Journal of Family Communication

ISSN: 1526-7431 (Print) 1532-7698 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hjfc20

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To cite this article: Jennifer S. Owlett, K. Andrew R. Richards, Steven R. Wilson, J. D. DeFreese & Felicia Roberts (2015) Privacy Management in the Military Family during Deployment: Adolescents' Perspectives, Journal of Family Communication, 15:2, 141-158, DOI: 10.1080/15267431.2015.1013105

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2015.1013105

Published online: 02 Apr 2015.

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Journal of Family Communication, 15: 141–158, 2015
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ISSN: 1526-7431 print / 1532-7698 online
DOI: 10.1080/15267431.2015.1013105

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Privacy Management in the Military Family during Deployment: Adolescents' Perspectives

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This study examines military adolescents' experiences of managing private information within their families during a parental deployment. Thirty-eight adolescents were interviewed about how they and their families managed private information across the deployment cycle. Our interviewees suggested that when a deployment occurs: (a) family members should limit the information that they share with the deployed parent about events at home, (b) children should be cautious when talking to the at-home parent about the deployment situation, and (c) parents should filter some deployment-related information from their children. We explore concrete ways these rules are enacted as well as factors (e.g., dialectical tensions, motivations, salient emotions, and rule acquisition) that can shape how these rules are applied. Our analyses also illuminate how boundary turbulence can influence how youth make decisions about sharing private information. Future research should continue to explore deployment with specific attention to how privacy rules change during reintegration.

Since September 11, 2001, more than 700,000 U.S. children have experienced having a military parent deployed to a combat zone in Iraq or Afghanistan (Maholmes, 2012). When deployments occur, military children and families undergo significant changes to their daily lives while they are separated from their service member (Chandra et al., 2010; Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass,

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& Grass, 2007). Adolescents often worry about their deployed parents' safety and feel ambivalent about the parent missing significant events (Flake, Davis, Johnson, & Middleton, 2009); hence, family communication becomes a way of managing those uncertainties.

In comparison to previous conflicts, advances in communication technology (e.g., electronic mail, live video) allow unprecedented opportunities for family communication during deployment (Greene, Buckman, Dandeker, & Greenberg, 2010). Although these changes allow for increased contact between deployed service members and their families, they also mean that families frequently must decide what information to reveal or conceal when a parent is deployed. Drawing on communication privacy management (CPM) theory (Petronio, 2002), this study explores adolescents' perceptions of how they and their families regulate private information during the deployment process. Exploring adolescents' perspectives is valuable since research to date has tended to focus primarily on couples, and often relied on parent reports even when investigating children (Maguire & Wilson, 2013; Park, 2011). Before discussing CPM, dilemmas that military families face in terms of communicating openly versus selectively are discussed.

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Dilemmas of Open Family Communication during Military Deployment

During deployment, military families encounter conflicting suggestions about how they should communicate. One piece of advice military families often receive is to talk openly about issues they encounter together (Drummet, Coleman, & Cable, 2003). For example, the National Military Family Association (2013) suggests that families with school-age children should communicate in a way that is "truthful and lets children know about the deployment early on."

Military families are encouraged to talk openly for several reasons. First, families may become more resilient to deployment-related challenges if they are able to discuss these concerns together (MacDermid-Wadsworth, 2010). For example, Wilson, Chernichky, Wilkum, and Owlett (2014) found that deployed parents who reported higher conversation orientation in their family had children who experienced fewer deployment difficulties. Second, open communication can lead to increased relational health (Greene et al., 2010). For many military spouses, increased communication with the service member can aid in maintaining relationships, even if one partner is physically distant (Merolla, 2010). Many civilian couples report that even seemingly mundane conversations are important for maintaining their bonds (Duck, 1994), and the same is likely true when military families are separated by deployment. When couples avoid conversations about difficult topics, or engage in protective buffering, the nondeployed spouse also is increasingly likely to suffer negative health consequences (Joseph & Afifi, 2010).

Although military families are encouraged to talk openly, qualifications about timing and developmental appropriateness often are attached to this advice. In some instances, children might desire additional information about their parents' deployments, while at other times they may want information to be limited. Consistent with such thinking, Wong and Gerras (2010) as well as Houston and colleagues (2009) found positive associations between the frequency with which adolescents communicate with their deployed parent and child stress and internalizing symptoms. Wong and Gerras (2010) also documented a U-shaped curvilinear association between depth of communication with the deployed parent and child stress, whereas Houston, Pfefferbaum, Sherman, Melson, and Brand (2013) showed that depth of interaction with the nondeployed parent also was positively associated with child internalizing symptoms. Although

direction of causation is not clear, these findings suggest that communication that is too unrestrained may be problematic. However, the literature provides limited guidance on how much information should be given to children of various ages during the deployment process.

