those who do not volunteer, 71% of enlisted men's wives and 81% of officer's wives indicated that they did not volunteer because they did not have enough time (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988).

Griffith, Stewart, and Cato (1988) also point out that 38% of wives volunteer to prepare for a good job in the future. In addition, 49% of those who want a paid job volunteer to gain job experience. Volunteer activities such as clerical and office work, management and community relations, social services, financial counseling, medical assistance, teaching and writing offer women practical work experience which may help them prepare for careers.

In general, officer's wives are less likely to use volunteerism as a way of accumulating job experience than enlisted men's wives (30% versus 42%). Instead, officer's wives are likely to volunteer to contribute to the community (76%), meet people (52%) and support activities used by their children (52%). Enlisted men's wives are likely to volunteer to contribute to the community (59%), meet people (52%), and have a sense of achievement (45%). Among spouses of enlisted personnel who volunteer, those married to

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<sup>18</sup>For example, the percentages of employed, unemployed and non-labor force Army enlisted wives who volunteer were 22%, 17% and 18%, respectively. The percentages of employed, unemployed and non-labor force Army officer's wives who volunteered were 47%, 40% and 60%, respectively. Thus, while employment seems to have little effect on volunteerism among enlisted men's wives, amongst officer's wives, those with (or seeking paid jobs) are less likely to volunteer than those without.

Specialists 4 and below are more likely than others to say they volunteer to gain experience for future jobs (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).

Based on these findings, Griffith, Stewart, and Cato (1988, p. 76) conclude that:

"volunteer programs that enhance spouse job capabilities and opportunities are important to many Army spouses....It is important, however, that volunteer programs do this kind of job development for spouses who want it, as a matter of regular practice and policy, to ensure that spouses' needs are met, to the extent possible, and that they do not become dissatisfied with the results of their volunteer participation."

Thus, volunteerism may be affected by the extent to which spouses perceive volunteer opportunities as having a future employment payoff. And, even if employment status alone does not influence whether spouses will engage in volunteer activities, it does influence their flexibility to volunteer (Morrison et al., 1989) and the amount of time devoted to these activities.

#### Family Adaptation

Coping with day to day stress, the ability to function in the soldier's absence and satisfaction with the Army as a way of life are all family factors which give evidence of the family's adaptation to the Army environment and which have important implications for soldier readiness and retention. The employment factors that influence these and other measures of family adaptation are important because spouse satisfaction/adaptation is positively related to spouse support for the husband remaining in the Army or other military service (Bowen, 1986; Griffith, Doering, & Mahoney, 1986; Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).

How does spouse employment affect these aspects of family adaptation? Data from the 1987 ASAF indicates that employed spouses do not report greater problems in coping with daily stresses or in getting along in the soldier's absence than do other spouses (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988). When examining only the wives of enlisted personnel, unemployed spouses are more likely to indicate difficulty in managing while the husband is away than are employed spouses. The researchers suggest that the greater financial need of these families produces more difficulty in coping in the husband's absence (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).

Although employment status alone has no effect on the spouse's ability to either cope with daily stresses or manage in the soldier's absence (again, it appears that the husband's rank is an important factor), it does influence the spouse's satisfaction with the Army as a way of life (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988). Analyses of the ASAF indicate that 65% of officer's and enlisted men's wives who do not want a paid job are satisfied with the Army as a way of life, while 61% of employed wives and 56% of wives who want and do not have a paid job are satisfied (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988). Other analyses indicate that while those who are employed are not necessarily more satisfied

with the military lifestyle than others, those who are unemployed and looking for a job are significantly less likely to be satisfied with the military way of life than others (Schwartz et al., 1987). Thus, it appears that negative employment outcomes (e.g. unemployment) may be responsible for dissatisfaction with the military lifestyle.

Job context factors also influence satisfaction with the Army lifestyle. Spouses who are satisfied with their job's development opportunities are more satisfied with the Army as a lifestyle than those who are unsatisfied with this aspect of their job (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).

#### Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Military Life

In addition to the questions on satisfaction with the military way of life, the 1985 DoD survey also asked respondents how satisfied they were with specific aspects of military life. Murray (1987) found that wives' labor force participation was related to dissatisfaction with: education and training opportunities, military demands placed on wives, and wives' rights. Specifically, wives in the labor force were more likely to be dissatisfied with each of these aspects of military life than were wives not in the labor force. These relationships are of considerable importance since it is likely that these factors contribute to the wives' overall satisfaction with the military.

#### Support for Member's Army Career

Research has consistently demonstrated that spouse support greatly influences a military member's work commitment (Orthner and Pittman, 1986). For example, Pittman and Orthner (1989) found that a wife's employment status had a significant indirect effect on her husband's job commitment. The relationship between a spouse's employment status and her opinion regarding whether the husband should remain in the Army is also pivotal, since research shows that a spouse's support of retention is related to the member's plan to remain in the service (Bowen, 1986; Etheridge, 1989; Military Family Resource Center, 1984; Mohr, Holzbach, & Morrison, 1981). Overall, however, analyses of ASAF data found that whether the wife is employed, unemployed or outside the labor force is unrelated to her support for the soldier's Army career (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).<sup>19</sup>

