

**Applying Durkheim's Theory of Suicide: A Study of Altruism and Anomie Among
Canadian Veterans of Afghanistan**

By

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Abstract

As over 40,000 Canadian service-personnel returned from the war in Afghanistan, more than one third believe they did not make a successful transition. This study inquiries into the lived-experience of Canadian Veterans who have made this transition and demonstrates how difficult transition experiences can contribute to suicidal ideation among Veterans. The vast majority of research on suicide among Veterans focuses on the impact of mental disorders such as Post-traumatic Stress and Major Depressive Disorders, resulting from traumas incurred on deployment. Discussions of difficult social transitions run parallel to this research on suicide. Research on Canadian Veterans in transition to civilian life highlights the negative effect of losing one's tightly formed communal bonds when leaving the military (Black and Papile, 2010). In addition, Veteran Affairs Canada's Life After Service Studies (2014) have found that compared to the general Canadian population, Regular Force Veterans are less likely to have a sense of community belonging and are less often satisfied with life. The purpose of this dissertation is to connect the literature on suicide with research on issues related to social belonging during transition. A concept of transitional injury is developed to bridge this gap and build on current understandings of suicidal ideation among Veterans. This research employs semi-structured qualitative in-depth interviews with 35 Canadian male Veterans who deployed to Afghanistan. Following the interviews, a thematic analysis was conducted to understand the major social barriers individuals face as they transition into civilian occupations and family life. Durkheim's theory of suicide is applied to this contemporary social phenomenon to demonstrate the relevance of his sociology of morality in light of recent developments in the field of suicidology.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Over 40,000 Canadian service-personnel have returned from the war in Afghanistan, Canada's longest combat deployment since the Second World War. Some continue their service within the military, while others leave the military to pursue new careers in civilian life. Although war is hell, civilian life can be worse for some individuals, particularly those who experience suicidal ideation upon return home. Beyond a physical space, "home" is a place where one is surrounded by a sense of community or familial belonging. The classical sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies said that "man, in the long term and for the most part, will feel at his best and happiest when he is surrounded by his family and his own circle. He is at home" (P. 28). In the military, a strong sense of familial community is developed through highly integrated and regulated practices. This is how the unit functions and maintains resilience amidst the threats of combat. After coming out of this type of environment, finding a sense of home is often difficult.

As one Veteran told me, after being faced with life or death decisions on a day-to-day basis, civilians look like they are "sleepwalking through life." Instead of pulling together into highly functioning teams where loyalty is valued above all else, the contemporary "age of uncertainty" (Bauman 2007) values temporary individual life-pursuits that take precedence over long-term collective actions. Individuals are always be ready to abandon commitments and loyalties in favor of new opportunities. This also manifests in tenuous commitments to others. Contemporary affective relations are like lines drawn in the sand, constantly disappearing to the tides and must be redrawn anew (Bauman 2003). This state of temporary and fleeting social relations is, in Durkheim's (1897/2005) terms, a society characterized by egoism and anomie, which are defined as a lack of institutional forms of social integration (egoism) and moral

regulation (anomie). Societies lacking these two elements can be defined as lacking moral solidarity, making individuals more prone to suicide. Modern Western individuals are socialized into these conditions and therefore less prone to its suicidal effects. In the case of veterans, they are more affected by social contexts that lack moral solidarity due to the socialization that occurs in the transition to military service where the team is more highly valued than the individual. Without adequate re-socialization upon transitioning back into civilian life, suicidal risk is elevated. This produces problems that are not recognized by those who only consider the traumas of war or pre-existing traumas when they come to conclusions about the cause of veteran suicides.

Without recognizing that the transition itself may be potentially injurious, it would be tempting to abandon a sociological explanation of suicide in favor of a psychological explanation, since war does have a high potential to create individual traumas. The concept of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has dominated the field in this regard, consisting of one third of the literature about veterans' physical, mental, and social health in Canada. (Rose, Aiken, and McColl 2013). The concept of PTSD is also well-known among the general population, becoming a buzzword associated with any non-physical issues veterans face. An example of the popular use of PTSD as an umbrella-term is found in this statement from the Toronto Star: "...suicide is only the extreme manifestation of post-traumatic stress that may go undetected for years after soldiers return from combat missions" (Ward 2011). Although PTSD may play a role in veterans' suicide, to suggest that suicide is "only" its extreme manifestation neglects the impact of life stresses outside of the military, particularly the stress that may occur in the transition from military to civilian life.