Military families cannot discuss everything that is happening during a deployment. Before a deployment begins, service members receive Operation Security (OPSEC) guidelines that explain how confidential information should be handled. As part of these instructions, service members and their families are instructed not to share private information (e.g., locations and times of unit deployments) with individuals outside the family for fear this information might be intercepted (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.). Service members' mental well-being and occupational productivity during deployment also can be influenced by family communication (Greene et al., 2010). Service members may feel stressed if they hear about issues at home when they can do little to resolve the issue (Warner, Appenzeller, Warner, & Grieger, 2009).

When advice about how military families should communicate is considered collectively, military families face dilemmas. As a result, military families may struggle with decisions about what information to reveal or conceal when communicating during deployment. Communication privacy management theory (Petronio, 2002) offers one framework for understanding how family members manage private information during deployment.

Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory

Three main assumptions guide a CPM perspective (Petronio, 2002). First, dialectical tensions underlie how rules are formed about privacy management processes. These tensions exist because motives to reveal and conceal information often are simultaneously present. When tensions arise, families create rules about how to manage private information (Petronio, 2010). Within a CPM framework, rules are conceptualized as broad guidelines. However, there are specific ways in which these rules are implemented. We label the broad guidelines as *macrorules*, and the ways in which they are carried out as *microrules*. Both types of rules are acquired through socialization processes, but both may have to be renegotiated when events such as a military parent's deployment create new circumstances (Petronio, 2002).

A second assumption is that five criteria (culture, gender, motivation, context, and risk/benefit ratio) influence rule development (Petronio, 2002). Three criteria seem especially salient when applied to military families. With regard to the first criterion, the military "creates a culture that values collectivism, hierarchy, structure, authority, and control, and requires service members to place mission readiness above all else" (Maguire & Wilson, 2013, p. 2). Because family members also are expected to support the mission, they may be reluctant to talk about negative emotions such as sadness or worry while their service member is gone (Villagran, Canzona, & Ledford, 2013). In terms of context, parents may reveal or conceal information based on their children's age (Huebner & Mancini, 2005). Regarding motivations, military adolescents may want to protect themselves or others from harmful information. Adolescents are particularly perceptive about potential outcomes (e.g., injury, death) related to their parent's deployment to war zones (Huebner et al., 2007).

Third, CPM uses a boundary metaphor to understand how information is managed with others (Petronio, 2002). When individuals share private information, they must consider how boundaries are coordinated (i.e., boundary linkages) because collaborating makes others co-owners

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of the shared information. When this coordination is completed in a family, internal and external privacy boundaries are created. *Internal privacy rules* are "dyadic and group boundaries that function internally within the family around linkages between and among members" (Petronio, 2002, p. 151). *External privacy rules* are defined as "exterior boundaries for coordinating information outside the family" (Petronio, 2002, p. 151). We explore how internal privacy rules influence information management processes in the family.

Family members do not always agree how private information should be managed. Boundary turbulence reflects that information management is "not always completed in a synchronized manner" (Petronio, 2002, p. 12). One reason for these challenges is boundary ambiguity, which occurs when family members are unclear about each member's role within the larger family unit (Drummet et al., 2003). When a parent or other family member is physically absent, such as during a deployment, boundary ambiguity is likely (Huebner et al., 2007).

As a theoretical framework, CPM offers several insights about how information management in military families occurs during deployment. As one example, Joseph and Afifi (2010) investigated how military spouses use protective buffering to shield their deployed service member from information that could cause additional worry or stress while they are away from home. Although they explored the spouse's perspective, a CPM framework suggests that protective buffering might not be only a dyadic phenomenon. If older children live at home, they often may be privy to private information (e.g., household repairs) that the at-home spouse is trying to withhold from the deployed parent. Through looking at co-ownership of private information, CPM highlights how adolescents may participate in the joint managing of private information. However, CPM also raises the possibility of turbulence, which has not been explored yet in the context of military deployment from adolescents' perspectives.

Military deployments hold the potential to change service members and their families in ways that create dilemmas about revealing and concealing private information. Because of these changes, families must negotiate new rules about how to disclose private information. We examine adolescents' perceptions of their own and their parents' communicative decisions about managing private information. Specifically, we pose the following research questions:

RQ1: What internal privacy rules do military adolescents and their families articulate, enact, and follow in light of changes that occur during a parent's military deployment?

RQ2: How do military adolescents and their families create and acquire rules about deployment-related private information? In particular, how do these rules arise from information dilemmas, what factors influence their development, how do they involve emotions, and how are they learned?

RQ3: In the process of managing privacy boundaries, how do adolescents and their families experience boundary turbulence?

