

University of Massachusetts Amherst

From the Selected Works of Dr. Jennifer H. Lundquist

2014

Reinstitutionalizing Families: Life Course Policy and Marriage in the Military

Jennifer H. Lundquist, *University of Massachusetts - Amherst*
Zhun Xu



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/jennifer_lundquist/19/

JENNIFER LUNDQUIST *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

ZHUN XU *Renmin University of China**

Reinstitutionalizing Families: Life Course Policy and Marriage in the Military

The transition to adulthood has become an increasingly telescoped process for Americans with marital formation occurring increasingly later in the life course. It is therefore striking to find a context like the U.S. military, in which marriage rates bear an anachronistic resemblance to those of the 1950s era. Using narrative data from life history interviews with military affiliates, the authors show that the military has reinstitutionalized military families at the same time that civilian families are becoming deinstitutionalized. Structural conditions of modern military service, such as war deployment and frequent geographical relocation, have created policies that rely on families to make these conditions more bearable to military personnel. These policies are part of an overarching institutional culture that directly and indirectly promotes marriage. The authors bring together life course literatures on turning points, the welfare state and linked lives to show how the military has reinstitutionalized families in these ways.

Research shows that the pathways taken to adulthood leave an indelible mark on the life

Department of Sociology, University of Massachusetts,
W35 Machmer Hall, Amherst, MA 01003
(lundquist@soc.umass.edu).

*School of Economics, Renmin University of China, 59
Zhongguancun Ave., Beijing, 100872 China.

This article was edited by Kevin M. Roy.

Key Words: xxxx,

course (Rindfuss, 1991). One of these pathways to adulthood—marriage—now occurs increasingly later in the American life course (Lesthaeghe & Neidert, 2006). Among some low-income populations, marriage is often foregone altogether (Edin & Kefalas, 2005; Goldstein & Kenney, 2001). This retreat from marriage reflects the protracted and individualized transition to adulthood that has become common throughout the Western world. In the midst of this societal shift, one well-known American institution appears resistant to these processes: The U.S. military, which is characterized by early and pervasive marriage rates (Lundquist 2004; Lundquist & Smith 2005; Drummet, Coleman, & Cable, 2003; Hogan & Furst Seifert, 2010; Teachman, 2009) that today stand in contrast to the rest of U.S. society. Although these trends have been well documented, the processes through which they occur are poorly understood. We suggest that U.S. military service hastens an early transition to adulthood by deliberately embedding families into its core institutional structure. In so doing, we bring together life course literatures on turning points, the welfare state, and linked lives to show how the military has reinstitutionalized families.

Existing explanations for prevalent military marriage rates center primarily on its compensation package, in particular financial incentives provided by housing benefits for married couples (Hogan & Furst Seifert, 2010; U.S. Department of Defense, 2008). We take a broader view. On the basis of life history interviews, we argue

1 that housing benefits are but a small piece of the
2 puzzle contextualizing military marriage. Major
3 structural conditions of modern military service,
4 such as war deployment and the military's inex-
5 orable demand for frequent geographic reloca-
6 tion, have created policies that implicitly rely on
7 families to make these conditions more bearable
8 to service members. These policies are part of
9 an overarching institutional culture that directly
10 and indirectly promotes marriage.

11 BACKGROUND

12 During the brief period lasting from the end
13 of World War II into the 1970s, the transi-
14 tion to adulthood was far more uniform than
15 it is today. Life course theorists call this the
16 *Fordist era*, one that was characterized by early
17 and near-universal marriage (Katz & Autor,
18 1999; Mayer, 2004; Mayer & Muller, 1986;
19 Sironi & Furstenberg, 2012). Postwar socioe-
20 conomic mobility provided secure employment
21 earlier in the life stage, whereas today upward
22 mobility has become a privilege enjoyed mainly
23 by the college educated. In tandem, women's
24 employment has increased dramatically due to
25 the decline of family wages and shifts in gen-
26 der values. In this post-Fordist, deindustrialized
27 era, marriage has been pushed back increasingly
28 later in the life course, and for some it is out of
29 reach completely. In short, families are diversify-
30 ing and deinstitutionalizing.

31 In the military, on the other hand, families
32 have been reinstitutionalized. Repeat studies
33 have shown that marriage is much higher among
34 service members than their same-age civilian
35 counterparts (Drummet et al., 2003; Lundquist,
36 2004; Teachman, 2009). Research has shown
37 that role transitions have differing impacts
38 depending on whether they occur at normatively
39 prescribed periods during the life course (Setter-
40 sten & Hägestad, 1996). While early marriage
41 among civilians has become normatively "out
42 of time," the pervasiveness of young military
43 marriage makes it culturally "on time" in that
44 context. Little is known empirically about how
45 this process happens. Few sources collect data
46 on the military population, and those that do are
47 limited. Nevertheless, a substantial amount of
48 speculative attention has been given to the mili-
49 tary's housing benefits as an incentivizing factor.
50 Single, lower ranking enlistees must live in mili-
51 tary barracks, but upon marriage they may move
52 into privatized housing and receive rental funds.

This is called the *basic allowance* for housing. 1
The average allowance for junior enlistees 2
ranges from \$800 to \$1,900 per month ("2014 3
Basic Allowance," 2014). Anecdotes about 4
"green card marriages"—arrangements between 5
friends for a housing allowance—are common. 6
Even at higher ranks, where barracks are not 7
required, married members receive a higher 8
housing allowance than singles so that they 9
can purchase more living space in the civilian 10
economy. The difference adds up to an annual 11
\$2,500 differential between the two groups. 12

A recent report by the Defense Advisory 13
Committee on Military Compensation recom- 14
mended abolishing the housing differential, 15
concluding that the policy is embedded with 16
a marriage incentive (U.S. Department of 17
Defense, 2008). Scholars have also attributed 18
housing policy to early marriage (Kelty, 19
Kleykamp, & Segal, 2010). Only one study 20
tested the impact of housing policy empirically, 21
concluding that housing benefits are a major 22
motivating factor of early marriage in the mili- 23
tary (Hogan & Furst Seifert, 2010). Although the 24
authors creatively manipulated cross-sectional 25
data to rule out selectivity, they left out a number 26
of broader incentives for military marriages that 27
we argue are built into the basic military employ- 28
ment structure. Viewing housing benefits as a 29
"perverse incentive" that inadvertently causes 30
marriage eclipses something more pervasive. 31
In fact, the military has a powerful incentive to 32
institutionalize early marriage among its troops. 33

34 THE MILITARY AS A TURNING POINT

Glen Elder (1986) was one of the first scholars 37
to examine the critical role of military service 38
in the life course, connecting veterans' stories to 39
their changing society. Although military service 40
has played a varying role for different cohorts in 41
differing eras, it has always served as an institu- 42
tional turning point in the lives of young people. 43
During the draft era, military service enabled a 44
knifing off of negative influences while simulta- 45
neously delaying the transition to adulthood 46
(Laub & Sampson, 2003). Although military ser- 47
vice no longer affects as many Americans as it 48
did during the height of World War II, it remains 49
America's largest employer and, as such, is a 50
major pathway to adulthood in our society. 51

Because of low retention rates after the 52
Korean War due to family disruption, the Pen- 53
tagon resolved to make families an essential 54

1 component of personnel policy and management
 2 (Bourg & Segal, 1999; Little, 1971). The transi-
 3 tion to the all-volunteer force in 1973 required
 4 reinvention in order to recruit and retain young
 5 people amid civilian labor market competition.
 6 To offset the hardships of enlisted life, the
 7 Pentagon adopted an unusual array of policies
 8 to support families, including full family health
 9 coverage, family housing, day care services,
 10 schooling systems, and so on. These policies
 11 are unique in U.S. society as a whole, which
 12 lacks a well-articulated welfare state, and rarer
 13 still in the low-wage economy. Today's military
 14 still serves as a crucial turning point in young
 15 people's lives but, instead of delaying it, it now
 16 advances the transition to adulthood in the form
 17 of marriage. This stands in marked contrast to
 18 other major institutions that serve as influential
 19 turning points in the lives of young adults. The
 20 higher education and penal system, for example,
 21 delay and disrupt family formation. In this sense
 22 the military is unusual.

MILITARY SERVICE IN THE ABSENCE OF A STRONG WELFARE STATE

27 Life course scholars have observed that the
 28 welfare state has become a major source of
 29 important life course markers throughout
 30 Europe (Mayer & Muller, 1986; Settersten,
 31 2008). Although the U.S. welfare state is com-
 32 paratively less generous, its military stands in
 33 contrast as a major provider of universalistic
 34 entitlements to service members and their
 35 families. It is not a surprise, then, that military
 36 service is a major determinant of young adult
 37 life course transitions in the United States.
 38 Work-family strain characterizes all employ-
 39 ment in the postindustrial era; however, military
 40 travel and deployment demands are particularly
 41 extreme. To lessen this tension, the service
 42 engulfs families into the military apparatus
 43 entirely. The results of this are reflected in the
 44 population of dependents and spouses that now
 45 dwarfs the number of members, in clear contrast
 46 to the draft era (Office of the Deputy Under
 47 Secretary of Defense, 2013).