Building on developments in veterans' mental health literature, I depart from popular representations of suicide as mental illness in veterans in order to consider the complex social forces that contribute to this problem. This is in line with Durkheim's (1973) statement that "...sociology, which draws on psychology and could not do without it, brings to it, in a just return, a contribution that equals and surpasses in importance the services that it receives from it" (p.150). This approach is also in line with an expert panel on suicide prevention in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) that recommends:

[s]uicidality should be identified and addressed as a separate problem in mental health patients. Patients with suicidal ideation, intent, or behaviour should receive evidence-based psychotherapy specifically targeting the suicidality and *the interpersonal problems that are driving it*. (Zamorski 2010, emphasis added).

Canadian researchers, Black and Papile (2010), conducted a survey on Canadian service-personnel stating that more than one third (37.6%) of respondents believed they did not make a successful transition from military to civilian life. A survey conducted by Veteran Affairs Canada found that roughly a quarter (25.3%) of respondents reported having a moderately difficult or very difficult adjustment to civilian life (Thompson, Maclean, Van Til, Sweet, Poirier, Pedlar, 2011). Researchers have referred to the problem as a "reverse culture shock" (Westwood, Black, and McLean 2002). Veterans speak of losing their closely bonded "military family" upon leaving the forces and experience a sense of identity disorientation as they attempt to navigate within a now unfamiliar civilian world (Pranger, Murphy, and Thompson 2009).

My research builds on the insights of the above Canadian researchers, further investigating the nature of this "reverse culture shock." I investigate how difficult transitions to civilian life contributes to suicidal ideation among veterans of Afghanistan. It is my thesis that the anomic transitional conditions veterans face in the transition to civilian life contributes to suicidal ideation. Therefore, this research has implications for suicide prevention strategies that

go beyond individual therapeutic methods by considering the role of social programs in mitigating anomic transitions, allowing veterans to reintegrate into civilian life with a greater sense of purpose and belonging.

The literature review in Chapter Two provides a summary of the theoretical and substantive literature relevant to veterans in transition to civilian life, particularly in relation to the risk of suicidal ideation. It is divided into five parts: Macro-sociological critiques of individualism in modernity, psychological perspectives on suicide, sociological perspectives on suicide, a section on relevant psychological and sociological approaches to morality, and a section on the primary literature consisting of relevant memoir and documentary accounts of combat and the transition to civilian life. The section on Macro-sociological critiques of individualism in modernity considers the work of Zygmunt Bauman, Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, and Charles Taylor. These contemporary theorists of modernity share a common focus on the contemporary problem of identity and individualism. In each theorist's body of work, a substantial focus is given to the problem of the destabilization of traditional institutions, giving way to a fluid social order that tasks individuals with the project of identity self-construction and self-orientation. The section on psychological perspectives on suicide provides a description of the work of Edwin Shneidman and Thomas Joiner. Regarding sociological perspectives on suicide, I look at the work of Émile Durkheim, Steve Taylor, and Elwin Humphreys. The section on relevant psychological and sociological approaches to morality considers how the concept of morality has been recently used in veterans' health literature through the concept of 'moral injury'. In addition, contemporary and classical sociological approaches to morality are explored here. Lastly, the substantive secondary literature is reviewed, consisting of memoir and documentary accounts of life in combat and the experience of transition.

Chapter three describes the methodological approach taken in my research. It presents a rationale for a qualitative method in the context of Durkheim's quantitative methodological approach. It describes the interview structure with ethical considerations; the specifics of the population studied; and the thematic analysis of the interview material. A major theoretical development is also presented in this chapter by considering evidence of Durkheim's own early lessons on qualitative research in his (1897/2005) chapter in *Suicide* on "Individual Forms of the Different Types of Suicide" (p. 240). The concepts of 'altruism', 'egoism', and 'anomie' are initially developed here as well.