METHOD

Participants and Setting

Participants in this study were adolescents from military families who attended a weeklong, overnight camp at a large Midwest university. In order to participate in the camp, adolescents

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had to be between the ages of 12 and 17 and have experienced or be currently experiencing the deployment of one or both of their parents. Data were collected during camp sessions in the summers of 2011 and 2012. Participants were recruited if they had experienced a parental deployment within the previous five years. As part of the registration process, parents were sent information about the research procedures and invited to give permission for their adolescent(s) to participate in the study. All research protocols and interview questions were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the researchers' university.

Upon receiving parental consent, adolescents were assented by the research team during camp check-in. Parental consent and participant assent were obtained for forty adolescents (20 male, 20 female) from a total of 62 campers who met the eligibility criteria. Thirty-eight adolescents (19 male, 19 female) contributed to the final dataset because two participants elected not to complete the interview process. Participants' ages ranged between 12 and 17 years old (M = 13.68 years) and all had experienced at least one deployment (M = 3.1 deployments). Ten were currently experiencing parental deployment at the time of the interview. Participants reported an average deployment length of 9.38 months (SD = 5.57). The sample included adolescents whose parents served in a variety of military branches (Army = 21, Air Force = 8, National Guard = 3, Navy = 3, Air Force Reserve = 1, Marines = 1, Marine Reserves = 1).

Data Collection

All participants were interviewed on one occasion by a same-sex member of the research team. Interviews, which lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, proceeded in a semistructured format with a common interview protocol guiding all conversations (Patton, 2002). Interviewers also had the flexibility to explore topics introduced by interviewees not included in the protocol. Participants were asked to focus on their parent's most recent deployment when addressing questions. With parent and participant permission, all interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by an external, professional transcription service prior to analysis.

Interview questions focused on communication across three phases of deployment – predeployment, deployment, and reunion (the reunion phase was skipped for participants who had family members who were still deployed). Participants also were asked about the influence of social contexts and challenges (e.g., influence of the media, societal perceptions of the military) and any knowledge or experience they gained as part of the deployment process (e.g., "If you are a parent someday, and a tough situation comes up, like your spouse being away for a long time, how do you think you'd like to handle that with your own kids?").

At relevant points within each deployment phase, interview questions probed what topics participants liked to discuss with their families and friends as well as what topics they avoided. During the deployment phase, for example, participants were asked about interactions with the deployed parent (e.g., "What kinds of things did you talk about over Skype/e-mail/phone/Facebook?," "Was there anything you chose not to talk about or tried to avoid?," and "How did you know what you should/shouldn't talk about with your deployed parent?") as well as with the parent at home ("Day-to-day, what kinds of things did you talk about?," "Was there anything you chose not to talk about or tried to avoid?," and "Did you talk with anyone else about what it was like to have a parent deployed?").

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Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Prior to beginning initial analyses, the research team checked 10 interview transcripts against the audiotapes in their entirety to verify transcription accuracy. Data analyses proceeded in a multistep approach. During the first phase of analysis, the research team engaged in open and axial coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) during which the transcripts were read and coded freely for emerging concepts and ideas. Open codes included topics that were (were not) discussed, emotions experienced during family interactions, and so forth. Researchers wrote memos to capture developing themes and discussed them at weekly meetings. Through this procedure, it became evident that participants tended to articulate rules or guidelines related to how their families discussed issues surrounding the deployment process. The research team then began axial coding for examples of criteria that family members used when deciding whether to reveal information to others in the family. This led to the development of a set of categories related to the content and development of privacy rules. One category was constructed to emcompass how adolescents and other at-home family members communicated with the deployed parent, another for adolescent communication with the at-home parent or caregiver, and a third to capture adolescents' perceptions of how their parents communciated with them. For each category, exemplars were identified and definitions were developed to assist coding.

The second phase of analysis was marked by a combination of inductive and deductive analysis and the constant comparative method (Patton, 2002). Using constant comparison, the researchers read all of the interviews individually and coded them according to the categories developed during open and axial coding. As the coding process continued, a macrorule for the general governance of family communication was identified for each of the three categories along with with associated microrules. Microrules, which reflected specific ways of implementing a macrorule, were similar to themes in that they were articulated by multiple participants who used verbatim wording or language with similar underlying meaning (Owen, 1984).

As the analysis process unfolded, the researchers remained open to emerging themes and concepts (inductive analysis), but used CPM as a framework to guide the analyses (deductive analysis). The use of CPM allowed the researchers to consider motivations underlying rule development, salient emotions related to each rule, dialectical tensions inherent to the rules, and ways in which the rules were aquired or taught. CPM also allowed the researchers to consider how issues related to boundary permeability and turbulence impacted the negotiation of the rules that governed communication. After all of the transcripts were reviewed and coded, the researchers read through the codebook and made adjustments to each macrorule and associated microrules, such as making sure each was articulated by more than one participant. The analysis process culminated in a final set of rules, which are presented in the results section of this article.

