

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY ACQUAINTANCES:
MILITARY SPOUSE SOJOURNERS, FACEBOOK GROUPS, AND COPING WITH
ACCULTURATIVE STRESSORS

A THESIS PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

COMMUNICATION

AUGUST 2016

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Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without my committee - the professors whose teaching introduced me to the specialties of social media and intercultural communication, and who gave me the tools to be able to undertake communications inquiry.

Thank you Professor Buente for introducing me to the exciting field of social media research and encouraging me to pursue this study. You gave me the knowledge and analytic framework to be able to carry it out. Many thanks for all the time you have taken to discuss my ideas and guide my research.

Thank you Professor Kramer for your thought-provoking lectures and interesting class discussions about intercultural communication. They not only prepared me for the writing of this thesis, but also contributed to my understanding of my own life experiences as a sojourner.

Thank you Professor Dalisay for grounding me in communications theory, and for patiently leading me through the processes of constructing research questions and rigorously designing studies. It was a steep learning curve for me, but you got me through it.

Thanks are also owed to my husband, Adam Smyk, and sister, Nyree Grierson, for their proof reading and input. Adam, I could not have done any of this without your unerring support and wholehearted encouragement.

Sonya J. Smyk

Abstract

The study sought to establish whether resource mobilization attempts in the Facebook Group (FBG) environment helped sojourners to deal with acculturative stressors. It was posited that the architecture and affordances of the FBG environment would be salient to its efficacy as a coping resource. Berry's stress and coping framework was used to assess coping with acculturative stress. The study comprised a qualitative analysis of interviews with a sample of military spouse sojourners on Oahu. It was found that resource mobilization attempts in Facebook Groups help sojourners to cope with acculturative stressors by linking them with valuable social capital resources that yield primarily informational support. The architecture and affordances of the FBG environment played an important role in the coping process. The literature suggested that similar results could emerge for other Groups of sojourners, so long as they had an aspect of common identity, such as national origin or occupation.

Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	v
List of Charts.....	vi
List of Abbreviations.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
(i) Study Population.....	2
(ii) Hawaii as Host Culture.....	5
(iii) Analyzing the Role of Online Support.....	7
Literature Review.....	9
I. Concepts in Intercultural Psychology.....	9
(i) Acculturation.....	10
(ii) Acculturative Stress.....	11
(iii) Coping.....	12
(iv) Coping with Acculturative Stress.....	13
(v) Theoretic Limitations.....	15
II. The Role of Online Forums.....	16
(i) Resource Mobilization Attempts.....	17
(ii) Facebook Group Affordances.....	18
(iii) Social Capital and Social Support.....	20
(iv) Studies of Online Forum Usage by Immigrants and Sojourners.....	23
(v) Military Spouses and Online Support.....	25
(vi) The Role of Privacy.....	27
(vii) Agency and Interactivity as FBG Gratifications.....	30
Research Question.....	32
Thesis Methodologies.....	34
(i) Sensitive Research Environment.....	35
(ii) Qualitative Interviews.....	38
(iii) Defining FBGs for Oahu Military Spouses.....	39
(iv) Recruitment of Informants.....	40
(v) Thematic Coding.....	40
(vi) Interviews.....	41

Results.....	42
I. The Informants.....	43
II. Discussion.....	64
(i) Facebook Group Resource Requests and Coping with Acculturative Stressors.....	64
(ii) The Role of Privacy.....	66
(iii) Access to Low-Cost Social Capital.....	70
(iv) Groups Beat Google.....	73
(v) Timeliness.....	74
(vi) Group Characteristics and Support Types.....	75
(vii) Coping with Acculturative Stressors Via Facebook Groups.....	80
(viii) Adaptive Outcomes.....	82
III. Conclusion.....	84
IV. Limitations and Directions for Future Studies.....	89
Appendices.....	91
(i) Appendix A: Interview Questions.....	91
(ii) Appendix B: Table of Informant Descriptors.....	94
(iii) Appendix C: Examples of Resource Mobilization Attempts.....	93
References.....	100

List of Tables

i. Primary and Secondary Support Outcomes..... 72
ii. Table of Informant Descriptors..... 94

List of Figures

i. Associations Between FBG Characteristics and Support Types.....79
ii. Coping Process Via FBG.....81

List of Abbreviations

FB - Facebook

FBG - Facebook Group

FRG – Family Readiness Group

SNS – Social Network Site

MSO – Military Spouses of Oahu (FBG Pseudonym)

MSC – Military Spouse Connector (FBG Pseudonym)

RWW – Residents of Warrior Way (FBG Pseudonym)

Introduction

The Internet and the affordances provided by Web 2.0 technology provide new ways for migrants and sojourners (people who live temporarily in a host culture) to access information about their destinations, and find support through the processes of acculturation and adaptation to a new culture. Indeed, online support groups and forums have been shown to have positive effects on the coping of sojourners and immigrants (Tabor & Milfont, 2013; Ye, 2006). Many such forums can be found on Facebook (FB), where migrants and sojourners use the Facebook Group (FBG) tool to create specialized social networks of information and support (Pi, Chou, & Liao, 2013). I propose to study FBGs for military spouses on Oahu to determine whether Group participation has any effect on the psychological adaptation of sojourning US military spouses in Hawaii. As a military spouse and a member of several such Groups, I shall take a participant observer approach, combining content analysis of posts to the Groups with qualitative interviews with site members to establish what role, if any, the site has played in their psychological adaptation.

Adjusting to host culture and environment is an experience every sojourner must go through, whether they are spending a period of time studying abroad, taking a temporary assignment away from home on behalf of their employer, volunteering for a charity overseas, or accompanying a family member whilst they work, study or volunteer in a different country or culture. The psychological effect of this period of adjustment is commonly known as “culture shock”- a term introduced by Oberg in 1960, but now viewed by prominent intercultural psychologists as inaccurate, overly negative and theoretically weak (Berry, 1997; Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Intercultural psychologists like John W. Berry and Colleen Ward have been guided by modern scholarship to view this period as one of acculturative stress that is only

moderately taxing on the individual, with psychological processes available to the individual to be able to cope with its demands (Berry, 1997, p. 13). If coping is positively accomplished then the acculturation process may also be positive, rather than “shocking”. Nevertheless, if adaptation is not positively accomplished, the effects can be devastating. In fact, the physical and mental health toll of the life-changes involved in migration precipitate an 80% risk of major illness (Ward, 2004, p.191). Berry finds that migrants and sojourners are equally subject to acculturative stress (Berry, 1997). It is therefore important that scholarship identify resources that sojourners can use to effectively cope with acculturative stress.

(i) Study Population

The FBGs I propose to study are those that the spouses of US military service members stationed on a military base on the Hawaiian island of Oahu have created, therefore the study population shall be military wives sojourning in Hawaii.

Military wives in Hawaii form a population that is highly vulnerable to the effects of acculturative stress. There are more than 50,000 US military personnel stationed in Hawaii, and a great many are accompanied by spouses and family members from elsewhere in the United States and overseas (Military active-duty personnel, civilians by state, 2013). The vast majority of military spouses are female. Even though the number of male military spouses is growing, a RAND study found their numbers to be statistically insignificant (Lin & Schulker, 2010).

Military moves are generally mandated by the careers of the service members. The military often assigns service-members to duty stations for periods of 2 – 3 years, although there is a lot of variation in the length of time military families stay in one place. Added to that they must deal with the uncertainties of deployments and combat, when their spouses are away from them,

therefore they may experience long periods alone in surroundings where they are separated from traditional support networks of family and friends (Jennings-Kelsall, Solomon & Marshall, 2015, p.101). Military spouses' backgrounds are heterogeneous. They come from all over the United States, and some are international. They can have any level of education, any ethnic background and cover a wide age range. A study of their adjustment, and how it is influenced by the use of social media tools, could identify coping resources that ease the psychological burden on a population that is called upon to make frequent moves and is therefore at high risk of negative mental and physical health outcomes as a result of those moves.

It is valid to focus on a female study population because scholarship indicates that women experience the psychological impacts of moving differently than men. McCollum's (1990) study of women who had made domestic moves within the US found such impacts to include grieving, doubt, guilt and shame; a heightened longing for intimate friendship; vulnerability; and strain in conjugal relationships. Magdol's (2002) study of US movers found that "the gender effect and the mobility-by-gender effect on depression were both significant" with a higher incidence of depression associated with the process of moving detected amongst female movers than males (Magdol, 2002, p. 198). When the psychological effects of moving are combined with the psychological effects of acculturative stress, it is clear that the challenges women face as sojourners deserve unique attention.

The adaptation of the accompanying spouse is different to the adjustment of the sojourner whose career or education has precipitated the cross-cultural move, making it important to isolate the experiences of this particular type of sojourner in studies. De Verthelyi (1995) identified various factors that caused depression, loneliness and self-doubt amongst the wives of international students who were accompanying their partners during their studies in the US. One

was a lack of purpose in their everyday lives. Their husbands were able to focus on their studies and had their time scheduled by classes. Whilst homemaking wives adapted well, for career-oriented wives joblessness was a painful experience. Career-oriented wives had no clear-cut role or activity, and it was hard for them to find anything to do that was personally satisfying. These findings have been echoed in studies of expatriate spouses, for whom the loss of employment or the interruption of careers have been identified as major reasons for difficulty in adjusting (Cole, 2011; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). In the military community, service members are immersed in a familiar workplace culture from the moment they arrive in a new place; the culture of their organization remains recognizable no matter where in the world it is located. They also have a sense of purposefulness as they are engaged in work that is meaningful to them and productive. Spouses, by contrast, have to deal with a loss of structure and having to integrate into an unfamiliar culture when they make a cross-cultural move, as well as establish new routines and, in some cases, find employment. Mehta and Jorgenson's (2015) study of how Air Force wives make sense of their work-family predicaments noted that the majority of military spouses desire employment of some form, but that frequent moves make their career trajectories "fragmented and discontinuous" and that they must reevaluate their options, goals and the centrality of work in their lives with each new duty station (Mehta & Jorgenson, 2015, p.120). The results are unemployment, underemployment, or discouraged workers who opt out of the workforce altogether. In this sense, each new military duty station may bring about a period of turbulence or disappointment in relation to work and role identity. Therefore military spouses have specific needs and challenges when making cross-cultural moves that differ from the spouses they are accompanying.

The proposed study could also have benefits for populations beyond the military spouse community. It could help universities to develop policies to better support the families of international students, and companies to support the families of employees abroad. “Expatriate failure” causes many employees working internationally to terminate those assignments early (Cole, 2011). Expatriate failure rates are significantly high; frequently associated with spousal dissatisfaction; and can cost companies up to \$1 million per incidence (Cole, 2011, p. 1504). With the negative effects of acculturative stress posing significant risks to spouses in both the military and civilian communities, it is important to evaluate the coping resources available to them in order to encourage coping strategies that have been found to be psychologically beneficial.

(ii) Hawaii as Host Culture

Although Hawaii is a state within the US, its unique culture may demand that US mainland residents go through acculturative stress in order to adapt to living there. Sojourning in Hawaii is not like sojourning in any other US state. Miyares’ (2008) ethnographic study showed that Oahu has a distinct ethnic and cultural makeup that strongly differentiates it from the mainland. Anglo-dominant US culture and local culture run parallel on Oahu. Both are influenced by historic and ethnic factors that are unique to Hawaii. Historically, Hawaii experienced waves of immigration from all over the world as workers were contracted to work in the sugar plantations. Over time these cultures mixed with Native Hawaiian culture and the Anglo culture of American missionaries, creating the dynamic blend that came to be recognized as “local culture” in Hawaii (Miyares, 2008). This culturally inclusive tradition persists today, with new influences blending into the island’s cultural mix as new waves of immigrants arrive.

The majority of the island's population is ethnically Asian or Pacific Islander, therefore cultural norms more associated with Asian cultures than western cultures strongly influence local culture, and may be disorienting for sojourners expecting to live in familiar mainland culture whilst in Hawaii (Quick facts - Honolulu County, Hawaii, 2015). This makes intercultural adaptation necessary for US as well as international sojourners to Hawaii.

Sojourners from the Continental United States to Hawaii may be taken by surprise by the level of cultural distance they encounter upon arrival, and this may play a role in their adjustment. The issue of cultural nearness and distance is considered significant in predicting how easily a person from one culture will adapt to another (Ward, 2004). Cultural nearness is when two cultures closely resemble each other, and cultural distance is when the two cultures are dramatically different. An unprepared sojourner can be blindsided by the difficulty of communicating in even a culturally near country. A study of American students sojourning in various European countries found that those who studied in England had the highest degree of intercultural communication problems, in spite of being native speakers of a common language and seeming cultural nearness (Ward, 2004). They were less prepared to adapt their behavior than those sojourning in France and Spain, who were more aware that intercultural communication might be difficult (Ward, 2004). US military spouses sojourning in Hawaii may expect cultural nearness when sojourning in a US state, and therefore find it difficult to adjust when they encounter a culture that has many unfamiliar and culturally distant elements beneath a veneer of familiar US dominant culture. This could exacerbate acculturative stress.

Military spouses sojourning in Hawaii may pick up on tensions emanating from some members of the Native Hawaiian and local communities over Hawaii's statehood and its relationship with the US military. For example, it is not uncommon on Oahu to see bumper

stickers with images of machine guns and hand grenades, bearing slogans like “Aloha Enforcer,” “Defend the Aina [Hawaiian land]” and “Hawaiian Prisoner.” Signals like this make it apparent that some local people feel ambivalent, if not openly hostile towards US governance, and the heavy presence of the US military. Local academics have articulated these concerns. Ferguson and Turnbull (2010) acknowledge that mainstream politicians and culture in Hawaii support the military presence in the islands. However, they note disadvantages to the military’s long-term presence: the economic dependence it has wrought, harsh environmental impacts, the degradation of Hawaiian cultural sites, the economic burden of educating military children, and social ills associated with the high-stress lifestyle military members and their families endure, such as domestic violence (Ferguson and Turnbull, 2010). It is fair to say that not all local people in Hawaii welcome the military’s presence and this is something that military spouses may sense, or even be directly confronted with, leading to acculturative stress.

(iii) Analyzing the Role of Online Support

It is clear that military spouses sojourning in Hawaii may experience acculturative stress, and that they are vulnerable to physical and mental health problems as a result of that stress. The military provides some support for spouses, such as Family Readiness Groups (FRGs). FRGs are support groups for the families of service members at individual commands and are run by military spouse volunteers. Their purpose is to help members prepare for deployments and homecomings, adjust to the challenges of military life and coordinate social events (Family Readiness Groups, n.d.). Studies have shown that they can be effective. Army-supported FRGs, for example, “often provide information, facilitate mutual support between command and

military families, and help families identify resources and become effective problem solvers” (Maguire, 2015, p.30). However, families’ contact with FRGs can be limited to monthly meetings and, as volunteers from the spouse community head them, their quality, activity and efficacy can vary greatly. So, although some FRGs work well and have improved family wellbeing, studies have also found them to be associated with stress related to rumors, and heightened stress for the spouses that run them (Maguire, 2015, p.22). They can also go through periods of dormancy in between deployments. FRGs, then, are not always a ready or reliable source of support for the acculturating spouse.

Maguire’s (2015) “state-of-the-art” review of military families and communication during deployment found that communication is recognized as a “critical resource” for military families (Maguire, 2015, p.20 & p. 31). Scholars have found that “a strong support system is critical to family resiliency” and that this can be found online, so long as those who provide the support understand military family life (Maguire, 2015, p.30). It is, therefore, possible that belonging to military spouse FBGs can help spouses cope with acculturative stress, by providing them with communication resources and access to peers who understand military family life. In order to analyze the role of online support in the process of coping, some key ideas must be understood, and relevant theories explored. The following sections will look at theory and concepts in intercultural psychology, and the architecture and affordances of online forums in order to provide a sound basis for such an analysis.

Literature Review

I. Concepts in Intercultural Psychology

In the 1930s, cross-cultural psychology established the link between cultural environment and human behavioral development, and explored what happens when individuals from one culture re-establish their lives in another one (Berry, 1997, p.5). The term intercultural psychology is more commonly used now because it refers to the interaction and mutual influence of cultures that have come into contact. Owing to the work of psychologists in the intercultural field, there is now enough evidence to develop an understanding of what happens at the individual level when cultures interact. Berry's (1997) highly regarded stress and coping framework for the study of immigration, acculturation and adaptation brought together psychological theory with the findings of this empirical work. There are other approaches available in the intercultural psychology field, such as culture learning theory, but these are thought to complement rather than compete with the stress and coping framework (Ryder & Dere, 2010, p. 279). Berry (1997) will therefore form the basis for understanding the intercultural psychology concepts in the proposed study. The acculturative stress and coping framework developed by Berry (1997) is adapted from the theoretical work of eminent psychologists Richard S. Lazarus and Susan Folkman in their book *Stress, Appraisal and Coping* (1984). This work shall help sharpen and deepen the definitions of concepts in the proposed study, as well as suggest methods of inquiry that shall be incorporated.