The research findings and conceptual development are presented in chapter four. This chapter describes the thematic analysis of the interview data and interprets what contributes to successful and unsuccessful social transitions from the military to civilian life. This data demonstrates the contemporary relevance of Durkheim's sociology of morality, particularly its ability to assist in qualitatively understanding the experiences of Canadian veterans in transition to civilian life, and the risk of suicide produced by the unique nature of the transition. The chapter is divided into three major sections: 1) altruism and the military community; 2) the anomic transition to civilian life; and 3) finding home. The first section illustrates how the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is a social institution that facilitates a highly altruistic community. After developing a concept of altruistic community, I demonstrate how this is applicable to the Canadian context by looking at institutional documents such as the rules of military doctrine and by drawing on the altruistic themes present in my interview data. The second major section of this chapter develops a concept of transition as social injury. I illustrate how the transition from a highly altruistic military community to an anomic and egoistic civilian life may be the source of difficulties for individuals making this transition. I apply this

conceptual development to my interview material in order to demonstrate how the transition was experienced on the individual level as egoistic and anomic, negatively affecting the individual's sense of moral purpose. The third major section develops a concept of 'home' as a remedy to this transitional injury by looking at how the family, civilian professions, and community organizations act as institutional forms of moral integration, promoting a sense of moral purpose. I draw upon interview data to illustrate the experience of veterans I interviewed who regained a sense of being home, as well as the experience of those who struggled or are still struggling to feel at home in civilian life.

Chapter five presents a discussion of the implications of this research for the military and veterans' health literature, the field of suicidology, and contemporary social theory. It demonstrates how sociological analysis of 'anomie' can build on discussions of operational stress injuries (OSIs) by focusing on how the transition to civilian life itself may be injurious, and that not all issues necessarily stem from traumas or injuries that occur on operational duty. I then integrate my findings and Durkheimian conceptual development with the interpersonal theory of suicide, the currently prevailing theory in suicidology. This theoretical integration demonstrate Durkheim's contemporary relevance for explaining why individuals take their own lives. Lastly, I demonstrate the relevance of Durkheim's sociology of morality in light of contemporary theories of modernity.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the various theoretical and substantive literature relevant to veterans in transition to civilian life and is especially relevant to the risk of suicidal ideation that may occur during this transition. The review is divided into six parts: macro-sociological critiques of individualism in modernity, psychological perspectives on suicide, sociological perspectives on suicide, a section on relevant psychological and sociological approaches to morality, a section on the primary literature consisting of relevant memoir and documentary accounts of combat and the transition to civilian life, and a conceptualization of altruism in the military community.

Macro-Sociological Critiques of Individualism in Modernity

This project is situated within the field of contemporary social theories of individualism in modernity. Major theoretical contributors in this area include Zygmunt Bauman, Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, and Charles Taylor. These recent theorists of modernity share a common focus on the contemporary problem of identity and individualism. In each theorist's body of work, a substantial focus is given to the problem of the destabilization of traditional institutions, giving way to a fluid social order that tasks individuals with the project of identity self-construction and self-orientation. This individual responsibility combined with a loss of stable communal bonds is problematic since it leads to the disintegration of stable social bonds that inform an individual's sense of purpose, belonging, and sense of moral commitments. The reason why my theoretical approach to suicide is situated within the field of contemporary social theories of modernization and individualism will become evident in later sections where I illustrate the importance of social belonging in psychological and sociological research on

suicide. In this section I provide a brief overview of the concept of 'individualization' in contemporary, macro-sociological theories of modernity.

In *The Individualized Society* (2001), Bauman is concerned with the state of collective moral commitments in an increasingly privatized world. Tasked with engaging in our individual identity-projects, individuals construct their identity based on their individual successes and failures without an awareness of their social limitations. For Bauman, the task of sociology is to illuminate these connections between the individual and society in order to demonstrate that our shared anxieties surrounding identity formation are not private problems that should be tackled individually, but should be engaged with at the level of their social roots. Bauman most famously developed these ideas in his book *Liquid Modernity* (2000) where he argues that as modernization continues, traditional social orders are increasingly destabilized, creating a sense of ambivalence and confusion as private individuals lose the stable support of long-standing social institutions such as religion, traditionally gendered family forms, and life-long careers. For Bauman, contemporary individuals take on a tourist-like subjective experience characterized by fragmented, fleeting experiences whereby roles and identities are constantly undergoing formulation and reformulation. Bauman's theories of identity in the modern era closely resembles that of Anthony Giddens.

In *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991) Giddens frames identity as the ability to think of one's life-story in terms of a coherent narrative. Individuals' life stories are becoming increasingly detached from a coherent social order; therefore, they are tasked with constructing their internal life-stories without reference to a stable external social order. As modernization continues, increasing instability creates a problem of moral and existential meaninglessness.