48 In the absence of draft-era coercion, the mil-
 49 itary had to gain recruits' consent to control
 50 in a number of other ways. Janowitz (1964)
 51 famously argued that a future military would rely
 52 on manipulation, persuasion, and group consen-
 53 sus. An important part of this persuasion pro-
 54 cess is providing two elements that are often

1 out of reach to working class young adults: 1
 2 (a) secure employment with opportunity for 2
 3 advancement and (b) ample provision for fam- 3
 4 ily members. These conditions were created to 4
 5 serve the needs of both military families and the 5
 6 military, although toward two different ends. 6

7 Toward the first end, military enlistment 7
 8 provides a rare form of employment to young 8
 9 people, the equivalent of what the unionized fac- 9
 10 tory job was in the past. Economic security and 10
 11 career stability at early life stages for these youth 11
 12 has led to a more stable transition to adulthood 12
 13 than for civilians (Kelty et al., 2010). Relative 13
 14 to entry-level service economy jobs for young 14
 15 people who lack a college degree, military work 15
 16 pays in the top percentile (U.S. Department of 16
 17 Defense, 2008). To illustrate, Walmart, second 17
 18 in size only to the military, offers an average 18
 19 full-time annual wage of \$26,000 with few to 19
 20 no benefits (Folbre, 2013). Once the military's 20
 21 in-kind benefits, such as universal health care, 21
 22 retirement pension, continuing education, GI 22
 23 Bill education benefits, and room and board 23
 24 are factored in, military service compensation 24
 25 eclipses other entry-level jobs in the service 25
 26 economy, with an estimated \$99,000 entry level 26
 27 value (Folbre, 2013). Furthermore, military 27
 28 active duty members and veterans are able to 28
 29 acquire mortgages without down payments and 29
 30 commonly purchase homes earlier than civilians 30
 31 (Segal & Sullivan, 1998). Military service is 31
 32 largely immune to layoffs while providing an 32
 33 unambiguous occupational mobility ladder. As 33
 34 a result, military enlistment for today's cohorts 34
 35 triggers a succession of early role transitions 35
 36 that reverberate through the life course. In 36
 37 this article we focus on marriage, but other 37
 38 pathways to adulthood, such as early career 38
 39 entry, homeownership, and early parenthood, 39
 40 are intertwined, mutually influential experiences 40
 41 for many military youth. 41

42 Toward the second end, the military depends 42
 43 implicitly on familial labor, which explains in 43
 44 part the generosity of its benefits. Here we draw 44
 45 a parallel to the more conservative branch of 45
 46 European countries described in the compara- 46
 47 tive welfare state literature (Esping-Andersen, 47
 48 1990). These welfare states channel social 48
 49 policies through the employed male head of 49
 50 household, relying on the reproductive and 50
 51 caretaking labor of women. Similarly, in an 51
 52 extension of Becker's (1981) household special- 52
 53 ization model, military spouses are expected to 53
 54 provide a full support system in the face of long 54

1 hours, constant transfers, and war deployments.
 2 This intensive reliance on spousal labor by the
 3 military intersects with the life course concept of
 4 linked lives to aptly illustrate the process through
 5 which the military institutionalizes marriages.

7 LINKED LIVES

9 A foundational element of the life course per-
 10 spective, *linked lives* describes the sharing
 11 of mutually intertwined life trajectories that
 12 extend throughout the life course (Elder, 1998;
 13 Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003). Although
 14 often intergenerationally focused, such research
 15 also focuses on the interconnected lives of
 16 spouses (Moen & Wethington, 1998). Spouses
 17 are among the most intensive linkages because
 18 they move through the life course together.
 19 This is particularly true of the military, in
 20 which the nuclear family members are often
 21 geographically separated from extended family
 22 members.

23 The military plays an explicit role in this link-
 24 ing process because it depends upon spousal
 25 support roles to operate. To illustrate, the Army
 26 spouse guide (U.S. Army, 2007) notes that “fam-
 27 ilies must be very self-reliant, such as when a
 28 soldier is at training, a special duty assignment,
 29 or even deployed overseas,” which will bring
 30 about “new confidence . . . gained from its abil-
 31 ity to work together and to grow while support-
 32 ing the Soldier” (p. 2). The Army’s *Deployment*
 33 *Readiness Family Handbook for DA Civilians*
 34 *and Family Members* (U.S. Army, 2010) extends
 35 this point, demonstrating that the family domain
 36 is inherently a “militarized” space:

37
 38 It is of utmost importance that Army Families
 39 prepare, train, and resource themselves for the
 40 day-to-day requirements associated with Army
 41 living. They must be ready to assume command of
 42 the home front in the absence of their Soldier on
 43 short notice. This means equipping, arming, and
 44 training as Army Families to meet the needs of
 45 self-reliance, preservation, and forward movement
 46 as Soldiers focus on the mission that lies in front
 47 of them. (p. 9)

48 As such, family members are clearly also
 49 doing time in the service. Military research has
 50 shown that, in addition to being more likely to
 51 reenlist, married members have fewer depressive
 52 symptoms and lower rates of job-related prob-
 53 lems (Burnham, Meredith, Sherbourne, Valdez,
 54 & Vernez, 1992). Thus, linking the lives of its

1 members to spouses is an effective strategy not
 2 only to ensure domestic support but also to coun-
 3 teract unpredictable or even volatile elements of
 4 young (usually male) adulthood.

5 Military families receive the generous pro-
 6 vision described earlier in exchange for a high
 7 degree of regulation. The military aggres-
 8 sively intervenes with social services it deems
 9 appropriate, excludes nonnormative families,
 10 and enforces conservative family military law
 11 (Burland & Lundquist, 2012).. Although the
 12 military recently decreed that officer promo-
 13 tion could no longer be influenced by the
 14 actions of the spouse, expectations for volun-
 15 teerism and other uncompensated work operate
 16 informally (Gassmann, 2010; Harrell, 2001a),
 17 illustrating the depth of linked lives in the
 18 military. Spouses of all ranks are relied on to
 19 be the primary caretaker of the children dur-
 20 ing deployment and to participate in military
 21 culture integration classes and family support
 22 groups (Harrell, 2001b). Military volunteer
 23 organizations expect and rely on the labor of
 24 family members, an invisible military subsidy
 25 worth billions (Christensen, 2011; Gassmann,
 26 2010). The geographic structure of the military
 27 career makes family portability a necessity,
 28 which necessarily deprioritizes spousal careers.
 29 Military spouses are often unable to accumu-
 30 late work experience and face higher rates
 31 of unemployment than civilians (Kleykamp,
 32 2012). This structural feature of the military is
 33 more supportive of breadwinner–homemaker
 34 families than dual-career families and, much
 35 like conservative European welfare states, relies
 36 on the specialized labor of each member. This
 37 necessity helps explain the considerably gener-
 38 ous in-kind benefits provided by the military to
 39 entry-level, low-skill workers.

40 A policy encouraging linked lives ensures the
 41 provision of care work and emotion labor, in
 42 particular during episodes of war when service
 43 members need it most. Running the household
 44 while the employee is at war and being avail-
 45 able psychologically and emotionally for the
 46 deployed member and the military community
 47 as a whole are major support roles. The *Deploy-*
 48 *ment Handbook* urges the spouse to “Accept
 49 your responsibility [to the Unit] in assisting in a
 50 positive and nurturing role” (U.S. Army, 2007, p.
 51 25). It suggests how spouses can best help their
 52 children process the long-term absence of a par-
 53 ent while emphasizing the importance of staying
 54 connected to the soldier:

1 As you and your Family members are learning
 2 ways to manage and cope with the separation and
 3 deployment of a loved one, it is equally impor-
 4 tant to stay in touch and connected throughout the
 5 deployment . . . Maintaining an emotional connec-
 6 tion is essential . . . Active communication also
 7 boosts morale for both the Soldier and those left
 8 at home. (U.S. Army, 2010, p. 60)

9 This caretaking labor at the home front pro-
 10 vides service members and other military fam-
 11 ilies with security and morale that the military
 12 would find difficult to substitute in other forms.
 13 The military family literature shows that combat
 14 deployment is associated with higher stress
 15 levels for families (Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox,
 16 Grass, & Grass, 2007; Karney & Crown, 2007;
 17 RAND Corporation, 2008), yet it has also found
 18 that military families are unusually resilient in a
 19 variety of ways (Karney & Crown, 2007; Mac-
 20 Dermid Wadsworth, 2010). This resilience effect
 21 must be credited to the great deal of unpaid work
 22 and emotion management on the part of spouses
 23 whose lives have been linked to the military
 24 apparatus.

25 Furthermore, the spouse’s duality as both
 26 military affiliate and civilian provides a crucial,
 27 often-overlooked service for the military: that
 28 of reintegrating veterans into civilian life and
 29 serving as ambassadors for their emotional
 30 management throughout the transition. The
 31 military’s family support and expectation for
 32 reciprocity can become a lifelong obligation,
 33 even after active duty. GI Bill educational
 34 transfers to family members, disability and
 35 retirement pensions, and veteran home loans
 36 are not freely given; family members are major
 37 long-term caregivers of physically disabled and
 38 emotionally disturbed veterans (Rosen, Durand,
 39 & Martin, 2000). Even in the event of death, the
 40 military remains entwined in the family’s life. In
 41 exchange for survivors’ benefits, the widow or
 42 widower’s marital status is monitored to in order
 43 to determine whether he or she will continue
 44 to receive full benefits. By being paid not to
 45 remarry, the widow/widower’s emotion work
 46 of bereavement is thus symbolically extended
 47 across the life course.

48 Very little empirical research has investigated
 49 the ways in which the lives of family members
 50 are shaped by their connection to the military;
 51 our research provides important insight into how
 52 those linkages are initially formed. In this article
 53 we demonstrate that military service reinstitu-
 54 tionalizes marriage in a variety of early-career

stage dimensions of members’ lives. Marriage
 envelopes spouses into the military from their
 civilian life, interconnects their fate to that of
 the service member, and mutually “militarizes”
 both individuals. We will show how timing
 and context within the early military career life
 course determine the occurrence of such linked
 lives. The 43 life history interview excerpts
 that follow provide rich insight into relation-
 ship formation in the Army from many per-
 spectives, demonstrating the sheer pervasiveness
 of opportunities to marry in the military. Our
 data suggest an institutionalization of nuptial-
 ity that extends well beyond abuses of loopholes
 in housing policy. Three powerful mechanisms
 that link the lives of spouses to service members
 are (a) war zone deployment, (b) the marriage
 policy as it relates to relocation assignments,
 and (c) overarching Fordist regime-like char-
 acteristics of military employment. Together,
 these structural conditions of the military insti-
 tution function as marriage catalysts, pushing
 the transition to adulthood early in life for its
 members.

METHOD

In 2010 and 2011 the first author conducted a
 study of individuals associated with two U.S.
 Army military installations located in Germany
 as part of a research project sponsored by the
 Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Quali-
 tative data from 79 interviews (43 in-depth,
 semistructured life history interviews and 36 tar-
 geted short topical interviews) were collected
 over a period of 11 months. This data collec-
 tion is the first stage in a comparative project that
 evaluates institutional impacts on U.S. families
 across a spectrum of four workplace sites where
 the degree of “total institutionalism” varies from
 high to low: (a) an international military base,
 (b) a domestic military base, (c) civil service
 employment, and (d) private sector employment.

We use life history interviews for this arti-
 cle ($N = 43$), which solicited narratives on the
 full spectrum of the respondents’ life events.
 We chose a life history interview approach in
 order to better understand the meaning people
 construct about their experiences and their
 relationships. This narrative process provides
 an opportunity for new meanings to emerge
 from life events and experiences, generating
 respondent reflections that might otherwise go
 unspoken and even unrealized (Atkinson, 1998).

