

A Comparison of Maternal Stress Indicators for Women Mothering from Afar and Proximally

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines several indices of maternal stress (Hock et al. 1989) to answer the question, “Does where a child resides affect the stress a mother experiences in parenting?” The analysis focuses on maternal self-report measures using the Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale (MSAS; Hock et al. 1989) and its three subscales. Additionally, I argue that career salience, or the importance one places on one’s career, offers a protective measure to maternal stress. In the remainder of the paper, I will review the literature on long distance mothering, deployment parenting and maternal stress and then introduce the research study, discuss the findings and results, and make suggestions for policy reforms.

KEYWORDS: maternal stress, MSAS, deployment military, career salience

Introduction

Starting in 1975, the United States military implemented a series of policy changes. These changes allowed women to remain in service when becoming pregnant. Prior policy forced women to choose between service and children, however, with the end of conscription, the US military faced shortfalls in personnel and needed to welcome more women into its ranks (Murdoch et al. 2006; Snyder 2003). Today women constitute over 15% of the active-duty forces in the US (DoD 2016). Over 200,000 women serve, with approximately 10% of deployed troops being women. Women

can be deployed as soon as six months after giving birth, so the deployment of mothers is a routine part of military service, and an area that has been overlooked in research on families.

A vast body of literature exists concerning immiserated women performing domestic labor in foreign countries, separated from their families (Schmalzbauer 2004). However, literature is rather thin on women in the military mothering from afar. The US presence in the Republic of Korea is approximately 35,000 personnel, with slightly more than 10% women. Korea is still considered a hardship tour, and many service members choose not to bring families with them, or their commands do not support the movement of families. Hardship locations are those that the military considers living conditions to be substantially below those in the continental US. Because of this, Korea is an optimal location to examine the maternal stresses that women in the military face while parenting proximally and afar.

Literature review

Long distance parenting

When a mother must leave her child for long periods of time, other-mothers are key in maintaining family unity and easing children's emotional burdens of being separated from their mothers. Other-mother is defined by nurturing and caring, not by a biological connection to the child (Stack and Burton 1994; Hooks 1984). Other-mothers can be blood related, such as grandmothers, aunts, or sisters, or not blood related, such as friends or neighbors (Schmalzbauer 2004; Collins 1992; Dodson 1998). This role is crucial in transnational parenting, where the parent's absence is for a prolonged period (Artico 2003; Levitt 2001). Other-mothers can ease the child's discomfort by reassuring the child that their mother is a dedicated parent and her absence is a great personal sacrifice she is making for the sake of the family (Schmalzbauer 2004). Additionally, this parenting arrangement bolsters new family formations and challenges the standard of the nuclear family (Wong 2014). Other-mothers are just one of the strategies women mobilize when facing the challenges of reconciling migration and care provision. In this way, the mother provides for the child materially, while other mothers provide emotional and nurturing support (Wong 2014). Mothering from afar takes a lot of work to maintain connections (Schmalzbauer 2004). Mothers work to both economically and emotionally support their children

from afar (Yeoh et al. 2004). Transnational communication is not always an easy feat and is embedded in unequal power-geometrics (Yeoh et al. 2004; Wong 2014). Basically, mothering from afar comes easier to more economically advantaged women. The remoteness of the parent or child contributes to the difficulties mothers face in communicating. However, the declining costs of telecommunications allow mothers to parent from afar more readily today than ever before (Peng and Wong 2013; Wong 2014).

Peng and Wong (2013) explored the phenomenon of intensive mothering by transnational mothers in terms of virtual mothering, or super-mothering across borders of time and space (Hewitt 2009; Millman 2013). Here mothers send texts saying goodnight or call in the morning to wake the child, even going to great lengths to send text reminders for the child. Although absent from their child physically, these mothers work hard to remain a constant, daily presence in their children's lives. These women are enacting "good mothering" to the best of their ability. On the opposite end of the distance parenting spectrum, Peng and Wong (2013) describe passive mothers; those that find it too difficult and painful to try to interact regularly with their children via long distance. Passive mothers try to minimize contact because they feel impotent in tending to their children's needs from such a distance and those feelings of impotency lead to stress and frustration that is not easily relieved. These two extremes are just two ways mothers manage their emotions when doing the work of mothering from afar.