Braddy's (1988) interviews with Army spouses suggests that while many Army wives are completely supportive of their husbands military career and subordinate their own career development to that of their husbands, this attitude is changing, especially among younger, highly educated wives. Styles

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<sup>19</sup>However, spouses of soldiers in the early career stages (company grade officers, junior NCOs and Specialists 4 and below) who are out of the labor force are most likely to want the soldier to stay in the Army until retirement while spouses in the labor force are less likely to want him to stay (Griffith, Stewart & Cato, 1988).

and colleagues' (1988) interviews with soldiers, spouses and Army leaders and service providers indicated that some aspects of military life (especially frequent relocations) had negative effects on spouses' careers. It appears that consideration of the spouse's career is becoming more important in retention decision making in military families. These changing attitudes have important ramifications for retention given that approximately one third of enlisted men's wives (30%) and somewhat more officer's wives (40%) indicated that their husbands military job interferes with their own employment (Griffith, LaVange, & Gabel, 1986).

Job context factors also influence the wife's preference for an Army career. For spouses of enlisted men, satisfaction with job progress/development opportunities is positively associated with a preference for the soldier to stay in the Army until retirement (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988). And, among spouses of enlisted men, this relationship is found for those married to Specialists 4 and below but not for NCO's wives. However, the spouses of company grade officers who are satisfied with their job progress and development opportunities are less likely to want the soldier to stay until retirement than others. These spouses are more likely to want the soldier to leave at the end of his current obligation possibly because they fear that they will be unable to continue to get such good jobs if their husband remains in the military (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988).

#### Opportunity to Achieve Personal Goals

Finally, the impact of employment on the spouse's opportunity to achieve personal goals is examined. This factor is important since one might suspect that wives who are unable to achieve personal objectives may not favor their husbands' remaining in the military. Data from the 1987 ASAF on both enlisted men's and officer's wives indicated that spouses who are outside of the labor force are the less likely to report problems with opportunities to achieve personal goals than wives in the labor force. Those who are unemployed have the greatest problems achieving personal goals.

Several job context factors are also related to the spouse's perceived opportunity to achieve personal goals. Among employed Army spouses, dissatisfaction with ones' job progress and development opportunities and with the use of skills and abilities are associated with difficulty achieving personal goals and objectives (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988).

## Consequences of Spouse Employment

Although civilian research yields inconsistent findings on the impact of married women's employment on wives, husbands and families, one point remains clear:

"...(the) consequences of women's employment (e.g. for mental health, marital satisfaction, children's well-being) are favorable when women's employment status is consistent with their (and their husbands') preferences about it (Spitze, 1988, p. 610)."

This section examines some of the outcomes of spouse employment for family members, family relationships and military institutions.

### Consequences for Wives

Research conducted in the civilian sector examines the relationship between having a paid job outside the home and satisfaction with various aspects of one's life. Spitze (1988) suggests that employed women and housewives do not differ much on life satisfaction and mental health and that the few differences that do exist often favor employed women. Stokes and Peyton (1986) found that after controlling for demographic variables (e.g. age, household income, education), employed women tend to be more dissatisfied with their home lives and feel overloaded with responsibilities, although they also tend to have higher self esteem than homemakers. In their small, non-representative survey, Manning and DeRouin (1981) found that employed wives were significantly better adjusted or more satisfied than wives without paid jobs.

### Consequences for Husbands

The research on the impact of wife's employment on husband's life satisfaction is mixed. Spitze's review of the civilian literature (1988) notes research which seemed to indicate that wives' employment hurt husbands' wellbeing. Similarly, Staines, Pottick and Fudge (1985) also found that husbands of employed wives had significantly lower life satisfaction than those of wives without paid employment. In contrast, Manning and DeRouin's (1981) examination of a small sample of Army soldiers and wives indicates that husbands of employed wives were more content than those of non-employed wives. It is as yet unclear whether the differences in husband satisfaction are due to the military/civilian setting and whether these differences would hold in a larger, more representative Army examination.

Staines and colleagues (1985) also examined the influence of spouse employment on husband's job satisfaction. Again they found that satisfaction was lower for husbands of employed wives than it was for those of housewives. This difference persisted even after controlling for a variety of the husband's personal and job factors. The authors concluded that future

research which addresses the impact of wife's employment on "husband's major life roles" is needed.

### Consequences for Marriages

Despite several findings that spouse employment has a negative impact on marital satisfaction, several recent investigations relying on large, national (civilian) samples demonstrate that a wife's employment and occupational commitment have no effect on the marital satisfaction of either spouse (see Spitze, 1988 for a review of these literatures). Drake Smith's (1985) review of 27 research investigations on the impact of spouse employment on marital adjustment reveals that the overwhelming majority of investigations find that spouse employment has little, if any, effect on marital adjustment for either husbands or wives.

In contrast to the literature which indicates that spouse employment has either no effect or a negative effect on marital satisfaction, other research indicates that employed spouses were more satisfied with their marriages and daily lives than non-employed wives (Manning & DeRouin, 1981). Similarly, Pittman and Orthner (1988) found that among a sample of Air Force wives, marital and personal adjustment was higher among those who were employed full-time than it was among part-timers or unemployed wives.