(i) Acculturation

Classically, acculturation was understood as two cultural groups coming into immediate and continuous contact, precipitating change to the cultural patterns of either or both groups. In practice, one group would be likely to experience the most cultural change: the acculturating group (Berry, 1997). Psychological acculturation extends the concept to the individual level. It is a change in the psychology of the individual brought about by intercultural contact. Individuals' acculturation is variable, owing to individual traits, circumstances, experiences, cultures and preferences (Berry, 1997).

The term acculturation has had a controversial history, therefore it is important to understand its conception within Berry's (1997) framework. The term acculturation achieved controversy when it became synonymous with assimilation. Assimilation is considered a negative type of acculturation because it involves the individual shedding their native culture completely and taking on host-culture wholesale. This is the type of acculturation that US missionaries were hoping for when they forced Native American children to attend Indian Schools, or when the Australian government mandated the adoption of Aborigine children into families of European descent. Assimilation is long-discredited as either a social policy in most western societies, or a beneficial strategy for individuals. There are other types of acculturation than assimilation. Acculturation should be seen as a neutral concept, and not be confused with assimilation.

Acculturative types other than assimilation include separation, marginalization and integration, with integration being the most successful according to numerous studies, as cited by Berry (Berry, 1997, p.24). Integration is an acceptance by all cultural groups within a society of the validity of each other's culture, and a willingness by the dominant cultural group to make

accommodations to the needs of the non-dominant group (Berry, 1997, pp.10 – 11). For integration to be successful, then, the dominant society must be open and inclusive towards cultural diversity, which Miyares' (2008) ethnographic study would suggest is the largely the case on Oahu.

At the individual level, one may hold different attitudes towards these kinds of acculturation, and behavior will correspond accordingly. Berry (1997) calls these attitudes and behaviors “acculturation strategies” (Berry, 1997, p.11). Individuals pursuing an integration-type strategy have a high degree of flexibility, and such strategies are associated with knowledge-seeking behaviors (Berry, 1997). Berry's (1997) review of studies of acculturation and adaptation found integration to be the most adaptive strategy, being positively associated with long-term health and well-being (Berry, 1997, pp.24-25).

(ii) Acculturative Stress

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define stress as “a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being.” (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 21). They emphasize the relationship aspect of this definition, so that stress is not a property of either the environment or the individual but the relationship between the two. This takes into account the fact that what one person finds stressful, another may not. Intercultural transitions may be exhilarating for some, who may thrive off the challenges involved, whilst being highly stressful for others, who may feel over-taxed or over-whelmed by the same challenges. Individual traits and previous life experiences can, for example, help determine how the individual will react. For these reasons, the psychological outcomes of acculturation can be highly variable. When problems arise from

acculturation they tend to be short-term, with more positive outcomes generally emerging in the long-term as the individual adapts to the new cultural environment. However, if a “fit” is not found it can lead to acculturative stress and psychopathology (Berry, 1997).

(iii) Coping

Coping is the process by which the individual draws upon resources to deal with stressors in the environment. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) emphasize the idea of coping being a process rather than an outcome. The coping function is the purpose a strategy serves, such as getting information about a new place; outcome refers to the effect a strategy has, such as feeling less uncertain. Coping “reduces tension and restores equilibrium to the individual” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.149). Coping functions pertain to specific contexts and cannot be generalized. For example, if a person were moving to a new place they could look for information about housing options ahead of time. This would reduce stress by removing some uncertainty in a specific situation. However, this function is not generalizable to every stressor a person encounters in their life – looking for information about housing would not help someone experiencing a dental emergency. It is critical to the study of coping that the individual’s specific situation be included in the analysis.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identify two types of coping: emotion-focused and problem-focused. Emotion-focused coping means regulating the emotional response to a problem. It involves drawing upon emotional resources, such as anger, resiliency or social relationships. Problem-focused coping is managing or altering a problem with the environment that causes distress, and involves drawing upon information resources and problem-solving skills (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p.179). Problem-solving skills include the ability to search for

information and generate alternative courses of action that can be weighed and analyzed (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.162). In circumstances of high stress emotion-focused forms of coping tend to dominate, but flexibility between emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies is associated with “high quality decision-making, and resilience” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.175). Therefore a blend of emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies may be associated with successful coping with acculturative stress.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) emphasize that the process approach to coping requires contextual analysis of stressful encounters and can only be studied with reference to specific individuals and circumstances.

(iv) Coping with Acculturative Stress

According to Berry (1997), coping is both a mediating and moderating variable in relation to stress. A life event (the acculturation experience in the case of the sojourner) leads to stressors, which then require the use of coping strategies. The coping strategies will determine the level of stress experienced (the immediate effect). In the long-term, the effects of coping with acculturative stressors will determine how well migrants and sojourners acculturate and adapt. Berry (1997) explains that coping strategies serve as mediators when they link stressors to stress reactions, and as moderators when they affect the degree of relationship between stressors and stress.

Coping as mediator and moderator can be illustrated by the following example: A military couple arrives on Oahu and must visit the housing office to request temporary furniture until their household goods arrive on-island. The list of furniture they must pick from includes the term “keiki bed.” They have never seen or heard the word “keiki” before. They don’t even

know how to pronounce it. This could be an acculturative stressor, as it's important they select everything they need on the list, but they are not yet familiar with local terms (and were not expecting to see them on a US government document). It reminds them that they are in a foreign and disorienting environment – both in the US and yet different to the US they know. This could be deemed an acculturative stressor. In order to cope with this stressor they seek out further information. A double bed is also mentioned on the list, so they deduce that a keiki bed could be a twin size bed. They confirm this with the desk clerk, who lets them know it means “child’s bed,” which is a twin size bed. The couple has engaged an information-seeking, problem-focused coping strategy conducive to reducing tension and restoring their senses of equilibrium. The coping strategy mediated the stressor (the urgent need to understand a foreign word) by linking it to the effect (potential stress). It also moderated the relationship between the stressor and the stress effect by making the effect of the stressor to be a minimal level of disturbance.

This scenario could have turned out differently. If the couple had angrily approach the desk clerk and complained that the list ought to be fully in English, that would have been an emotion-focused way of coping. It would have brought conflict into the coping process, which is regarded as a critical factor in causing stress (Lazarus and Folkman, p. 238). The moderating effect of this coping strategy would have been to heighten the couple’s experience of acculturative stress.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) point out that there is a high degree of variation in how people cope with stressors. Personal traits, culture, health and situational variables are just a few that come into play.

Problem-focused and emotion-focused coping influence each other throughout stressful encounters, and both facilitate and impede positive outcomes. Studies have shown flexibility

with regards to coping styles to be more effective than rigidity, with both flexibility and knowledge-seeking behaviors being associated with integration strategies in regards to acculturation (Berry, 1997; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). It is therefore implied that military wives sojourning on Oahu may best cope with intercultural stressors by adopting a flexible coping style that includes seeking information of benefit in problem-focused coping strategies, as well as drawing on appropriate emotional resources and social support.

(v) Theoretic Limitations

It is worth noting some relevant limitations to Berry's (1997) stress and coping framework, which focuses on what happens when two cultures interact with one another. There has been a lack of attention to understanding what happens in multiethnic/multicultural settings in which more than two cultures interact. Critics have suggested that the stress and coping framework is inadequate to explaining multiple sources of cultural influence without further development (Ryder & Dere, 2010, p. 282). Military spouses on Oahu bring with them their native culture, which in many cases is US culture, but they may also inhabit the culture of the military milieu, and have been influenced by multiple cultures in their roles as frequent sojourners. In addition, they must adapt to life in a multicultural environment with a multiethnic population, so this theoretical weakness a potentially relevant concern. However, as the current study focuses on coping with acculturative stressors rather than broader issues of acculturation and adaptation, this may be only a minor drawback. Another area of weakness is the lack of a longitudinal view of the process of acculturation; it is possible that an individual will change their acculturation strategy over time and this deserves greater attention in the stress and coping literature (Ryder & Dere, 2010, p. 282). The current study shall be mindful of these limitations.

II. The Role of Online Forums

As we have seen, coping with acculturative stressors involves both problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies. It is the intention of the proposed study to explore whether online resource requests have a positive effect on the coping of sojourners with such stressors. This will be explored in relation to FBGs for Oahu military spouses, which form just one example of the numerous FBGs that are used by sojourners and migrants to connect with co-culture members living in the same host-culture environments. The architecture and affordances of the Groups can be seen as providing particular benefits by easing the psychological burden on sojourners in problem- and emotion-focused coping. It will be posited that the environment in which requests are posted is as important as the content of the requests, in terms of managing intercultural stress.

FBGs are a service offered by the social network site (SNS) Facebook. SNSs are networked communication platforms that vary greatly, but can be defined by certain common features (Ellison & boyd, 2013, p. 158). These include that participants have “uniquely identifiable profiles,” “publicly articulated connections,” and the ability to consume, produce and interact with “streams of user generated content” (Ellison & boyd, 2013, p. 158). The term social *network* site is more accepted amongst scholars than social *networking* site, because online social networks are largely employed to articulate and maintain existing social relationships rather than to forge new ones; the noun *network* is more apt than the verb *networking*, which would imply that new social relationships were being created (boyd & Ellison, 2007). In the context of FB, users connect with Facebook Friends to articulate their existing social relationships. The selection of the term *network* is a matter of emphasis, as forging new connections through SNSs is possible, but not the primary practice of most SNS usage (boyd &

Ellison, 2007, p.211). Nevertheless, some sites attract strangers based on shared interests or identities, and this may be the case with some FBGs (boyd & Ellison, 2007, p.210). The FBG incorporates central SNS features whilst adding affordances that could make it an appealing online forum for coping with intercultural stress.

(i) Resource Mobilization Attempts

A striking aspect of posts to FBGs for Oahu military spouses is that most of them fall into one category: the resource mobilization attempt. Ellison, Gray, Vitak, Lampe and Fiore (2014) describe resource mobilization attempts as “status updates that we believe ask for some sort of help or action from one’s Facebook Friends network” (Ellison, Gray, Vitak, Lampe and Fiore, 2014, p. 1115). An example of this might be the sick person who posts about their illness online, and receives messages of support in response; these could be promises of prayers, assurances they will get better, expressions of sympathy, or offers of practical help. In the case of Oahu military spouse FBGs these are often requests for advice about such issues as housing, quarantine procedures for pets and how to find toddler groups.

Ellison et al (2014) generated a random sample of 20,000 US users who had made any kind of post to their personal FB pages over a 28-day period and found that roughly one quarter had posted at least one resource mobilization attempt during that time. A survey offered to individuals in their sample show that those who posted resource mobilization attempts “tend to see the platform as a better source of information and exposure to ‘new things’ . . . and a better place to enact social coordination, organization, and problem-solving than those who do not” (Ellison et al, 2014, p. 1116). These findings signal that a FBG in which the majority of posts are resource mobilization attempts may have positive benefits for information- and emotion-

focused coping with intercultural stressors by providing a venue for information-seeking and problem solving (see Appendix C for examples of resource mobilization attempts in military spouse FBGs). However, this gives rise to the question of why posts to a FBG have a far higher rate of resource mobilization attempt-type posts than posts to individuals' FB friends network.

(ii) Facebook Group Affordances

FBGs for Oahu military spouses are often “closed” and the unique affordances of this technical setting may play a significant role in their provision of effective coping strategies; this is because closed Groups offer affordances that differ from the main FB site. When users access Facebook they do so through the “Newsfeed” feature, which allows for the performance of social connections before broad audiences of mainly Facebook Friends, by listing user-generated status updates and comments (boyd, 2011, p.45). Status updates may not always have a great deal of substance, but when they are aggregated together in Newsfeeds they have the effect of giving participants “a general sense of those around them” (boyd, 2011, p.45). The FBG environment offers different affordances to the FB Friends network, and users join Groups based on specific interests. This combination of influences may lead behavior within Groups to be more focused and specialized than within networks of FB Friends (boyd, 2011, p.45).

Following visual perception scholar James J. Gibson, an affordance is “an action possibility available in the environment” (McGrenere & Ho, 2000, p.179). In the context of social media, the environment is a computer mediated one, composed of code, and presented in a graphically appealing form that it is easy for the user to interpret and interact with, regardless of technical skill. Each SNS like FB has a set of design elements that were precipitated by an original premise to create affordances, such as sharing videos in the case of YouTube, or

communicating with college friends in the case of FB. Smock, Ellison, Lampe and Wohn's (2011) study of "Facebook as toolkit" supports an affordances approach to the analysis of the SNS's usage (Smock, Ellison, Lampe & Wohn, 2011, p.2322). They argue that FB is an umbrella of services, like instant chat and one-to-many message broadcasting, whose features users employ to address different needs. The affordances of the FBG setting arguably lead to differing patterns of behavior and effects than the affordances of the main FB site.

The closed FBG incorporates, but also reconstitutes some of the affordances of the main FB site. Any FB user can create a FBG making it open, closed or secret. Open Groups can be viewed by anyone with an Internet connection, whereas the contents of closed and secret Groups can only be viewed by users who have been admitted to the Groups by administrators. FBGs can coalesce around all kinds of subjects, events, needs and interests. Their exact functions vary according to Group settings, Group rituals and norms, membership criteria and the needs, desires, motivations, behaviors and tendencies of Group members, to name but a few factors. In the case of FBGs for Oahu military spouses, the closed FBG format presumably allowed individuals who were interested in sharing information with fellow military spouses to easily do so by creating the Groups. By opting to make them "closed," the founders ensured the Groups would be private, but also searchable so that interested parties would easily be able to find them. The Groups create new virtual communities that are built around interests, rather than existing personal relationships in environments that are closed off from members' FB Friends network, in that members' FB Friends cannot see their posts to the closed Groups (boyd, 2011). Members can opt to have Group posts appear in their personal FB Newsfeeds, but those posts are not visible to people who are not Group members. This creates opportunities that are conducive to

online support amongst sojourners and may render such Groups places to enact effective coping strategies.

(iii) Social Capital and Social Support

FBGs for Oahu military spouses provide members with access to social capital, or benefits gained from social connections, that they would not otherwise have. Lin (2001) defines social capital as “investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace” (Lin, 2001, p.19). The returns are not necessarily financial, but are more often access to advantageous resources or information (Lin, 2001). When people interact with their FB Friends network, they tend to use privacy settings to limit who sees the content they post, and they connect (or become FB Friends) with people they have an offline relationship with, even if it is weak and tenuous (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Therefore, an individual’s FB network is a dynamic, online iteration of their offline social network with both its weak and strong social ties. Research has shown that weak ties are highly valuable in terms of “bridging” social capital (Lin, 2001, p.68). Social bridges are people who link social circles that would otherwise be entirely independent of each other (Lin, 2001, p.68). They tend to sit on the margins of social groups. These weak ties can be friends of friends, and people we barely know offline. The value of weak ties is situated in knowledge and resources that are not possessed by the individual or their close ties, therefore “bridges” provide a precious conduit to social capital that would otherwise be difficult to acquire (Granovetter, 1973; Lin, 2001). Ellison et al’s (2011) review of several studies of undergraduate FB use showed that the FB Friends network provides an unprecedented opportunity to activate and reap the benefits of bridging social capital. However, it is my contention that FBGs can extend this opportunity dramatically further by facilitating connections with strangers. For

example, one FBG for Oahu military spouses currently has over 1,800 members. By joining the group, new members gain instant access to the bridging capital of 1,800 people that would not otherwise have been available to them. They can access knowledge about a specific situation (acculturating to Hawaii) that stronger ties in their existing social network may not possess.

This bridging capital is at the heart of Oahu military spouse FBGs' usage as resources for sojourners to Hawaii. This is because the Groups are mostly used to make resource mobilization attempts that are associated with bridging capital benefits, such as sourcing information and problem-solving. Ellison et al (2014), for example, found that responses from weak ties could be of particular value in response to mobilization requests because bridging capital provides "access to novel information and diverse perspectives" (Ellison, et al, 2014, p.1106). Smock et al's (2011) study of the different tools available to FB users showed that information sharing was a motivation of FBG users. They noted that people tend to use FBGs to interact with strangers in regards to common interests. Their study found that FBGs are associated with "expressive information sharing", such as sharing information that may be of use or interest to others (Smock et al, 2011, p.2326). Park, Kee, and Valenzuela's (2009) study of FBG usage amongst Texas college students found that the primary gratification of FBG use was information seeking, especially amongst female users where a significant correlation was found. It may be supposed that by creating large networks of weak ties, FBGs provide members with excellent resources for mobilization requests and access to information. This supposition will be examined in a study of the Group's usage.

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) analysis of the role of social support in coping with stress shows that access to a large social network may provide valuable social support. The authors identify social support as a source of emotion-focused coping strategies. They note that distance

from those with whom an individual has formed attachments is traumatic, and that empirical evidence shows that low social support is implicated in negative health outcomes. A challenge for sojourners is that by moving far from existing networks of friends and family they are distanced from their sources of social support, potentially making it harder for them to cope with acculturative stress. McCollum's (1990) study of female movers found that two of the dominant themes to emerge from her interviews with such women were (1) anxiety around friendships and (2) negotiating new social environments; highlighting a lack of social support as an issue amongst uprooted women. Military wives may be additionally burdened by moving at a time when a spouse may be deployed or working long hours and unable to provide emotional support. There is evidence that a feeling of emotional closeness may result from the usage of a FBG. Farrow and Yuan's (2011) study showed that frequency of communication in the FBG environment led to increased tie strength along the emotional closeness dimension. This could be helpful to spouses experiencing the acculturative stressor of loneliness, by giving them a sense of closeness to spouses in their new environment.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) point out that social support can be positive or negative – there can be costs to social support such as social demands. The authors mention that people with large social networks get support at lower costs than those with smaller networks. When Oahu military spouses join FBGs they access large social networks with inherently low costs; they can seek advice, but are under no obligation to reciprocate or perform any other kinds of social acts in return. Therefore FBGs may act as sources of low-cost social support, and be of use in emotion-focused coping strategies as well as information-focused coping strategies when dealing with acculturative stressors.