Deployment parenting

Kelley (1997) characterized military-induced separations as significant for both mother and child in that the mother cannot fulfill her role as primary attachment figure. While these separations are usually much more finite than transnational mothering, they occur frequently and repeatedly. Mothers' parenting goal of preserving their special bond with their child can be difficult to maintain from afar (Agazio 2012). When mothers deploy and leave their children behind, they want to normalize life as much as possible. In a two-parent household, the father usually becomes the primary caregiver, supplemented by nannies and/or grandparents. Mothers tend to keep much of their control in this arrangement. The most common plan for single mothers is leaving the child with grandma (Agazio 2012; Goodman et al. 2013). Here the mother faces relinquishing more control to her own

mother. Mothers have many concerns when relinquishing care of their children to others.

The primary fear mothers articulate when deploying is that the child will forget them. This is most common for mothers of small children (Agazio 2012; Kelly 1997; Tucker and Kelley 2009). Mothers' fears arise from the fact that they must entrust primary care of their child to someone else. Relinquishing control can prove difficult for mothers and many times they must distance themselves to achieve this. Additionally, mothers worry about missing milestones and life events. Most deployments are a year in length and children change a lot in that time. Mothers mentally prepare themselves for separation while still planning strategies to keep communication open.

While mothers cannot provide the fulltime daily support as they do when they are home, deployed mothers focus on "being there" as much as they can for their children and reassuring them that she will return safe and sound (Agazio 2012). They develop routines of communication, depending on what is available. While having strong lines of communication reassures children, sometimes the toll of involved parenting compromises the military mission by distracting mothers. The military is a demanding profession and one that cannot afford distractions, especially during deployments and wartime operations. The biggest problem distracting mothers is when their care plan fails. Family care plans are developed by single and dual-career military personnel for times when they must leave their child. This plan is developed to designate someone to care fulltime for the child in the parents' absence. According to the Department of Defense (DoD),

"Service members are responsible to ensure family members/dependents are cared for during deployments, reserve mobilizations and temporary duty, and at all other times which the service member is unavailable. Formal documentation of a family care plan is required under the following: service member with primary or shared physical custody of a minor child; both members of dual military couple have primary or shared physical custody of a minor child."

When a family care plan falls apart, the mother is generally thousands of miles away from her child, in a foreign country. Many times, the mother's chain of command does not discern the immediacy of such an event (Goodman et al. 2013; Kelley 1997; Tucker & Kelley 2009). Mothers tend to perceive less support from the military than fathers or non-mothers do, and as such, experience more stress related to deployments.

Maternal stress

Hock et al. (1989) developed the Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale, a 35 item, self-administered questionnaire. Each item is on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale is meant to measure maternal separation anxiety, defined as “an unpleasant emotional state reflecting a mother’s apprehension about leaving her child.” Parental separation anxiety is distinctly different from that experienced by the child and as such, needs to be measured independently. The scale is composed of three factors that Hock reported a Cronbach’s alphas of .90, .71 and .79. The first factor, maternal separation anxiety, reflects worry, sadness, and guilt, as well as mother’s belief that a child suffers from care by someone else. The second factor, perception of separation effects on the child, measures mothers’ perceptions of the child’s reaction to separation and the effects of separation on the child. The third factor, employment-related separation concerns, examines mothers’ ability to manage work and family.

Subsequent research using Hock’s MSAS demonstrates that employment preference and status are important when examining maternal stress (DeMeis et al. 1986; Erdwins et al. 2001; Hock et al. 2001; Hock & DeMeis 1990; McBride 1988; Symons 1998; Wille 1995). Greater labor market attachment predicts less maternal separation anxiety. In a two-by-two model, Hock and McBride (1986) compared women who preferred employment to those staying home, working, and not working. Findings support the hypothesis of labor attachment reducing maternal stress. Mothers who preferred staying home, whether they worked or not, had more MSA than those who preferred working. Several studies confirm that child outcomes depend more on maternal attitude toward employment than maternal employment status. Adding to this distinction, Erdwins et al. (2001) found that MSA can be mitigated if the mother feels confident in her child-care arrangements. The more satisfied a mother is with her childcare situation, the less MSA she reports.