However, there is evidence that the relationship between spouse employment and marital adjustment among military families may be more complex than that stated above. Bowen's (1987) research on marital adjustment among Air Force couples indicates that the effect of wife's employment status depends on the rank of the husband and the base location. Although employment seemed to enhance the marriages of officers stationed overseas, it was associated with lower marital adjustment and communication for those stationed in the U.S. These findings suggest that when evaluating the impact of military wives' employment on marriages, it is necessary to consider environmental factors which may place additional stresses on the marital relationship.

### Consequences for Families

There has been much research in the civilian literature on the effect of maternal employment on daughters and sons. Daughters of employed mothers are more independent and more likely to plan a future that includes paid employment than are daughters of women who do not work outside the home (Hoffman, cited in Spitze, 1988; Moore, cited in Spitze, 1988). In addition, both daughters and sons of employed women are more likely to have egalitarian sex role attitudes than are children of women without paid jobs (Spitze, 1988). Mothers' employment status has also been linked to children's academic achievement. While some research suggests that mothers' employment positively affects the academic achievement of daughters and negatively affects that of sons (Hoffman, cited in Spitze, 1988), more recent research showed that the apparent negative effect of employment on some children is accounted for by other factors (Milne, Myers, Rosenthal, & Ginsburg, 1986).

As noted earlier, child care is often a problem for civilian and military families in which wives either work or seek employment outside the home. In the military sector, research indicates that the presence of child care centers on posts positively influences spouse satisfaction with the military as a way of life (Schwartz et al., 1987). Again, since spouse satisfaction with the military lifestyle is a predictor of retention intent and actual retention behavior, child care availability and other factors affecting spouse support deserve consideration by Department of the Army personnel examining retention behavior.

### Consequences for Military Institutions

Spouse employment and other family factors influencing retention and readiness are of increasing importance given an all volunteer force and the shrinking supply of men between the ages of 18 and 21 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988, 1989). This section is divided into 2 subsections. The first reviews findings on the relationship between spouse employment and retention. The second suggests the probable impacts of spouse employment on readiness since, as yet, there is little empirical data on this relationship.

Spouse employment and retention. Because actual retention data is difficult to obtain, researchers often use the member's intention to remain in the military or the wife's support of retention as retention outcomes. Research consistently indicates that both outcomes are interrelated (Bowen, 1986) and highly correlated with actual retention behavior (Etheridge, 1989; Seboda & Szoc, 1984). The research question then becomes whether spouse employment has a direct and/or indirect effect on either of these outcomes.

Generally, researchers have found that spouse employment has little effect on husband's retention plans once the effect of other factors have been taken into account. For instance, Murray (1987) found that after controlling for a variety of family and personal factors, wives' employment status and occupation did not affect the likelihood that enlisted husbands would remain in the service beyond four years.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Griffith, Stewart, and Cato's (1988) examination of Army families found that, overall whether a wife was employed, unemployed or outside the labor force had no effect on her support retention. Employed spouses were as likely to support retention as were wives outside of the labor force. Unemployed wives were only slightly less likely to support retention than other wives.

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<sup>20</sup>The impact of other family and personal variables affecting the spouse employment-retention relationship must not be underestimated. For example, when only considering the simple, bivariate relationship between wife's employment and husband's retention plans, Murray found that enlisted men and officers were more likely to plan to remain in the service when their wives were not in the labor force than those whose wives were in the labor force. However, upon subjecting the data to logistic regression, this relationship disappeared.

However, there is some evidence that spouse employment is associated with lower retention for husbands at certain career stages. For example, ASAF researchers report that among wives of soldiers in the early career stages, spouse employment was negatively related to the spouse's support for retention (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988). Among spouses of Specialists 4 and below, junior NCOs and company grade officers, spouses who did not want paid employment were much more likely to favor retention than employed or unemployed wives. For example, among spouses of company grade officers, 64% who did not desire paid employment wanted their husbands to remain in the Army, while only 56% of employed spouses favored retention. Similarly, Szoc (1982) found that among Navy junior officers, those who intended to stay were more likely to have a spouse who did not have a paid job than were those who intended to leave. Explanations for the negative relationship offered by Griffith, Stewart, and Cato (1988) are that: (1) wives who do not desire paid employment may be predisposed toward the Army lifestyle, (2) the difficulties wives encounter in obtaining paid jobs (especially jobs that are suited to their talents and skills) reduces their support for husbands' remaining in the Army and (3) the conflicts between maintaining a career and living the Army lifestyle reduces the wife's satisfaction and commitment to the Army way of life. These explanations underscore the importance of going beyond the simple bivariate association between spouse employment and retention and considering the personal, family and job characteristics affecting this relationship.

Wood's (1988) examination of Army enlisted personnel in the 1985 DOD found that spouse unemployment negatively influences support for retention. She estimates that spouse unemployment among Army enlisted personnel reduces retention intentions by approximately 35%.

Researchers have also examined those aspects of a spouse's employment situation which have measurable impacts on a wife's support for retention. Satisfaction with job development opportunities is one aspect of a wife's employment circumstance which has been associated with support for retention. For example, ASAF researchers found that among enlisted men's wives, satisfaction with job development opportunities was positively associated with wife's support for retention (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988). Interestingly, the opposite relationship was found among officer's wives; those who were satisfied with their job's development opportunities were less likely to support retention.