(iv) Studies of Online Forum Usage by Immigrants and Sojourners

Few studies have examined the role of online forums in the acculturation of immigrants and sojourners. There has been some study of the use of SNSs in general, showing that sojourners use them to maintain their connections with friends and family back home at the outset of their sojourns, but gradually build new friends from the host culture into their online social networks over time. These uses have been associated with positive outcomes for adaptation (Chen, 2012; Sawyer & Chen, 2012). However, online forums allow individuals to forge connections with large numbers of people, including strangers, in the host environment both prior to and during the process of moving, and so contribute to the experience in other ways. The following studies have found that migrants' and sojourners' use of online forums can be associated with both social and informational support.

Ye (2006) used survey methodology to analyze whether the use of co-national, online social groups by Chinese students studying at a US university aided in their sociocultural and psychological adjustment. The researcher was able to make a positive link between perceived social support and intercultural adaptation. She also found that students who reported they had received emotional and informational support from online groups experienced less acculturative stress than counterparts who had not received such support.

Tabor and Milfont (2013) conducted a qualitative cross-sectional study of three forums used by British people emigrating to New Zealand. Subjects used the forums both to prepare for emigration and to cope with the transition to a new culture after they arrived. It was found that immigrants' use of the forums "tangibly changed the experience from something isolating to a socially supported experience" (Tabor and Milfont, 2013, p. 34).

Another study by Tabor and Milfont (2011) used the same dataset to analyze migrants' psychological coping during the pre-emigration stage. They found that for every request posted to the forum, at least three replies contained informational social support. Tabor and Milfont (2011) suggested this helped migrants cope with stress by reducing uncertainty in the pre-departure period.

Jung (2013) studied the online community media practices of newly arrived Korean sojourners in Australia by empirically examining posts to a popular online forum called *Melbourne Sky*, which is hosted by a newspaper for Koreans in Australia. Jung's (2013) analysis showed that question and query posts could be found on every message board throughout the site and could attract 50 or more replies (Jung, 2013, p.198). The author (2013) found evidence of both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies as members of the forum offered emotional support in response to expressions of emotional need, such as loneliness; and practical advice in response to questions regarding such issues as how to file taxes or what workers' rights are in Australia. Jung (2013) concluded that users' "collective participatory engagement with the internet community acts to bridge the cultural gap that these new arrivals are faced with when they first come to the host country", and that by sharing emotions and personal concerns they attempted to "cope with unfamiliar cultures and lifestyles in their new environment" (Jung, 2013, p.207). Jung's (2013) study made a positive link between the use of online forums and coping amongst sojourners.

Lang (2011) examined whether a Facebook Group could be used as a site of informal learning for British modern languages students spending a year of their degree studying and working abroad. The Group connected student sojourners with peer mentors who had been through the year abroad experience before them. Pre-sojourn testing via surveys and focus

groups showed that providing practical advice and social support were the two main areas of needs that the Group should address, in order to be relevant to students' pre-departure concerns. Content analysis of site use and post-sojourn qualitative interviews with student participants showed that the primary benefit of Group participation by sojourning students was to obtain information and ask for advice from peers; Lang (2011) found the Group had been highly effective in providing the practical information students wanted during their year overseas, such as information about accommodation, university bureaucracy, and travel. The second benefit identified by Lang's (2012) study was to provide social support and help students to overcome feelings of loneliness. The Group was, therefore, an effective tool for both information-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. She noted that the Group helped year abroad students maintain relationships with other students in their cohort, and helped them build bridging social capital with student mentors, both of which provided a positive sense of social support to the sojourning students. Lang's (2012) study showed that the Facebook Group setting could provide coping resources to sojourners.

The findings of these studies, which have highlighted information providing and socially supportive functions of online forums for immigrants and sojourners, suggest that military spouses who make use of online groups providing guidance about moving to and living in Hawaii may report both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategy benefits.

(v) Military Spouses and Online Support

Scholarship has shown that Internet support groups can play an effective role in providing coping support to military spouses. High, Jennings-Kelsall, Solomon and Marshall's (2015) study of an Internet discussion board for US Marine Corps spouses acknowledged that

military spouses are subject to a distinct set of stressors that include relocation, frequent moves, and the subsequent loss of network support. These factors can lead military spouses to become isolated from sources of support when they need them the most. The authors note that “at least two studies have identified seeking social support from other military spouses as the most effective means of coping available to military families” (High, Jennings-Kelsall, Solomon & Marshall, 2015, p. 103). When face-to-face contacts are lacking “the association between receiving support online and well-being gains importance” (High et al, 2015, p. 104). This suggests that online support could fill a need for social resources amongst military spouses and substitute for face-to-face interactions.

High et al’s (2015) study examined discussion board posts to establish the kinds of support being requested and received, and whether the responses elicited related adequately to the requests. They used Xu and Burleson’s (2001) typology of support, which includes informational, emotional, network, tangible and esteem support. They found tangible support (practical help such as housework or driving someone to a doctor’s appointment) and esteem support (enhancing a person’s self-worth) to be absent from the groups; they were neither sought nor provided often enough to register statistically. (High et al, 2015, p.103). The lack of tangible support was attributed to the wide geographic spread of the group’s members (High et al, 2015, p.102). Informational support, defined as facts or advice about a problem, was the type most often asked for and received; in fact it was received significantly more often than it was requested (High et al, 2015, pp.107-108). Network support, defined as “expanding an individual’s social resources,” was the second-most sought type, but was received significantly less often than it was requested (High et al, 2015, p.103 & 108). The authors concluded that users of the discussion board seeking to bolster their social contacts might have felt disappointed.

On the other hand, they noted that much of the information provided could be deemed effective. The authors recognized the discussion board's utility as a source of weak tie social capital, and providing military family-members with access to a population that could provide unique empathy for, and understanding of, the stressors involved in military life.

High et al's (2015) findings suggest that Facebook Groups may have informational and socially supportive benefits for sojourning military spouses that help them cope with the stressors associated with relocation. However, the connections forged may not lead to off-line friendships and tangible support, unless the concentrated geographic nature of the Groups has an effect on these outcomes.

(vi) The Role of Privacy

Another affordance of the closed FBG that may be helpful to sojourners is privacy. Posts to most Oahu military spouse FBGs can only be seen by Group members and cannot be shared outside the Group. Ye's (2006) study of a cohort of Chinese international students in the USA found that anonymity was important to them in online social forums. They felt free to ask questions that their embarrassment would have prevented them from asking publicly. The closed FBG does not allow for anonymity, and indeed western women may have less need for anonymity and face-saving than Chinese people (Hofstede, 2001; Ting-Toomey, Oetzel, & Yee-Jung, 2001). They may, however, appreciate that the closed Group keeps communications private within a particular social context. This helps avoid context collapse, which occurs when "multiple audiences, usually thought of as separate, co-exist in a single social context" (Marwick and boyd, 2011, p.145). The effects of this collapse can range from the irritating and discomfoting to the disastrous.

The need for privacy may be particularly acute amongst military spouses. Maguire's (2016) review of literature regarding military families and communication noted that "families receive pressure from other military families or support staff to hide home-life stressors from their deployed service members" (Maguire, 2016, p.20). During periods of deployment military spouses can feel particularly alienated from the civilian community, perceiving that the stressors associated with the military lifestyle are not understood (Maguire, 2016). By allowing members to select and limit the audience for their posts, military-spouse focused groups can allow for the sharing of challenges within an understanding and safe environment. Women can ask questions in Oahu military spouse FBGs that they would prefer for members of their FB Friends network not to see. For example, they may not want their high school friends to know that they are feeling lonely in Hawaii and seeking friendship online, as seeking relationships online may carry somewhat of a social stigma. By posting in the closed Group environment, they can keep that information private and within the context of an audience more likely to relate to their feelings than people who have not been through the experience themselves. This allows privacy to play a positive role in their coping.

The closed setting of the Group also decreases the psychological burden of having to take into account multiple audiences for a post. When people use social media they tend to have an "imagined audience" in mind for their posts. This is their "mental conceptualization of the people with whom [they] are communicating" (Litt, 2013). Conceptualizing their audience can cause tension for social media users because of the wide variety of social relationships embodied in their social networks. In the case of Oahu military spouse FBGs, however, the imagined audience can be simplified to "women like me who are dealing with a sojourn in Hawaii." Members do not have to keep in mind the feelings and perceptions of people in their FB Friends

network, such as parents, close friends or employers. Lang (2011) found that a concern of students using a Facebook Group to communicate during a year abroad was role conflict; they did not want authority figures like professors to see the way they acted with fellow students. It was decided that the Group would be open, but that membership should be limited to students, in order to allay their anxieties regarding role conflict and context collapse. This was found to be an important aspect of their willingness to use the Group. The membership boundaries of the closed FBG may therefore be conducive to its use by sojourners in intercultural adaptation by keeping communications in-context and geared to only one audience.

Marwick and boyd (2014) advocate a networked notion of privacy that is supported by this conceptualization of the closed Group. The closed FBG is a quasi-public space, in that many people can view its contents by virtue of membership to the Group. However, the closed setting implies that members can expect information to be contained within the bounds of the group. The fact that FB does not allow for the sharing of posts outside the Group provides a technical boundary. But the closed context sends a message to users not to employ alternate means to share what is posted within the Group (such as taking a screenshot and sharing it elsewhere). Networked privacy is built both upon the technical affordances of SNSs, and an implied relationship of trust between members of social networks that content be handled appropriately (Marwick and boyd, 2014). The privacy of the closed FBG renders it a place that is safe for sharing information members would prefer to keep in the context of the Group. The closed status of many Oahu military spouse FBGs may help reduce sojourners' stress by keeping in-Group communications private, contextualized and exposed only to a defined audience.

(vii) Agency and Interactivity as FBG Gratifications

Agency and interactivity are new media gratifications put forward by Sundar and Limperos (2013) in their update of uses and gratifications theory for the Internet age. Traditional uses and gratifications theory posits that individuals have innate psychological needs that different types of media fulfill in different ways (Katz, Blumler, Gurevitch, 1974). Sundar and Limperos (2013) argue that the Internet has created a need to crowd source information. The ability to crowd-source information from a pool of “experts” who have collective knowledge and experience of a particular situation may be a use of military spouse FBGs that produces the gratifications of agency and interactivity.

Uses and gratifications of the Internet vary depending on the specific sites or services being accessed. This is because the Internet is not monolithic; it is a multimodal form of communication delivering content by various means (text, audio, visual) and allowing user interaction in various ways (text-based posts, uploading media, and responding to news articles, to name but a few) (Herring, 2010; Hinton & Hjorth, 2013; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). The uses and gratifications of different websites and services within the Internet environment cannot be understood on exactly the same terms as each other because they offer different combinations of modalities and interactive possibilities. Smock et al’s (2011) study of “Facebook as toolkit” supports this idea, in that they found individuals employed different features of the FB site depending on the usages they sought. Sundar and Limperos (2013) say that new media gratifications “have been shown over the years to have significant psychological consequences” and these include agency and interactivity (Sundar & Limperos, 2013, p.512). These two affordances may be particularly salient for Oahu military spouse FBG users.

Agency allows Internet users to be agents or sources of information. Interactivity allows them to make real-time changes to Internet-hosted content. Studies have shown digital media users to be “more agentic and like to assume the role of sender or source of information, thanks to widespread proliferation of customization technologies” (Sundar & Limperos, 2013, p. 514). Agency-enhancement and interactivity are gratifications of new media driven by affordances that let users serve as sources of content and convey others’ reception to their postings (Sundar & Limperos, 2013, p. 514). When Oahu military spouse FBG users post resource mobilization attempts to the Groups, they may experience a sense of agency-enhancement that has positive psychological benefits. Being able to post requests that prompt other users to respond may be empowering to them, and provide them with a sense of an internal locus of control, as well as useful information. Individuals have a sense of an internal locus of control when they believe that they can influence events around them, rather than feeling they are the subjects of forces beyond their control such as fate or luck. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) found that subjects with a belief in their control over a situation were encouraged to pursue problem-focused coping efforts (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 160). Therefore agency and interactivity are affordances that may be inherently gratifying to sojourners in their FBG usage, whilst also producing tangible benefits by prompting problem-focused coping strategies in response to acculturative stressors.

Research Question

When sojourners transition to a new host-culture they must deal with acculturative stressors. The process of coping with these stressors will define the degree to which they experience the negative effects of stress and, ultimately, whether their adaptation to a new culture is psychologically and somatically healthy. Berry's (1996) framework for immigration, acculturation and adaptation, and the work of psychologists Lazarus and Folkman (1984) on stress and coping suggest that an interplay of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies in dealing with stressors can have positive associations with adaptation to a new culture. It is possible that online forums where immigrants and sojourners can post resource mobilization attempts may offer an unprecedented and effective resource for coping with acculturative stressors. Scant academic research has been conducted in this area, but what has been accomplished indicates that online forums can provide both problem- and emotion-focused coping resources. The advent of private FBGs has created a venue for such forums that is readily accessible to sojourners, with architectural features and a suite of affordances that allows them to tap into social capital resources that would be not be available to them otherwise.

In order to examine these ideas my study investigates the following question:

Research Question: Do resource mobilization attempts in Facebook Groups for military spouses sojourning on Oahu help them to cope with acculturative stressors?

Military spouses sojourning on Oahu must cope with acculturative stressors in their transition to a new cultural environment, and may find the FBG tool especially helpful in doing

so. Owing to variations in each individual's own cultural background, previous experience with acculturation and personal resources, their needs and ability to cope will be different. They will also be affected by the ease or difficulty with which their move to Oahu was accomplished. The architecture and affordances of closed FBGs may allow military spouses to seek resources from a population of qualified and understanding peers that is responsive to their needs, empowering to them, and gives them a sense of an internal locus of control. It is possible that FBGs present military spouse sojourners with a resource for coping that eases their transition to life on Oahu and helps them avoid or attenuate emotional disturbances induced by coping with acculturative stressors, and positively contributes towards their long-term adaptation to host-culture. With the correct methodological approach, these ideas can be examined.

Thesis Methodologies

The methodological approach to this study is precipitated both by its appropriateness to the subject matter, and by matters of ethical Internet research. The literature review has suggested several appropriate methodologies: content analysis of posts to the Groups; surveying Group members; and qualitative analysis of the effects of Group participation via interviews with Group members. I elected to take the qualitative interviews approach because of its appropriateness to the study of stress and coping, and the depth of insight it provides into individuals' psychological processes. The qualitative approach also avoids the insurmountable difficulties associated with obtaining consent from members of large, private Internet groups in order to be able to perform content analysis.

The nature of this study is exploratory, as there is little research into the effects of participation in online forums on coping with acculturative stressors. I therefore decided to take an emic, grounded theory approach by allowing themes to emerge from the interviews I undertook and then making sense of them *post hoc* (Taylor & Bogden, 1998).

As a military spouse and a member of the Group, my research role is that of a participant observer. I moved to Oahu as a military spouse seven years ago when there were no Facebook Groups to use as a coping resource. One year ago I learned of the various Groups that are available to military spouses sojourning on Oahu and joined several. I have mostly observed behavior in the Groups since then, but have contributed an answer to a question from time to time when I thought I could help. My position as an insider in this environment has both a positive and negative side. On the positive side I know the military spouse milieu well, and have experienced the challenges of acculturating to Oahu first-hand. For this reason, I suspect, my interviewees readily opened up to me about their own experiences. On the negative side, I am

apt to readily sympathize with my fellow spouses' predicaments and view FBGs as a useful resource for our community. With these personal limitations in mind, I have attempted to make my analysis as dispassionate as possible and back up all my assertions and conclusions with substantial evidence from the interviewees themselves.

(i) Sensitive Research Environment

It is critical to my line of research to examine the effects of behavior within private online forums. I have suggested that the confidential nature of the "closed" FBG environment eases the psychological burden on sojourners, gives them access to a panel of well-qualified "experts," and that these factors help them cope with acculturative stress by providing both problem-focused coping solutions and emotion-focused coping solutions. We cannot close off areas of social scientific inquiry because they are not public, and SNS researchers have called for the study of privacy settings so they can be included in models of FBG use (Smock et al, 2011, p. 2327). Yet we must be highly responsible about how we handle people's information when it is posted in a forum that allows only limited access.

Ethics are a matter for consideration in any research, but in examining behavior within a closed forum, which requires administrator approval to join and access, the researcher must be especially rigorous in the way she handles data, so as to respect subjects' implied wishes about the way the data they have generated online is shared. Group members have an expectation of confidentiality and privacy that must be respected and upheld by the ethical researcher.