Hock and DeMeis (1990) examined MSAS and Greenhaus’ career salience, reaffirming the connection between employment preference and stress. Women with higher levels of career salience reported less maternal stress than those with lower career salience scores. Women with higher levels of career salience reported less investment in the maternal role. Also, these women reported less employment-related stress (ERS) than those with lower reported career salience. Furthermore, McBride (1988) found that mothers who stayed

home reported higher levels of ERS than those who were more career oriented, while Symons (1998) found that women exhibited less avoidance coping and lower maternal stress if they were career oriented than those who remained home. Finally, Wille (1995) determined that those women who did not plan to return to work after the birth of a child experienced more ERS than those who intended to.

Career salience

Almquist and Angrist (1970) discovered that women with high levels of career salience and those in atypical occupations tend to have more commitment to career than those in traditional female jobs. Adding to the discussion of job satisfaction and having children, Hull (1999) suggests that career salience is the predictor of having children, rather than an outcome. Moreover, high skilled women must manage misperceptions that arise in the workplace due to childbearing. Women are perceived much more negatively for having children than men in high skilled fields.

Highly skilled professional women tend to have a strong work identity, which Gash (2008) attributes to decisions to postpone or forego childbearing. Additionally, Bulanda and Lippmann (2012), in examining highly motivated female workers, found women timed children around career milestones, such as putting off a baby until one made partner or earned a promotion. Women learn they need to accommodate work in their timing of fertility, otherwise fertility negatively affects work outcomes (Bulanda & Lippmann 2012, Taniguchi 1999). Adair (2013) and Mason and Goulden (2004) attribute more negative feelings toward babies to women's work commitment. In Mason and Goulden's (2004) examination of female professors, the authors found that 1/3 of fast-track women never have children, while women who receive tenure are twice as likely to be single and childfree 12 years post PhD. Iskra (2010) found that female officers in the military face similar choices in career progression and family formation

Research questions

Mothering is a demanding and stressful job in the best circumstances. Whether parenting from afar or proximally, mothers face a myriad of stressors. I construct models and examine whether mothering from afar generates more maternal separation anxiety than having the child with her.

Additionally, I examine whether mothers whose children are not with them during a deployment perceive more negative effects from separation than those whose children reside with them. Finally, I formulate a series of models to examine employment-related stress and its relationship to where a child resides. I suggest that career salience and security in one's family care plan offer protective benefits to these stressors.

Hypothesis one: Controlling for basic demographic variables, I expect that women who are deployed without their children will experience more MSA than those who have their children with them.

Hypothesis two: Controlling for basic demographic variables, I expect that women who are deployed without their children will experience more PSE than those who have their children with them.

Hypothesis three: Controlling for basic demographic variables, I expect to find that women deployed without their children experience more ERS than women who have their children with them.

Data and methods

I chose to use the nonprobability strategies of convenience and snowball sampling. The researcher arranged to become the administrator of a social media group that informally served military members in the ROK. Members were vetted to make sure they fit the criteria of being females on active duty in the U.S. military in Korea. While not all women in the population of interest may have social media, the researcher felt confident that this method, coupled with travelling to remote bases along the demilitarized zone, would produce more robust results.

Data collection commenced in May of 2015 and concluded in November 2016. In total, 564 women participated in the online survey, with a 95% completion rate. Approximately 208,000 served in the United State Military on active duty. 3986 women were serving in the Republic of Korea during data collection. Because of the anonymity of the instrument, there is a possible issue that someone not fitting my sampling criteria could participate, but the researcher accepts that possibility as reaching participants via social media improved my ability to obtain responses.

Survey construction

The survey instrument was constructed under the guidance of work done by Czaja and Blair (2005), utilizing the online platform, Qualtrics, through

a contract North Carolina State University has. Qualtrics is a simple, web-based survey tool to conduct survey research evaluations and other data collection activities (Snow and Mann 2013). The software enables users to do many kinds of online data collection and basic analysis. Qualtrics allowed me to build in to the instrument skip logic, making the survey easier for participants to answer. Skip logic is a feature that changes what question or page a respondent sees next based on how they answer the current question. It is also known as conditional branching and creates a custom path through a survey instrument based on the respondent's answers.

Survey deployment

In order to keep respondents not only anonymous, but also comfortable that they had complete anonymity, I utilized the option to not track IP addresses on Qualtrics and allowed for undisclosed submissions through a web page I designed, <http://www//chelliplummer.com>. I printed business cards and travelled throughout the Republic of Korea, distributing the cards to women in military uniforms and asking them to participate. I enabled the mobile survey optimization on Qualtrics so women could take the survey on their cellphones.