Job status is also related to retention among officer's wives (Mohr et al., 1981; Szoc, 1982). Mohr and colleagues (1981) demonstrated that not only were housewives more supportive of their husbands' Navy careers than were employed wives, but husbands of wives in lower status jobs (e.g. clerical workers) were more likely to make the Navy a career than were husbands of wives in higher status jobs (e.g. teachers). Similarly, Szoc (1982) found that the husbands of managerial and professional women were less likely to remain in the service than those married to non-professional women. In contrast, Murray (1987) found that after controlling for a variety of personal and family factors, officers whose wives were in professional or managerial occupations were more likely to plan to remain in the service than those whose wives were in other occupational groups. These findings are important since over half

(52%) of Army officer's wives are employed in professional, teaching, managerial or administrative positions (Griffith, Gabel, & Stewart, 1988).

Retention is also affected by the extent to which wives are satisfied in their jobs and consequently satisfied with the military way of life. Murray (1987) found that, among officer's wives, professional, managerial or self-employment increased the probability that the wife would be dissatisfied with the military way of life, possibly because wives in these occupations experience career interruptions with each move. In contrast, among enlisted men's wives, employment in clerical, sales and service occupations reduced the probability that the wives were dissatisfied with the military lifestyle, possibly because the absence of career ladders in these occupations means that wives experience minimal career setbacks with each move.

Spouse earnings are also related to retention intent, although this relationship is quite complex. On the one hand, Murray (1987) found that higher earnings were associated with lower retention intent. On the other hand, Hogan's (in press) analyses using the Annualized Cost of Leaving model (ACOL) indicated that when the husband's military career translates into economic losses for the family because the wife cannot realize her full occupational and earning potential, support for retention is likely to be low. This latter finding leads us to expect that retention is positively related to higher spouse earnings. It seems that the nature of the spouse earnings-member retention relationship depends upon the specific employment motivations and job circumstances of the wife. If the wife is working primarily for financial reasons and has few opportunity costs (financially and professionally) associated with being a military wife, then it is probable that higher earnings enhances the wife's support for retention. In other words, in those families in which the wife's earnings are relatively unaffected by the husband's military affiliation, increased spouse earnings can be expected to increase retention intention/support. At the same time, wives who experience great opportunity costs for being a military wife are much less likely to support retention. For instance, in families in which the wife works in a highly skilled occupation (which is likely to be relatively high paying), the inability to professionally advance caused by frequent relocations, location in isolated areas and other aspects of military life, may reduce the wife's support for retention.

What conclusions can be drawn from these findings? First, it appears that the impact of employment is dissimilar for enlisted men's and officer's wives because, for the most part, they are in different job situations. The majority of enlisted men's wives are in nonprofessional positions and most appear to be working for financial reasons. Wives who are unsatisfied with their employment circumstances may attribute their difficulties (e.g., underemployment, low earnings, limited advancement opportunity, limited access to training programs) to their husband's military affiliation. Spouses in jobs which satisfy their personal needs for growth and occupational development and which also satisfy their financial requirements are more likely to favor retention than those in low paying, limited growth positions.

However, the circumstances are quite different for officer's spouses. These wives are more likely to be working for intrinsic reasons and are more likely to be in professional and other highly skilled occupations. It is quite likely that their employment circumstances are satisfactory to begin with and that these spouses may have considerable employment opportunities if their husbands were not members of the military. Professional or managerial spouses may believe that the military way of life (e.g., frequent relocations, relocations to remote areas) may significantly constrain their job opportunities, career progression and advancement. Therefore, those with the highest earnings and in the most skilled occupations who feel so constrained are the least likely to favor retention. Thus, it may be in the best interest of the military to reduce the career impediments experienced by professional and managerial wives.

There may also be cohort differences among officer's wives which explain the negative association between spouse employment and officer retention found in some research. It may be that the spouses of senior officers hold more traditional sex role attitudes and are more committed to the role of the "officer's wife" than are the wives of junior officers. The former may envision their role as one which is primarily supportive. In contrast, junior officers' wives (almost half of whom are college graduates) may be predisposed toward employment and are likely to have definitive career expectations. Research in the civilian sector has demonstrated that homemakers were significantly more conservative and traditional than women employed outside the home (Stokes & Peyton, 1986). Again, the frustrations associated with military spouse employment may reduce employed spouses' support for retention while older, more traditional spouses who are outside of the labor force remain relatively unaffected.

What the findings on both officer and enlisted men's wives' point to is that it is not spouse employment, per se, which reduces support for retention. The critical issue seems to be the extent to which the wife's employment meets her personal and family expectations and needs. It appears that support for retention is low when spouses must accept employment which is less than that which they need or expect, or less than that which they could obtain if married to a civilian. Consequently, when the needs of employed enlisted men's spouses are met, support for retention is high. When officer's wives perceive that their professional opportunities are maximized whether their husband is with the military or not, support for retention is also maximized. In summary, the relationship between wife's employment and husband's retention seems to be influenced by a variety of antecedent (e.g. job expectations) and intervening (e.g. job satisfaction) variables. In addition, the findings also suggest that there are distinct retention improvements to be derived from increasing wages and improving professional and managerial wives' satisfaction with the military lifestyle.