Research has shown that it is easy to identify internet-using individuals with very little data. Researchers and Institutional Review Boards have been taken by surprise at the ease and speed with which supposedly anonymous, publicly released private data can be associated with

individuals. Zimmer (2010), for example, examines the ethical issues that arose from the collection and publication of data gleaned from FB accounts belonging to a cohort of Harvard freshmen for a project called Tastes, Ties and Time (T3). The T3 researchers believed they had anonymized the data sufficiently to protect the identities of the individuals, but before the codebook containing the anonymized data was even published, the cohort had been identified. Because of incidents such as this one, I have avoided quoting data that could identify individual users of the Groups. Interviews have been conducted with the informants' knowledge and written consent to having the details of their site usage potentially made public. I have assigned them pseudonyms in order to add a level of identity protection.

The following steps have been taken to protect the identities and private information of my informants:

1. I have not reproduced the names of the FBGs my informants mentioned. There are numerous FBGs for military spouses living on Oahu, so this provides a layer of identity protection to my informants. Military spouse FBG names tend to associate Groups with specific bases, branches of service, military housing neighborhoods and military units, therefore I have not named the branch of service my informants are associated with, nor the bases their spouses are stationed at, nor the specific geographic locations of the bases. Every branch of US military service is represented with bases on Oahu, meaning that there are at least 7 military branches on the island with approximately 14 military bases. By not identifying the base, branch of military service nor geographic location of the base the Groups are associated with, it ought to be difficult to identify the Groups. My informants frequently mentioned two Groups in particular, so I have given them

generic pseudonyms in the interview transcripts: Military Spouses of Oahu and Warrior Way Group.

2. I have changed the names of my informants and the people they mention in their interviews. The mean age of my informants was 34 years old, therefore I downloaded lists of the 100 most popular girls' and boys' names from 1982, which is the year a 2016 34 year old would have been born in. I assigned every second name from each list during the process of transcribing the interviews. To avoid confusion, I skipped the second incidence of any names that sounded the same as ones I had already used, but had different spellings (eg. Sarah and Sara).

3. I have not directly quoted from posts or comments to the Groups. My informants all provided permission to paraphrase their posts to Groups via their IRB consent forms. Even though the Groups are mostly closed, and it is not possible for the general public to see posts within them, I have assumed that a determined individual could gain Group membership and search the sites for the sources of any individual data quoted, allowing for my informants to be identified.

5. I have not stated the exact number of the Groups' membership as this could be used to identify the Groups.

6. I have taken care to keep my interview transcripts safe. The identifying information mentioned above has been changed or redacted within the transcripts. They are stored on my home computer and with Dedoose (a cloud software application for sociocultural inquiry) under a dual layer of encryption.

(ii) Qualitative Interviews

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) recommend qualitative interviews as the optimal way to study stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 317). This is because stress and coping cannot be realistically created under lab conditions, and coping strategies are specific to the situations being encountered. Therefore, to find out how people cope with intercultural stressors, people who have dealt with such stress must be interviewed.

McCullum (1990) also found qualitative interviews to be the most appropriate approach in her psychological study of the experiences of women movers. She did not feel that standardized instruments such as rating scales and questionnaires could capture the subjective and internal experience of her subjects. The qualitative approach was selected to achieve depth and richness of insight (McCullum, 1990, p.18). During unstructured interviews she made unspoken connections with relevant theories, which she then made explicit in her findings. Themes emerged spontaneously and the most prominent were synthesized into her book (McCullum, 1990, p.19). This made her study an exploratory one that was informed by theories, but not limited by them. I have adopted a similar approach to the research methods in the current study.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) recommend that researchers learn what is being coped with in different situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 317). My personal experience and observations of the Oahu military spouse Groups (as a participant-observer in this study) provides me with some knowledge of potential stressors for military spouses transitioning to Oahu, such as housing, navigating military bureaucracy, concerns about children and pets, traffic conditions and friendship. These informed my expectations of sources of intercultural stress amongst informants, but I remained alert to others that informants revealed, and incorporated

them into the study, as appropriate. As Lazarus and Folkman (1984) point out, stressful situations place multiple demands on individuals that the researcher must identify to assess coping with respect to those demands, so the researcher must keep an open mind (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 317).

Assessing individuals' coping is not as straightforward as asking "how did you cope?" Lazarus and Folkman (1984) recommend that the interviewer ask subjects to reconstruct recent stressful encounters and describe what they thought, felt and did (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 318). Responses have been analyzed with reference to what is known about the efficacy of stress and coping strategies and the role online resource requests may have played as a way of coping.

(iii) Defining FBGs for Oahu Military Spouses

When I originally planned this study I had intended to study the use of one particular FBG – Military Spouses of Oahu. However, as I talked to spouses about their use of the Group I discovered that they used numerous Groups, and sometimes found it difficult to distinguish one from another. They particularly found it difficult to disaggregate their use of the large Groups like Military Spouses of Oahu or Military Spouse Connector^{*}, which have over 1,000 members. Sometimes they were not sure which large Group they had posted to, they just knew they had posted to a large Oahu military spouse Group. It turned out that the spouses strategically post to Groups, selecting the best Group for the issue they are facing (neighborhood Groups for neighborhood and military landlord issues, or large Groups for crowd-sourcing answers to questions about moving to Oahu in general, for example). Therefore I decided on the following criteria to define the Oahu military spouse FBGs: they are Groups exclusively for military

* Pseudonym

spouses to gain and share information and support about moving to and living on the island of Oahu.

(iiv) Recruitment of Informants

Informants were recruited using a combination of known group and snowball sampling (Reinard, 2008). This is a similar approach to McCollum's (1990) who used a known-group sampling approach to recruiting female movers for her study. The "known group" in my study was members of Military Spouses of Oahu. My approach was two-fold. I know some Group members personally, therefore I approached three of them to ask for interviews. I also posted a message on the Group page to solicit volunteers to be interviewed. This directly yielded three more informants. One of those informants recruited three more on my behalf. After conducting and analyzing nine in-depth interviews I judged that some consistent themes were emerging. With that consistency and with time constraints I decided to cap my recruitment of informants at nine.

(v) Thematic Coding

I used thematic coding to analyze the interviews for this study. I built my codes through the act of analyzing the interviews, expanding and then refining them as I proceeded. I used Dedoose software to perform the analysis. As well as being a tool for qualitative analysis, Dedoose software makes some quantitative analysis and visualization of codes possible. This has been put to limited use in this study, however, as quantitative measures should not be given undue weight in qualitative research. As Taylor and Bogden (1998) point out, "coding is intended to help [the researcher] develop insights and generate theoretical understandings, not to

produce frequency counts to prove [her] hypothesis” (Taylor & Bogden, 1998, p.154). During the processes of interviewing and coding, clear themes began to emerge from the interviews, which I used to build grounded theory. So rather than imposing theory onto my data, I tried to build theory from the evidence in my data.

(vi) Interviews

I offered the informants a choice of interview locations, telling to pick the one that was most convenient and comfortable for them. Three invited me into their homes to conduct the interviews; I met three in parks and three in coffee shops. The interviews were conducted from late January to mid March 2016, and varied in length from 35 to 70 minutes.

The interviews followed a largely unstructured approach, as I guided my informants through talking about the issues outlined in the literature review. However, I used a list of questions (see Appendix) to check that we had discussed all relevant information by the end of each interview. This gave consistency to the interviews, and made it possible to draw comparisons between the views and experiences of all the informants. I did not talk about the Groups prior to the interview, so as not to influence informants’ responses.

Results

Results are split into three sections. In the first section I give largely descriptive accounts of each informant's experience of using resource requests in FBGs to cope with acculturative stressors, and the outcomes of those uses. The accounts are not exhaustive of every detail given in each interview, but give an impression of some of the most salient points to emerge from each one. In the second section, I discuss the informants' usage of military spouse FBGs and what they can tell us about their efficacy as a coping resource. I assess whether the architecture and affordances of the FBG environment played a role in that efficacy. I put forward a tentative model of how Group characteristics are associated with the provision of different types of coping. I also map out the process by which military spouses use FBGs to cope with acculturative stressors. Finally, I outline some limitations and suggest some avenues for further research in order to test these results.

The informants' descriptions of using FBGs to cope with acculturative stressors yielded a complex picture of how different Groups can provide different types of support. FBGs provide a wide range of coping resources to military spouses. They provide informational support, social support, tangible support and even esteem support, but these outcomes were not consistent across all Groups. The support received varied depending upon certain characteristics the Groups embodied. The following interviews give an account of these phenomena, which I shall then analyze and evaluate.

I. The Informants

EMILY

“It really did help me avoid stress altogether. It made me realize – your situation is not unique . . . You are not the first person to have to pack up your game and move to Hawaii by yourself and you won’t be the last person to do it.” – Emily, talking about her use of FBGs for Oahu military spouses

Emily is a kindergarten teacher and mother of two young children. She has been a military spouse for 6 years and moved to Oahu 18 months ago from the US mainland. Her words speak to the social support she derived from using Oahu military spouse FBGs to help with a particularly challenging move to Oahu. Emily arrived in difficult circumstances, as her husband and his unit were yet to arrive on-island. She and her two young children arrived by themselves. Emily is not an experienced mover, and underestimated how overwhelmed she would feel upon arrival in a strange place. She immediately turned to FBGs to get the help that she needed to cope with the many stressors she encountered, and repeatedly stated that the Groups had helped her “avoid stress” during the process of orienting to the island, navigating military bureaucracy, and finding a place to live. However, one of the FBGs that played a key role in this adaptation eventually had to be terminated due to inappropriate posts and “drama” that reflected badly upon her husband’s military unit.

Emily’s husband’s unit was one of two that were relocating to Hawaii from the US mainland. Family members from the units had set up a FBG for the two to share information and provide support during the relocation process. Emily said this helped them overcome “wrong” information issued by her husband’s command, and it evidently played an empowering role in that sense. Emily had joined the Group prior to leaving the mainland. She had never met anyone in the Group in person because she had not lived at the units’ previous duty station. When she

arrived at Honolulu International Airport she instantly lost all the confidence she had felt about handling the move alone. She realized, “Oh my gosh, I’ve no idea what I just signed up for.” To cope with this stressor, Emily used her cell phone to post to the Group that she had just arrived. She instantly received several responses welcoming her to the island. She reported the effect of these messages saying, “It was just this tremendous sense of relief that – oh thank God – somebody knows that I am here – somebody to call in case of an emergency, somebody to help me. Because you don’t realize until you land . . . that you have no idea where you are.” In this case, Emily used an emotion-focused coping strategy to overcome an acculturative stressor, receiving socially supportive help that was highly effective in addressing her immediate need.

Emily quickly turned to the Group for help again. She was looking for the housing office on base to attend an appointment and could not find it. She had acquired the telephone number of one person that she had connected with in the FBG for the unit relocation. She called her and got directions. Emily explained, “If I hadn’t met her through this Group, I probably would’ve sat on the side of the road crying, because I had no idea where to go.” Emily described successful use of a problem-focused coping strategy to overcome an acculturative stressor that would not have been available to her if she had not had the FBG as a resource. The alternative course of action she described – sitting by the side of the road crying – would have been an emotion-focused strategy that would not have solved the problem of finding the housing office. Through a FBG Emily had accessed the coping resource she needed.

Emily estimates she was the sixth spouse of about 200 from the two units to arrive on island. She and the other spouses who had been early to arrive deliberately built up the resources available to incoming spouses in the FBG. After the housing office incident, for example, Emily ensured that a map with a pin locating the office was posted to the Group page so that others

would find it more easily. Unfortunately, Emily said that interactions in the Group “went south” after all the families had arrived and the FBG became a venue for venting frustrations over a pay issue that arose. This included personal attacks on certain service members and their spouses who were perceived by some Group members to be part of the problem. As a result, the Group had to be terminated.

Although the loss of that Group was disappointing, Emily had joined many other Groups, including a military neighborhood Group that became a resource for tangible and social support. Emily explained that if anyone was sick or in need, their neighbors would find out through the Group and would organize childcare and meals to help the sick person out. If people went silent in the Group, other members would enquire after them and make sure they were OK, and offer help if needed. The military neighborhood FBG Emily described was a rich source of tangible and social support.

Emily went on to serve on her Family Readiness Group (FRG) committee, which had a FBG that became a source of tangible support. Emily recalled putting a post in that FBG when her husband was deployed, saying that she was tired of eating alone, and inviting everyone to her house for a potluck dinner. This resulted in 10 people coming over with their families. She said such incidents gave her a feeling of being in a “community.”

Emily arrived on Oahu with a great need for support and found it through her involvement in FBGs. As well as arriving in challenging circumstances, Emily felt Oahu to be “like moving to a foreign country.” She said that she had not been prepared for that either, but that the Groups had helped her find people to explore the island with and gain confidence about visiting places beyond the military base area. It is apparent that Emily used FBGs for problem-focused coping with acculturative stressors that lead to positive informational and social support.

MARY

“With all these Groups that people have created – now I’m amazed at what Facebook can do!” - Mary

Mary is a 29 year old event planner, travel agent and mom of three children under 10. She has been a military spouse for 11 years. Originally from the Philippines, Mary met and married her US service member husband overseas. Her first military move was to Japan six years ago, and she came to Oahu 6 months ago. Mary has found the transition to life on Oahu relatively easy. The Pacific Island culture is familiar, she has friends who had moved here before her, and her kids adapted easily. Nevertheless, Mary gives FBGs a lot of credit for improving the overall experience of moving. When Mary moved to Japan, there were no FBGs to help with the transition. She says it was harder without the Groups and that the Groups have given military spouses support and empowerment. She says she joined the Oahu Groups primarily for informational support, but has a sense of social support from her involvement with them. She talks about the Groups enthusiastically saying, “Don’t underestimate Facebook!”

Mary drew on Group resources to overcome a financial stressor after arriving on Oahu. She and her family had to live in an airport hotel for the first two months, but the allowance they needed from the military to reimburse their hotel expenses was not forthcoming. Mary was growing increasingly frustrated with the situation. Her husband was off-island and she did not feel placated by his assurances that the reimbursement procedure was in hand. Mary needed to take action to calm her troubled mind. She knew which military office she needed to speak to to find out what was going on, but rather than call it directly, she went to an Oahu military spouse FBG to ask for advice first. She explained her situation, asked who would be the best person to speak to at the office and got a name and number. The reason she took this approach was

because she believed that administrative officials in military offices are often incompetent or give bad advice; the advice can vary greatly depending on the official giving it. To avoid the frustration of dealing with an unhelpful bureaucrat, Mary crowd-sourced the contact information of an official with a good reputation. In this way, Mary easily acquired the information she needed. Describing the outcome, Mary said, “That’s when it starts getting OK. So it didn’t go on for long – it wasn’t a *burden* burden [sic].” In this anecdote Mary described encountering an acculturative stressor (having to deal with military bureaucracy) and coping by acquiring the local knowledge to address the stressor via a FBG. This attenuated the anxiety and frustration she was feeling, and resolved her emotional disturbance over the issue by removing the “burden.”

Mary is Vice President of her command’s FRG. She believes its FBG has helped make the FRG a success, in that it is “the most active” FRG. She says that FRGs do not normally elicit a lot of participation from families outside of deployments, whereas her FRG’s events are proving popular even when the service members are on-island. She thinks this is because they post a lot of pictures from their events in the FBG, which are extravagantly decorated by Mary, as an event planner. This induces people to attend the events. The FBG emerges from Mary’s account as an effective resource for augmenting FRG participation.

For Mary the only downside of FBGs is when people make posts that are not supportive of fellow military spouses. One time a spouse posted a photo of her engagement ring and encouraged others to show off their “bling.” Mary said the post had “really upset” her. Mary posted a picture of her ring with the setting turned inward so it could not be seen, and commented that it was not fair to encourage spouses to compare rings – that it was not a “supportive” thing to do. Mary felt that military spouse FBGs are supposed to be supportive

environments, and when she saw something that she felt violated this ethos she was not only upset, but took action. This shows that, although Mary joined Oahu military Spouse FBGs for informational support, she additionally acquired a sense of social support by using them.

LAURA

“For the most part, information we get from the military is useless or confusing . . . it’s really helpful to talk to the Groups.” - Laura

Laura is a 40-year-old attorney, and a 10-year military spouse with three children under 10 years old. She has moved 7 times as a military spouse, including four overseas moves. As a seasoned international mover, Laura did not find the transition to Oahu particularly challenging, however she was able to use FBGs to cope with some stressors. She takes a strategic approach to FBGs, using them strictly as an informational resource and does not derive a sense of social support from them personally.

Laura first became aware of FBGs for military spouses when she joined one for worldwide officer spouses, which had over 8,000 members. Through that Group she learned about the local Groups for bases and has joined those whenever she has moved, even starting one for San Diego officer spouses when she lived there. She has found the Oahu FBGs to be of limited help to her, saying that the members seem “young” and are not her peers. She regards the worldwide officer spouses Group as a better informational resource because they are her peers. Also, because it is such a large Group and closely monitored, she usually gets prompt and satisfying answers to her questions in that forum. Nevertheless, Laura checks in with the Oahu Groups regularly` to keep herself informed, and to maintain a presence by providing answers to questions. She feels that by having a presence in the Groups, people will be more apt to help her out when she has a question.