When conducting qualitative research, questions of credibility are addressed through methodological decisions intended to improve the research design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the present investigation, several steps were taken in order to increase the trustworthiness of the data analyses and the associated results. First, researcher triangulation was conducted by involving multiple researchers in the analysis process and achieving consensus on the final set of rules. Next, data triangulation was achieved by interviewing multiple participants about the same experience. Finally, a comprehensive search was made for negative cases (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) in the data set, which will be incorporated into our analyses.

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RESULTS

From our analyses, three macrorules emerged regarding how families managed private information during deployment: (a) family members should limit the information they share with the deployed parent about events at home, (b) children should be cautious when talking to the at-home parent about the deployment, and (c) parents should filter some deployment-related information from their children. Each macrorule will be explained, including the microrules that support them (RQ1), and the information management processes they involve (RQ2). Elements that influence privacy rule formation, such as dialectical tensions, motivations, salient emotions, and methods of rule acquisition, are shown in Table 1. After discussing these three macrorules, we explore how participants viewed boundary turbulence as affecting individual and family privacy rules (RQ3). Speakers' ages are cited in parentheses; names are pseudonyms.

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Shield the Deployed Parent

Our initial macrorule involves adolescents' perspectives on what they and their family members should and should not talk about when separated from the deployed parent. This rule involves family members jointly managing a boundary so as to shield the deployed parent from at least some events going on at home. The rule appears to arise from a tension between wanting to update the service member on daily events (which is a common relational maintenance strategy; Merolla, 2010) and wanting to buffer the service member from information that might elicit negative thoughts and emotions (Joseph & Afifi, 2010; see Table 1). Adolescents mentioned three specific guidelines (what we term microrules) regarding what not to share with the deployed parent. Specifically, do not talk about things that could (a) add additional worry or stress to an already stressful situation, (b) distract the service member from his/her mission, and (c) lead the service member to feel homesick. There were some instances in which adolescents said they did not filter anything from their parents. Linda (14 years old) said that she did not view many privacy rules to be present in her relationship with her father: "I feel like he's a friend when I talk to him. I talk to him about everything." Despite this, many adolescents described how they and their family did withhold co-owned information from their deployed parent.

Additional Worry and Stress

Many adolescents described withholding topics that might create additional worry or stress for the deployed parent. For example, when asked whether there were things that she avoided telling her dad, Janet (17 years old) replied "most of the things we kept away were things that might worry him." Andrew (13 years old) provided an example of a specific topic he avoided to shield his father from additional stress:

> If there was something at home, like mom and I got into an argument or something, I tried to not bring it up or something because it was for my mom and I to work out and he shouldn't have to be the peacekeeper from overseas.

Andrew went on to say that he tried not "to overworry him more than he needs to be." Sandy (14 years old) gave a second example of a topic her family avoided with the deployed parent:

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TABLE 1
Military Adolescents' Rules for Regulating Private Information within the Family during Parental Deployment

Macro Rule	*Micro Rules*	*Dialectical Tension*	*Motivations Underlying the Rule*	*Salient Emotions*	*Rule Acquisition*
Family members should shield the deployed parent from some events going on at home	1. Don't talk about things that add additional stress or worry to an already stressful situation 2. Don't talk about things that distract from the mission 3. Don't talk about things that lead to homesickness	Wanting to maintain a relationship with the service member by updating him/her on daily events vs. wanting to buffer the service member from information that would cause added worry or distraction	1. Other-protection (protective buffering) 2. Self-protection (e.g., not wanting to get in trouble with the deployed parent)	1. Stress 2. Worry 3. Sadness	1. Rule is explicitly communicated 2. Learning through trial and error
Children should be cautious when talking with the at-home parent about the deployment situation	1. Limit the amount of talk 2. Be strategic when initiating talk 3. Mask emotions like fear/sadness	Wanting to find out more or share feelings about the deployed parent vs. not wanting to upset the at-home parent	1. Other-protection (protecting the at-home parent) 2. Self-protection (avoiding own negative emotions or dealing with at-home parent's emotions)	1. Worry/anxiety 2. Sadness 3. Fear	1. Observing siblings interact with the at-home parent 2. Learning through trial and error
Parents should filter some deployment related information from their children.	1. Tell kids the basics, but do not talk about danger/risk/ "bad things" 2. When talking with kids, mask negative emotions and show strength/positivity 3. Tell kids only the information they developmentally are ready to handle	Wanting to satisfy children's curiosity about the deployed parent (e.g., what the deployed parent is doing) vs. not wanting to disclose information that will make children worry	1. Other (child) protection	1. Worry 2. Sadness 3. Fear	1. Observing how their parents interact with them vs. younger siblings 2. Reflecting on lessons learned from their own experience (when describing how they would communicate with their own children in the future)

"because we don't want to stress him out. Mostly we don't want to have him worrying about stuff. Like his mom, she's got Alzheimer's really bad. And so my mom has Power of Attorney."