Spouse employment and readiness. Individual readiness reflects a soldiers' ability and willingness to perform his assigned tasks (Pliske, 1988). Consequently, to measure individual readiness it is necessary to have information on a soldiers' performance, physical and mental health, discipline, deployability, leadership abilities and combat effectiveness (Pliske, 1988). There is preliminary evidence that a variety of family

factors influence these and other indicators of member readiness and spouse preparedness by affecting the military member's behavior, ability to perform and the spouse's ability to function in the soldier's absence. Indeed, Vernez and Zellman (1986) note that family stresses have the ability to influence "the readiness of the force to accomplish its mission."

In general, the absence of family problems has been linked to member readiness (Kralj, Sadacca, Campbell, & Kimmel, 1988). For example, Staines (as cited by Kralj et al., 1988) reports that strong family relationships were associated with model employee behaviors (e.g. absence of work problems). Researchers have also examined the relationship between family factors and peacetime events or attitudes which are related to the member's ability to fight. For example, family problems may affect the soldier's ability to deploy, ability to perform well under combat conditions (Patel et al., 1989), commitment to the unit's mission (Kralj et al., 1988), confidence in family financial and emotional well being during deployment (Braddy, 1988), and confidence in the spouse's ability to function (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988). In addition, family factors such as change in marital status (Vernez and Zellman, 1986) and family stress (Kralj et al., 1988) have been linked to job performance, an important component of member readiness. In short, family factors contribute significantly to member (and ultimately, unit) readiness.

Unfortunately, the specific influence of spouse employment on spouse preparedness and member readiness has yet to be systematically explored. However, there is anecdotal evidence that spouse employment is directly related to readiness and spouse preparedness. In interviews with families, Braddy (1988) found that spouse employment improved soldier performance because the soldier was less worried about family finances or the wife's wellbeing when the wife was employed. In the absence of other empirical data, we can only hypothesize on the ways in which spouse employment might influence husbands' deployment, stress levels, and commitment to the unit mission. Husbands who cannot deploy because of their wives' employment circumstances or those who are worried because their wives cannot find jobs are not at peak readiness. Similarly, husbands who are worried about their families' wellbeing or about their wives' ability to emotionally and financially cope in their absence are also not at peak readiness. These concerns may ultimately influence a military member's ability to concentrate on his job and effectively perform his assigned tasks. In addition, when wives cannot find suitable employment and military husbands assume second jobs to supplement family income, readiness (as measured by availability for deployment, job performance, attention span) may also be compromised.

Spouse employment and its relation to retention also has significant implications for readiness. Since retention increases readiness by increasing the experience level of the Army, it is possible that spouse employment improves readiness to the extent that it enables experienced personnel to remain in the service.

## Policy and Program Implications of Spouse Employment

The Army has made a considerable investment in family programs and services (Comptroller of the Army, 1987). Spouse employment, in particular, has important ramifications for the distribution of military economic and human resources. The increased labor force participation of military wives can affect military programs and services by increasing the demand for and utilization of: child care and transportation services, spouse preference, and career development and training programs. An increased demand for these services will require greater military economic and human investment in these areas to meet the expressed need. In addition, spouse employment has been demonstrated to influence member readiness and retention. Thus, the costs of spouse employment to the Department of the Army include not only the costs associated with family support services and employment assistance programs, but also costs associated with military turnover, training, staffing and performance. Since members' lower retention intent is associated with negative employment outcomes for spouses, the lack of satisfactory employment for military wives may, in the long run, increase the costs of retaining a ready force capable of peak performance.

There are thus, two competing perspectives addressing why the Army should devote such resources to family services and programs: the humanitarian and the utilitarian perspectives. The humanitarian view has a long history within the Army going back to the nineteenth century when forces kept watch over the western frontiers. According to this line of thought, since the Army demands so much from families (e.g. in terms of duty in harsh or foreign locations, frequent moves, etc.), it is only right that the service "takes care of its own." In other words, the Army has a moral obligation to soldiers' families. Given the necessity of dual incomes to meet current family expenses and the desire of many wives to pursue independent careers, it is quite appropriate for the Army to help families reach their goals through spouse employment programs, policies and services. This is particularly the case given that many barriers to employment (frequent relocations, remote posts) are consequences of the military lifestyle.

On the other hand, the utilitarian view stresses that the Army should construct policy and provide only those services which are advantageous to the Army and its mission. Thus, this perspective stresses that spouse employment should be supported only to the extent that it increases retention and readiness and other desirable military outcomes. In light of the shrinking resources available to the Army for family programs and services, this perspective may be useful in establishing policies, programs and practices on spouse employment which are necessary for effective Army functioning.

Of course, these two viewpoints are not mutually exclusive. Many actions are not only the "right thing to do"; they are also good for the Army. However, when setting priorities in a climate of reduced spending, it may be necessary to distinguish recommendations offered because they are the "right thing" from those that are at minimum necessary for functioning. The importance of policies, practices and services aimed at reducing

unemployment, underemployment and work-family conflict cannot be underestimated. Not only are these significant problems for military families, they also cost the Army in terms of retention and readiness. And, not only are policies, programs and services addressing these issues the "right things to do" (humanitarian), they are also essential for reducing the problems facing many military families today (utilitarian). The discussion below focuses on what might be done to improve the employment outlook for military wives. The recommendations which are easiest to implement, least costly and which are likely to have the fewest unintended consequences are given first. They are followed by those which may be more difficult to implement or which require major policy changes.