Laura is guarded in her interactions with her go-to Group of worldwide officer spouses. She says that members can be “snippety” and that some participants come across as “know it alls.” She keeps up with Group posts so that she is informed through other people’s questions and does not have to ask a lot of her own. When she does post or comment she tries to keep her tone neutral so that she doesn’t provoke or elicit any uncomfortable interactions. Laura describes the potential for a FBG to be an emotionally fraught environment and has developed strategies for overcoming that.

In spite of her mixed feelings about the Groups, they play a vital role in her life as a frequent mover. She says that the information the military provides families with is “useless.” She uses the Groups to arm herself with useful information before engaging with the military relocation bureaucracy. An example of this is when she needs to set up a move with a military housing office. Similar to Mary, she says that the quality of information is inconsistent and depends on the competence of the official giving it. She uses the Groups to find out what provisions other people are getting for their moves, and uses that information to secure the best service for herself and avoid the trauma of a bad move-out experience. She says this helps her avoid a lot of frustration.

In moving to Hawaii Laura used FBGs to find out about schools, housing and quarantine procedures for pets. She wanted to find out about private schools in Hawaii. The local Groups were not much help she found, but the worldwide officer spouses Group was able to give her a lot of information, as many had been stationed in Hawaii at some point in their careers. This included assurances from parents at her chosen school that their kids had secured places, even after being waitlisted. So far as housing was concerned, she was interested in finding out “technical, mechanical” issues such as whether she needed to make an appointment at the

housing office, and how utilities billing worked, rather than seeking qualitative evaluations of neighborhoods. Through strategic use of FBGs, Laura had found resources for coping with the acculturative stressors most salient to her.

The support Laura derived from military spouse FBG participation was strictly informational, but helped her avoid frustration in dealing with the military bureaucracy and anxiety about her kids getting placed at the school of her choice. On the other hand, Laura's description of her participation in various Groups implied some associated burdens, such as needing to keep a neutral tone and avoid conflict in the worldwide officer spouses Group. She also said that reading posts about moving caused her some anxiety by reminding her both that she must move again soon, and that things could go wrong. However, Group-derived knowledge would ultimately prepare her for making sure her next move would go as smoothly as possible.

Laura feels confident about reaching out to people she meets in person to initiate friendships. In fact, she is so at ease with this that she worries she is over-eager and "like a puppy dog." This may be because she is a seasoned mover and has had to create a life for herself and her family in 7 different places in the last 10 years. Laura gives the impression that she thrives in this lifestyle. Perhaps because she is so at ease with making friends in person, and because she does not feel the women in the Oahu military spouse Groups are her peers, she does not derive a sense of social support from Group participation. But it is clear that they are a source of valuable informational support to her.

AMBER

“You come to the military world and everyone is in the same boat. It’s like a family. It’s like a community . . . I think they’re more willing to help each other within this community than they are out in the real world, for example.” – Amber

Amber is a 42-year-old British woman, who met and married her husband 13 years ago whilst she was working in the US. They have two young children together and have lived on Oahu for 4 years. Amber was formerly a nurse and is now a stay-at-home mom. She is a member of more than 10 FBGs for Oahu military spouses. Amber is a self-described “stress kitten,” and FBGs played a vital role in helping her avoid stress during her move to the island.

Amber is conscious that she is vulnerable to the effects of stress. She says that stress and worry keep her awake at night, but that she can alleviate those effects through research and organization. FBGs provide her with a pivotal resource in those respects.

After finding out that her family was to move to Oahu from the US mainland, one of the biggest stressors for Amber was finding a preschool for her son. Through Oahu military spouse FBGs, Amber found out that there were few preschools around the military base, and that the few that existed had long wait lists. After conducting some background research, she contacted one she wanted to get her son into and got him on the wait list. The result was that when they arrived on island, her son was able to start preschool without waiting. She said that being able to get her son into a preschool alleviated her stress and that it was a “big thing” for her. Without the FBG, she would not have been able to get a preschool place. The Group had helped her cope with this stressor.

Amber also used FBGs to help her select a military neighborhood to live in. She and her husband had narrowed their options down to two, and by asking questions of the Groups, she was able to identify which neighborhood would be the best fit for her family. They selected the

Warrior Way neighborhood, which now has an active FBG, dedicated to the community. Amber describes it as being “like a sorority.” People use the Group to ask for information, to coordinate social activities and to exchange favors. She says that, as a “support group,” it has been a “huge help” to her. She feels so confident in the Group’s support that she believes that if she had an emergency and needed someone to take care of her kids, someone from the Group would offer right away. Amber describes a source of social and tangible support in the Warrior Way FBG.

Amber believes that the sense of social support she derives from military spouse FBGs, and the Warrior Way Group in particular, is because of the unique situation military spouses find themselves in in Hawaii. Most are thousands of miles from traditional support networks of friends and family. “You’re very much on your own,” says Amber. This causes military spouses “to look out for each other” and form close networks.

FBGs have also been useful to Amber because she thinks of herself as an introvert. She would not be willing to go to a FRG meeting and ask a question publicly. FBGs make it possible for her to ask questions comfortably and acquire the information she needs quickly. She likes the information she acquires through fellow spouses because it is based on their experiences and opinions. She calls it “the information that you really want – the nitty gritty,” as opposed to impersonal information from the Navy. In all, Amber finds FBGs to be sources of both social and informational support that have helped her cope with acculturative stressors.

JESSICA

“You can always tell who the new person is coming in, because they’re posting a lot of questions to the Group.” – Jessica

Jessica is a 33-year-old fitness instructor. She has been a military spouse for 10 years and has one toddler. This is her second time being stationed on Oahu. The first time she lived

on Oahu was seven years ago when there were not any FBGs to go to for information. At that time she worked professionally in Honolulu and lived in civilian housing in a beach community. This time she is a mom and lives in military housing. Whereas she thinks FBGs would have been more helpful to her the first time she came to the island, they have helped her navigate her new situation and have provided her with informational, social and tangible support. They have also been helpful in reminding her about aspects of life on Oahu she had forgotten, such as how to get an automobile safety inspection.

Jessica strategically joins FBGs when she has a specific need. She originally joined Military Spouses of Oahu to find out about local pediatricians. She was unhappy that the health clinic for her husband's branch of service did not have a dedicated pediatric unit. She suspected her son had some developmental issues and wanted the best pediatric care possible. She asked for advice in a Group and was recommended to enroll with a pediatrician in a clinic for another branch of service. Jessica said it would never have occurred to her to do that without FB. Also, several people recommended a specific pediatrician. Jessica enrolled with that pediatrician, has had a satisfying experience working with him, and feels that her son is getting the best of care. By posting in a FBG Jessica gained access to local, insider knowledge that would have been unavailable to her otherwise. It has been key to getting her son into an early intervention program, therefore accessing the help he needs and alleviating some of Jessica's stress over her son's developmental issues. Jessica was able to cope with the acculturative stressor of locating a medical provider for her son directly through posting a resource request to a FBG.

Jessica also used Military Spouses of Oahu to crowd source information about toddler classes for her son. She wanted to post her request in a large Group, as it would be more likely to have moms with kids the same age as hers. She joined the class that was suggested to her by a

member of the Group. Again, she was able to overcome an acculturative stressor by accessing a pool of local knowledge.

Information from FBGs helped Jessica decide to live in the Warrior Way community and she is a member of the neighborhood FBG. She has found that it has given her access to social opportunities. She says it is easier to “make the first move” online and it has helped her get to know people in her community. She would never knock on neighbors’ doors or approach them in the street, but getting to know them through the Group first has made it easier to get to know them offline too. When she first came to the community she posted an invitation to a birthday party for her son in the Group and many people came.

Jessica has observed the provision of tangible support in the Warrior Way Group, and provided it to her neighbors, in one instance lending fans when some Group members’ air conditioning units stopped working. This has helped her meet her neighbors in person and make friends with them. This shows that in specific circumstances, membership to a FBG can lead to offline friendships.

Jessica is less involved in the wider community in Hawaii this time around than she was the first time she lived on Oahu. When asked if the community FBG was perhaps preventing her from integrating into the local community she responded that it was probably a combination of that and motherhood, and living and working in the military community. However, it could be argued that Jessica’s participation in FBGs helped her to acculturate to life in the military community in Hawaii, which she had previously avoided. It informed her of community resources and helped her integrate socially into her new living environment. In this way it had helped with her acculturation to military life on Oahu.

AMY

“It’s just nice because I know that if I needed anything I could probably just post it and I’m sure somebody would help me.” – Amy

Amy is a 33-year-old mother of four and a stay-at-home mom. Amy’s objective in joining FBGs was to access social support saying, “I was looking for a way to make friends and stay in the loop about activities and events – just to kind of socialize.” In spite of joining FBGs prior to moving to the island, access to the kind of support Amy was looking for was not instantaneous. In fact it took a year, and a move to a military neighborhood, before she found it.

When Amy first came to Oahu there was no military housing available, so she and her husband decided to live in a civilian community far from base while they waited. During that period, Amy found access to social opportunities rare. The only place she met anyone was at the community pool. Further, she was pregnant with her fourth child and sick, so she was not able to venture very far from home. Amy wanted to make friends and even started a neighborhood FBG for her community, but few people joined. She explained, “There just wasn’t a lot of interest in it because the neighbors just kind of kept themselves to themselves and it wasn’t really friendly.” This shows that it takes more than FB to bring about the kind of neighborhood closeness that users of the Warrior Way Group described.

By the time Amy moved to the Warrior Way neighborhood, her baby had been born and she was hungry for social interaction. The neighborhood Group gave her access to many social opportunities: field trips, play dates, a Bible study group and social events. She said that participating in the FBG had sped up the process of getting to know people in the community and helped her find out about and attend social activities. The Group played a much-needed role in relieving Amy’s loneliness. She felt this was more possible in a military community than it had been in a civilian community because,

We all share that bond of knowing what it's like to be alone - especially when your husband's deployed . . . that's the reason we bond together. I found more friends in the military than I ever had in the first 25 years of my life.

Amy speaks to the unique needs of military spouses, particularly when stationed overseas, which make them more bonded as a community than in much of the civilian world.

FBGs also gave Amy access to informational support. Before moving to Warrior Way, she was able to find out about the local elementary school her son would attend. She found out that people liked the teachers for his grade, and that there was a bus service in their neighborhood, so she would not have to drive him. This helped her feel emotionally settled in regards to the new school, and gave her a sense of relief knowing she would not have to drive her son to and from school.

Amy experienced some drawbacks to Group participation. The Warrior Way Group is "secret," therefore it is unsearchable, and new members must be added by existing members. This had caused Amy some frustration before she joined, as she had only been able to find and join the neighborhood buy-sell FBG until someone added her to the Warrior Way Group. She was more interested in accessing social opportunities than buying and selling goods. Another drawback was the disappointment she felt when she missed a social event or had not been invited to something that she found out about later through the Group. Lastly, she expressed some irritation with irrelevant information; sometimes Group posts or discussions were of no interest to her and made her "glaze over," and yet she reported catching up on such posts after her children had gone to bed at night and she had time. This perhaps speaks to what boyd (2011) describes as SNS Newsfeeds giving participants "a general sense of those around them" (boyd,

2011, p.45). As Amy's primary motivation in FBG participation was social, it may have been important to her to know what was happening in the life of the community, even if it did not directly affect her.

Amy's motivation for joining FBGs was primarily to gain access to social support in the form of off-line social interactions, but she did not find this until she moved to military housing and joined a neighborhood-focused Group. Whilst effective informational support was available to her before the move, the social support she craved did not fall into place until she lived in an area served by an active FBG. This suggests that it is a particular combination of circumstances that leads FBGs to be effective resources for tangible and social support. It took a long time for Amy to access the resources to cope with the acculturative stressor that was most salient to her – loneliness. It was only when she lived in military housing and gained access to particular FBGs that she acquired the resources to cope with the stressor.

ELIZABETH

“It's different. Island people are different. Island culture is different – the way they do things is different. They are laid back to a fault . . . It's definitely been helpful to have these Groups to bring something of home over to help you adjust – to have that connection.” – Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a 33-year old mother of 3 young children and has lived on Oahu for 8 months. She is a stay-at-home mom and also has a direct sales business. Of all the informants, Elizabeth seemed to find the local culture the most perplexing. She had readily found friends in the military community with whom she interacted offline, especially through the Warrior Way neighborhood Group, but also through a command officer spouses' FBG and even some military buy-sell Groups. She derived a strong sense of community from the Warrior Way Group and said it gave her a feeling of being in a more “normal” environment, by which she said she meant

“mainland normal.” She admitted she struggled to connect with local people. She attended a church in the civilian community and had only managed to become friendly with one local family. She seemed to feel there was a chasm between her and the local people and culture of Oahu, and so Warrior Way gave her a refuge from the discomfort that caused, making her feel like she was living in her own culture.

It might be suggested that Elizabeth was pursuing an acculturative strategy of separation. Elizabeth herself felt this to be the case, saying that more effort was required to integrate with the local community than the military one. She felt that her involvement with Oahu military spouse FBGs reinforced her separation from the local community. Even so, Elizabeth had recently signed up for a moms’ group at another civilian church, indicating that she was beginning to make the effort that would be required to become more involved with local people. She said it would just take more time to get to know them. Elizabeth’s example substantiates the idea that acculturative strategies may change over time, and not be fixed.

Elizabeth had found the Groups to be a source of informational support. A particular stressor for her was local traffic. Oahu has notoriously bad traffic conditions, which have been exacerbated by the building of the new rail system. She described traffic updates that members posted in the Groups advising each other to avoid certain areas saying, “That is very important because if there’s one thing I hate it is sitting in traffic.” The traffic updates helped her cope with that particular stressor.

Elizabeth described making a variety of resource requests in the Warrior Way Group. She had asked for tangible help, in the form of cilantro, which she had received “nice and quick”; she had asked people to join her on an outing; and she had used the neighborhood Group to identify a “terrible noise” in the middle of the night. She felt that the Groups were most useful

for providing “tidbits” of information and trivia, but she would not go to them for more important information, which she would prefer to get from an official military source. She observed that some Groups could be “vent session pages” and appreciated that Warrior Way was not like that. Through FBGs, Elizabeth seemed to find social support and help in coping with acculturative stressors, particularly in regards to her discomfort with local culture.

SARAH

“I’d rather post to a Group of spouses who completely understand and know what I’m talking about, versus my general friends who haven’t lived the military life and don’t understand the nomadic life we live.” - Sarah

Sarah’s mother is a military service member, so Sarah has spent most of her life living on or near military bases, including an overseas tour in Japan, of which she has fond memories. She married her husband at 20 years old and has been a military spouse for 6 years. She has one young son and has lived on Oahu for 12 months. Sarah could be described as a military spouse FBG maven. She belongs to many Groups and administers a Challenges and Triumphs Group*, in which officer spouses anywhere can share and support each other through the challenges of military life, as well as celebrate each other’s successes. She describes receiving a lot of help from FBGs in adapting to life on Oahu, and considers the privacy of the Groups to be important to her use of them.

Sarah used FBGs as a coping resource throughout her move to Oahu. She found she got quick responses from the Groups when she needed information. For example, Sarah and her husband stayed in a hotel in Waikiki when they first arrived. She needed to find things to do with her toddler and asked the Groups about Honolulu Zoo. She wanted to get beyond the kind of information she could acquire from a Google search, which would be apt to include bare facts

* Pseudonym

such as opening times and which animals the zoo has. Rather, she wanted qualitative information. She wanted to know if Honolulu Zoo was a safe place to take a fair-skinned toddler: could he run around safely without getting lost, was there plenty of shade so he would not get sunburned, was the cost of entrance worth the money? Hawaii is an expensive place to live, and so Sarah did not want to squander money on an activity that would not be worthwhile. She was able to get quick answers to her questions about the zoo by posting to the Oahu military spouse FBGs, and she found the advice to be accurate. She explained that facts are easy to search out online, but “they won’t give you any experiences – they won’t give you experiences from a mom, or experience from a spouse . . . But if someone has already done that they know, and they can share that with you.” Sarah finds FBGs give her access to experiences and opinions that are more likely to line up with hers because they are derived from people like her. This is why she turns to FBGs for information.

The privacy of closed and secret Groups is important to Sarah. One reason is for audience management; by posting to closed and secret Groups she avoids getting useless or insensitive advice from people who have not walked in her shoes as a military spouse. Security was also of salient importance to Sarah. She did not want to be “preyed upon” by anyone who may take advantage of a mother home alone whilst her husband is working, or by someone who might exploit her emotional vulnerability. Her husband is in a particularly dangerous military specialism. For Sarah, a private Group is a safe place to ask for advice about what to watch on TV that will not trigger any negative emotions whilst her husband is on a mission. Sarah is very careful about who she admits to the secret Challenges and Triumphs Group she administers. She vets everyone thoroughly “to make sure it isn’t somebody trying to prey upon us.” In Sarah’s mind, private Groups provide a safer environment for coping with stressors than public Groups.