Giddens links the problems faced in this post-traditional cultural milieu with the effects of globalization. He asserts that we need to repair solidarities by rethinking modern institutions that no longer effectively serve a democratic function in a globalized and radically individualized world. Giddens' theories of globalization and individuality overlap significantly with Ulrich Beck's concepts of 'risk-society' and 'individualization'.

In *Risk Society* (1992), Ulrich Beck illustrates the impact of global capitalism on state regulation and responsibility. Individuals are now tasked with the individual responsibility to regulate their actions through ongoing risk assessment. Rather than national state regulation through coercion or disciplinary measures, individuals are monitored through risk assessments such as credit reports, medical histories, and criminal records. In *Individualization* (2001) Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim elaborate on the concept of 'individualization' by differentiating it from neo-liberal free market individualization and argue that contemporary institutionalized individualism does not threaten social cohesion, but rather, makes it possible in highly differentiated societies (for example, in the demand for individual rights). However, this institutionalized individualism undermines itself when it fails to produce integration: emancipation (individual freedoms) and anomie (a state of normlessness) form alongside one another. This results in a state of "precarious freedoms" whereby individuals engage in politics and work based on the ideal of a 'life of one's own'. In this radically pluralistic modernity characterized by institutionalized individual rights and individual goals, Beck rethinks the problem of social cohesion. The theme of individualized morality also runs through the work of the contemporary Canadian political philosopher and social theorist of Modernity, Charles Taylor.

In *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991) Charles Taylor traces the history of contemporary western moral ideals of individualism and instrumental rationality. He outlines the contemporary debate between supporters of the ideals of modernity and those who are against them, stating that this debate is futile since it misses the nuances that can be recaptured by tracing the origins of these ideals. Taylor argues that our modern individualism has a rich moral underpinning in romantic expressivism, and the ideal of instrumental rationality has its roots in the beneficent goals of early modern scientists to effectively improve states of suffering in the world. Taylor argues that the rich depths of these ideals have been debased, replaced by a shallow narcissistic individualism and a sterile isolating instrumentalism. By illustrating the rich moral underpinning of our contemporary ideals, Taylor argues that the debate between those in favor of modernity and those against it must be reframed based on the nuances illuminated by tracing the historical roots of modern moral ideals.

I situate my project within the context of these contemporary debates over the problem of individualization and social cohesion. In the following sections I illustrate how the problem of suicide is inextricably tied to this sociological issue. The theoretical sociological approach to suicide adopted here does not intend to refute current psychological explanations, but intends to supplement these explanations in order to show how macro-social forces and micro-social events can produce suicidal thoughts or behavior at the individual level. This approach is important since, as Prinstein (2008) suggests:

...few theoretical models have been offered to help understand self-injury in the manner that other manifestations of psychopathology have been examined. In particular, few studies have considered integrative models that address interplay between dynamic systems within the individual and between individuals and their environments (p. 2).

A reinvigorated sociological perspective on suicide that takes into account the current state of the psychological literature can play an important role in addressing this gap in the theoretical models of suicide. Van Orden et al. (2010) state that:

...the relatively low number of empirical advances in understanding the causes and correlates of suicide, as well as methods for suicide prevention, may therefore be the absence of a theory that can comprehensively explain known facts about suicide... (p. 1).

Theoretical advances in this field are important since a strong theoretical model will not only aid in empirical advances, but may act as an instrument for suicide risk assessment, as well as a model for suicide prevention.

In order to reflect a comprehensive contemporary social theory of suicide, I review the empirical and theoretical advancements in psychological and sociological research. The following two sections consist of brief expositions of the state of suicide literature within these two disciplines.

Psychological Perspective on Suicide

This section provides an exposition of two of the major theories in the psychological literature: Shneidman's (1993) "psychache" and Joiner's (2009) interpersonal theory of suicide. Given the development of the psychological literature away from individual-oriented theories of suicide and toward an interpersonal context, this section also demonstrates the need for contemporary sociological analyses of suicide.