Dependent variable

The dependent variables are the component measures of the MSAS (MSAS; Hock et al. 1989), which provides three subscales: (1) Maternal Separation Anxiety (MSA), where high scores are related to maternal sadness, worry, and guilt about separation, as well as apprehension that non-maternal caregivers may not adequately meet her child's needs; (2) Perception of Separation Effects on the Child (PSE), where high scores reflect belief in the disadvantages of separation experiences on child social development; and, (3) Employment-related Separation Concerns (ERS), where high scores reflect anxious concerns about the competing demands of maternal role and career/occupation. Adequate factor structure, construct validity, internal consistency, and test-retest reliability of this measure have been demonstrated.

Independent variable

The first independent variable is where the child lives. Possible answers are with the mother in Korea, with the other parent, with another family member or my child currently maintains two homes. The second independent variable is women's reported comfort with her family care plan. The third independent

variable is woman's reported level of career salience. Additionally, for ERS I have a fourth independent variable of woman's reported confidence in her childcare.

Control variables

The first control variable of interest is the variable asking if the respondent is an officer or enlisted member. The second control was race, followed by highest education level attained, relationship status, and age.

Analysis

As my three dependent variables are continuous, and my independent variables are a mixture of categorical and continuous, the best method for analysis is multiple linear regression. Multiple linear regression allows us to look at the linear relationship between two or more normally distributed predictors and one normally distributed interval outcome variable. The purpose of a multiple regression is to find an equation that best predicts the Y variable as a linear function of the X variables. Multiple regression allows for determination of the overall fit of the model and the relative contribution of each independent variable. I generate a series of models for each dependent variable.

Being a parent tends to be a stressful endeavor in general. Being a mother in the military seems to have its own distinct stressors that may have an additive effect. Careers in the military require separations from family, often for long periods. As a result, women in the military must perform their familial roles from afar. As the Republic of Korea is a remote deployment, many families do not accompany soldiers on their tour of duty, especially to Area I, which is in the northern most section of the country. This makes my research location optimal for studying the differences between women who enact their familial roles from afar, and those who enact them on a daily, proximal basis. For this research question, I turn to work done by Hock et al, (1989), Hock (1976) and Weinberg and Leif (1979) in creating questions that focus on family separations and the stress involved.

Results

538 respondents answered for the first dependent variable, while 407 answered questions for the second dependent variable. 28% of the women have served 5 years or less, 21% served more than 5 years but no more than 10, 17% served more than 10 years but no more than 15, while 34% served more than 15 years. 198 of the women are in non-traditionally female positions while 366

are. 201 of the women are officers and 363 are enlisted members. Women range in age from 22-46 with the mean of 32.7 and SD of 6.9. 33% report they are White, 32% Black, 15% Hispanic, 11% other and 9% mixed. 26% of the service member have a high school diploma or GED only, 19% have some college, 34% are college graduates, while 20% have graduate degrees. 37% are married, 16% single, 23% divorced and 24% report being in a committed relationship. 50% of the women are in the army, 22% in the air force, 22% navy, 6% marines and <1% coast guard.

My first dependent variable, maternal separation anxiety (MSA) is made up of 10 questions with a Cronbach’s alpha of .8535. Questions are on a five-point Likert scale with some reverse scored. Statements are in Table 1.

Table 1: Variables that make up MSA (alpha .8535)

I miss being with my child when I am away from him/her
Only a mother best knows how to comfort her distressed child
I worry when someone else cares for my child
I worry about my childcare arrangements frequently
It takes a long time for my child to get used to new things
I don’t like to leave my child
Finding reliable childcare is easy (reverse score)
My child will benefit from group experiences such as nursery school (reverse score)
If I could choose between working and staying home with my child I would stay home
Sometimes I feel trapped by parenting responsibilities (reverse score)

My second dependent variable, perceptions of separation effects (PSE) is made up of six statements with a Cronbach’s alpha of .7866. Questions are on a five-point Likert scale with some reverse scored. Statements are in table 2.

Table 2: Variables that make up PSE (alpha .7866)

It takes a long time for my child to get used to new things
I worry about my childcare arrangements frequently
My child will benefit from group experiences such as nursery school (reverse score)
I worry when someone else cares for my child
I don’t like to leave my child
Finding reliable childcare is easy (reverse score)

My third dependent variable, employment-related stress (ERS) is made up of nine statements with a Cronbach's alpha of .8546. Questions are on a five-point Likert scale with some reverse scored. Statements are in table 3.