Distractions from the Mission

Throughout our interviews, many adolescents mentioned that their military parents needed to stay focused on their jobs while they were deployed. Mindy (12 years old) explained that her father was "doing his job and that's what he's out there for." Anthony (12 years old) added that his deployed father needed to "concentrate on his work . . . and not on problems with our mom." Amanda (15 years old) shared that "we're [nondeployed family] still one of his number one focuses, but he's got to take care of himself and his team members out there and he's also got to look out for the people he was sent to take care of." Many adolescents, like Sandy (14 years old) said that their parents needed to stay focused on their mission because of potential deployment dangers like injury or death. Sandy shared "my mom says he [deployed father] needs to focus on staying alive. And that kind of freaks me out, so, I don't want him to not focus on that."

Homesickness

Adolescents also wanted to avoid issues (e.g., birthdays, holidays) that they thought might make their deployed parents feel homesick. Kelly (12 years old) did not talk to her deployed father about celebrating his birthday while he was deployed: "I remember when we called him for his birthday, and I didn't really talk about birthday cake, or presents, or anything, because I knew we couldn't give that to him then." She did not share some information with her deployed father because she "was afraid he'd want to come home really bad," and "didn't want him to feel like that." Catherine (13 years old) also noticed that when she talked with her deployed father about events at home, it could make him upset. She explained:

> I try not to talk about how much I miss him because I know that makes him sad . . . when I talk about how much I miss him I can hear it in his voice that he's sad. So I just don't anymore . . . I used to when I was younger, but I don't anymore.

Emotions, Motivation, and Acquisition

As the preceding examples illustrate, stress, worry, and sadness were three salient emotions associated with this first macrorule (see Table 1). In all of these examples, adolescents were withholding or limiting information they thought might elicit negative emotional responses from their deployed parent. In some cases, adolescents and their family members also may have been masking their own emotions (i.e., worry) to protect the deployed parent. The primary motivation for this first macrorule appears to be other protection, although in some instances adolescents may be protecting both themselves and their deployed parent by avoiding topics where the deployed parent would be upset with them. Janet (17 years old) articulated both motivations when explaining her rationale for why she and her siblings withheld some information from her father: "if we would've gotten in trouble we'd try to keep it from him so he wouldn't worry about having to discipline us over the phone . . . so he would be focused on what he was doing." In some cases, this first macrorule was communicated explicitly by the at-home parent (e.g., Sandy's report that

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"my mom says he needs to focus on staying alive"). In other cases, adolescents learned what they should and should not talk about to buffer the deployed parent through trial-and-error (e.g., Catherine used to tell her father how much she missed him when she was younger but does not do so any longer).

Use Caution When Talking with the At-Home Parent

Our second macrorule reflects that military adolescents often are cautious in how they communicate with their at-home parent about deployment. This rule arises from a tension between military children wanting to know more information or share their feelings about their deployed parent but also not wanting to upset their nondeployed parent (see Table 1). When communicating with the nondeployed parent, adolescents said they: a) limit the amount of talk about deployment, b) are strategic about initiating talk, and c) mask negative emotions. There were some instances in which adolescents said they did not need to be overly cautious when communicating with the nondeployed parents. When asked about what information she shared with her nondeployed mother, Amanda (15 years old) said that she talked to her about "sports and colleges that I want to go to and different things I want to do." When the interviewer inquired if there was anything that she excluded in their conversations because of deployment, Amanda said "No." However, the majority of our interviewees said that they did restrict information; how they made such decisions was dependent on several criteria.

Limit the Amount of Talk about Deployment

Several military children suggested that conversations about deployment with nondeployed parents should be limited. Some reported that they tried to avoid talking about the deployment with their at-home parent as much as possible. Andrew (13 years old) said that he:

> tried to steer us [his family] away from all the hurt and stuff that was going on. You can't really hide it or cover it up, but you try not to bring it up if it's not needed, it's not necessary to bring up in the conversation.

Linda (14 years old) also said she avoided deployment talk with her nondeployed mother because "you'll be like, 'how's Glenn [deployed step-father] doing,' and she'll just cry. She'll just break down and cry and you're like, 'okay. I'm sorry.' So, I just try not to talk to people about it ever." In other cases like Javier (16 years old), limiting talk was a goal but was not always achieved:

> It was something I tried to avoid [talking about deployment], but like when I did talk to her, I got really – I broke down and told her like everything . . . when I did talk to her I felt like I didn't really hold anything back, 'cause like also with my mom I just started talking about all my emotions and all my feelings.