#### Recommendations Requiring Minimal Investment/Policy Change

Improving wives ability to compete for employment. Employment assistance programs have the potential to greatly reduce unemployment. However, the data show that FMEAP services are used by only a minority of job seekers and half of the users felt the services were not helpful. Given this information, an effort should be made to determine: (1) the causes of this underutilization (2) why some clients perceived the services as not helpful and (3) whether the services offered by FMEAPs are meeting the needs of job seekers. Perrine (1988) made the following suggestions based on her investigation of CONUS FMEAPs: (1) develop materials that explain DoD, DA policies and procedures on spouse hiring and that can be used to market programs at installations and in local civilian communities; (2) provide marketing training; (3) increase resources for upgrading staff position, skills training and (4) develop a FMEAP directory which includes information on all FMEAPs and can be useful in job networking.

In addition, there is evidence of considerable confusion and dissatisfaction regarding the functions and services of Civilian Personnel Offices (Braddy, in press). Utilization and satisfaction might be improved by educating wives regarding the functions and services of Army Community Services FMEAPs and CPOs so that they have reasonable expectations of the kind of assistance they will receive from both offices. Also, educating clients on the regulations and policies of CPOs (a simple fact sheet would be sufficient) might improve wives' ability to negotiate in the federal civilian employment system.

It has been demonstrated that many Army wives are using volunteer experiences to prepare for future jobs. Consequently, structuring volunteer experiences to closely approximate career opportunities may provide a way for spouses to explore their career interests, discover what it is like to work in certain fields and sharpen their skills. Expanding volunteer opportunities for office managers, computer operators, data entry personnel, human service workers and other jobs in demand in local labor markets may provide wives with the opportunity to learn new skills, refine old ones and become more marketable once they enter the labor market. Assisting spouses in translating their volunteer experiences into marketable skills is also a necessary part of this effort.

Assistance with resumes and private and federal job applications (SF171) may also help wives in not only finding employment, but also in finding a job that utilizes their particular skills and training. Assisting wives in finding jobs in the private, civilian sector is especially important during federal hiring freezes.

Wives have indicated that military and civilian friends and acquaintances are the most useful sources of employment information. Therefore, programs which enhance formal and informal job networking may prove to be of great utility. Highly skilled wives, in particular, can benefit from such networks since they enable wives to explore the job opportunities in a given occupation either prior to or upon relocation.

The data also indicate that the young, relatively unskilled, inexperienced wives of junior enlisted men have an even more difficult time finding employment than other wives. Since these wives experience disproportionately more unemployment (and low earnings) special attention should be directed at their employment circumstances and other family needs. Also, since these wives are making multiple personal adjustments (to the Army way of life, marriage, adulthood, parenthood, the work world) they are likely to have the greatest need for family support and employment services. Employment programs might explore ways to team up with other agencies to provide their package of services to these wives, who, because of their newness to the Army, are less likely to be familiar with the variety of Army family support services and programs.

The AFRP and National Military Wives Association (NMWA) have also uncovered evidence of underemployment among Army wives. The NMWA (1982) recommends the encouragement of spouses in federal career programs. Army spouses should also be assisted in translating their coursework and formal education into job-qualifying experience. Career counselors specially trained in providing employment leads to professional and other highly skilled wives are another part of this effort. In addition, underemployment may be reduced by developing policies and procedures that enhance opportunities for spouses to continue their careers (e.g. joint ventures with civilian sector employers).

Creating New Opportunities. An important part of any approach to resolving spouse unemployment must entail the creation of new jobs. Developing linkages with major local employers (or employment agencies) in private industry could be an essential part of this effort. Changing employers' perceptions that military wives are "temporary" workers not worth investing in is of paramount importance.

#### Recommendations That May Be Difficult/Expensive/Require Major Policy Changes to Implement

Improving wives' ability to compete for employment. AFRP findings have also demonstrated that excessive family responsibilities and inadequate child care services are problems expressed by many Army wives which limit the extent to which spouses can seek and accept employment opportunities. The National Military Wives Association (1982) indicated more full-time and drop-in child

care facilities are needed. Expanding child care facilities and hours (and reducing costs) and encouraging employers to offer child care will improve spouses' ability to balance family and work responsibilities.

The findings also indicate that many wives are not able to look for paid employment because of transportation problems. Consequently, transportation services should be reevaluated with an eye toward expanding off-post services as needed. Expanding transportation enables wives (especially those overseas) to look for employment at greater distances from the post.

Frequent relocations have been demonstrated to have pervasive effects on wives' employment. AFRP researchers have estimated that increasing the time at one's current location from 36 months to 60 months will increase the probability of being employed from .84 to .93 (Bell, 1988). In addition, such an increase in time at current location is also expected to increase the probability that the spouse will have a job that uses her skills from .59 to .65. Of course, longer tour lengths can have several negative, unintended consequences for both wives and husbands: wives in locations with limited labor market opportunities will be there for longer periods of time, and longer tours reduce the variety of jobs the soldier has over his career.

Since research has shown that wives with more education are less likely to be unemployed, policies and programs which enhance opportunities for wives to continue their education and develop job skills for which there is a demand in the local labor market are likely to have a positive effect on spouse employment. Emphasis should be placed on offering training in occupations which are portable (such as data processing) and in demand in the civilian communities near installations. Policies and programs which enhance spouses' ability to continue formal education should also be introduced or expanded. Possibly, expanding linkages with institutions of higher education, such that more degree granting programs are available overseas is one way of approaching this issue.