Table 3: Variables that make up ERS (alpha .8474)

My life would not be complete without my career (reverse score)
I would resent my job if it meant being away from my child for long periods of time
I have a systematic plan for how I am going to build my career (reverse score)
My career brings me a lot of personal satisfaction (reverse score)
I would regret postponing my career in order to stay home with my child (reverse score)
Children are very demanding (reverse score)
I often wish I had more time for my career (reverse score)
Sometimes I feel trapped by parenting responsibilities (reverse score)
If I could choose between working and staying home with my child I would want to stay home

To examine the relationship between where a child resides and types of maternal stress, I estimate a series of models for my three dependent variables in tables four, five and six. For maternal separation anxiety (MSA), I first estimate a model with only the constant and the predictor of where a child lives. The model predicts for those whose child lives with the other parent a decrease of 2.02 point on the MSA score while those whose child is with another relative are predicted to experience a 4.42-point increase.

The next model introduces the control variables military category of rank, race, education, relationship status and age. If the child lives with the other parent, the model predicts a decrease in MSA of 2.51, whereas if the child lives with another relative, the model predicts an increase in MSA of 3.37, net the effects of all other variables in the model. When examining the control variable for race, the model predicts that all other races experience more MSA than white mothers, however, the coefficient for the "mixed" category is not statistically significant.

The third model estimated includes a measure of the woman's security in her family care plan. The model predicts that mothers whose child lives with the other parents will report MSA scores 3.22 lower than the baseline, mothers whose child is with them, while those whose child resides with another family member expect a 2.74 increase, net the effects of all other variables in

the model. Race is statistically significant, except for “mixed.” Security in one’s family care plan seems to offer a protective measure. It is statistically significant, and every level of the variable predicts a lower level of MSA.

The final model of table 4 introduces the predictor for career salience. The model *F* is statistically significant to the .000 level, with an adjusted *R*² .2404, meaning the model explains 24% of the variance in MSA. The variable for career salience is not quite statistically significant, which led me to estimate the likelihood ratio. The likelihood ratio test yields a χ^2 of 3.82, with a *p* of .05 which indicates that the full model is an improvement over the restricted model.

Table 4: Effects of where a child resides on maternal separation anxiety (MSA)

MSA	Model One	Model Two	Model Three	Model Four
Where does child reside				
With other parent	-2.02* (1.01)	-2.51* (1.01)	-3.22* (0.95)	-2.97* (0.95)
With another family member	4.42* (1.39)	3.37* (1.40)	2.74* (1.30)	3.08* (1.31)
Military category of rank				
Enlisted		-0.50 (1.49)	-1.13 (1.39)	-2.38 (1.53)
Race				
Black		3.20* (1.25)	2.17* (0.97)	2.36* (0.97)
Hispanic		3.36* (1.25)	2.72* (1.15)	3.03* (1.16)
Mixed		2.98 (1.53)	2.43 (1.42)	2.86* (1.43)
Other		5.42* (1.51)	4.58* (1.41)	4.04* (1.42)
Education				
Some college		-1.04 (1.16)	-0.91 (1.07)	-0.81 (1.07)

	Bachelor's degree	0.86 (1.13)	0.71 (1.04)	0.83 (1.04)
	Graduate Degree	3.04 (1.92)	2.17 (1.78)	2.56 (1.78)
Relationship status				
	Single	-0.61 (1.41)	-0.57 (1.30)	-0.99 (1.32)
	Divorced	0.93 (1.03)	0.13 (0.96)	-0.14 (0.96)
	Committed relationship	-0.11 (1.15)	-0.49 (1.07)	-0.52 (0.96)
Age		-0.11 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.07)	
Family care plan				
	Disagree		-5.16* (2.30)	-4.61* (2.31)
	Neither agree nor disagree		-6.73* (2.21)	-6.48* (2.20)
	Agree		-9.57* (2.00)	-9.48* (1.99)
	Strongly agree		-12.70* (2.13)	-12.62* (2.12)
Career salience				-0.20 (0.11)
Constant	29.86* (0.50)	30.99* (3.16)	39.10* (3.40)	42.95* (3.94)
Adjusted R^2	.0453	.1021	.2337	.24

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$

Table five examines the relationship between perceived separation effects (PSE) and where the child resides. I first estimate a model with the intercept and the predictor of where the child resides only. For this model, the variable indicating where the child resides is only statistically significant for women whose child lives with the other parent or maintains two homes. The model predicts those women will have scores 3.84 and 3.59 points lower than the baseline.