In fact Sarah was wary of people in large Groups, even if they were closed, saying that you never know whom you are talking to, as members in those Groups are not well vetted. So she was more circumspect in her interactions in large Groups than in small ones, even if they were private, evaluating the members and their advice on a case-by-case basis.

Sarah used FBGs for informational and emotional support. She used the Oahu military spouse Groups mainly for informational support, and they were effective in helping her cope with a number of acculturative stressors. As well as the zoo, they had provided her with advice about flying with her toddler, what she would need when she moved into her house, and how to locate neighborhood resources. The Warrior Way Group had given her access to social opportunities such as mother-and-child field trips. She used other Groups for emotional support, but seemed to derive a sense of social support from the Oahu Groups saying that Group involvement “does bring our community closer.”

ANGELA

“Everybody’s on Facebook and you have it right on your phone, so I hope for a quick response when I ask questions. And it seems, for the most part, like people really do respond pretty fast to your questions.” – Angela

Angela is 26 and describes herself as a “student and stay-at-home mom,” having recently graduated with a Masters degree. She has a toddler and has lived on Oahu for 17 months. Angela had heard of military spouse FBGs prior to coming to Oahu and had searched them out, joining Military Spouses of Oahu. Her primary objective was to connect with other moms with children the same age as hers. Secondly, she was looking for advice about moving, things to do and good places to eat.

Angela fulfilled her primary objective quickly and efficiently. Two weeks after arriving, she posted in Military Spouses of Oahu that she was looking for a toddler group to join and was

invited to join an in-home group. She found this very satisfying, appreciating “being able to sit in someone’s home and relax and let your kids get that social interaction.” She received social benefits from the post beyond the playgroup. She met a neighbor through attending the playgroup who she became friends with and sees every day, became part of a “group of girls,” and attends another playgroup. This offline support and social contact is important to Angela because her husband is off-island with work a great deal. She copes with this by trying to schedule at least one activity a day. Social support plays an important role in her coping with military life on Oahu.

The command’s FRG FBG also plays an important role in keeping Angela occupied during her husband’s absences. Social activities are coordinated through the FBG which she says are “very supportive and helpful – just knowing those wives are going through the same thing and actually hanging out with them.” FBGs have helped augment Angela’s social life on Oahu by connecting her with people she could relate to and were going through similar experiences.

Angela recounts one particular stressor that she was able to cope with via support from Military Spouses of Oahu. She had a deflating tire and couldn’t find a gas station that had a working pump. She was becoming anxious at the prospect of getting stranded with a flat tire. She used her phone to post to Military Spouses of Oahu and quickly received some options for other gas stations in the area with working pumps. In this situation, Military Spouses of Oahu gave her instant access to a pool of local knowledge that she did not previously possess, and allowed her to easily resolve the problem. She said it was a “stress reliever” but also gave her a sense of pride in knowing she had a supportive community she could turn to when she needed help.

Angela admits that she preferred living in the previous duty station her husband was assigned to on the mainland. However, the FBGs she belongs to have had a substantial, positive impact on her life in Hawaii. As she puts it, “Here in Hawaii we have people we hang out with a lot more, and I found those friends through various FBGs.”

II. Discussion

(i) Facebook Group Resource Requests and Coping with Acculturative Stressors

“I didn’t realize there was stress, because I was so ready to go. But when I got here it was, ‘Oh, what did I just do?’ So it still didn’t feel stressful because I knew I had the support Group . . . I had the support system that I could depend on.” – Emily talking about her use of an Oahu military spouse FBG.

“I think there are more significant things that have helped me adapt . . . Just the passage of time . . . And making friends in person. That’s a huge way to adapt.” – Laura talking about whether FBGs helped her adapt to life on Oahu.

The accounts of the nine informants in this study speak to a key idea in Berry’s (1997) stress and coping framework of immigration, acculturation, and adaptation: each individual’s experience of stressors during the acculturation process is different, and dependent upon a number of individual level variables combined with circumstances. Emily arrived in what might be thought of as highly stressful circumstances: as the sole adult in charge of her two young children, and moving overseas for the first time in her life to a place she immediately found to be “like a foreign country.” In addition, Emily was leaving behind traditional support networks of family and offline friends for the first time. As soon as Emily arrived she felt lost and experienced an acute sense of helplessness. She immediately turned to an Oahu military spouse FBG for social and informational support, which was swiftly provided by the Group. She says their responses to her resource requests were effective in helping her “avoid” stress. Frequent international mover Laura, on the other hand, took her transition to Hawaii in stride, describing it as a “fairly smooth road” and reporting that there had been no “major challenges.” She said that her use of FBGs to acquire informational resources had been helpful to her adaptation only “in a minor way.” These two informants represent opposite ends of a spectrum of supportive needs when coping with cross-cultural transitions; nevertheless, both had been able to have some of their needs met by posting online resource requests in the military spouse FBG environment.

Indeed, every informant recounted several instances of resource requests they had posted to the Groups and how these had been met with the informational or social support they required. They each articulated how these requests had helped them to either maintain or attain a sense of emotional equilibrium after resolving the stressor using the resources provided.

It could be concluded, then, that military spouse FBGs are an effective venue for military spouses to post resource requests that help them cope with acculturative stressors, but it is clear from the informants' accounts that the situation is more complex. Laura, for example, had found Oahu-based military spouse Groups to be less helpful than a Group for worldwide officer spouses in addressing her informational needs. Amy, whose need for offline social interaction had prompted her to join Oahu military spouse FBGs before she moved to the island, did not have her needs met until she moved into a military housing community that was served by an active neighborhood FBG. Elizabeth reported that some of the Groups were not effective because they hosted "vent sessions" more than anything else. The Group that Emily found to be so effective when she first arrived on-island had to be terminated after certain members started using it to mount personal attacks on spouses and service members. Amber had observed drama and offense taking in some of the larger Groups. And yet members of Groups like the Warrior Way Group found it to be an effective coping resource and a rich source of social and tangible support, and most of the informants acquired effective informational and social support from the large FBGs. Clearly, there are variables that moderate a Group's ability to be an effective coping resource for acculturative stressors. The following socio-technical analysis of the Groups the informants described reveals some of these variables.

(ii) The Role of Privacy

“I can start to ask questions or comment on posts [in the Groups], and my family cannot see I’m doing that and they don’t know. We like to not give them any information till we know for sure where we’re going and we know orders are coming. Otherwise my mom gets out of control about it with the questions - the endless, endless questions.” - Laura

Laura describes audience management opportunities that private FBGs give her, helping her avoid irksome questions about a move until the move is confirmed. The informants in this study described using FBGs with “open,” “closed,” and “secret” privacy settings. Each one was asked how they felt about the privacy settings of the Groups. The most frequently cited benefit of closed and secret Groups was audience management. Privacy was also associated with safety and security for some. Their understandings of the kinds of privacy afforded by the various settings was nuanced, with many of them indicating that privacy of any form in the FB environment was an illusion – Group privacy settings offered a safety net rather than a fail safe.

In terms of audience management, all informants felt it was beneficial that only Group members were able to see posts to the closed and secret Groups. For Laura, this helped her avoid information seepage. Amy did not want to overload her relatives’ Newsfeeds with the kinds of posts and comments she made in the Groups because they would be irrelevant to them. And Emily said that her FB Friends from back home would be apt to mock her if they saw her posting in one of the Oahu Groups that she was lost, as she has a reputation amongst them for being geographically challenged. In each of these instances the privacy of closed or secret Groups helped the informants to avoid the emotionally disturbing consequences of context collapse, consistent with Marwick and boyd’s (2014) findings.

Audience limitation via privacy settings was also associated with the quality of responses that a post would elicit. Certain questions could only be effectively answered by fellow military

spouses. Angela explained that her non-military family and friends would not understand the kinds of questions she asks in military spouse FBGs. Others said there would simply be no point in their non-military FB Friends seeing their military spouse FBG requests because they could not help. Jessica pointed out that non-military Friends would probably only give sympathy responses to the kinds of requests people make in spouse FBGs, which would not address the immediate needs of the person making the request. In order to receive any responses or relevant responses, audience selection and limitation were important.

Two informants associated privacy settings with safety and security. Amy felt comfortable with social coordination via the small, secret neighborhood Group Warrior Way, but said that trying to coordinate events in a public setting could “go wrong fast.” Sarah was concerned about being preyed upon if the Groups she belonged to were “open” rather than closed and secret. The privacy settings of closed and secret Groups helped them cope with the stressor of safety and security.

Interestingly, some of the informants referred to the large, closed military spouse Groups like Military Spouses of Oahu as “public,” even though an administrator must admit members to those Groups. Their size meant that the informants thought of them as a public forum. Mary pointed out that members were not well vetted before being admitted, and said that she would judge each member and the quality of their information on a case-by-case basis. Sarah also said that she preferred to observe members’ behavior in Groups before becoming involved. This showed that the spouses were doing their own vetting of the closed Groups, rather than taking for granted that membership equated to trustworthiness.

Emily described an instance in which the privacy boundaries of a Group were broken. Before the unit relocation Group was terminated, some members had been posting inappropriate

messages aimed at others in the Group, and then deleting them as soon as they felt the person the message was aimed at had seen it. Emily and her friends were deriving entertainment value from the unfolding drama, and started taking screenshots of the posts before they were deleted and sending them to each other. She acknowledged that this had contravened the implied boundary conditions of information posted in the Group. She explained that this was an inherent risk of any kind of online activity saying,

When you're on the Internet, I think you roll the dice. Your privacy is not as private as you think it is . . . You run the risk of having it all put out there. You have to know and understand and respect it – and if you don't, that's how you get in trouble.

Amber said she felt that privacy settings provided a “safety net” when people posted sensitive personal information in Groups, but no actual guarantee of privacy. The informants generally seemed to have a sense that posting personal information online was a risky business and that good judgment should be employed in using the Groups, regardless of privacy settings.

Relatively small Groups like Sarah's Challenges and Triumphs Group or the Warrior Way Group were associated with higher levels of trust. Jessica described a very small Group she administers for her military spouse exercise Group, which provides a trusted environment for the giving and receiving of effective esteem support. Posts to the Group, affirming that she had taught a good class, could lift her up when she was down and make her day, she explained. It may be that a combination of privacy settings, Group size and selective membership are associated with higher levels of social, esteem and tangible support than can be acquired through large Groups, even if they are closed.

Two informants talked about open Groups, both of which were FRG Groups. Mary explained that FRG Groups have to be open in order to reach a broad audience of service members' extended families. It was no longer possible for spouses to freely post resource requests in these Groups because every post is vetted. Emily pointed out that a vetting policy was a necessary precaution for her FRG after the debacle over the Group that had to be terminated. Mary highlighted operational security concerns and the feelings of the families as reasons why posts to her FRG Group must be screened. This filtering may dilute the efficacy of such Groups in returning timely resources to help with spouses' immediate needs. On the other hand, Mary, Emily and Angela had received social support via social events coordinated through FRG Groups. It may be that such open Groups do not provide a particularly good forum for posting resource requests, but they assist with the FRG mission to provide support to service members' families.

Privacy is clearly a multifaceted issue in the context of FBGs. The networked notion of privacy put forward by Marwick and boyd (2014) helps explain how members of Groups view privacy. Members are mindful that the moderate level of privacy that they associate with large, closed Groups is beneficial for audience management, but does not guarantee that information stays within the bounds of those Groups. They are aware that the technical restrictions of such Groups can be surmounted and the audience boundaries breached. Indeed, one informant had direct experience of this. This leads to the constrained use of such Groups, in that the informants did not consider them an appropriate venue for revealing personal information or emotional need. It may even help explain why posts to large Groups like Military Spouses of Oahu are mostly phrased as informational resource requests. Only the smallest Groups with the most

vettted memberships seemed to be trusted, in terms of the maintenance of boundary conditions for informational and emotional expression.

(iii) Access to Low-Cost Social Capital

“If I have the knowledge base to help them then I do. But I don’t want to sit here and say, ‘You helped me so I have to help you... but I don’t have any clue what I’m doing’ ... I don’t want to give bad information . . . I’d rather let somebody who knows what they’re talking about answer.” - Sarah

Sarah spoke to a common sentiment amongst informants. The informants did not feel that they needed to directly reciprocate the help they received via the Groups. If someone gave them good advice in a Group, they did not feel the burden of needing to return a favor to that particular person. If they saw a request they believed they could help with then they would do so, but not otherwise. This could even have benefits for their affect. Mary summed it up by saying, “It feels good to help others through Facebook.” This supports Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) observation that large social networks are helpful in coping with stressors by providing access to low-cost social capital, which eases the emotional burden of indebtedness. Several informants mentioned giving advice in the Groups, but not feeling like they had to. Amber said that in the big Groups it was impossible to keep track of who has given help and so “you just move on,” whereas in the Warrior Way Group she would be more inclined to provide help to someone who had provided tangible help to her, but she would not feel she had to do so. Of all the informants, Laura was the only one who seemed to feel that there was any cost to acquiring resources through the Groups. She felt it was important to keep a presence in the Groups by commenting on posts when she had the appropriate knowledge – that way people would be more inclined to help her when she needed something. This was a matter of maintaining a presence

rather than needing to directly reciprocate help. Through the course of the interviews, the Groups emerged as low-cost venues for resource requests, with emotional rewards associated with helping others as possible additional benefits.

The informants took strategic advantage of the types of social capital available to them in different Groups. They selected Groups that would provide them with access to the optimum social capital resources for their needs. Jessica, for example, posted her request for information about toddler classes to a large Group precisely because it would be more likely to contain members with children the same age as hers than a smaller Group. Amber said she posted to Groups that were used the most frequently and would also cross-post (post the same request to more than one Group at a time) in order to ensure quick and effective responses. Elizabeth said she joined Groups according to their affiliations, be they demographic characteristics such as wives and moms, or military affiliations, such as the FRG or the command officer wives Group. She also joined Groups that gave access to particular resources, such as babysitter information. Emily joined Groups seeking social resources. She said she joined all she could because “You never know who you’re going to meet . . . That person could end up being your best friend.” The informants used multiple Groups in order to access the best social capital resources they could find.

All of the informants but one reported deriving a feeling of social support from the Oahu military spouse FBGs. Three of the informants had joined the Groups in order to receive social support, and five had joined for informational support and experienced social support as a secondary benefit (see Table (i)). Sarah said that FBG participation “brings us closer together because we are able to help each other.” And Angela reported feeling a sense of a bond with people who frequently posted to Military Spouses of Oahu, even though she had never met them.

This is consistent with Farrow and Yuan’s (2011) finding that frequent communication in FBGs engenders emotional closeness. Two informants mentioned having to build a substitute family when living far from their biological families. For most of the informants, the Groups played a role in their ability to construct this sense of a substitute family and a supportive community.

This supports the idea that FBGs give participants easy access to a large network of social support that would be difficult or impossible to access otherwise. However, it does not contradict the Ellison and boyd (2013) conceptualization of SNSs as mainly being used to articulating existing offline social networks. Rather, in these instances, the Groups allowed for the activation of latent networks of loose ties, such as neighbors in a community and military spouses sojourning in a specific location. Although most members had never met in an offline context, they were part of a latent social network nevertheless.

Table (i)

Primary and Secondary Support Outcomes

Name	Primary Objective Social	Primary Objective Informational	Primary Objective Met?	Received Secondary Informational or Social Support
Jessica		✓	✓	✓
Sarah		✓	✓	✓
Elizabeth		✓	✓	✓
Amy	✓		✓	✓
Angela	✓		✓	✓
Amber		✓	✓	✓
Laura		✓	✓	
Emily	✓		✓	✓
Mary		✓	✓	✓

(iv) Groups Beat Google

“I think there’s more truth to the personal experiences because they’ve been it, they’ve done it.” – Amy on the value of Group-acquired information.

Each of the informants had views about the quality of information available in Oahu military spouse Groups. The quality of information provided was associated with the identity of Group members and the experiences they could draw upon, which might match the informants’. Several informants made comparisons between the information Google and the military can provide versus what they get from spouses. Information from fellow spouses was felt to be superior because it was based upon experience, whereas Google would deliver the bare facts and the military may have an agenda for the information they put out. This made Group-acquired information more helpful for coping with acculturative stressors.

In spite of their overall confidence in the information in Groups, the informants felt that it should be handled with caution. They would back up suggestions from the Groups with their own research, or they would measure the situation of the giver of the advice against their own. There was a range of attitudes amongst informants regarding the best types of information to acquire from the Groups. Elizabeth, for example, felt that the groups should only be used to acquire trivial information, whereas Laura did not see any reason why Oahu military spouses would not be qualified to give advice about living there. All of the informants filtered and evaluated the advice they gained in Groups and none followed it blindly.

Oahu military spouse FBGs provide advice based on experience, and it is access to the experiences of many women who share a similar situation, that makes them a valuable coping resource. This is the essence of crowd sourcing, and gives spouses the agency to acquire low-cost social capital resources to address their needs.