1 The first author conducted this research as a
 2 part-time guest lecturer with a military-affiliated
 3 institution that provides educational classes to
 4 U.S. active duty soldiers and family members
 5 stationed in Europe. Through her contacts at
 6 the institution and in the local community, she
 7 snowball-sampled respondents associated with
 8 two different Army installations in Germany.
 9 Germany was chosen as the international study
 10 site it hosts the largest proportion of the U.S.
 11 military population outside the United States,
 12 with 287 military bases (Lutz, 2009) and is
 13 considered to be a standard tour of duty for most
 14 military families. Both affiliation sites were
 15 established in the immediate post-World War II
 16 era during the beginning of U.S. occupation in
 17 Germany. Although each installation has similar
 18 command functions, they differ drastically in
 19 size and surroundings. The first site is small,
 20 consisting of approximately 15,000 community
 21 members, and located in an industrial city.
 22 The second site is large, with approximately
 23 60,000 community members, and situated in a
 24 historic, tourist city. Interviews took place at a
 25 location of the respondents' choice outside work
 26 hours and lasted from 90 minutes to 3 hours.
 27 She used purposive sampling (Patton, 1990) to
 28 select a wide range of individuals affected by
 29 the military from differing locations within the
 30 institution. Institutional review board approval
 31 was granted, and we ensured confidentiality and
 32 protection of respondent identities.

33 Active duty enlisted soldiers comprised half
 34 the sample, with unmarried partners, spouses,
 35 and adult children comprising the other half.
 36 The first author used an interpretive approach
 37 to develop emergent themes (Charmaz, 2006;
 38 Glaser & Strauss, 1967) on the ways that enscen-
 39 cement in a near-total institution differentially
 40 affects relationships and other outcomes. She
 41 was open to discovering the specific catalysts for
 42 marriage from the perspectives of interviewees
 43 while remaining attentive to the institutionalized
 44 context in which such catalysts were occurring
 45 and in which decisions were being made. Going
 46 into the field, she began with some sensitizing
 47 concepts (or tacit knowledge) based on the liter-
 48 ature about military families, but the data collec-
 49 tion process was primarily inductive. As themes
 50 emerged from interviews, her inquiry became
 51 increasingly more focused and she continually
 52 adjusted the sampling frame to maximize varia-
 53 tion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
 54

1 Although the project focuses on the military's
 2 impact on individuals and their families, the first
 3 half of the interview established a baseline
 4 comparison to civilian life prior to one's mili-
 5 tary experience. Thus, interviews began with
 6 childhood memories of immediate and extended
 7 family, neighborhood, schooling, and friendship
 8 experiences and moved sequentially over the life
 9 course to encompass the individual's major life
 10 events, schooling and employment transitions,
 11 and relationship histories. The process of going
 12 through detailed life experiences from early to
 13 present provided opportunities for the respon-
 14 dents to express key themes of most importance
 15 to them and a nuanced context against which
 16 to position their current situation and belief
 17 system. The breadth of the interviews also
 18 allowed for the identification of continuities, as
 19 well as inconsistencies and anomalies, in the
 20 narratives. As an example, respondents framed
 21 marital decisions as purely individual decisions,
 22 rooted in the expected descriptions of love and
 23 romance. But in later describing the events
 24 surrounding the marital decision, their language
 25 consistently indicated a notable absence of
 26 autonomy.
 27

28 The first author was both an insider and an
 29 outsider among participants. Being an Ameri-
 30 can living abroad in Germany created an instant
 31 bond in a way it would not have if the interviews
 32 had taken place in the United States. She often
 33 knew the person who had referred the respondent
 34 to her, which helped create a foundation of some
 35 trust. Some of the interviews took place with for-
 36 mer students in her small, 18-student Introduc-
 37 tion to Sociology course. Although her position
 38 of relative power could have created a distanc-
 39 ing effect, her out-group civilian status made her
 40 less threatening. Some students remarked that
 41 they were able to share information with her that
 42 they would have felt less comfortable revealing
 43 to, say, a higher ranking official in the military.
 44 There was also a previous semester's worth of
 45 rapport and trust built up with former students,
 46 which made for a safer space for communica-
 47 tion and candid discussion. Outside the inter-
 48 views, the researcher spent a year in the field
 49 working and socializing with a wide variety of
 50 military affiliates. This prolonged engagement
 51 process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), informed by
 52 her career-long study of military social dynam-
 53 ics, provided a strong foundation from which to
 54 carry out the study.

1 The average age of the respondents was
 2 early to mid-20s. A slight majority of the inter-
 3 viewees (58%) were men; most were either
 4 African American (40%) or White (45%); the
 5 third largest ethnic group was Latina/Latino
 6 (12%). Of the soldiers, most were enlisted, not
 7 officers. Enlisted soldiers comprise 80% of the
 8 military and do not enter with college degrees
 9 like officers do. Most soldiers were relatively
 10 junior, meaning that they were in low to middle
 11 military ranks and had been on active duty for
 12 3 to 4 years. The average age at marriage was
 13 22. All the soldiers had previous experience in
 14 stateside military service, and the life history
 15 interviews collected this information.

16 Data coding took place in a series of phases.
 17 The first author trained a team of five research
 18 assistants, and the group met weekly to col-
 19 laboratively code the interviews using the
 20 open source programming software WeftQDA
 21 (www.pressure.to/qda/.) The group began by
 22 reading through each of the transcripts in an
 23 open coding process to group a priori themes
 24 into initial conceptual codes. Then we began to
 25 dimensionalize (LaRossa, 2012) the codes into
 26 specific variables by systematically comparing
 27 the frequency and nuances of these themes as
 28 we worked sequentially through the interviews,
 29 going back frequently to expand or refine the
 30 original coding schema. In this axial coding
 31 phase, we paid special attention both within and
 32 across interviews to repetitions of specific words
 33 and phrases, contradictory sentiments, and pat-
 34 terns related to demographic and life course
 35 context. In the final coding phase, we identified
 36 interrelated subcategories relating to romantic
 37 relationships, both the respondents' own and
 38 those around them, and their experiences of
 39 military life that affected these relationships.

40 We now provide a brief description of
 41 our coding process. Married respondents, for
 42 example, had fairly standard and immediate
 43 answers when asked why they had married,
 44 answering with normative cultural scripts: "I
 45 was in love," "She was my best friend," "We
 46 were ready," and so on. But when we went
 47 through their life histories year by year, it
 48 became clear that, as with most major life
 49 decisions, timing and context were key driv-
 50 ing factors. Through a constant-comparison
 51 process we identified two recurring subthemes
 52 of geographic relocation and war deployment
 53 that infused narrative descriptions of life events
 54 leading up to marital decisions. Although our

original a priori codes included categories for the
 pro-nuptial influence of life course conditions in
 the military, respondents rarely drew direct asso-
 ciations between the two. But variables embody-
 ing the early transition to adulthood were
 constantly described, and we began to appre-
 ciate how the two other emerging subthemes
 were intimately embedded within this institu-
 tional context. Whereas the role of relocation,
 deployment, and Fordism subthemes were fairly
 constant without variation across the respon-
 dents' military affiliation, gender, and ethnicity,
 variation did emerge in relation to the housing
 benefits subtheme, primarily with regard to
 sexual orientation. In general, more discordant
 discourses emerged with regard to the housing
 benefits theme than the other subthemes.

We assessed interrater reliability contin-
 uously as we went through the coding and
 analysis process. There was 60% agreement on
 the first iteration of coding variables. After reex-
 amining data where disagreement was highest,
 we triangulated and refined the schema, result-
 ing in high levels of agreement of 80% + as
 the coding process matured. We later solicited
 comments from one of the key respondents on
 an early draft of this article. This, combined
 with the use of multiple coders using an inter-
 active constant-comparison process and the first
 author's cultural immersion in the study envi-
 ronment, ensured accurate data interpretation
 and extensive analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

FINDINGS

In the following sections we present vignettes
 from our interviews that most clearly illuminate
 the major themes emerging from our narrative
 analysis. First, we assess the extent to which
 housing incentives drive marital behaviors in the
 military. We then describe two other emergent
 narratives that point to a more structural incorpo-
 ration of early marriage in the military: (a) war
 deployment and (b) duty reassignment. Finally,
 we analyze the recurring themes of the mili-
 tary's social welfare provision that permeate the
 biographies and narratives of our interviews and
 provide a backdrop against which the foregoing
 themes occur.

The Promise of Housing

In the existing literature, housing benefits are
 often invoked to explain early marriage in the

1 military; however, we found that its role in incen-
 2 tivizing marriage failed to map onto common
 3 arguments regarding the financial advantages
 4 of such benefits. Instead, it played more of an
 5 escape role for our respondents than a finan-
 6 cial one. Most of the narratives focused on the
 7 fact that barracks afford far less privacy than
 8 a private residence and that barracks are sub-
 9 ject to rules and scrutiny by one's superiors. For
 10 example, Alex, an outgoing junior reservist mar-
 11 ried to an active duty spouse, jokingly described
 12 his search for a "spouse shield" from the bar-
 13 racks. For Alex and his wife, getting married
 14 was a way to avoid feeling like they were liv-
 15 ing in a fishbowl: "They're watching you," he
 16 observed. "The barracks is a horrible thing to
 17 live in. Everybody knows your business. When
 18 you have a family, nobody comes and bothers
 19 you." Now, 3 years later and expecting a baby,
 20 he said that it worked out for the best. "It was
 21 supposed to be a contract marriage at first . . .
 22 but it turned into a real relationship." His wife,
 23 Mary, a soft-spoken 22-year-old who grew up in
 24 the military, often raised a sardonic eyebrow at
 25 her husband's comments during the interview.
 26 On this point, however, she concurred, adding,
 27 "Yeah, like Jenelle and Mark. They got to the
 28 unit and they didn't know each other, got mar-
 29 ried, now they're having a kid. A lot of people
 30 do that." After describing a barracks money pool
 31 among men taking bets on which of the only
 32 three women in the barracks would sleep with
 33 them first, she added, "Thank God I found my
 34 husband and got out of the barracks!"

35 Later in the interview, however, both Alex
 36 and Mary revealed an earlier impetus for getting
 37 married, which happened well before Mary ever
 38 began living in the German barracks. They had
 39 been dating in the United States for about 8
 40 months, both living in on-base barracks, when
 41 she was transferred to a duty station in Germany:
 42

43 We had strong feelings for each other . . . we went
 44 to the courthouse and got married so he could come
 45 back over [to Germany]. Technically, he wouldn't
 46 have housing here unless he was a dependent,
 47 which now he is.