The second model introduces the control variables of military category of rank, race, education, relationship status and age. Again, the coefficients for children living with the other parent and children maintaining two homes are statistically significant. If the child lives with the other parent, the model predicts a decrease of 3.96 in PSE score, net the effects of all other variables in the model, while it predicts a decrease of 3.98 for those whose child maintains two homes.

The third model estimated includes a measure of the woman’s security in her family care plan. This model predicts a decrease in PSE if the child resides with the other parent (-4.56) and an increase if the child maintains two homes (4.35), net the effects of all other variables in the model. Security in one’s family care plan seems to ameliorate PSE for those who are the most secure with their plan.

The fourth model introduces career salience into the estimation. The model predicts that if the child lives with the other parent (3.01) or maintains two homes (1.95) PSE will be less. However, if the child lives with another family member, the model predicts an increase in PSE of 2.87, net the effects of all other variables in the model. Additionally, military category of rank is statistically significant with the model predicting enlisted members having a score 3.77 less than officers. Again, security in one’s family care plan seems protective for those who feel the strongest security. This model introduces the measure for career salience. The model predicts that for each one unit increase in the score for career salience, PSE with drop by .73, net the effects of all other variables in the model.

Table 5: Effects of where a child resides on perceived separation effects (PSE)

PSE	Model One	Model Two	Model Three	Model Four
Where does child reside				
With other parent	-3.84* (0.86)	-3.96* (0.89)	-4.56* (0.88)	-3.01* (0.82)
My child maintains two homes	-3.692* (0.95)	-3.98* (0.97)	-4.35* (0.96)	-1.96* (0.92)
With another family member	1.61 (1.16)	1.51 (1.21)	0.92 (1.18)	2.87* (1.10)

Military category of rank				
	Enlisted	1.07 (0.87)	1.08 (1.23)	-3.77* (1.26)
Race				
	Black	1.07 (0.87)	0.43 (0.85)	1.03 (0.78)
	Hispanic	1.47 (1.05)	1.10 (1.26)	2.16* (0.93)
	Mixed	0.49 (1.30)	0.11 (1.26)	1.26 (1.15)
	Other	2.96* (1.27)	2.37 (1.24)	3.81* (1.14)
Education				
	Some college	-0.53 (0.97)	-0.44 (0.94)	-0.15 (0.85)
	Bachelor's degree	0.59 (0.95)	0.51 (0.92)	0.87 (0.83)
	Graduate Degree	1.53 (1.62)	0.96 (1.57)	1.99 (1.43)
Relationship status				
	Single	0.46 (1.18)	0.43 (1.15)	-1.10 (1.06)
	Divorced	0.92 (0.87)	0.47 (0.85)	-0.68 (0.78)
	Committed relationship	-0.90 (0.97)	-1.06 (0.94)	-1.31 (0.85)
Age		-0.09 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.06)	-0.07 (0.06)
Family care plan				
	Disagree		-2.81 (2.03)	-0.70 (1.85)
	Neither agree nor disagree		-2.30 (1.94)	-1.33 (1.77)

Agree			-3.99*	-3.75*
			(1.76)	(1.59)
Strongly agree			-6.79*	-6.24*
			(1.88)	(1.70)
Career sa- lience				-0.73*
				(0.09)
Constant	23.48**	24.33*	27.69*	41.63*
	(0.47)	(0.86)	(2.99)	(3.21)
Adjusted R^2	.0863	.0966	.1520	.3042

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$

Table 6 examines the relationship between employment-related stress (ERS) and where the child lives. I first estimate a model with the intercept and the predictor of where the child resides. The model predicts a decrease in ERS for women whose child lives with the other parent (-4.08) or maintains two homes (-5.16). Model two introduces control variables of military category of rank, race, education, relationship status and age. The model predicts a decrease in ERS for women whose child lives with the other parent (-4.09) or maintains two homes (-5.14), net the effects of all other variables in the model. While that is statistically significant, none of the rest of the control variables are.