Be Strategic About Initiating Talk

One way in which to manage questions about the deployed parent was to be strategic about when or how inquiries were made. Adolescents suggested that it was best to ask about the deployed parent when the at-home parent was in a good mood, or appeared ready to talk. For

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example, James (14 years old) said that after he had asked his at-home mother about his deployed father, he would "lay off it here and there and wait a couple days . . . and then I'd go back to the subject and talk about it . . . when she was on her good days." Other adolescents described how they would discuss daily routines and let the at-home parent decide whether to initiate talk about the deployed parent. Andrew (13 years old) said that he would avoid discussions related to deployment and simply talk about "normal stuff, just like how did school go or whatever." He indicated that he made this decision in hopes that his nondeployed parent would "lead into it [discussions about the deployed parent], 'cause I didn't want to be forceful and make her talk about something she didn't want to."

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Mask Negative Emotions

Several adolescents attempted to mask their own emotions (fear, sadness) so that these feelings would not spread to the at-home parent. Jessie (12 years old) suggested that showing your mother that you were fearful was not beneficial "because if you show your mom your fear it makes them have more fear." To avoid this problem, some adolescents said that they attempted to promote positive feelings with other extended family members. When Henry (12 years old) visited extended family, like grandparents, aunts, and uncles, he tried "to be as happy as I could, because when I'm there I don't wanna be like sitting down on the couch looking all sad. I wanna be cheery, I guess."

Emotions, Motivation, and Acquisition

In constructing this macrorule, adolescents' responses reveal how the emotions of worry/anxiety, sadness, and fear are salient (see Table 1). Both other and self-protection served as motivations when adolescents decided not to discuss deployment with their at-home parent. James (14 years old) articulated both motivations when he explained: "I don't want to keep on reminding her about where he's at. I don't like doing that . . . it kind of makes me a little upset thinking about that, too." Some children learned how to interact with the nondeployed parent by observing their siblings. James mentioned that his sister "tried to [talk to the at-home parent], but it didn't work out. So she kind of just backed off." In other instances, they learned what should be communicated through trial and error, such as Linda deciding not to ask about her deployed step-father because each time she did, her mother would cry.

Filter Information for Children/Adolescents

Our third macrorule suggests that parents should filter the amount or type of private information about deployment they provide to their children. This rule appeared to arise from a tension that parents faced in providing details about the deployed parent's activities without creating additional worry or stress for their children (see Table 1). The responses related to this macrorule come from children and adolescents' own deployment experiences, but also from their suggestions for how they would talk with their hypothetical children about parental separation in the

future. In particular, adolescents commented that parents should: a) share only basic information with them (i.e., not information related to risk or danger), b) show strength, and c) provide developmentally sensitive information to them.

Restrict Information About Danger

Although adolescents were interested in learning about their parent's deployment, they did not want to know about items related to danger, risk, or "bad things." When asked what information they would potentially share with future children who were experiencing a similar situation, several participants said that parents should minimize information about risk as much as possible. Mindy (12 years old) reflected that she "wouldn't say that there's a possibility that he [hypothetical parent] might get hurt or something . . . I'm not gonna say that cause that will just make them worry and that would just be horrible." Stephanie (16 years old) shared that she would share positive information such as "he said hi, or just happy things to keep their minds pure." Kim (12 years old) indicated that information about the deployed parent's war experiences should be diminished because she "wouldn't want to do that to hurt my kids." When asked about their own experiences with their parents, some adolescents noted that their parents limited what details were shared with them. Andrew (13 years old) reflected about his conversations with his deployed father: "he kind of left it vague for us, but he told my mom more in detail because she wanted to know." Adolescents recommended that parents maintain a closed boundary in terms of restricting information about danger, which was consistent with what most adolescents experienced.

Show Strength

Many children also perceived that their parents attempted to mask negative emotions and show strength and positivity. Stephanie's (16 years old) mother was upset during deployment, but attempted to hide these emotions from her children:

> Stephanie: [She was dealing with a lot of] emotions and stuff like that because of the stress of her husband going away . . . Probably loneliness and stuff like that, and probably feeling like I didn't understand her or how she was feeling.
> Interviewer: Did she talk to you about those kinds of things?
> Stephanie: Not really. I'm guessing that she probably doesn't want me to see that she's having these feelings, but she talks to him every night . . . I know she worries about him.

Some at-home parents isolated themselves so their children would not become upset. Janet's (17 years old) mother would go to her room to cry so other family members would not know: "you always knew when she was upset because you wouldn't see her for a while and then she'd come down and be okay because she got it all out." Fred (14 years old) indicated that his nondeployed mother avoided showing emotion in front of other family members because "she didn't want us to see her being really worried, which would make us worried." Marsha (15 years old) noticed her nondeployed mother's ability to restrict how much negative emotion she showed to her family members: "she didn't want to make it seem like it was super hard on her because that'd be the example she'd set for me, my brother, and my sister."