48
 49 After a few months of barracks life on a Ger-
 50 man Army base, Mary moved into an apartment
 51 once Alex was transferred to join her.

52 Erin, a high-ranking noncommissioned offi-
 53 cer, was sympathetic to the "barracks escape"
 54 theme. Recalling her own experience as a

1 junior-ranked enlistee, she said, "You live in a 1
 2 little, you know, 10 × 15 cell, and you probably 2
 3 have to share a bathroom . . . You don't have 3
 4 your own kitchen" She said that she doesn't 4
 5 blame couples, adding, "Like, I can come and, 5
 6 uh, inspect the room, basically whenever I 6
 7 want . . . but if you're married, I can't just 7
 8 come in your house." The incentive to escape 8
 9 the watchful eye of one's superiors and gain 9
 10 some modicum of privacy was mentioned often 10
 11 among the interviewees. Outside the military, 11
 12 young couples who wish to escape parental 12
 13 rules leave the house and establish a cohabiting 13
 14 union. In the recent past, however, their options 14
 15 were more similar to Mary's and Alex's: The 15
 16 only acceptable way they could enter an intimate 16
 17 union was to marry. In the military setting, this 17
 18 antiquated expectation continues because of the 18
 19 structure of the workforce and the policies it has 19
 20 adopted. 20

21 There were alternative views. Many interviewees 21
 22 thought contract marriages were more hope 22
 23 than they were common, as Zack, a mid-level 23
 24 enlistee in his early 30s, explained: 24

25
 26 They're too much trouble. Not worth the money. 26
 27 The problem is, there's all the other stuff that goes 27
 28 along with it on the legal stance. Nah. Not for a 28
 29 couple extra hundred bucks . . . You can get in big 29
 30 trouble if they find out. 30

31
 32 Zack's commentary indicates that there is 32
 33 substantial onus on the couple to "prove" that 33
 34 they are in a legitimate union. Derek, a veteran 34
 35 contractor, similarly mentioned that, although 35
 36 some people "talk the talk" about contract 36
 37 marriages, they are uncommon. Darryl, another 37
 38 veteran contractor, voiced surprise that anyone 38
 39 could dislike barracks life, saying, "I've never 39
 40 met anybody who done that. I loved the bar- 40
 41 racks. The barracks was a blast—we partied the 41
 42 hell out of the barracks!" 42

43 But not everyone finds the barracks to be such 43
 44 a blast. This context holds less allure for soldiers 44
 45 struggling to maintain their sexual identity in 45
 46 the shadow of the former "Don't Ask Don't 46
 47 Tell" (DADT) policy. Gay and lesbian service 47
 48 members have far more to lose in barracks 48
 49 life and described the extra risk and trouble of 49
 50 a contract marriage as worth it. At one point 50
 51 Arnold, a constantly smiling junior enlistee with 51
 52 a deep Southern accent, showed me a picture of 52
 53 his wife, who was still living back in the United 53
 54 States. A few months later I ran into him and a 54

1 friend on post, holding hands; he introduced her
 2 to me, with visible discomfort, as his girlfriend.
 3 When we met for our interview a few weeks
 4 later, he told me he would never cheat on a
 5 “real” wife and that, in fact, the woman in the
 6 States was a contract wife from his previous
 7 military posting in Alabama. He explained that
 8 his wife, a civilian and good friend, was in
 9 a committed lesbian relationship with one of
 10 his friends, a female soldier, who in turn was
 11 involved in a contract marriage with a gay sol-
 12 dier. This arrangement enabled the two women
 13 to live off post together, and Arnold and the gay
 14 soldier each used their extra housing allowance
 15 to obtain their own off-base housing, thereby
 16 avoiding “superiors coming into your room at 3
 17 o’clock in the morning without warning going
 18 through your stuff.” It provided an altogether
 19 different kind of “spouse shield” for the lesbian
 20 and gay service members whose sexual identi-
 21 ties might otherwise come under scrutiny. For
 22 Arnold, who made sure to describe himself as
 23 “straight as an arrow in Cupid’s quiver,” this
 24 marital arrangement enabled him to live at home
 25 with his mother and help her out with his share
 26 of the housing allowance while also providing
 27 medical and dental benefits to his contract wife
 28 (who could not legally marry her partner in the
 29 military). If this seems complicated, it is. Arnold
 30 detailed his effort to keep up such appearances
 31 on his Facebook and MySpace pages, not-
 32 ing that military oversight was “very strict
 33 on it—talking to your friends, checking your
 34 records.”

35 Erik, a mid-level enlisted self-described
 36 “loudmouth” who gained his American citizen-
 37 ship during his stint in Afghanistan, described a
 38 similar arrangement: “You know that [housing
 39 allowance], all of us queers get married for that
 40 [laughs]!” While serving his first term in Texas,
 41 he married a friend so that they could “live out-
 42 side, two separate lives.” He explained, “I didn’t
 43 want nobody saying ‘Erik is gay’ and be all up
 44 in my business, um, so I needed to move off post
 45 and the only way to do that was to get married.”
 46 For gay individuals under the former DADT
 47 policy, the need for a spouse shield took on more
 48 urgency, allowing them to avoid institutionally
 49 enforced stigma and potential job loss.

50
 51 *Mobility and Military Families*

52
 53 By far the most common marriage scenario
 54 described by military affiliates revolved around

a sudden and looming externally imposed dead- 1
 line. Couples suddenly had to decide whether to 2
 commit to one another much earlier than antici- 3
 pated. Most respondents described making a 4
 major relationship decision upon receiving news 5
 of an upcoming war deployment or, more fre- 6
 quently, an upcoming duty station move. The 7
 language describing marital decisions around 8
 these events evoked words like “rush,” “haste,” 9
 and “pressing.” We divide the narrative themes 10
 into two sections. The first involves impending 11
 war deployment and how couples negotiate this 12
 kind of separation. The second involves reloca- 13
 tion, a permanent change of duty station location 14
 that occurs every few years, forcing couples into 15
 a stark choice: link their lives together in mar- 16
 riage or permanently separate. 17

18
 19 *Deployment and emotional connection.* Mil- 19
 itary marriages sometimes occur in response 20
 to imminent war separation. When a service 21
 member is sent to a war zone, anxieties and 22
 emotions run high. Committing to marriage 23
 is one way to solidify a relationship against 24
 hardship, providing the service member with an 25
 emotional connection to home. Many soldiers 26
 discussed marital decisions as stemming from 27
 an emotional need for stability in the face of the 28
 unknown. This process is especially heightened 29
 in the climate of mixed fear and excitement that 30
 surrounds deployment into a war zone. Derek, 31
 a 21-year-old mid-level enlistee, got married 32
 just before going to Iraq. He said it made the 33
 experience easier “knowing you have a reason 34
 to come home . . . knowing you have someone 35
 waiting on you.” Connecting to loved ones 36
 while away and anticipating a homecoming and 37
 a life together enables service members to better 38
 navigate the stresses of war zone deployment. 39
 This is an often-overlooked way that the military 40
 benefits from incorporating families into ser- 41
 vice. Echoing Derek’s sentiment, Tony reflected 42
 on his experience with soldiers in his platoon: 43
 “Deployment has a strong effect on soldiers that 44
 have never been into that situation.” A more 45
 senior enlistee who considered himself a mentor 46
 to incoming junior soldiers elaborated: 47

48
 49 These young boys come in, vulnerable, these 49
 women kiss them on their neck, say, “I love you,” 50
 and they’re ready to get married . . . I know guys 51
 that would’ve met a girl, dated 3–4 weeks and he’s 52
 about to go down-range and he wants to marry her 53
 before he deploys . . . It happens a lot. 54

1 Although deployments sometimes trig-
 2 ger hasty marriages, other soldiers described
 3 painful separations, which often led to breakups
 4 at some point during the 12- to 16-month
 5 deployment. Soldiers called these break-ups
 6 "Dear John" letters, although for most these
 7 days it is an email. But some interviewees made
 8 marital engagement decisions during deploy-
 9 ment, often resulting in proxy marriages over
 10 the Internet. Indeed, there exist half a dozen
 11 online proxy-by-marriage services advertised
 12 on Google that cater specifically to deployed
 13 service members, and a scan of the testimonials
 14 echoes the sentiments we document here: worry,
 15 commitment, connection.

16 Upon notification of deployment, interviewees
 17 described their emotions as running high,
 18 making commitment a way to ease the separa-
 19 tion. "I was a mess thinking about it . . . I wrote
 20 him long letters . . . In some ways I loved him
 21 even more at that time because, like, I knew he
 22 might never come back, you know?" remem-
 23 bered Carol, a young civilian woman who mar-
 24 ried her junior enlisted boyfriend before he left
 25 for Afghanistan. Although Carol was still mar-
 26 ried 4 years later and described her husband
 27 as her best friend, her anecdote suggests that
 28 decisions made during the intensified context
 29 of war are sometimes idealized. Some respon-
 30 dents, however, were openly practical about the
 31 decision. Christine, a veteran who married her
 32 enlisted boyfriend 2 weeks prior to his Iraq
 33 deployment, explained:

34
 35 I wasn't ready to get married, but I knew there
 36 might be the possibility that . . . [leaves sentence
 37 unfinished]. It was the best option to take care
 38 of my daughter and myself. We already owned a
 39 house together. We were practically married, so
 40 might as well put a label on it.
 41

42 The possible deployment death of her partner
 43 was the trigger that led Christine to seek official
 44 military recognition so that the family would
 45 receive support if her husband were to die in
 46 the line of duty. Survivor's benefits are generally
 47 hundreds of thousands of dollars along with a
 48 lifetime pension. This is a deliberate policy on
 49 the part of the military that seeks to compensate
 50 a family's sacrifice, for both the loss of a loved
 51 one and for their support during deployment.
 52 Her husband was delivered home to Christine
 53 with traumatic brain injury, whom the Army now
 54 recognized as his official caregiver spouse:

1 I was just so grateful he, you know, survived the
 2 [improvised explosive device] . . . he always knew
 3 we were back there rooting for him and made it
 4 back safely to us . . . The recovery has been hardest
 5 on Michelle (stepdaughter), who just doesn't get
 6 why he seems so different now.
 7

8 Christine's story illustrates the linked lives
 9 role of military marriage. The military provides
 10 generous paternalistic policies to partners, but
 11 only to those who are married. Upon marriage,
 12 the transition is swift. Christine's and her daugh-
 13 ter's fate became officially bound up in her hus-
 14 band's life course trajectory and his recovery
 15 from the traumatic brain injury.