The fourth model estimated introduces security in childcare. Two categories of the predictor variables are statistically significant. This model predicts a decrease in ERS if the child resides with the other parent (-4.04) or maintains two homes (-5.40), net the effects of all other variables in the model. Again, mother’s security in her family care plan does not appear to be protective in this model. For the variable indicating confidence in childcare, two of the five categories are statistically significant, with those expressing ambivalence (-3.64) or strongly agreeing (-3.27) that they don’t worry about childcare seeing reductions in ERS, net the effects of all other variables in the model.

The fifth model incorporates career salience into the equation. All categories of where a child resides are statistically significant in this model, with those in the categories of child living with other parent (-2.06) or maintaining two homes (-1.65) expected to have lower ERS scores, while those whose child resides with another family member (2.54) are expected to have higher ERS scores, net the effects of all other variables in the model.

Additionally, this model predicts enlisted members will have a score 6.31 lower than officers on ERS, net the effects of all other variables in the model. The only category of relationship status that is statistically significant is “in a committed relationship” (1.66), which shows a protective value for ERS. Also, only those women who worry the least (3.23) about childcare have decreases in their ERS scores that are statistically significant. Finally, career salience seems to offer protective measures in that for every one-point increase in career salience, the model predicts a 1.27 decrease in ERS score, net the effects of all other variables in the model.

Table 6: The effects of where a child resides on employment-related stress(ERS)

ERS	Model One	Model Two	Model Three	Model Four	Model Five
Where does child reside					
With other parent	-.408* (0.84)	-4.09* (0.85)	-4.35* (0.87)	-4.04* (0.91)	-2.06* (0.62)
My child maintains two homes	-5.16* (0.93)	-5.14* (0.93)	-5.40* (0.95)	-5.40* (0.95)	-1.65* (0.69)
With another family member	-1.11 (1.13)	-0.26 (1.16)	-.56 (1.17)	-0.56 (1.17)	2.54* (0.81)
Military category of rank					
Enlisted		1.90 (1.21)	1.82 (1.21)	1.82 (1.21)	-6.31* (0.93)
Race					
Black		-0.83 (0.83)	-1.02 (0.84)	-0.87 (0.84)	0.10 (0.57)
Hispanic		-0.41 (1.00)	-0.49 (1.00)	-0.36 (1.00)	1.39* (0.68)
Mixed		-1.65 (1.24)	-1.81 (1.25)	-1.81 (1.24)	0.11 (0.84)
Other		-1.30 (1.22)	-1.53 (1.23)	-1.60 (1.23)	0.85 (0.84)
Education					
Some college		-0.15 (0.93)	-0.12 (0.93)	-0.03 (0.93)	0.49 (0.63)
Bachelor's degree		-0.54 (0.91)	-0.10 (0.91)	-0.08 (0.90)	0.56 (0.61)
Graduate Degree		-0.43 (1.55)	-0.61 (1.55)	-0.45 (1.55)	1.19 (1.05)

Relationship status						
	Single	1.71 (1.13)	1.70 (1.13)	1.64 (1.13)	-0.88 (0.77)	
	Divorced	1.39 (0.83)	1.22 (0.84)	1.29 (0.84)	-0.82 (0.57)	
	Committed relationship	-1.00 (0.93)	-1.11 (0.93)	-1.23 (0.93)	-1.66* (0.63)	
Age						
		-0.04 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.04)	
Family care plan						
	Disagree		-2.21 (2.00)	-0.81 (2.12)	1.49 (1.43)	
	Neither agree nor disagree		-1.28 (1.92)	0.73 (2.11)	0.91 (1.42)	
	Agree		-1.38 (1.74)	1.07 (2.05)	-0.25 (1.38)	
	Strongly agree		-2.80 (1.86)	-0.23 (2.18)	-0.29 (1.47)	
Worry about child care						
	Disagree			-2.45 (1.47)	-0.35 (0.99)	
	Neither agree nor disagree			-3.64* (1.45)	-1.00 (0.99)	
	Agree			-1.78 (1.45)	-0.70 (0.98)	
	Strongly agree			-3.27* (1.65)	-3.23* (1.11)	
Career salience						
	Constant	25.42* (0.46)	25.77* (2.54)	27.01* (2.95)	27.02* (2.96)	51.11* (2.37)
Adjusted R^2						
		.1141	.1584	.1584	.1718	.6246

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$

Discussion and conclusion

Women serving in the military on active duty in the Republic of Korea struggle with the everyday stresses of parenting that all parents experience. However, Korea is a unique microcosm of military service because it is considered a hardship tour. This means that families may or may not elect or be selected to accompany their service members. When surveying women

serving in Korea, over 50% of the respondents were mothers. Of these, slightly over $\frac{1}{2}$ the women had their children in Korea with them, while the other mothers did not. Because of this, comparing women in a forward position by where their child resided became a natural way to study maternal stress.