In *Suicide as Psychache: A Clinical Approach to Self-Destructive Behavior*, Shneidman (1993) coins the term psychache, stating that it is the most important contributor to suicide. The concept of psychache refers to an intense level of emotional pain resulting in suicide when the

pain exceeds the individual's threshold to endure it. Shneidman's method of investigation is also individually oriented since he is primarily concerned with common individual features of suicidal individuals, as demonstrated in his book *The Suicidal Mind* (1998). Although psychache centers on individual traits and the individual experience of emotional pain, it has a strong explanatory capacity when integrated with interpersonal and sociological levels of analysis.

The most cited psychological theory of suicide in contemporary suicide research is Thomas Joiner's interpersonal-psychological theory of suicidal behavior. This relatively new theory is currently embraced by the field of psychology due to its strong evidence base (Joiner 2009). This perspective disregards psychoanalytic theories of suicide that dominated 20th century psychological approaches to suicide, and which generally assert that suicide is the result of aggression turned inward. Joiner (2005) disagrees with the psychoanalytic approach and instead asserts that the cause of suicidal ideation is the lack of positive interpersonal relations. This represents a shift in psychological theories of suicide away from internal pathologies toward a theory that recognizes a social context and demonstrates the relevance of sociological analysis.

In *Why People Die by Suicide* (2005) Joiner claims that suicide is the result of 1) 'desire' and 2) 'ability'. The desire to commit suicide is the result of thwarted belongingness, perceived burdensomeness, and hopelessness about these states. The ability to commit suicide refers to one's psychological ability to overcome one's survival instinct. Risk factors that contribute to the development of this ability include previous suicidal attempts, increasing use of self-harm, psychological familiarity with the idea, or a high pain threshold. However, Joiner (2005) states that the strongest and most reliable risk factor for predicting suicidal behavior is 'social isolation'. Additional risk factors include mental disorder, family conflict, unemployment, and

physical illness (Van Orden et al. 2010). Joiner states that any comprehensive theory of suicide should be able to account for all of these empirically validated risk factors.

The psychological approach to the research on suicide has gained predominance in the U.S within the last fifty years due to the influence of Shneidman and his work on psychache. Before then, the field of psychology had mainly produced psychoanalytic theories of suicide that agreed with Durkheim's sociological research on suicide (Joiner 2005). According to Joiner, psychoanalytic theories "have been obstacles to understanding" (p. 35), but he does not blame early psychologists for their perspective, stating:

Had I been working in the 1930s I would have seen the world through a similar lens. I feel much less charitably, however, toward those who perpetuated these mistakes into the following decades and less charitably still to the few who promulgate these theories today (p. 36).

Shneidman, referred to as the founder of modern suicidology, brought the field of psychology out of its fixation with psychoanalytic models of suicide and directed key institutions that allowed his psychological approach to suicide to gain academic traction and relevance to public policy. Shneidman co-directed the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center in 1958 and went on to found the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) in 1968. According to the AAS (2015), Shneidman was quick to capitalize on the crisis center/hotline movement in the U.S at the time, /integrating it with his approach to suicide prevention. Now the AAS takes thousands of calls annually, holds major conferences, training workshops, and founded the peer-reviewed journal *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*. In 1995 the AAS moved to Washington, DC and has a board of directors consisting largely of clinical psychologists who advise policymakers or actively promote suicide prevention programs.

The study of suicide has gained significant ground due to Shneidman and contemporary psychologists. Although this is the case, Joiner (2005) still believes Durkheim's theory stood the test of time for a good reason:

He anticipated my model's emphasis on social disconnection as a major source for the desire for suicide. Through his emphasis on altruistic suicide, he also anticipated my theory's inclusion of perceived burdensomeness as a key precursor to serious suicidal behavior... (P. 35).