16 Not only does military policy make mar-
 17 riage accessible, but also its existence signals a
 18 family-supportive culture. For most of the narra-
 19 tives, war-related marriage was a way to remain
 20 emotionally connected during an impending,
 21 high-risk separation. Relationship solidification
 22 in the midst of traumatic events is not with-
 23 out precedent in studies of nonmilitary fami-
 24 lies (Cohan & Cole, 2002). The fact that the
 25 anticipated stressful event is combined with an
 26 imminent couple separation is likely to lead to a
 27 desire to commit, perhaps as way to give the cou-
 28 ple strength to get through the deployment. This
 29 emotion labor from the home front helps ensure
 30 smoother deployments and more rapid postde-
 31 ployment recovery among the military's labor
 32 force.

33 Although war deployment is surely an induce-
 34 ment to marriage, only a minority of military
 35 couples face deployment at this stage in their
 36 relationship. Military marriage rates have been
 37 high throughout the last 40 years, including dur-
 38 ing peacetime. Thus, it is important to examine
 39 how couples deal with the major defining struc-
 40 tural component of military service that distin-
 41 guishes it from almost any other civilian job: its
 42 constant nomadic lifestyle.

43 *Relocation and nomadic lifestyle.* By far the
 44 most pivotal pretext for marriage in the military
 45 revealed by the interview data relates to the Per-
 46 manent Change of Station (PCS) process, which
 47 occurs every 2 to 3 years. To deal with the glob-
 48 alized nature of U.S. peacekeeping, the military
 49 must offer its labor force a way to include fami-
 50 lies in the face of an imposed nomadic lifestyle.
 51 The military's solution is to incorporate fami-
 52 lies in their entirety, and it pays the full reloca-
 53 tion costs for each family member. This policy
 54 enables families to stay together while also being

1 a crucial way for the military to ensure a portable
2 support system for its employees. It is important
3 to note that PCS moves also promote the forma-
4 tion of new marriages. Unmarried couples face
5 permanent separation; however, if they marry in
6 anticipation of an upcoming duty change, the
7 spouse is fully integrated into the relocation pro-
8 cess. Thus, relationships that would have other-
9 wise ended or eventually resulted in marriage
10 undergo a premature turning point process.

11 When considering the career cycle of a
12 recruit, transfers occur more frequently over
13 time than either war deployments or barracks
14 assignments. Nowhere in the military marriage
15 literature did we find speculation as to the strong
16 incentive that geographical separation avoidance
17 is likely to play in the lives of military members.
18 Yet this is a major component that is built into
19 today's military service. Military nomadism is
20 a theme that emerged from our very first inter-
21 views. Whether married, single, or a dependent,
22 relocation loomed large as an anticipated event
23 in the lives of each of the interviewees. It was
24 described as a distinct turning point in the life
25 course of a romantic relationship when couples
26 were forced to make a decision. Unlike war
27 deployment, when military members usually
28 return, a PCS means that the partner is unlikely
29 to return to that town again. Thus, couples are
30 faced with two diametrically opposed choices:
31 (a) dissolve their relationship or (b) transition
32 into a marital arrangement. For the civilian
33 partner, marriage means being brought along,
34 all expenses paid, to the next duty station. But
35 though the moving expenses are free, there is an
36 implicit expectation on the part of the military.
37 Marriage to a service member means linking
38 your life to the military system and taking
39 on a distinct labor role as a military spouse,
40 while leaving your civilian lifestyle, hometown,
41 family, and, often, career behind.

42 We came to see that although marital deci-
43 sions were often framed by the interviewees as
44 a choice, their language consistently indicated
45 a notable absence of autonomy. This was par-
46 ticularly true for nonmilitary spouses, whose
47 lives often changed radically upon marriage to a
48 member of the military. Margaret, a new military
49 recruit at the time, had been dating her future
50 husband for 7 months when she was ordered to
51 move across the country. She told her boyfriend
52 there was only one way they could stay
53 together:
54

1 "We can get married and you can come with me,
2 or um . . . you know." I really left it up to him. He
3 was, like, "Well, I want to be with you." And I was,
4 like, "Well, then, we need to get married . . . And
5 he said, "All right, if that's what it takes."

6 Margaret described the difficulties her hus-
7 band faced leaving his home and adjusting to
8 life out West: "It was rough for him." Just a
9 few months after relocating in order to stay
10 together, they became separated anew when she
11 was called out on a series of overseas duties and
12 then deployed to Iraq for 15 months. Although
13 the couple was able to exercise some control
14 by forcing the military to accommodate their
15 decision to marry, it meant that Margaret's hus-
16 band was enveloped into the military complex on
17 the military's terms, and they still had no con-
18 trol over Margaret's constantly changing assign-
19 ments that took her away from their new home.
20 This is a distinctive way in which the linked
21 spousal role is more all encompassing within the
22 military context.
23

24 Another soldier, Marta, described how she
25 came to marry her husband, also a soldier, who
26 was about to get transferred:
27

28 While I was deployed, we had to get married online
29 . . . And I'm, like, I don't want to get married . . .
30 But at the same time, I know he would be gone by
31 the time I get back if we don't get married, so we
32 had to rush.
33

34 In this relationship, war separation was not
35 the catalyst for the decision to marry, although
36 it may well have heightened the intensity of
37 the commitment. The ultimate catalyst was the
38 prospect of Marta returning from a war zone
39 to find that her boyfriend has been shipped off
40 to another location. Similarly, Jenna, a veteran,
41 married to avoid a breakup. Describing the cir-
42 cumstances under which her first marriage took
43 place at age 18, she prefaced her story with,
44 "Well, it's a little embarrassing," continuing, "I
45 dated him for six months and he was getting sta-
46 tioned somewhere else and he was, like, "I want
47 to take you with me," and I was, like, "Naaaah!"
48 But then we just got married on a whim." Five
49 days later, realizing this was "probably the stupi-
50 dest thing I'd ever done in my life," Jenna filed
51 for an annulment. Her story highlights the pos-
52 sibility that, depending on when in the life of a
53 relationship a transfer occurs, individuals may
54 be forced to make premature decisions about the

1 relationship's significance. Jenna is now married
2 to a different soldier.

3 This scenario was common, both among
4 the interviewees themselves and in stories they
5 relayed about their friends in the military. For
6 example, Amy, an enlisted soldier, shared the
7 following:

8 Yeah, tons of soldiers get married just so they can
9 be with their girlfriend. I kinda did this. I got an
10 assignment to Italy and missed my boyfriend so
11 much that I returned for a few days on leave and
12 married him—just so he could get reassigned to
13 Italy. It worked, but the problem is we didn't get
14 married for the right reasons, and we broke up
15 within a year. Getting married just for convenience
16 is never a good idea.

17
18 Margaret, Marta's, and Jenna's stories suggest
19 that divorce may not be an unexpected outcome
20 when marriages occur under hurried circum-
21 stances. Derek, the veteran contractor we intro-
22 duced earlier, himself a divorcee, told us, "That's
23 why the divorce rate is twice as high in the Army
24 side than the civilian side, because you've got to
25 get married without really knowing somebody."

26 Derek's perception of divorce counters evi-
27 dence showing that, on average, the divorce rate
28 in the military is no higher than among civilians
29 (Karney & Crown, 2007), but it supports stud-
30 ies showing that women soldiers (Adler-Baeder,
31 Pittman, & Taylor, 2006) and combat veter-
32 ans have high divorce rates (MacLean & Elder,
33 2007). There is widespread anecdotal specula-
34 tion that too many service members are marrying
35 before they are mature enough to choose com-
36 patible partners. Derek's comments also suggest
37 that all marriages, whether remarriages or first
38 marriages, are heavily incentivized. Counting on
39 two hands the number of couples he knew who
40 married in order to transfer as a couple, he went
41 on to explain, "You meet someone in the mil-
42 itary and it's two years at any given duty sta-
43 tion; how [else] are you gonna stay together?"
44 The military's imposed nomadism clearly makes
45 life challenging for individuals who wish to fos-
46 ter a long-term, nonmarital relationship. Darryl
47 echoed Derek's opinion, saying, "The only way
48 to do it is 'Let's get married. You can come
49 with me.' . . . Because of the urgency of things
50 and not knowing where we're going, we rush
51 things."

52 Interviewees matter-of-factly described
53 relocation-driven marriages as simply a part of
54 military life. Brenda, the daughter of an officer

1 who married an enlisted soldier when she was
2 just 19, said that all of her military-affiliated
3 family members had married young. When
4 asked why she thought this was, she said, "Well,
5 we all know long distance just doesn't work,"
6 indicating that these marriages took place to
7 avoid the difficulties of maintaining a relation-
8 ship from afar. Mary, who earlier discussed
9 her marriage as a way for her boyfriend to join
10 her in Germany, said her civilian friends were
11 surprised by how young she married. When
12 asked more about this she remarked, "I think
13 that's normal . . . it's because we know even-
14 tually you have to move on. You don't want
15 to end a relationship with that person, so you
16 have to get married." Although Mary indicated
17 that her early marriage was out of the culturally
18 proscribed life course time frame of civilian
19 society, it was clearly normative in the military
20 environment.

21 Anna, the daughter of military parents (who
22 knew each other for 2 weeks before getting
23 married after notification of a transfer to Europe)
24 was dating an enlisted soldier and agreed, saying
25 she will probably get married sooner than later:
26 "I don't know if I want to get married so soon,
27 but the military forces you to. I hate to say it."
28 Then she went on, "When he moves to his new
29 duty station . . . I can't afford to just pick up
30 and go with him, but the Army will pay for
31 me if I'm married to him." Along with other
32 accounts, Anna's example illustrates the way
33 that the military job held by her boyfriend had
34 a ripple effect into her own linked life. Also,
35 upon marriage, Anna's life would dramatically
36 alter, beginning first with a major relocation.
37 These stories also demonstrate how early ages at
38 marriage in the military correspond to the early
39 life course stage at which a recruit experiences
40 his or her first duty station transfer.