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Provide Developmentally Sensitive Information

When information is shared with children, many participants indicated that children should only be told details that are developmentally appropriate. Kelly (12 years old) reflected that her mother did not talk about deployment related dangers because "we were pretty young, and she didn't want us to know how dangerous it really was." Sheldon (14 years old) noticed that the deployed parent was also able to take an active role in only providing age appropriate information throughout the deployment: "he couldn't have told me 'cause I was a kid then." When asked to think about his own future hypothetical children, Fred (14 years old) responded:

> What age group? I mean it depends on age . . . I think the older the more I would feel comfortable talking about it. Younger, I don't want to really talk about it to get them worried . . . [I would just want to let them] be a kid.

Emotions, Motivation, and Acquisition

As the examples just presented illustrate, three salient emotions were associated with this macrorule: worry, sadness, and fear (see Table 1). Unlike the previous macrorule, the motivations that underlie this rule appear to be solely focused on other (child) protection. Trent (13 years old) vividly described this motivation when explaining what he would not tell his future (hypothetical) children: "'Mommy might come home in a coffin.' You never wanna say that . . . That's not okay . . . they're gonna probably flip out." In such instances, military children said that it would be beneficial for their parents to limit how much private information is shared with them. In terms of rule acquisition, some adolescents learned what type of information should be shared by comparing how their parents interacted with them versus younger siblings. Stephanie (16 years old) commented that although her parents disclosed that her father would be deployed to her well in advance, "They didn't tell my five-year-old brother that he was leaving until closer to that time. It was kind of sad to see the younger ones go through that." When giving advice, adolescents relied on their own experiences and reflected on how they learned about what details were appropriate to share with military children.

Boundary Turbulence

In some cases, military children reported that coordinating these privacy rules with others was difficult (RQ3). Several participants noted instances in which boundaries were not maintained and turbulence resulted. Boundary turbulence findings separated into three themes: anticipated boundary turbulence, individual-level turbulence, and family-level turbulence.

Anticipated Boundary Violations

The first theme, anticipated boundary violations, reflects instances where youth maintained a boundary around private information because of anticipated negative outcomes from disclosing. Sandy (14 years old) refrained from sharing details with her father about problems at school; she noted that that her mother would be upset with her for stressing out her father: "I could tell my dad, and he would probably handle it, and then give my mom, like a softer version of it. But

then she'd be like, 'Why are you stressing your father out?'" In this example, Sandy refrained from sharing information to avoid causing turbulence. In other examples, adolescents restricted access to private information because certain individuals might be required to violate their privacy boundaries. Hector (15 years old) anticipated that job requirements would force his teachers to share information: "Sometimes teachers are forced to tell what happened to their higher people, and you don't want them giving away your own personal information to other people." In both Sandy and Hector's examples, information is not shared because of anticipated privacy violations.

Individual-Level Turbulence

The second theme involves instances where adolescents perceived that their parents made inappropriate disclosures but did not confront them about these violations. For example, Kim (12 years old) was told information about her deployed father being in danger that she did not want to know:

> I wish he wouldn't have told me this. He was driving in a truck and it blew up on him. I know this guy that almost died in a truck that almost blew up and now he doesn't have any legs. And I wish he didn't tell me that. It really scared me.

In another example, Sally (16 years old) explained that she began experiencing privacy issues with her at-home mother around age 12. When asked for additional information about the issues that her mother shared with her, Sally responded: "I don't know; everything . . . I don't think she talks. She needs more of a girlfriend and that's why she's more my friend than my parent. And she just tells me stuff that stresses her out." This comment also provides evidence for violation of our third type of privacy rule violation (developmental considerations). In these examples, both Kim and Sally felt uncomfortable with their parents' privacy violations, but did not appear to voice these issues with them.

Family-Level Turbulence

The third theme involves instances in which privacy expectations were not maintained, and youth mentioned these issues to other family members. In one example, Sandy (14 years old) said that her mother shared information with her that she's not developmentally ready to handle (i.e., debt): "I want to know how to do the taxes, but I don't want to know how in debt we are." Sandy mentioned that she told her mother that she was uncomfortable knowing about this information: "Please don't tell me. Don't tell me. Don't tell me.'' These issues are evidence for our third rule (parents should filter deployment information), in addition to the microrule about developmental appropriateness. In other examples, adolescents noted that timing was important to consider when potentially distressing information was shared with them. David (17 years old) experienced this problem with his deployed father. David was angry after he learned that his father was injured during the deployment, but did not share this information with him until his two-week leave: "He didn't tell me until he got home on his two-week leave. I looked at him and got mad at him and told him, 'Why didn't you tell me?' He said, 'Too much stress.'" David appears to believe that his father has followed our third rule too closely. He believes that his father should have told his son that he was injured when it happened, and not have waited until he returned home. In both of these examples, children complained about what they perceived as inappropriate boundary

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management. In Sandy's experience, the boundary appeared to be too porous; David felt that the boundary was too tight.