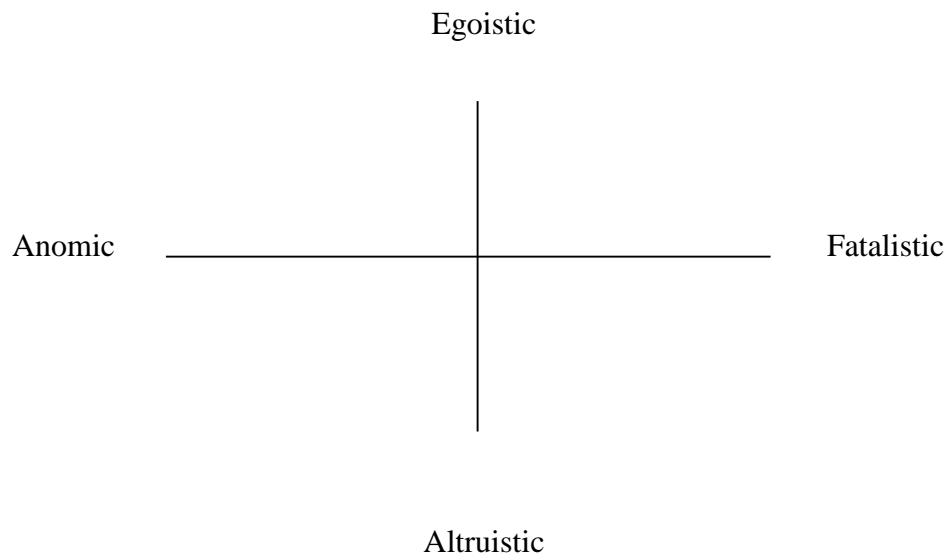
The field of psychology has a capital on suicidology, but I argue Durkheim's sociological insight can build on their understanding of why people commit suicide and further contribute to questions of public policy and suicide prevention programs. The next section describes Durkheim's approach to suicide and provides a description of more recent theorists' attempt to build on his work.

Sociological Perspectives on Suicide

Durkheim

Durkheim's classic sociological text, *Suicide* (1897/2005), is foundational to the field of sociology in general, and has been the dominant sociological perspective on suicide throughout the 20th century. Arguing that the 'social' is a separate and distinct realm that can be studied empirically, Durkheim conducted a statistical analysis on various populations and cohorts divided by various social factors (religious affiliation, marriage status, socioeconomic status, etc.) and compared the suicide rates between these populations in order to determine the health of that population. This empirical inquiry led Durkheim to develop a four-part typology of suicidal social forces: Egoistic, Altruistic, Anomic, and Fatalistic.

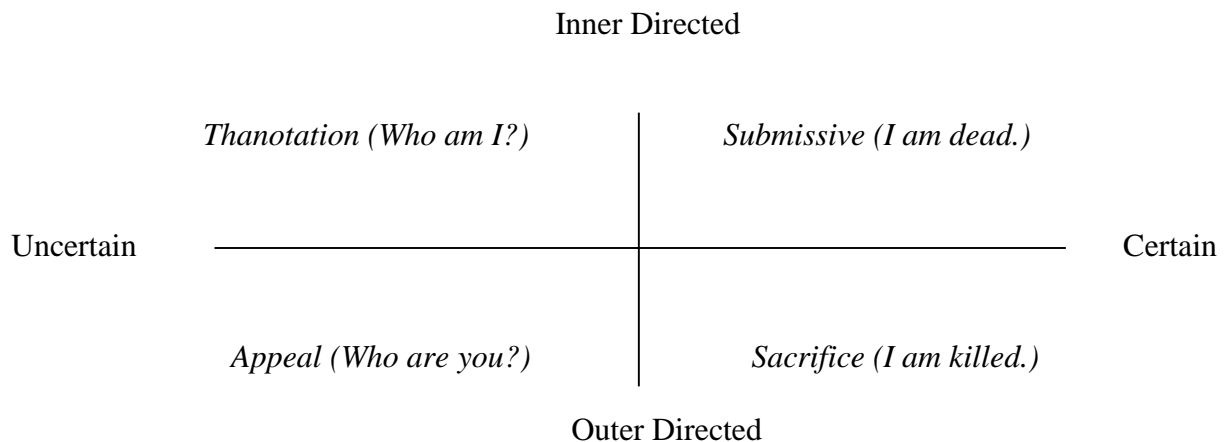
This typology can be divided into two axes; as seen in the visual representation below, the vertical axis represents the level of social integration, while the horizontal axis represents the level of social regulation. Egoistic suicide results from a very low degree of integration within a population (e.g. isolation, alienation from others, or disintegration of a common cause), altruistic suicide results from a very high level of integration (e.g. “primitive” religious sacrifices, suicide bombers, or soldiers in combat), anomic suicide results from a very low degree of social regulation (e.g. in times of chaos or revolution), and lastly fatalistic suicide – a concept briefly referred to in his text – is the result of a very high degree of social regulation (e.g. in prison, or in highly restrictive marriages). High suicide rates, according to Durkheim, are the result of a society’s imbalance between these forces.