41 Incidentally, the nomadic lifestyle of military
42 service and its impact on relationships is not lim-
43 ited to romantic relationships. Darryl described
44 how couples at least have the option of marriage
45 as a way to buffer the negative effects of constant
46 relocation:

47 Darryl: [Marriage] is a way to save their relation-
48 ship . . . because, no matter what [Military Occu-
49 pational Specialty] or position, it's impossible to
50 have a stable relationship.

51 Interviewer: So not just intimate relationships?

52 Darryl: Anybody. You have to start all over again.

53 You meet somebody the first day you come. . . .

54 In two years, it's bye-bye. Being in the military is

1 like being on an emotional roller coaster. Can you
2 imagine moving every two years?

3
4 Even professional and working friendships
5 are constantly cut short by the military's geo-
6 graphical imperative. As one soldier's husband
7 said to me, "Truthfully, I'll be surprised if she
8 stays in touch with you after we transfer. That's
9 just the way she deals with always having to
10 ditch people. She just cuts 'em off."

11 This aspect of military life was especially
12 prevalent in conversations related to military
13 children. Interviewees lamented and celebrated
14 military children, whom they saw as advantaged
15 because they learn how to deal well with change
16 but disadvantaged in their lack of lifelong friend-
17 ships. Thus, romantic relationships are just one
18 type of relationship among many that are threat-
19 ened by the military's nomadic lifestyle. The
20 consequences of the military lifestyle for such
21 romantic relationships are more visible because
22 there is a deliberate policy that benefits the mil-
23 itary apparatus. By design, marital relationships
24 are privileged above all others in the military.

25 26 *Fordist-Era Employment Conditions*

27
28 Responses to external stimuli, such as deploy-
29 ment duty transfer orders, and an incentive to
30 escape public barracks all take place within a
31 larger institutional context that has a vested inter-
32 est in promoting an early transition to adulthood
33 and benefiting from the labor of the families that
34 come along with it. Life course theorists docu-
35 ment the transition to adulthood across differ-
36 ent historical eras, and the military setting is an
37 institutional context that mimics the traditional,
38 marriage-oriented Fordist era. The degree of pro-
39 vision in place for military families is similar in
40 form and function to the more conservative well-
41 fare states in Europe.

42 Socioeconomic stability is a primary factor
43 that drives marriage rates among civilians.
44 Combined with the structural conditions of
45 military service, its in-kind economic stability
46 fosters an environment in which marriage is
47 extremely common. Few interviewees were
48 unambiguously happy with military service,
49 and some longed for their military affiliation
50 to end. Nevertheless, given often-lackluster
51 civilian employment alternatives, almost every
52 respondent noted economic advancement as a
53 turning point upon becoming affiliated with the
54 service. "Once my mom joined the military,

1 when I was in middle school, I could see a huge
2 difference," said Anna, recalling her childhood.
3 "I had nice clothes, we had a nice car, lived
4 in military housing It was a huge jump
5 from where I was." Carol, in recounting her rise
6 in living standard upon marrying her soldier
7 husband, asked rhetorically, "I mean, what other
8 place is there you can turn to that you can have
9 a steady job, you have a steady paycheck?"
10 Margaret, who was working at K-Mart before
11 enlisting, said about her civilian employment
12 opportunities, "This isn't going to work for me.
13 I need better income. So, I went active duty.
14 Now, I can't complain. Money, benefits, it's
15 not bad." For Margaret the advantage was not
16 only a higher income but also job security and
17 an array of in-kind benefits absent from the
18 service sector jobs available to someone of her
19 credentials in the civilian labor market: "You're
20 always going to get paid, regardless of whether
21 you're on vacation or not. Up to 30 days of
22 vacation, anytime I want to. Free medical. Free
23 dental. Housing. Steady job."

24 Another major benefit is education and job
25 training. Jamal, a junior enlistee married to a
26 fellow soldier, entered the military with his GED
27 but will exit with his associate's degree. His story
28 shows how the military serves as a safety net that
29 is lacking in civilian society unless one has the
30 income to purchase one:

31
32 I won't have to pay all the student loans back.
33 I'll be finished with my associate's in occupational
34 technology And I had my eyes done, my dental
35 work done, school is taken care of. The majority
36 of things that were issues in my life, it took care of
37 that, so I'm good.
38

39 Interviewees often compared their current
40 social and economic status favorably to their
41 civilian reference group from high school
42 while also benefiting from what life course
43 theorists call a "knifing off" of negative influ-
44 ences. Alex, who said that he was engaged
45 in gang activity at the age of 15, exclaimed,
46 "Oh, yeah, but I showed them; I have every-
47 thing!" He went on to explain his success, as
48 measured in consumer items, including his car,
49 "Mostly Army people, if you ever realized, have
50 brand-new cars. Because when you apply for
51 a loan, they know you're in the Army, it's a
52 stable paycheck." Arthur, who had spent time
53 in jail prior to joining the military, drew similar
54 comparisons:

1 I keep in touch with the high school friends that
2 were better off than I was. They all went to college
3 and with the recession have had problems getting a
4 job. I feel really fortunate to be in the military and
5 think that if I was to go back into the real world I
6 would definitely be able to secure a good job.

7 He also pointed out other, intangible aspects
8 of military life that improved the quality of life
9 for his family, such as cultural exposure and
10 access to leisure activities on base:

11 It's small and quaint but it has this essence of a rich
12 theater and they do plays similar to Broadway . . .
13 It's something good. I'm not sure if I'm using this
14 word out of context, but . . . "affluent." Culture.
15 People go there dressed in a nice suit. I took my
16 son to an opera! Can you believe it?

17 Arthur's commentary captures an important
18 way in which cultural capital, in addition to
19 human capital, is transferred in the military set-
20 ting.

21 A similar recurring theme in the interviews
22 was how such windows of opportunity altered
23 the way individuals thought about themselves
24 and their future. Alex described a personal
25 metamorphosis: "I became a different person.
26 I started thinking, realizing, appreciating more
27 things in life . . . I went to [Advanced Individual
28 Training] and graduated from that in the upper
29 10 percent of my class." Rico, who grew up in
30 a military family and whose brother is enlisted,
31 described a similar process: "The military has
32 changed my brother's life completely . . . more
33 mature, responsible, settled down, has a family
34 he can actually support now. He's having the
35 life he should be having."

36 In addition to the socioeconomic supports that
37 might encourage marriage and promote mar-
38 ital stability, some interviewees discussed aspects
39 of military life that are explicitly designed to
40 support marriage. Anna, whose parents, as men-
41 tioned earlier, married after knowing each other
42 for only 2 weeks in order to stay together through
43 a duty station transfer, thinks military marriages
44 have more institutional support than civilian
45 marriages:

46 In the military community there's enough to keep
47 it going . . . Once a month, there's a marriage
48 retreat that goes down to Garmish. My parents
49 have been on it seven times and they don't even
50 have an issue with their marriage. You have to go
51 through counseling, but you get free lodging at
52 the Army resort, get to see the Alps, it's like a

1 free vacation. Everything—all kinds of stuff . . .
2 Outside the military, you have to pay for that stuff,
3 to go see a counselor . . . The military has a lot of
4 things in place for it.

5 Such marriage supports are clearly intended
6 to support marriages, once formed, and per-
7 haps also to address perceptions of high divorce
8 rates in the military. Marriage is the norm in
9 the military, which is a natural result of the
10 employment conditions described herein and
11 self-perpetuating in the marriage-normative cul-
12 ture it creates. The pervasiveness of familistic
13 culture in the Army may be best illustrated by the
14 existence of the organization BOSS—"Better
15 Opportunities for Single Soldiers"—that pro-
16 motes a higher quality of life for unmarried sol-
17 diers.

18 Few individuals attributed economic stabil-
19 ity directly to their decision to marry young;
20 however, it emerged as a major undercurrent in
21 each interview. As studies of civilian couples
22 have shown, financial factors are often the pri-
23 mary reason deterring the transition to marriage
24 (Smock, Manning, & Porter, 2005). Such socioe-
25 conomic benefits of military service are likely
26 what pushes a couple to decide to marry rather
27 than dissolve their relationship when faced with
28 an upcoming move or with deployment pres-
29 sures. For example, Rosa, a military spouse mar-
30 ried to a midlevel-rank enlistee whose three chil-
31 dren and mother-in-law were living in military
32 housing on post, described family and commu-
33 nity life on base as a "little time warp." Although
34 she was referring to neighborhood safety and the
35 prevalence of traditional family roles in military
36 communities, we believe this is also an appropri-
37 ate characterization of marital trends there.

DISCUSSION

41 It is striking to find a context in which marriage
42 rates bear such an anachronistic resemblance to
43 those of the 1950s era. Our data augment and
44 enrich the small body of research that has exam-
45 ined military family formation, much of which
46 has focused on the role of military housing. We
47 have shown that there are much broader factors
48 at play in this process. The military is innately
49 structured to encourage early marriage among its
50 recruits so that it can function efficiently. This
51 is seen most clearly in its provision of a vast
52 safety net and springboard for its members and
53 its formulation of policies specifically intended
54

1 to make it more convenient to marry than remain
2 single.

3 Although many of our respondents knew peo-
4 ple who had married for the purpose of obtaining
5 housing allowances, and even a few claimed to
6 have done it themselves, others suggested it was
7 more hype than practice. A few enumerated the
8 disincentives the military puts in place to prevent
9 this from happening widely. One respondent
10 who claimed to have done this revealed later in
11 the interview that the more proximate reason she
12 had married was, in fact, an imminent transfer
13 of duty station. Although we can only speculate,
14 we wonder whether the rhetoric of contract mari-
15 riage may be a way of justifying early marriage
16 to one's peer group. If most junior enlistees agree
17 that barracks life is degrading, claiming one got
18 married to get out of the barracks may be a way
19 to gain respect from peers by showing resistance
20 to military control. Indeed, a common theme in
21 our interviews was the sentiment that service
22 members should unapologetically take advan-
23 tage of military policies because the military
24 unapologetically takes advantage of them. It is
25 also notable that most of the concrete examples
26 of contract marriage emerging from the inter-
27 views were linked to the DADT policy. If this
28 is a more pressing incentive for lesbian and gay
29 members, it suggests that it may become less of
30 an issue in light of the recent repeal of DADT;
31 however, it is unlikely that informal norms in
32 the barracks stigmatizing non-heteronormative
33 behaviors will fade quickly.