(v) Timeliness

“If you . . . post to the Group page, they’re going to try and help you. Because they know that for you to post on the page right now, you need help right now.” - Emily

Emily speaks to the importance of quick answers to resource requests posted in Groups, and explains the responsiveness in terms of a supportive community that is eager to help. Every informant commented upon the swift speed with which they received responses to their military spouse FBG resource requests, and this was attributed to the architectural affordance of the Newsfeed. Ellison & body (2013) describe this newer affordance of SNSs as pushing content to users in a stream. Users tend to access FB through the Newsfeed feature, so that it is the first thing they see when they enter the site. Posts to Groups can appear in users’ Newsfeeds, depending on the settings they select. Many informants reported that Group members are constantly monitoring their Newsfeeds via their cell phones, and this leads to fast response times – usually within minutes. This is what made the Groups successful in providing coping resources to spouses in times of acute need, such as when Emily landed at the airport and felt overwhelmed and when Angela needed help averting a flat tire. Elizabeth cited this as another reason why resource requests in Groups were more effective than resource requests to users’ FB Friends Networks. Posts to the Network are filtered by algorithms, which delay their appearance in Newsfeeds or filter them out altogether. Group posts appear in Newsfeeds immediately, with Group members controlling the level of filtering, making them a more responsive environment in which to post requests.

Most informants had Group posts appear in their Newsfeeds. Mary used technical settings to limit the appearance of different Groups according to how frequently she wanted to be

updated on them. She said this was to avoid information overload. Laura reported that she did not have Group posts appear in her Newsfeed, but visited the Group pages periodically to get updated. She said having the Group posts appear in her Newsfeed was “annoying.” But for others, having posts appear in their Newsfeeds was a matter of convenience, as Sarah explained, “I don’t have enough time to go into every Group and see what’s been going on with the dynamic of the Group or the things that have been asked. It helps me, as it pops up on my Newsfeed.” Angela did not think she would check in with the Groups at this stage in her sojourn if not for having the posts pop up in her Newsfeed. She had transitioned from needing to locate resources to providing them to others when she could. The Newsfeed posts kept her involved in the Groups and answering other people’s resource requests. Having Group posts appear in FB users’ Newsfeeds was associated with the timeliness of responses, and, in most cases, with ease of involvement.

(vi) Group Characteristics and Support Types

“It’s almost like a step back in time, but on Facebook. People used to live in communities where they could borrow a cup of sugar and it’s totally like that on Warrior Way. But it’s all Facebook.” - Jessica

With these words, Jessica attributes the closeness of her neighborhood, and the exchange of tangible support within it, directly to FB. In High et al’s (2015) study of an online forum for Marine Corps spouses, tangible support had been found to be absent. They speculated that this was because of a lack of geographic focus – the Group was for Marine Corps spouses associated with any base. This result was consistent with Ellison et al’s (2011) study, which found offline support not to be associated with online resource mobilization attempts posted to users’ FB Friends network. However, with Oahu Groups, and the neighborhood Groups in particular, the

members reported many instances of receiving tangible support as a result of FBG posts, indicating that a high level of geographic focus may indeed be conducive to accessing tangible support through online forums. Posts seeking ripe avocados, cups of sugar and emergency Tylenol evidenced tangible support. This is an example of how FBGs can reconstitute the affordances of the FB Friends network and produce dramatically differing effects. Members of Warrior Way all felt that responses to such posts were swift and effective; within moments, someone would reply that they had some Tylenol they could bring over, a ripe avocado or cup of sugar to lend. Members of the Warrior Way Group had a strong sense that their neighbors were there for them, because of their FBG. Amber expressed this sense by saying, “Someone always has your back.”

Emily mentioned being a member of a FBG for a different neighborhood and the social and tangible support she had found through that. The neighbors looked out for each other via the Group and organized support for each other in emergencies by providing childcare and meals. Emily’s account shows that Warrior Way is not an isolated example. On the other hand, the neighborhood FBG that Amy had tried to start in a largely civilian community had met with a complete lack of interest from its residents. Amy felt this was because residents of that community did not share the bond that military spouses share. This indicates that it is a blend of geographic focus and identity that leads to military neighborhood Groups being effective sources of tangible support.

Neighborhoods in military communities tend to be organized by rank. Warrior Way is a neighborhood of officers, and Emily’s neighborhood is populated by the junior enlisted ranks. This means that residents of the neighborhoods share a sharply defined aspect of identity. There are also potential workplace repercussions for service members if people living in military

communities do not hold their behavior to certain standards. This may make people more confident that their neighbors can be trusted. Amy seemed to express this sentiment saying, “There’s more accountability here, and I think people look out for you a lot better in this neighborhood than they would any other place.” Added to this, military spouses stationed overseas need to build support networks amongst each other, because emotional support and tangible help will be difficult to come by otherwise. So it is suggested that common needs linked to identity, geographic focus, and a sense of accountability make neighborhood Groups successful. Amy indicated that the “secret” status of the Warrior Way Group also made it a safe place to coordinate social events, so privacy could also be added as a condition of neighborhood Group success.

Two informants mentioned Groups that provide esteem support, which High et al (2015) describe as enhancing a person’s sense of self worth. One was Sarah’s Challenges and Triumphs Group and the other was Jessica’s exercise class Group. The purpose of both Groups is to support and encourage members through challenges related to a particular aspect of their lives, and to celebrate their successes. These Groups had small, restricted memberships that were based around an aspect of the members’ identity. This indicates that Groups with highly selective memberships and a strong common identity factor amongst members can be effective providers of esteem support.

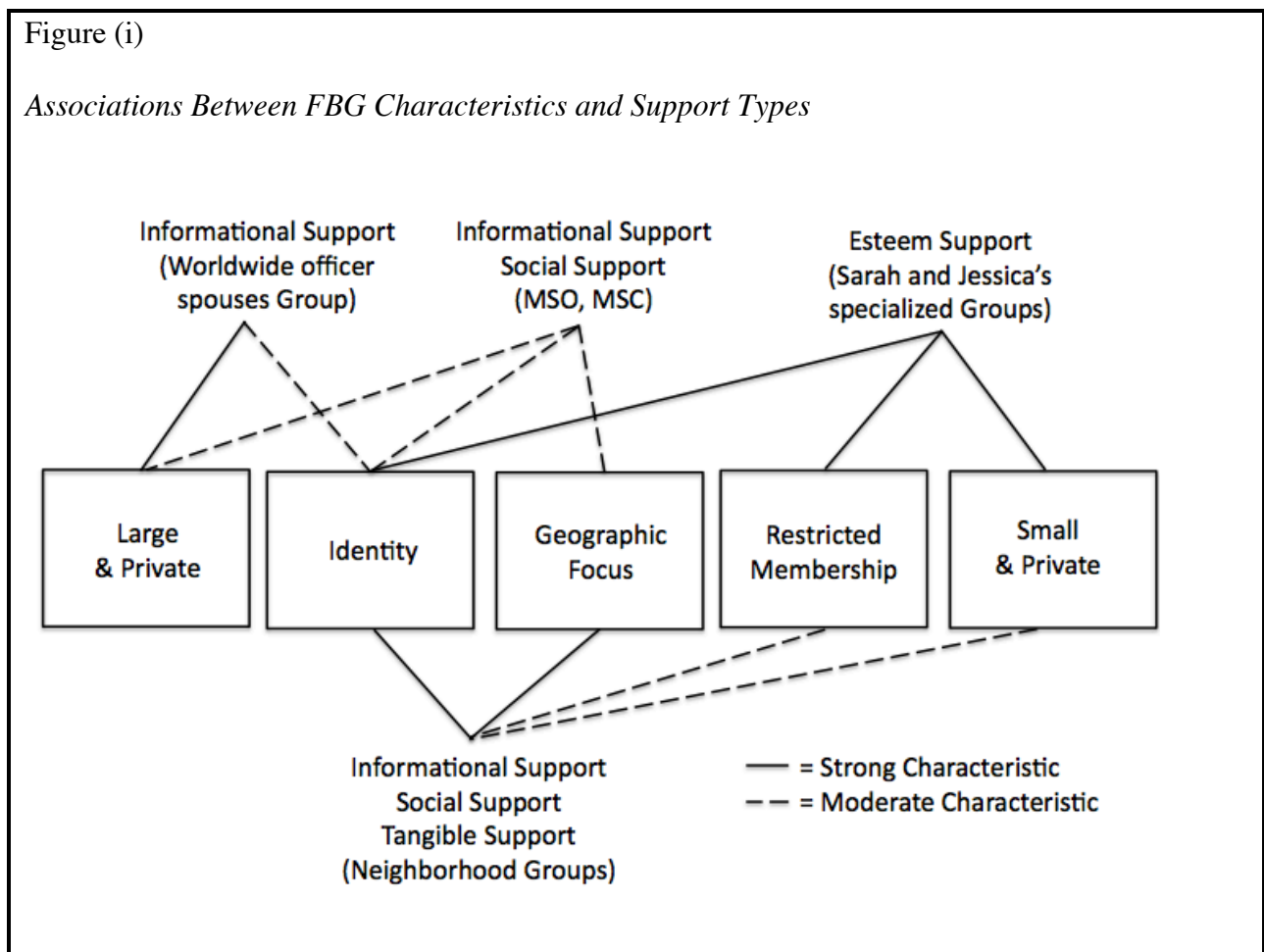
The large Oahu spouse Groups seemed to be most frequently associated with informational support and, secondarily, with providing a sense of social support. These Groups bring together military spouses through a broad association with the military and a broad geographic focus on Oahu. These could be thought of as the defining Group characteristics that make them effective in providing informational and social support.

One informant did not derive any sense of social support from the Oahu Groups, and it is important that her case be examined. Although Laura had some of her informational needs met in Oahu Groups, others could not be met, so she turned to an international officer spouses Group. She said it was her “go-to” Group because “they are my people,” showing she held a strong sense of a common identity with its members. She said that members of the Oahu Groups she participated in were not her peers. This speaks to the importance of identity as a factor in whether participants derive a sense of social support from Group membership.

The issue of identity may also explain why Emily’s unit relocation Group transformed from being a source of supportive coping resources into a venue for expressing frustrations that boiled over into personal attacks. Emily felt that the Group had become too big and failure was inevitable, yet bigger military spouse Groups exist on Oahu that maintain a civil level of discourse (Military Spouses of Oahu is an example, with over 1000 members). Perhaps it is because the bond of identity that united the members had been broken. Emily explained that the pay issue that had initiated the negative Group interactions had affected some families and not others. A change of administrative policy had meant that families that had arrived on-island early were receiving the correct pay, but that those that had arrived later were being underpaid. Oahu is a highly expensive place to live and families’ finances would undoubtedly have suffered as a result, causing distress amongst those affected. In addition to this discrepancy, people felt that certain service members were to blame for the lack of a swift rectification of the issue and used the Group to air their frustrations against them and their spouses. This divided the spouses into those that were being disadvantaged by the pay issue and those that were not, and caused some members to turn against each other. With the bond of identity broken, the Group was transformed from a site of mutual support into a site of conflict and resentment. This identity

breach could explain why the unit relocation Group ultimately failed as a sustainable resource for coping with acculturative stressors.

These ideas about how Group characteristics can be associated with support types are highly tentative. Nevertheless, based on the evidence from the informants in this study, certain Group characteristics may be associated with the different types of support available through them, and help explain the differing experiences of the informants in this study. I have mapped out these associations in the following diagram (see Figure (i)).

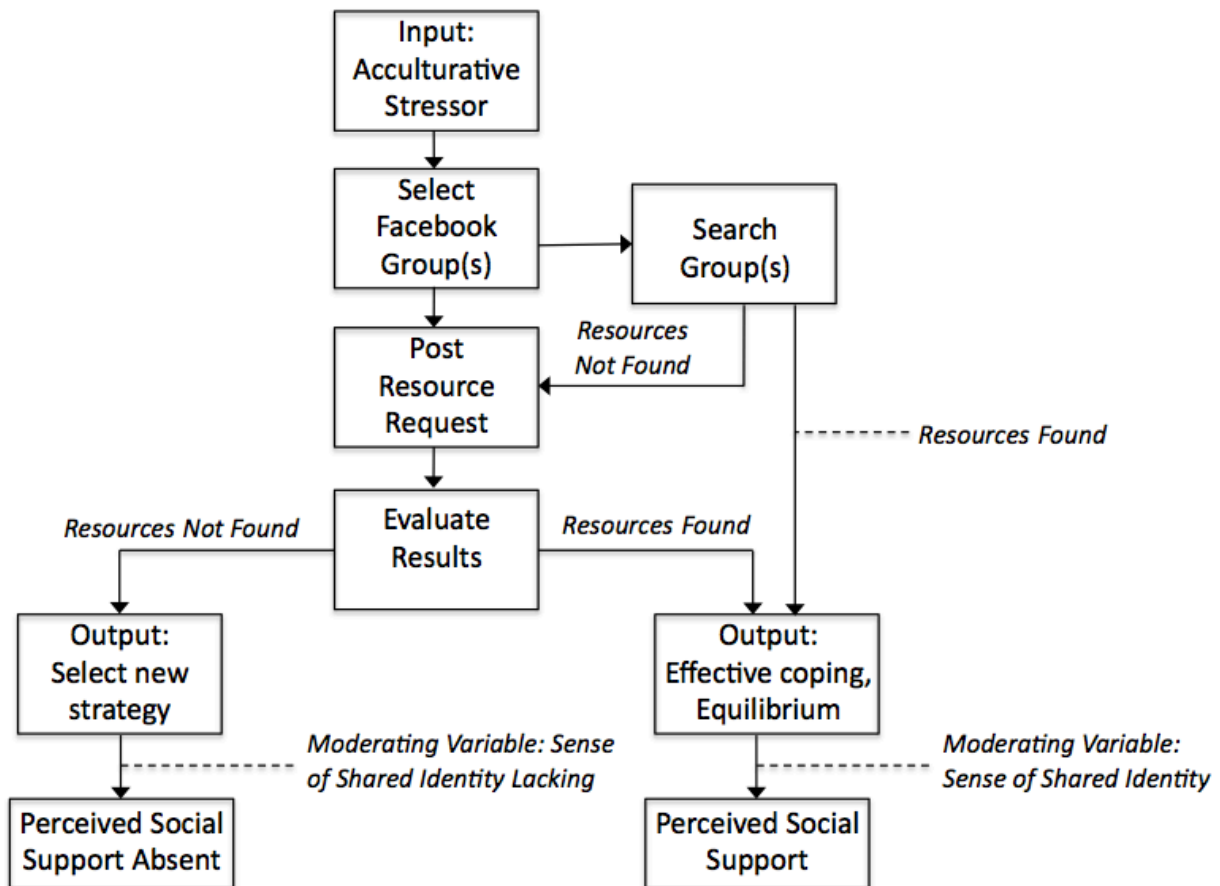


(vii) Coping with Acculturative Stressors via Facebook Groups

A model for coping with acculturative stressors via Facebook emerges from the evidence in this study (see Figure (ii)). When informants encountered acculturative stressors they turned to Facebook Groups to locate the resources to be able to cope. First, they would select the Group or Groups that would be most likely to help them access the resources to cope with the stressor. Secondly, they would either search the Groups for relevant information that had already been posted, or post a resource mobilization attempt of their own. If a search were not successful then they would post a request. They would then evaluate the results of the request, filtering down to the most useful responses, sometimes backing up the information found with their own research. By receiving the information they needed they were able to establish a sense of emotional equilibrium in regard to the stressor. When informants had a strong sense of identity with Group members, they felt socially supported by engaging in this process. When the information needed was not accessed through this process then a new coping strategy had to be selected. Laura's case makes it possible to speculate that when sojourners do not get the resources they need from their posts, then the feeling of being socially supported is absent. However, further study would be needed in order to probe this idea.

Figure (ii)

Coping Process via FBG



By searching previous resource requests or posting new resource requests in the FBG environment, informants pursued problem-focused coping strategies, which are positively associated with coping with stressors, according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Emotion-focused coping strategies were averted. Whilst statistical information should not drive qualitative studies, it is instructive to note that in coding the interviews I recorded 60 references

to problem-focused coping and 50 references to informational support, against just five references to emotion-focused coping strategies. Some informants had observed complaining (emotion-focused coping) in some military spouse FBGs, but indicated this type of communication was not helpful, so they avoided those Groups. They seemed far more engaged with Groups that emphasized problem-focused resource requests and provided positive informational and supportive resources.

(viii) Adaptive Outcomes

The purpose of the current study is to analyze whether FBGs help military spouse sojourners to cope with acculturative stressors. Within Berry's (1997) framework, the coping process is considered to have both mediating and moderating effects upon adaptive outcomes. Adaptive outcomes are the long-term results of the acculturation process and can have either positive or negative valences – individuals can be thought to have adapted well or poorly. One way to measure this is by assessing each individual's acculturative strategy. The informants provided some information that could help assess some of their strategies and whether these had been positively or negatively effected by their use of the Groups.

