Family Functioning in the Families of Civilian Husbands of Female Service Members in Light of Wives Military Service

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Introduction

• Husbands do not serve in the military, but are affected by wives’ service (Segal, 1986; Segal & Segal, 2003).

• Spouses perceived military life as having negative influences on their work opportunities (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008).

• Deployment forces the family to meet the associated challenges, so that it can continue to function effectively during the absence of the service member (Turner, 2009).
Perspectives

• **Time Availability Perspective**
  Division of household labor is strategically allocated according to time availability by spouses

• **Gender Ideology Perspective**
  Household labor is divided based on individuals’ attitudes about gender (traditional vs egalitarian gender ideologies)

  (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010)
Methods

• Phenomenological study of 20 civilian husbands of active duty female service members around the US.
• Husbands were on average 40.8 years old, white, and well educated.
• In-depth telephone interviews lasting between 1-2 hours
• Data was analyzed using a General Inductive Approach.
Results

• **Domestic and International Relocations**
  - Shift from full time employment and careers to unemployment and underemployment.

• **Domestic Relocations**
  - Increased share of tasks and sole decision-making about important issues.

• **Deployment**
  - Increased responsibility in caregiving and tasks.
  - Some husbands worked more hours while others worked less hours to perform child care duties.
Discussion

• Time Availability Theory best helps explain changes husbands made to family lives.

• Reports of unemployment, and underemployment following relocation were similar to findings by Little and Hisnanick (2007).

• Similar to findings by Hertz (1999) husbands reorganized their work schedules and work so that they can actively participate in childcare.
Discussion Questions

• Can findings from qualitative data provide convincing evidence of a test of competing hypotheses?

• What does the family functioning of civilian husbands tell researchers about military and civilian families?