Creating new opportunities. Another approach to solving the unemployment problem would be to build opportunities for military wives employment at bases, particularly bases located in remote locations where the local labor market opportunities are limited. How can this be done? Locating a postal or other facility or service at a remote base has the potential to provide employment for wives of servicemen stationed there. Or, upon closing some posts, relocating essential facilities/services to remote posts (rather than posts that are in urban, metropolitan areas) might also reduce some of the unemployment experienced by wives in very isolated areas.

In addition, the National Military Wives Association (1982) recommends that Status of Forces Agreements be reexamined with an eye to increasing the pool of jobs available to military wives.

## Summary and Discussion

In general, although Army wives are entering the labor force in increasing numbers, their labor force participation lags slightly behind that of civilian wives. In addition, unemployment is considerably higher among Army wives (especially among wives of junior enlisted personnel) than among civilian wives and there is ample evidence of underemployment. Aspects of the military lifestyle, such as employment interruptions due to frequent relocations, seem to have pervasive effects on wives' labor force participation and employment. Other structural/institutional barriers such as inadequate transportation and child care and restrictions upon hiring military spouses in overseas locations also inhibit employment opportunities for military spouses.

The social trends occurring in the civilian community affect members of the military and their families. Given the magnitude of the social changes and challenges facing society today, military institutions would do well to examine the impact of changing social roles and expectations on service members, families and missions.

There are several areas where additional research is needed. Research examining the extent to which Army wives are underemployed and how this affects their labor force participation is needed since statistics hint that underemployment may be a problem of considerable magnitude. There are at least 3 avenues of research in this area: (1) specifying the extent to which underemployment is characteristic of military spouse employment; (2) investigating the relationship between underemployment and spouse support for the military lifestyle and; (3) investigating the relationship between underemployment and spouse commitment to the military as a way of life.

Another as yet underresearched area is the specific impact of family factors on member readiness. Although past research presents anecdotal evidence that member readiness is influenced by family factors, this relationship needs to be further studied. This is especially important given the rise in dual military and single parent families within the Army. The current survey being conducted as part of the AFRP should yield valuable information in this area.

The findings suggest significant differences between officer's and enlisted men's spouses on issues related to spouse employment. These differences need further examination. For example, ASAF researchers (Griffith, Stewart, & Cato, 1988) indicate that satisfaction with opportunities for career development is positively associated with a preference for an Army soldier to remain in the military for spouses of enlisted personnel but not officers. Among spouses of company grade officers, satisfaction with job development opportunities is associated with lower support for retention. It has been suggested that differences in spouses' occupations explain these results. Further research is needed to explore the role that spouse employment plays in the retention decision making process for both sets of wives.

In addition, since there is evidence that the occupational status of wives influences retention plans, special attention should be given to the problems faced by professional and managerial wives in seeking employment and advancing professionally. Ultimately, ways to reduce the military lifestyle's interference with spouses' career advancement should be identified. Exploratory site interviews (Braddy, in press) conducted as part of the AFRP show that while today Army wives may subordinate their own career plans to those of their husbands', future cohorts of wives will be less likely to make such sacrifices. Also, there is evidence that spouses' careers will be an increasingly important factor in retention decision making. There is already evidence of this trend among officers' wives.

The interrelationships between child care availability and labor force participation and unemployment also should be a targeted area of research. Military families are often residing far away from extended families and other sources usually relied upon to provide quality child care services. Research is needed on the extent to which the type and amount of child care services available influence the ability of wives to look for and accept employment.

Further examination of FMEAPs would also be of great benefit. Evidence of low utilization of FMEAPs among Army personnel has been presented. Further research should investigate the reasons for low utilization. Also, the impact of FMEAPs on underemployment should be examined. What kind of skill training and career development would be most useful to Army wives both CONUS and OCONUS? These are all issues which need further clarification if spouse employment programs are to be of maximum benefit to both spouses and military institutions.

An overload of family responsibilities was often given as a reason for not seeking employment. The specific types of family responsibilities which prevent some women from participating in the labor market needs to be investigated further. Are these responsibilities which can be addressed by military institutions (e.g. child care or resettlement) or are they outcomes of husband-wife sex role expectations and the marital distribution of power and consequently must be addressed by husbands and wives themselves (e.g. housework). Further research is needed in this area.

Finally, the economic consequences of spouse employment for the Army and other services needs to be examined. What are the debits and credits associated with spouse employment? In other words, what would be reflected in a "Spouse Employment Balance Sheet"? These are just a few of the remaining questions.

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Appendix A:  
Description of Selected Data Sets

The 1985 Department of Defense Survey of Officer and Enlisted Personnel was a stratified, random sample of active duty members of all services who were stationed in the U.S. or overseas on 30 September 1984. To be included in the sample members must have served at least 4 months of service by this date. By the time the surveys were actually distributed and completed, respondents had served at least 10 months of service. The 1985 Department of Defense Survey of Military Spouses surveyed the spouses of married military personnel who were included in the Member Survey. The spouse sample consisted of over 41,000 spouses. The DoD findings cited include only civilian spouses of male military personnel.