34 Our interviews showed that the threat of
35 geographical separation due to deployment and
36 in particular relocation transfers was repeatedly
37 tied to early marriage. The impact of these
38 stressful life events on already-formed military
39 families is well known in the military family
40 literature, but our data suggest that these stresses
41 play an even more influential role in the initial
42 family life course. Not only do the forces of
43 war and duty relocation affect military families,
44 but also these conditions often generate the
45 formation of these families in the first place.

46 Although the foregoing themes emerged
47 in our research as proximate causes of mar-
48 riage, they operate within an institutional
49 context that depends on families to recruit
50 and sustain its labor force. Thus, the fourth
51 theme to emerge from our data acts as a more
52 distal but all-encompassing catalyst of mar-
53 riage: Fordist-era–like institutional conditions
54 that promote an early transition to adulthood.

1 Marriage is prevalent in such a setting because
2 it has been deliberately made to be compatible
3 with military life. Would the first three explana-
4 tions cause high marriage rates in the absence
5 of these employment features? It is likely they
6 would not. The operation of these factors in
7 a setting designed to make an early transi-
8 tion to adulthood accessible to marginalized
9 youth undoubtedly shapes the decision-making
10 process.

11 Whereas in the past military service delayed
12 family formation, its post–1973 personnel policy
13 of linked lives makes it an altogether different
14 kind of turning point that now encourages early
15 role transitions into marriage. How this early
16 transition to adulthood will affect military fami-
17 lies in the long term, however, is an open ques-
18 tion and one in need of examination. This article
19 provides insight into just one cohort embedded
20 within a specific historical time period in the
21 military. It is notable that although we observed
22 evidence for a knifing off of negative influences
23 (often economic), enabling service members to
24 start anew, the narratives also suggest another
25 kind of knifing off: that of marriages. Military
26 mobility policy encourages marriage, but it may
27 promote *many* marriages among the same indi-
28 viduals. Ironically, the mobility demands of mil-
29 itary service that lead to marriage are also what
30 may destabilize it. Thus, when military service
31 ends it is unclear whether the emotional bonds
32 formed from hastily made marriages are strong
33 enough to last in the absence of the military's
34 all-encompassing family benefit system. This
35 suggests that the military reinstitutionalizes fam-
36 ilies, but mainly during the period of service
37 when it relies on familial labor the most. After
38 active duty service, the linked lives of veterans
39 and spouses may become much more tenuous.

40 Given the increasingly rare occurrence of
41 early marriage amid the societal-wide retreat
42 from marriage, a recent article urges researchers
43 to ask “not only why people, especially dis-
44 advantaged people, *don't* get married, but also
45 why they *do*” (Uecker & Stokes, 2008, p. 845).
46 We have asked exactly this about the military
47 population. What is then the “transferability”
48 (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of our findings to civil-
49 ian society? Our findings on deployment draw a
50 parallel to the impact of trauma and separation
51 on civilian couples. Because deployment is an
52 exogenous event imposed on many couples at
53 once, its influence on nuptial decisions are large
54 enough to measure. But our research raises

1 the question of whether less identifiable and
 2 heterogeneous forces operate on couples in
 3 larger society as well. For example, are couples
 4 more likely to become engaged when a loved
 5 one dies or when they are undergoing stressful
 6 periods of their lives? Indeed, some research
 7 has documented increases in marriage following
 8 natural disasters (Cohan & Cole, 2002).

9 As for the influence of mobility on military
 10 families, it would be interesting to see whether
 11 civilian occupations catalyze the marriage pro-
 12 cess in similar ways. Of course, rare is the civil-
 13 ian firm that requires its employees to relocate
 14 every couple of years, and such mobility require-
 15 ments are even more unusual to impose on
 16 entry-level employees. Although many civilian
 17 jobs require frequent travel, a defining difference
 18 in the military is the trip's duration and thus the
 19 need to permanently relocate. But a few smaller
 20 scale occupations, such as the clergy, foreign
 21 service and sales, require frequent relocation,
 22 often at substantial geographical distances. Sim-
 23 ilarly, academic jobs may also force couples into
 24 marital commitment, given the scarcity and geo-
 25 graphical diffusion of the job market. Indeed,
 26 preliminary findings from a longitudinal study
 27 of economist cohorts show that the major cat-
 28 alyst for marriage between dating couples is a
 29 job offer that requires one member to relocate
 30 (Murray-Close & Helleppie McFall, 2013).

31 But we believe our main application to civil-
 32 ian trends is one of contrast, not similarity. In
 33 the highly individualistic, market-driven policy
 34 context of the United States, the transition to
 35 adulthood has been very weakly supported by
 36 the state. As a result, youth are often "ware-
 37 housed" in particular institutional settings dur-
 38 ing this transitional period of unemployability.
 39 Those with parental resources spend time in
 40 the college setting, whereas those with the least
 41 resources spend time in the prison setting, which
 42 functions as a welfare state of last resort. The
 43 military, on the other hand, offers a social safety
 44 net that few other settings do, providing a clear
 45 and structured pathway to adulthood.

46 CONCLUSION

47 Our findings could have a number of policy
 48 implications. Within the military, barracks
 49 could be reconceptualized to be less dehuman-
 50 izing settings or the military could reconsider
 51 "homesteading" policies, which keep military
 52 members at duty stations for longer periods of

1 time. However, these ignore the deeper, under-
 2 lying source of nuptiality in the military. The
 3 root of early military marriage is its provision
 4 of stable employment, comprehensive fam-
 5 ily benefits, and socioeconomic advancement
 6 for working-class youth. By stepping in as a
 7 springboard during the transition to adulthood
 8 in ways that are mutually beneficial to both
 9 employee and employer, the military is a critical
 10 turning point in the life course. Altering
 11 such employment conditions of military service
 12 would leave few individuals willing to incur the
 13 risks and unique hardships of military service.
 14 Also, it is unlikely that the military has any
 15 interest in curbing early marriage. Despite a few
 16 high profile cases of upper ranking individuals
 17 advocating for policies against marriage among
 18 junior-ranked members (Evans, 1993; Schmitt,
 19 1993), the military has much to gain from link-
 20 ing the lives of spouses to military life early on
 21 in the career. Without the support and emotion
 22 labor of spouses, the modern day military loses
 23 manpower readiness.

24 The cumulative-exposure model has shown
 25 that conditions during young adulthood can
 26 protectively mediate earlier life exposures of
 27 disadvantage (Berkman, Ertel, & Glymour,
 28 2011). Military service offers a path to class
 29 mobility in the form of early family formation
 30 and socioeconomic stability that disadvantaged
 31 civilians lack. Indeed, life course researchers
 32 have found evidence for a "bridging effect"
 33 among racial/ethnic minority and economically
 34 disadvantaged recruits when they eventually
 35 enter the civilian labor market (MacLean &
 36 Elder, 2007). An open question is how post-
 37 sequester military rebudgeting and personnel
 38 reductions will affect the military's ability to
 39 serve as a substitute welfare safety net for a
 40 substantial portion of young Americans who
 41 otherwise have little recourse.

42 The biggest policy implication of our research
 43 relates to all families, not just military families.
 44 Some policymakers and family advocates have
 45 argued that the government should promote
 46 marital formation. Indeed, for the past decade,
 47 the federal government has funded the Healthy
 48 Marriage Initiative, spending \$150 million a
 49 year (Administration for Children and Families,
 50 2013). But on the basis of the military example,
 51 marriage is widespread in part due to stable,
 52 decent-paying jobs and transfers of health care
 53 and education benefits to family members.
 54 Given growing class inequality, precarious

1 underemployment, and long-term unemploy-
 2 ment, perhaps there are some aspects of the mil-
 3 itary employment model that could be extended
 4 to all U.S. youth. A serious jobs creation pro-
 5 gram modeled on the legacy of the New Deal's
 6 Works Progress Administration that borrows the
 7 in-kind educational and social benefits of mili-
 8 tary service is one model. Public works projects,
 9 such as infrastructure investment, and signif-
 10 icant expansion of national service programs,
 11 like AmeriCorps, VISTA, and so on, are alterna-
 12 tives to military service as a route to economic
 13 security for our youth who lack a college degree.
 14 Better understanding the transferability of mili-
 15 tary employment dynamics to civilian contexts
 16 may shed light on how to support more stable
 17 transitions to adulthood for American youth.

NOTE

21 We acknowledge research funding from the Alexander von
 22 Humboldt Foundation. We also thank Joya Misra, and Sanjiv
 23 Guptas for their feedback. This article is dedicated to the
 24 memory of Meghan Kyla Tateo Beebe, who assisted in the
 25 early stages of this research. We also thank Rose Axelrod,
 26 Samuel Hicks, Alyssa McGloin, Sujin Oh, and Viktoriya
 27 Zupkofska for their assistance with this research project.

REFERENCES

- 29 2014 *Basic allowance for housing rates*. (2014).
 30 Retrieved from www.military.com/benefits/military-pay/basic-allowance-for-housing/basic-allowance-for-housing-rates.html
 31
 32 Adler-Baeder, F., Pittman, J. F., & Taylor, L. (2006).
 33 The prevalence of marital transitions in military
 34 families. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 44,
 35 91–106.
 36 Administration for Children and Families. (2013).
 37 *Healthy Marriage Initiative*. Retrieved from
 38 <http://archive.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage>
 39 Atkinson, R. (1998). *The life story interview*. Thou-
 40 sand Oaks, CA: Sage.
 41 Becker G. S. (1981). *A treatise on the family*. Cam-
 42 bridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
 43 Berkman, L., Ertel, K., & Glymour, M. (2011). Aging
 44 and social intervention: Life course perspectives.
 45 In R. H. Binstock, L. K. George, S. J. Cutler,
 46 J. Hendricks, & J. H. Schulz (Eds.), *Handbook*
 47 *of aging and the social sciences* (Vol. 7, pp.
 48 337–351). New York: Academic Press.
 49 Bourg, C., & Segal, M. (1999). The impact of family
 50 supportive policies and practices on organizational
 51 commitment to the Army. *Armed Forces & Society*,
 52 25, 633–652.
 53 Burnham, M. A., Meredith, L. S., Sherbourne,
 54 C. D., Valdez, R. B., & Vernez, G. (1992).
Army families and soldier readiness. Report No.