Hock's (1989) first component of their MSAS scale is that of maternal separation anxiety. My expectation was that women deployed without their children would experience more MSA than women who have their children with them in Korea. My hypothesis was only partially supported in that it depended on who the child was living with. If the child was with the other parent, women reported less MSA. However, if the child was with another family member, women experienced more MSA. While relationship status was not statistically significant in my models, there may be a secondary factor, such that those who are married are more comfortable leaving the child with the other parent than single or divorced women.

Having confidence in their family care plan did provide protective measures. The stronger the women felt about her care plan, the stronger the reduction in stress. Prior research indicates that a care plan that falls apart can be highly stressful for parents away from their children in general, but even more so for women, as the lion's share of the care work is traditionally hers.

Despite prior literature supporting my hypothesis that women with higher career salience would experience less MSA, this was not supported. This could be reflective of my sample in that it is an older group of women than overall in the military as well as being on a hardship tour that may lower career salience. I did discover that women of color tend to have higher rates of MSA than white women. This could represent cultural differences, as many minorities are first- or second-generation immigrants in the military.

Another component of Hock's model is perceived separation effects (PSE). My second hypothesis, that women who deployed without their children would perceive more negative effects from the separation was marginally supported by the models, however, the relationship is more nuanced than expected. If the child is with the other parent, or maintains two homes, perceived separation effects are reduced. This may be because the mother feels secure in the other parent's care of the child. Being secure in one's family care plan appears to only matter for those who moderately agree with the statement. In the full model, military category of rank is statistically significant. This is the model with career salience and the model predicts that enlisted members will

have less PSE than officers. This could be reflective of relationship status as officers in my study tend to be married more than enlisted members. Moreover, co-parenting may provide a security in one's family care plan. This reduction in PSE due to career salience supports prior research that employment attachment can serve as a preventative measure for PSE. Women who are more invested in their careers will experience less employment related stress, and this is enhanced by involvement in the care of the child by the other parent.

The final component of Hock's model is employment-related stress (ERS). My hypothesis, that women who have their children in Korea with them experience more ERS than those whose children are not with them was supported, but again not in the exact way I predicted. All models predict a decrease in ERS when the child resides with the other parent or maintains two homes. Much like PSE, this may be because of the security in one's family care plan when co-parenting. Women may be better able to focus on their careers when the other parent is caring for the child.

Enlisted members experience lower levels of ERS than officers, leading me to believe that employment attachment for higher skilled women increases ERS. Enlisted members may feel that parenting is not as big a drain on their careers as officers because officers have a much stricter career progression. Career salience seems to reduce the effect of where the child lives for the categories of with the other parent or maintains two homes, while model five is the only model that the child living with another relative becomes statistically significant. With another family member appears to increase ERS.

In examining ERS, when a woman can focus on her career, and her career is important to her, the child being with a spouse may allow for more work engagement whereas being with another family members detracts from work, thus increasing ERS. While the relationship of the child living with another family member and ERS is not statistically significant, it appears that the stress of the child not living with a parent increases work stress giving credence to the spillover theory that one's family life encroaches on one's work life.

This research project serves to illuminate parental stress in mothers deployed overseas. While my hypotheses were only partially supported, the data seems to support the general theoretical perspectives. Moreover, this research points to policy implications for the DoD, namely that having a child with you in a deployment situation may not be the best way to reduce parental stress, however, it depends on who is caring for the child. Additionally, the military

needs to work to make sure parents have workable and reliable family care plans in order to limit distractions to the mission. Finally, it should be examined why there is a difference in employment stress between officers and enlisted. Clearly there are demands on officers that are not placed on enlisted personnel and this may be a factor in retention.

Further research should examine parental stress for women in the military on active duty in multiple locations. The relationship between where a child resides and a mother's stress is nuanced and complicated, more research needs to be conducted to untangle just exactly what is going on. Because women are more likely to be divorced in the military than men, and stress is related to where the child lives, the military would be well served by offering marriage counseling, especially to dual military couples.

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