Analysis of the 1987 Annual Survey of Army Families (ASAF) was conducted as part of the Army Family Research Program. The ASAF is a probability sample of approximately 12,000 spouses of active duty officers and enlisted personnel world-wide. The soldiers (and thus their spouses) were selected from the Officer Master File and the Enlisted Master File. The response rate for the survey overall was 62% while 70% of officer's spouses and 54% of enlisted soldiers' spouses responded. In addition, the AFRP is also conducting the first world-wide survey which randomly samples approximately 18,000 soldiers and their company leaders. In addition to these two major initiatives in data collection, numerous reports reviewing existing literature and programs and analyzing existing data have been produced. The ASAF findings cited include only civilian female spouses of male Army personnel.

Bowen's (1986) research on predictors of the retention intention of Air Force personnel is based on a probability sample of 700 U.S. Air Force couples from which 419 couples were included in the final sample. The final sample included enlisted men and their wives (270), male officers and wives (58) and female enlisted personnel and husbands (91). Bowen constructed a path model and determined direct and indirect effects of the variables using forward step-wise multiple regression. Models for each of the types of couples were trimmed and regressions recalculated.

Farkas and Durning (1979) used a stratified random sample of 2,126 Navy personnel to assess the impact of family factors on reenlistment intentions, describe characteristics of Navy families, identify problems faced by Navy families and determine sources of social support.

Ickovics and Martin (1987) used a longitudinal research design to examine the impact of employment status on the psychological well-being of Army wives. The nonprobability sample consisted of 278 wives of Army enlisted personnel who were part of a DA effort to develop a unit replacement system. Data were collected at 2 points in time, 6 months apart, through self-administered questionnaires distributed by mail. The survey data was also supplemented by interviews. The authors used Chi-squares, one-way analysis of variance, and regression techniques to analyze the data.

Manning and DeRouin distributed questionnaires to an entire single field battalion posted in West Germany (the sample did not include field grade officers; there were 111 soldiers and 111 wives). The return rate was low -

only 49%. The final sample consisted of 45 questionnaires from wives and 59 from servicemen.

Murray (1987) used the 1985 DoD Spouse Survey to investigate military wives' employment and labor force participation and implications. His analysis includes only the civilian wives of military men in all 4 branches. This is important to keep in mind when comparing his results to those of Griffith, Schwartz, and colleagues who examined only Army spouses. There are likely to be important differences between services on a number of military and personnel characteristics (e.g. on average, Army personnel PCS more frequently than members of other services) which may explain some of the discrepancy between these findings and those of the ASAF and other service-specific analyses.

Mohr, Holzbach, and Morrison (1979) examined the impact of spouse opinion on the retention intentions of a random sample of 312 Navy surface warfare junior officers. Husbands of working wives were found to receive less spousal support for a Navy career and had lower levels of career intent than the husbands of women who did not work outside the home.

In 1982, the National Military Wives Association surveyed and interviewed over 3,000 spouses from all services at 28 installations in Europe during a 60 day period. The sample, while large, was not randomly chosen. Therefore, the extent to which the responses are representative of military wives as a whole is suspect. Nevertheless, the size of the sample does allow readers to get some idea of the problems associated with being a military wife. The objective of the research was to identify issues of concern for military wives and families and suggest means to address these concerns.

Schwartz, Griffith, and Wood (1987) used data from the 1985 DoD survey and the 1985 Current Population Survey (CPS) to examine the current status of Army spouse employment and contrast it to that of comparable civilian wives. The CPS is a random sample of the U.S. civilian, noninstitutional population and members of the military stationed in the U.S living in off-post, civilian housing. In 1988, Schwartz used the March 1985 CPS to compare labor force participation, employment status, wage rates and annual income of military and civilian wives. In this research effort, Schwartz's final sample resulted in a population of 17,560 married women (550 have military husbands, the balance have civilian husbands). Schwartz, Wood, and Griffith (1988) again used the 1985 DoD member and spouse surveys to examine labor force participation, employment, level of employment and underemployment.

Smith (1985) used the data cumulation method to categorize the findings on the impact of spouse employment on marital adjustment. In this method, journals and other sources are searched for data on a given topic. Criteria are established for acceptance of research articles and other identified data sources into the current study. The sources meeting the acceptance criteria are then coded according to the number of respondents, and dependent, independent and control variables included in the research. Smith searched for data on the relationship between wives' employment status and marital adjustment. Twenty seven research investigations met the criteria for inclusion and were examined for their findings on marital adjustment differences between husbands with and without employed wives.

Staines, Pottick, and Fudge (1985) used the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey to investigate the impact of wife's employment on husband's job and life satisfaction. The QES is a national sample of 1,515 workers who were employed for at least 20 hours per week and were at least 16 years of age. The authors analyzed a subset of the QES sample; only husbands whose wives were employed for at least 20 hours per week and those who describe their wives as housewives (the sample omits husbands whose wives are unemployed, retired, on strike, etc.).

Stokes and Peyton (1986) based their results on a subsample from a national probability sample collected in 1982. The main sample consisted of 6,033 adults who completed questionnaires with 62% of the women and 52% of the men responding. The authors' subsample consisted of 485 homemakers and 331 women employed outside the home.