Some residents of the Warrior Way Group indicated that they were adopting a separation strategy. This was most striking the in the case of Elizabeth, who did not understand local civilian culture, and found it hard to integrate. The Warrior Way neighborhood gave her a feeling of living in a more familiar mainland US cultural environment. In her mind, this was reinforced by the Warrior Way Group, which provided a highly effective means for members of the community to communicate and coordinate social activities. She need hardly venture out of the neighborhood to have her social needs met, and this helped her avoid confronting a culture

she found difficult to comprehend. Amy and Jessica also felt that they would be unlikely to become involved in the local civilian community, because of their roles as mothers and their immersion in the military milieu. They each felt this was reinforced by their participation in the Warrior Way Group. On the other hand, Elizabeth had recently joined a mother and toddler group at a civilian church, and Amy showed a great deal of interest in learning about Hawaiian culture, even if she was unlikely to integrate into it. Another member of the Warrior Way Group, Sarah, reported enjoying interacting with local people when she had the chance. She also found that island culture had had a positive effect on her, in that she had slowed down and learned to do things on “island time.” This had helped her cope with her toddler, and her husband appreciated that she had become more laid back. Sarah appeared to be integrating aspects of local culture into her life. The Warrior Way Group played a role in facilitating separation strategies, but it was not a decisive factor in the selection of those strategies. It was also apparent that strategies had the potential to change over time, with Elizabeth making a positive effort to reach outside the military community in spite of her discomfort.

Emily had found that FBGs helped her to explore Oahu and go to places she would not have the courage to visit by herself. She would post requests for people to join her on outings to unfamiliar places, and their company would give her the confidence to venture outside the military base area. She explained that “having the support system here has made it a lot easier to do exactly what I wanted to, which was to embrace the Hawaiian lifestyle.” For Emily, FBGs were helping her pursue a strategy of integration.

It ought to be recognized that military spouses experience acculturation to Oahu military life as well as local culture. They must learn about their base, military neighborhoods, local military bureaucracy, the work patterns, culture and social expectations of the units their service

member spouses are assigned to; to name but a handful of factors. Thus, when military spouses sojourn on Oahu, they are confronted with more than one culture that is new to them. FBGs may have a key role to play in helping them adapt to local military culture by providing them with the informational and supportive resources to integrate.

FBGs play more than one role in the acculturative strategies of military spouses. They can at once reinforce members' involvement in the military community, but also help them venture out into the local civilian community. Berry (1997) explains that acculturative strategies are determined by the value individuals place on maintaining their identity and characteristics, and the value of maintaining relationships with larger society. As temporary residents who are able to live in military communities, the degree of adaptation to larger society in Hawaii can be a matter of choice for military spouses, and can be driven by individual preferences and life circumstances. If they choose to limit their adaptation to integration into the military community, then they will find some of the informational and social resources they need in FBGs. However, if they choose to try and experience local culture and learn from it, then FBGs may help with that too. On the other hand, military spouses may find that by locating the resources they need in military spouse FBGs and military communities they are restrained from venturing into local culture. FBGs emerge as a facilitator for acculturative strategies, but not a deciding factor.

III. Conclusion

The research question asked whether resource mobilization attempts in FBGs for military spouses sojourning on Oahu help them to cope with acculturative stressors. Qualitative interviews with nine military spouses indicated positive results, but with some conditions attached. Every interviewee but Laura had found local FBGs to be effective in providing access to the informational or social support that formed their primary objectives for Group participation. Laura had found more effective informational support in a FBG that was not geographically based, but whose members she identified with more closely than members of local Groups. A sense of common identity, geographic focus, Group size, privacy and membership restrictions were Group characteristics that affected the types of support that were available in different Groups. Informational, social, tangible and esteem support were found to be present in the Groups depending upon the valences and combinations of each Group's characteristics.

Several socio-technical affordances of Facebook Groups were found to be associated with their efficacy as a coping resource for sojourning military spouses:

Privacy: Groups whose privacy settings were “closed” or “secret” helped members with audience management issues, prevented information seepage, relieved the psychological burden of having to deal with context collapse, and ensured that Group members were likely to be fellow military spouse sojourners and therefore able to effectively respond to resource mobilization attempts.

Newsfeed: With Group posts appearing in Group members' Newsfeeds, sojourners were able to acquire timely responses to their resource mobilization attempts, making the Groups effective at providing support in times of acute need. Further, the Newsfeed kept members engaged in the

Groups, even after they had moved forward in the adaptation process. This way, more experienced members would provide advice to newcomers. The Newsfeed also produced awareness of the frequency of Group communication, engendering a sense of emotional closeness amongst participants

Access to Low-Cost Social Capital: Groups provide members with easy access to large networks of low-cost social capital. They can seek and receive resources in Groups from large numbers of people with the combined knowledge, experience and motivation to provide them with effective help. The large size of the networks ensures that sojourners do not have to perform any acts in return for Group support, avoiding the psychological burden of indebtedness.

Agency: Having the agency to pull from Group resources empowered sojourning military spouses. They could overcome the limitations of official military and superficial search engine information by acquiring relevant and actionable resources in the Groups. This would give them a sense of having an internal locus of control, which is positively associated with effective coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

In this analysis it has been shown that the socio-technical affordances of Facebook Groups are salient to their efficacy as a coping resource for military spouse sojourners on Oahu, but are these results generalizable? Many informants indicated that they believed the strength of the Groups was situational. A combination of being stationed overseas, away from traditional support networks, and being immersed in a new cultural environment drove the need to pull from the Groups for social and informational resources. The informants had not observed, and would not expect, such high levels of support to be present in mainland military spouse FBGs. This indicates that it is the unique situation of the military spouses as sojourners that makes the Groups strong.

A number of studies have demonstrated the efficacy of online forums in providing support to sojourners, with Lang (2011) showing that a FBG could provide valuable informational and social support to the cohort she examined. A number of studies have examined a sample of sojourners with a common aspect of identity: Brits in New Zealand, British students in France, Chinese students in the USA, and so forth (Lang, 2011; Tabor & Milfont, 2013; Ye, 2006). It is, then, strongly indicated that FBGs can help sojourners in general to cope with acculturative stressors, provided Group members have a common sense of identity. The nature of the resources available to them will depend on the combination of Group characteristics that are present, but all Group types are associated with informational resources, which are the type most commonly sought by sojourners. The current study suggests that FBG resource mobilization attempts can help sojourners in general to cope with acculturative stressors.

Resource mobilization attempts in FBGs help sojourners to cope with acculturative stressors by linking them with valuable social capital resources that yield primarily informational support. The architecture and affordances of the FBG environment play an important role in the coping process, by providing easy access to large networks of low-cost social capital, and boundary conditions for Group membership and the information held within them. When potential Group characteristics such as identity, geographic focus, size, restricted membership and privacy settings are aligned in certain ways, the Groups can yield additional social, tangible and esteem support. The current study derived these results from an examination of the experiences of military spouse sojourners on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, but evidence from the literature suggests that similar results could be found for other Groups of sojourners, so long as they have an aspect of identity in common, such as national origin or occupation. The study has

found that resource mobilization attempts in FBGs can help sojourners cope with acculturative stressors, and that the architecture and affordances of the FBG environment are salient to this outcome.

IV. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study has a number of limitations. One is the mixed random and non-random sample involved. As three people were associates of the researcher, and four other people in the study were closely associated through the Warrior Way Group, results may have been skewed. Racial diversity was not well represented with the sample comprising 8 Caucasians and one Asian (see Appendix B). On the other hand, commonalities emerged in attitudes and experiences across the sample, with only one outlier emerging. Eminent qualitative researchers Taylor and Bogden (1998) argue for the importance of outliers in qualitative research based on grounded theory, in that they force the researcher to refine their theory-building by incorporating seemingly anomalous results. Laura's evidence played a valuable role in refining the ideas put forward in this study concerning Group characteristics and how they are associated with support types.

The methodology of this study was valuable to gaining deep insight into the effects of FBGs on coping with acculturative stressors. However, the nature of the study was exploratory, and results remain tentative without more in-depth analysis. Relationships between Group characteristics and support types were indicated. A quantitative study that tests the significance of associations between these factors is called for to test them more rigorously. It would also be apposite to test the relationship between failing to locate resources in Groups and feeling an absence of social support from them, as was suggested by Laura's case. Content analysis of Group posts could do more to connect request types to resources provided, if a study could be designed in such a way as to address Institutional Review Board concerns regarding private groups. It would also be useful to assess the generalizability of results from the current study by testing them on other populations of sojourners, such as foreign exchange students or the spouses

of workers on international business assignments. Whilst providing valuable insights into emerging SNS phenomena and their sociological effects, the current study has also revealed a rich vein of research that could be pursued in further studies.

Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Questions

How did you find the Facebook Groups for military spouses on Oahu?

Why did you join?

How many of them are you a member of?

What was your first impression of the Groups after you had been admitted?

What did you think the Groups were for?

How did you feel about becoming a member of such Groups?

Did you think it might help you adjust to life in Hawaii?

Can you remember the first thing you posted about?

What caused you to make that post? Tell me what happened... (questions and prompts will be used to draw out the details of the event – if it could be deemed an intercultural stressor then further questions and prompts will be used to ascertain whether the post they left on the page helped them cope with the stressor).

What kinds of things have caused you stress since you found out you were moving to Hawaii?

Did you ever post something on the site to get help with any of those stressors?

Can you tell me about one of those incidents? (I then use questions and prompts to reconstruct what happened, how they used the site to get help and what the effect was.)

How did you feel after getting information about the stressor from the Groups?

Would you post the kinds of comments you post in the Group to your Facebook Friends Network?

Do you think it's important that your posts can be seen only by other members of the Groups?

Can you think of a time you posted something that you wouldn't want to your Facebook Friends Network to see?

What was the benefit of that post being private to the Group?

Do you think members of Oahu military spouse FBGs are qualified to help you and each other?

If so why? / If not why?

What do you think of the quality of responses posts get – do they give good or useful information?

What's the difference between the information you get via FB Groups and information you get from the military?

Do you expect quick responses when you post comments to MSO or other Groups?

How do you feel about the response time you get to your posts in MSO?

Do you think the cell phone plays a role in the way people use the Groups and the response times to posts?

Do you feel that you get any social support from the Groups? If so why? / If not why?

Is there any sense of camaraderie amongst MSO users?

Is there a bond between MSO users?

Do you feel like you have to reciprocate if someone gives you good information or posts something nice in response to you post?

Has the site ever helped you emotionally?

Have you made any friends through your use of the site?

Do you ever see posts where people look for friendship?

Is making friends offline something you'd every use the site for yourself? If so why? / If not why?

Do you think MSO helped you adapt to life in Hawaii? If so why? / If not why?

Has MSO helped you to cope with any challenges you've faced in adapting to life here?

Appendix B – Informant Descriptor Table

Table (ii)

Table of Informant Descriptors

Name	Age	No. Yrs Married	Months on Oahu	No. of FBGs	Prior Overseas Experience?	No. of Children	Occupation	First time to Oahu?	Race
Jessica	33	10	18	10-15	N	1	Group Exercise Instructor	No	Caucasian
Sarah	26	6	12	10-15	Y	1	Stay-at-home mom	Yes	Caucasian
Elizabeth	36	6	8	15-20	N	3	Stay-at-home mom & sales	Yes	Caucasian
Amy	33	7	17	5-10	N	4	Stay-at-home mom	Yes	Caucasian
Angela	26	4	17	5-10	N	1	Stay-at-Home Mom and Student	Yes	Caucasian
Amber	42	13	42	10-15	Y	2	Stay-at-Home Mom	Yes	Caucasian
Laura	40	10	18	5-10	Y	3	Attorney	Yes	Caucasian
Emily	35	6	18	5-10	N	2	Elementary School Teacher	Yes	Caucasian
Mary	29	11	6	10-15	Y	3	Event Planner and Travel Agent	Yes	Asian

Appendix C – Examples of Resource Mobilization Attempts

The following are actual resource mobilization attempts posted in various Groups used by the informants in this study. The posts have been paraphrased, in order to protect the anonymity of the informants.

Laura's posts to MSO:

Back to the drawing board ... looking for a housecleaner for regular cleaning appointments (eg. not a one-time move out cleaning) who is completely reliable. Please message me if you are that person or you can personally recommend someone. Thanks!

1 comment

Recommendations to get jewelry engraved? It's for a wedding band, so cannot be Things Remembered or a similar place.

0 comments

Got any good tips for picking up pets at the airport animal holding facility? We are doing direct release for our two cats. I know where to pick them up (far end of the interisland terminal, I think?). How long does it take after the flight lands for pets to be brought to the holding facility?

10 comments

Renting a bounce house for a kid's party - best to go with renting from MWR, or can anyone recommend a business?

4 comments

Jessica's posts to MSO:

Does anyone know whether it's okay to go to another ER on island besides Tripler with Tricare Prime? (Particularly Pali Momi)

13 comments

Any recommendations for an infant/toddler class nearby? My boy is 12 months old and we live on Warrior Way. Thanks in advance!

6 Comments

Any photographers out there available for a casual first birthday session this week? Any examples of work and rates would be appreciated! Thanks in advance

8 comments

For those of you living in [military landlord] Housing - are we responsible for replacing the water filters in our refrigerators? Or will they replace them? Just wanted to make sure before I buy one myself.

12 comments

Has anyone been to Port Hueneme? +/-? Just wondering.

1 Comment

Angela's post to MSO:

Anyone know where I can find a working air tire pump? I've tried [2 bases] and the gas station on [street name]. All of their air machines are out of order.

7 Comments

Amy

Is there an organization here that accepts donations of Prom dresses?

7 Comments

I'm looking into getting a deployment bear for my children. I have looked online and there are different options. Does anyone have a good recommendation? TIA.

4 Comments

Can anyone recommend a florist which makes flower crowns? Preferably local to the [base] area. Mahalo.

2 Comments

I have a box of Christmas decorations that I don't need. Is there anywhere I can donate them?

1 comment

Where can I get a stylish aloha shirt? I don't want typical prints and style, but something more fitting and trendy. I am totally clueless. TIA.

9 comments

Any recommendations of resorts on the other islands that have kids clubs and/or babysitting services? Also, does anyone know of a babysitting service for vacation rentals? Asking for a friend who's planning a visit. Thanks!!

1 Comment

Can anyone give me directions to the barber in Waipahu. We have tried to find it and cannot, even using the GPS. A landmark to watch for would be perfect. Thanks!!!

1 comment

Any recommendations of an integrative medical practitioner? TIA.

1 comment

Whereabouts at Pearlridge is the movie theater? I cannot find it! Thx!

4 Comments

Amy's posts to Warrior Way

Has anyone used uber from and back to Warrior Way? How much did it cost and how what did you think of your experience?

3 comments

Krystal's Posts to Warrior Way

Hey if anyone receives a box with a bunch of Disney stuff in it let me know! It says delivered but I know how USPS is about putting them in the wrong boxes and not delivering them until the next day!

1 comment

We have friends staying at Aulani at the moment. They want to come to do something with us today but since it is forecasted to rain so we don't want to do the swap meet. Any ideas of fun things to do? They have two toddlers.

4 comments

Hi! we are looking at flying my mom out here for a vacation. How can we find the cheapest air fares – recommended sites?

5 comments

Does anyone know how much leis cost at the airport and if they take credit cards? I can't find out anything about them!

2 Comments

Does anyone know how to stop the sprinklers? Ours have been on continuously since last night!

7 Comments

Curb Alert! My husband will be putting out a Pirate Water Table with all of the accessories and a Dekor Plus Diaper Pail in the morning!!

3 comments

Thank you all for the best Halloween ever!! I didn't realize I could have drink that much while handing out candy and Jello Shots!!

18 likes (no comments)

Playdate at [address] tomorrow at 9am!

4 comments

How does sponsoring non-military people on to base work on the weekends?? Thanks!!

7 comments

Hi! My name is Sarah and my husband and my son just signed the paperwork to move into a house in a couple of days!! I am wondering if anyone knows of a place that rents washers and

dryers. Our stuff won't get here for several more months. We are looking forward to moving in and meeting everyone!

23 Comments (many welcomes along with advice on the issue)

Amy to Warrior Way

Hey! Can anyone suggest a kid-friendly place to eat tonight? Thank you!

2 comments

Elizabeth to Warrior Way

Anyone know if we need a new command letter for DMV to register an additional car or do they keep the old one on file?

Anyone know what's happening with trash??

2 comments

I know I've seen this posted here before, but where do I get a key for the workout room at the community center?

2 comments

Is there a Post Office on base?

6 comments

Does anyone have any cilantro you won't be using tonight? I just bought some the other day at the commissary and can't find it. *frown emoticon* I will be going back tomorrow and can replace it then! 1 comment

Has Anyone been to the Fabric Mart off of 99? Is it all Hawaiian style or are there 'normal' prints as well? Any home décor fabrics?

11 comments

Without Michaels or Hobby Lobby, where do you go for craft stuff?

15 comments

Hey everyone! I just got here on Friday and I am in need of a sitter for my kids on Monday evening. It would be from 1600 - 2200. If anyone can help me out, I will appreciate it. My cell is XXX XXX XXXX. Thank you!!!

4 comments

Mary to MSO

Hello! Permission to Post. I started a group for Entrepreneur and Working Mothers . Everybody is welcome to join. You can post your business in it but only 1 post per day

please. Also, post your business information, contact and website so I can put it in one master list for reference. Thank You! Enjoy working at home!

Mary to MSC

Hey! Anyone have any information or know how to register for the [base] craft fair on [date]? Thanks in advance.

2 Comments

Hello Spouses! It's time for back-to-school and I know we are all busy. Just wanted to do a quick survey. If you were going on vacation, where would you go?

1 Comment

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