DISCUSSION

This study explores adolescents' perspectives on how they and their family managed private information during a military parent's deployment. Adolescents articulated three privacy rules that they and their families enacted in terms of what private information should be revealed vs. concealed from the deployed parent, at-home parent, and children. For each macrorule, multiple microrules provide additional insight about how the rule is implemented. Consistent with CPM, multiple criteria influenced the development of these rules including military culture (e.g., masking negative emotions to show strength), risk/benefit calculations, motivations to protect self and others, and contextual considerations such as children's age (see Table 1). Adolescents learned these rules based on instructions from their parents, observations about how their parents and siblings communicated, as well as through trial and error.

Based on our findings, future research could extend CPM by exploring: the role of emotion in privacy management, the effects of concealing/revealing information during deployment, and the role of power during boundary turbulence. Petronio (2010) argues that emotions have not played a large role in extant CPM analyses, but hold potential for changing how information is concealed and revealed. During deployment, emotions clearly play a critical role in terms of how private information is managed within the family. For all three privacy rules, family members made decisions about what topics to discuss based on whether information might elicit negative emotions in themselves or others (see Table 1). Family members also frequently masked negative emotions when talking with each other as well as extended family. It is important to note that, similar to past reports (e.g., Huebner et al., 2007), many adolescents also reported positive emotions such as pride in connection to their military parent's service as well as their own contributions at home.

Before leaving, Andrew's (13 years old) father asked him to take care of the family during his absence. Andrew shared, "It made me feel proud, proud that he trusted me to do things that he normally did." Frank (12 years old) had a similar reaction, "We know that they really need him out there to help and we're proud of him for taking the job." Some adolescents struggled with mixed emotions. Hector's (15 years old) comments reflect this theme: "I was actually partly proud and partly disappointed because she wouldn't be there, but I was proud that she was gonna go over there and fight for us." Despite the presence of positive emotions, most privacy management decisions described by our participants involved withholding or masking negative emotions. Future research might explore conditions where positive emotions figure more prominently in privacy management.

Second, research should explore the degree to which families who adhere to the privacy rules articulated by adolescents in this study experience positive or negative outcomes. Although our participants perceived that withholding information sometimes was beneficial (e.g., in not distracting the deployed parent or burdening children with developmentally-inappropriate information), we did not assess emotional or behavioral outcomes directly. It is also possible that behaviors like protective buffering may be beneficial for the deployed parent but stressful for at-home family members (Joseph & Afifi, 2010) or beneficial during deployment but create new privacy dilemmas once a service member returns home (Huebner & Mancini, 2005).

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Third, research should explore how power can affect individuals' decisions to reveal or conceal private information. This information is missing from current literature, but "CPM provides clues for how power might be accounted for and articulated with CPM tenets" (Petronio, 2010, p. 192). In our analyses, power is evident in cases of boundary turbulence. For example, adolescents sometimes refrained from disclosing private information to the deployed parent out of concern that they would be accused of violating boundaries by the at-home parent. Sandy and David experienced family-level turbulence and responded to their perceptions of inappropriate boundary management, but implied that they did not have enough power to change how privacy boundaries were managed. When applied to CPM, we suggest that intergenerational boundary negotiations in the family do not occur between equals. We add to CPM by demonstrating that boundary turbulence is one potential site for exploring how power affects private information management (for similar ideas, see Harwood, McKee, & Lin, 2000).

With regard to practical applications, our findings provide insight from adolescents about how military families should communicate throughout the deployment experience. Our analysis of dialectical tensions that children face during deployment highlights the need to balance openness with discretion. When handling potentially sensitive information, parents should consider what news is developmentally appropriate to share. Instead of adhering to vague guidelines (e.g., communicate openly) that supposedly fit all families equally, each family should make decisions about how and when they will share private information during deployment as well as following reunion. CPM highlights the collective nature of such decisions.

This study's results should be interpreted with limitations in mind. As the participants were only interviewed once about their experiences, we captured a cross-section of their perceptions of the deployment experience. In addition, as the interview prompts included retrospective questions, participants were required to think back, sometimes several years, to what life was like during deployment. Since individuals tend to process information and reinterpret it differently over time, results may have been different if all adolescents had been interviewed during the deployment experience. Although our participants ranged from 12–17 years of age, developmental trends were not explicitly analyzed in terms of information management processes. Finally, the present study only captured adolescents' perspectives, and not the views of other family members. Future investigations might attempt to explore whether parents and children share similar perceptions of what information is construed as private during deployment, and whether processes such as family communication patterns (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004) impact the likelihood of these perceptions being shared. Despite these limits, this study shows the relevance of understanding how adolescents communicate their deployment experiences within the larger context of the familial unit. Opportunities are ripe for future scholarship on privacy management as U.S. service members continue to return home.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank Christina Collins and Kurtis Miller for their assistance throughout this project.

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FUNDING

The authors would like to thank the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University for their support for this project.

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