- RAND-R-3884-A, RAND Corporation, Santa
 1 Monica, CA.
 2 Burland, D., & Lundquist, J. H. (2012). "The best
 3 years of our lives": Military service, family rela-
 4 tionships, and the life course. In J. M. Wilmoth &
 5 A. S. London (Eds.), *Life course perspectives on*
 6 *military service* (pp. 165–184). New York: Rout-
 7 ledge.
 8 Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A*
 9 *practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Lon-
 10 don: Sage.
 11 Christensen, W. (2011, August). *The politics of*
 12 *foot powder: Depoliticizing motherhood during*
 13 *wartime*. Paper presented at the annual meeting
 14 of the American Sociological Association, Las
 15 Vegas, NV.
 16 Cohan, C. L., & Cole, S. W. (2002). Life course
 17 transitions and natural disaster: marriage, birth,
 18 and divorce following Hurricane Hugo. *Journal of*
 19 *Family Psychology*, 16, 14–25.
 20 Drummet, A. R., Coleman, M., & Cable, S. (2003).
 21 Military families under stress: Implications for
 22 family life education. *Family Relations*, 52,
 23 279–287.
 24 Edin, K., & Kefalas, M. (2005). *Promises I can keep:*
 25 *Why poor women put motherhood before mar-*
 26 *riage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 27 Elder, G. H. (1998). The life course as developmental
 28 theory. *Child Development*, 69, 1–12.
 29 Elder, G. H. (1986). Military times and turning points
 30 in men's lives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22,
 31 233–245.
 32 Elder, G. H., Johnson, M. K., & Crosnoe, R. (2003).
 33 The emergence and development of life course
 34 theory. In J. T. Mortimer & M. J. Shanahan (Eds.),
 35 *Handbook of the life course* (pp. 3–19). New York:
 36 Kluwer Academic/Plenum Press.
 37 Evans, D. (1993, June 18). Chastity would pay for
 38 young Marines as well as taxpayers. *Chicago*
 39 *Tribune*. Retrieved from http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-06-18/news/9306180041_1_marines-enlistment-young
 40 Folbre, N. (2013, January 21). Work in the Walmart-
 41 ocene. *New York Times Economix*. Retrieved from
 42 <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/21/work-in-the-walmartocene>
 43 Gassmann, J. (2010). *Patrolling the homefront: The*
 44 *emotional labor of Army wives volunteering in*
 45 *family readiness groups* (Unpublished doctoral
 46 dissertation). University of Kansas.
 47 Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discov-*
 48 *ery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative*
 49 *research*. Chicago: Aldine.
 50 Goldstein, J. R., & Kenney, C. T. (2001). Mar-
 51 riage delayed or marriage foregone? New cohort
 52 forecasts of first marriage for U.S. women. *Ameri-*
 53 *can Sociological Review*, 66, 506–519.
 54 Gosta, E. A. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare*
 55 *capitalism*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

- 1 Harrell, M. C. (2001a). Army officers' spouses: Have
2 the white gloves been mothballed? *Armed Forces*
3 *& Society*, 28, 55–75.
- 4 Harrell, M. C. (2001b). *Invisible women: Junior*
5 *enlisted Army wives*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND
6 Corporation.
- 7 Hogan, P. F., & Furst Seifert, R. (2010). Marriage
8 and the military: Evidence that those who serve
9 marry earlier and divorce earlier. *Armed Forces &*
10 *Society*, 36, 420–438.
- 11 Huebner, A. J., Mancini, J. A., Wilcox, R. M., Grass,
12 S. R., & Grass, G. A. (2007). Parental deployment
13 and youth in military families: Exploring uncertain-
14 tainty and ambiguous loss. *Family Relations*, 56,
15 112–122.
- 16 Janowitz, M. (1964). *The professional soldier: A*
17 *social and political portrait*. Glencoe, IL: Free
18 Press.
- 19 Karney, B., & Crown, J. S. (2007). *Families under*
20 *stress: An assessment of data, theory, and research*
21 *on marriage and divorce in the military*. Santa
22 Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- 23 Katz, L. F., & Autor, D. H. (1999). Changes in the
24 wage structure and earnings inequality. In O.
25 Ashenfelter & D. Card (Eds.), *Handbook of labor*
26 *economics* (pp. 1463–1555). Philadelphia: Else-
27 vier.
- 28 Kelty, R., Kleykamp, M., & Segal, D. R. (2010). The
29 military and the transition to adulthood. *The Future*
30 *of Children*, 20, 181–207.
- 31 Kleykamp, M. (2012). Labor market outcomes among
32 veterans and military spouses. In J. Wilmoth & A.
33 London (Eds.), *Life course perspectives on mili-
34 tary service* (pp. 144–164). New York: Routledge.
- 35 Laub, J. H., & Sampson R. J. (2003). *Shared begin-
36 nings, divergent lives: Delinquent boys to age 70*.
37 Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- 38 LaRossa, R. (2012). Writing and reviewing
39 manuscripts in the multidimensional world of
40 qualitative research. *Journal of Marriage and*
41 *Family*, 74, 643–659.
- 42 Lesthaeghe, R., & Neidert, L. (2006). The Second
43 Demographic Transition in the United States:
44 Exception or textbook example? *Population and*
45 *Development Review*, 32, 669–698.
- 46 Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic*
47 *inquiry*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- 48 Little, R. W. (1971). *Handbook of military institu-
49 tions*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- 50 Lundquist, J. H. (2004). When race makes no differ-
51 ence: Marriage and the military. *Social Forces*, 83,
52 1–28.
- 53 Lundquist, J. H., & Smith, H. (2005). Family forma-
54 tion in the U.S. military: Evidence from the NLSY.
55 *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67, 1–13.
- 56 Lutz, C. (2009). *The bases of empire: The global*
57 *struggle against U.S. military posts*. New York:
58 New York University Press.
- 59 MacDermid Wadsworth, S. M. (2010). Family risk
60 and resilience in the context of war and terrorism.
61 *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 537–556.
- 62 MacLean, A., & Elder, G. H., Jr. (2007). Military ser-
63 vice in the life course. *Annual Review of Sociology*,
64 33, 175–196.
- 65 Mayer, K. U. (2004). Whose lives? How history, soci-
66 eties and institutions define and shape life courses.
67 *Research in Human Development*, 1, 161–187.
- 68 Mayer, K. U., & Muller, W. (1986). The state and the
69 structure of the life course. In A. B. Sorensen, F.
70 E. Weinert, & L. R. Sherrod (Eds.), *Human devel-
71 opment and the life course: Multidisciplinary per-
72 spectives* (pp. 217–245). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- 73 Moen, P., & Wethington, E. (1998). Midlife develop-
74 ment in a life course context. In S. L. Willis & J. B.
75 Reid (Eds.), *Life in the middle: Psychological and*
76 *social development in middle age* (pp. 3–23). New
77 York: Academic Press.
- 78 Murray-Close, M., & Helppie McFall, B. (2013).
79 *Moving out to move up: Trade-offs between career*
80 *and relationship outcomes among early-career*
81 *economists*. Unpublished manuscript, University
82 of Michigan.
- 83 Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.
84 (2013). *2012 Demographics: Profile of the mili-
85 tary community*. Retrieved from [www.military](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2012_Demographics_Report.pdf)
86 [onesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2012_Demog-](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2012_Demographics_Report.pdf)
87 [raphics_Report.pdf](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2012_Demographics_Report.pdf)
- 88 Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and*
89 *research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA:
90 Sage.
- 91 RAND Corporation. (2008). *Post-deployment stress:
92 What families should know, what families can do*.
93 Santa Monica, CA: Author.
- 94 Rindfuss, R. R. (1991). The young adult years: Diver-
95 sity, structural change, and fertility. *Demography*,
96 28, 493–512.
- 97 Rosen, L., Durand, D., & Martin, J. (2000). Wartime
98 stress and family adaptation. In J. A. Martin, L. N.
99 Rosen, & L. R. Sparacino (Eds.), *The military fam-
100 ily: A practice guide for human service providers*
101 (pp. 123–138). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- 102 Schmitt, E. (1993, December 16). Military marriage
103 seen as no threat. *New York Times*. Retrieved from
104 [www.nytimes.com/1993/12/16/us/military-marria-](http://www.nytimes.com/1993/12/16/us/military-marriage-seen-as-no-threat.html)
105 [ge-seen-as-no-threat.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1993/12/16/us/military-marriage-seen-as-no-threat.html)
- 106 Segal, L., & Sullivan, D. (1998). Trends in home-
107 ownership: Race, demographics, and income. *Eco-*
108 *nomic Perspectives*, 22, 53–72.
- 109 Settersten, R. A. (2008). Social policy and the transi-
110 tion to adulthood. In F. F. Furstenberg Jr. & R.
111 G. Rumbaut (Eds.), *On the frontier of adulthood:
112 Theory, research, and public policy* (pp. 534–560).
113 Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 114 Settersten, R. A., & Hägestad, G. O. (1996). What's
115 the latest? Cultural age deadlines for family transi-
116 tions. *The Gerontologist*, 36, 178–188.

1 Sironi, M., & Furstenberg, F. F. (2012). Trends in
2 the economic independence of young adults in the
3 United States: 1973–2007. *Population and Development Review*, 38, 609–630.
4
5 Smock, P. J., Manning, W. D., & Porter, M. (2005). “Everything’s there except money”:
6 How money shapes decisions to marry among
7 cohabitators. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67,
8 680–696.
9 Teachman, J. (2009). Military service, race, and the
10 transition to marriage and cohabitation. *Journal of Family Issues*, 30, 1433–1454.
11
12 Uecker, J., & Stokes, C. (2008). Early marriage in the
13 United States. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70,
14 835–846.
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

U.S. Army. (2010). *U.S. Army deployment readiness handbook for DA civilians and family members*. Retrieved from www.myarmyonesource.com/cmsresources/Army%20OneSource/Media/PDFs/Family%20Programs%20and%20Services/Family%20Programs/Deployment%20Readiness/Operation%20READY/DEPLOY_READY_CIVILIAN_FAMILY_links.pdf

U.S. Army. (2007). *Welcome to the Army family*. Retrieved from www.futuresoldiers.com/downloads/resources/RPI_999_Spouse_Family_Guide.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. (2008). *Report of the 10th quadrennial review of military compensation*. Washington, DC: Defense Advisory Committee on Military Compensation.

Uncorrected Proofs

QUERIES TO BE ANSWERED BY AUTHOR

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please mark your corrections and answers to these queries directly onto the proof at the relevant place. DO NOT mark your corrections on this query sheet.

Queries from the Copyeditor:

AQ1. Please provide Keywords for this article.