Steve Taylor

In *Durkheim and the Study of Suicide* (1982), Steve Taylor reformulates Durkheim's typology to incorporate the specific meaning the act holds for the actors. He does this by reworking Durkheim's four part typology by replacing his four types (axes) with 'inner,' 'outer,' (the actor's orientation) 'certain,' 'uncertain' (an individual's state of knowledge about the circumstances), and then locates suicide risk within four quadrants: Thanotation (e.g. playing Russian roulette), Submissive (e.g. euthanasia), Appeal (e.g. a cry for help), and Sacrifice (e.g. cult activity).

This model is useful since it allows for the possibility of bringing in an analysis of specific contexts in terms of an actor's state of identity and what the act means in their specific situation. This model is also beneficial since it includes – in the thanotation, appeal, or sacrifice category – activities that do not necessarily aim at death as their end goal. Also, in the case of thanotation and sacrifice, suicides are not necessarily even the result of a state of despair.



Although this model usefully assigns phenomenological understanding to Durkheim's construct, Taylor (1982) falls short in explicitly connecting these micro-understandings to the

macro-social realm. Although Taylor critiques Durkheim for neglecting individual interpretations, Taylor includes this element at the cost of neglecting structural and or cultural explanations. Also, although Taylor's goal in his text is to spark a renewed appreciation of Durkheim, he falls short in explaining how his model is similar to or building on Durkheim's constructs. The observant reader will notice the similarities in the axes, but Taylor's text perhaps ends prematurely. It is my contention that an explanatory bridge needs to be provided that can link Durkheim's macro perspective based on 'social currents', and Taylor's micro perspective based on situated identification.

Elwin Humphreys Powell

In *The Design of Discord: Studies of Anomie* (1988), Elwin Humphreys Powell develops the concept of 'anomie' beyond Durkheim's formulation. Rather than viewing anomie as a state lacking social regulation, Powell builds on the phenomenological approach to suicide by conceptualizing anomie as an actor's state of meaninglessness. It is important to note that Powell's (1988) concept of 'meaning' can be defined as an existential state of purposive action, rather than the broader concept of 'meaning' used in semiology. According to Powell, a central area of life where actors find purposive action includes one's work. He writes, "Man derives his identity from his action. Action is more than motion, a mere doing things; it implies purpose, the pursuit of a goal. Without some aim beyond the moment, life becomes intolerable, meaningless" (P. 278). Powell's discussion of anomie is valuable since it allows for the possibility of applying the concept of social anomie to any of Steve Taylor's (1982) four quadrants to analyze the importance of a subject's identity based on a sense of meaning. It is also valuable because it builds on Durkheim's concept of anomie (the lack of social regulation) by demonstrating the role

of social regulation in providing individuals with purpose and direction. This is useful since it connects the micro level of existential meaning with the macro level of morality, which shall be discussed below.

Integrating Durkheim, Taylor, and Powell

Of particular interest to my study are Steve Taylor's (1982) concepts of 'Thanotation' (Who am I?), 'Sacrifice' (I am killed), and 'Appeal' (who are you?). I am interested in 'Thanotation' as it relates to risk-taking behaviors directed at establishing a sense of self, 'Sacrifice' as it reshapes the identity of those who experience the deep bond of altruistic love in combat, and 'Appeal' as it relates to a state of moral conflict resulting from the transition to civilian life. The concept of 'sacrifice' is particularly important to this project since it is a major force that shapes the moral identities of those in combat.

Steve Taylor's (1982) typology of suicide, in combination with Powell's (1988) in depth discussion of 'anomie', is the main theoretical model I intend to build upon. Although these developments in the sociology of suicide since Durkheim contribute to a deeper understanding of the social forces that contribute to suicidal behavior, I contend that they are missing a key element of Durkheim's theory: the importance of 'morality'. Durkheim's work is fundamentally rooted in the importance of social regulations and their socially integrative effects. He takes his analysis beyond individual perceptions of individual motives by always referring back to the state of social institutions and their impact on specific populations. An example includes his discussion of the impact of marriage on the suicide rate of males. Marriage provides a level of social regulation, integrating the individual into the family institution, therefore resulting in lower suicide rates in this population. By adding the concept of 'morality' to Steve Taylor's

model, the axis of certainty vs. uncertainty – reinterpreted as certain moral direction vs. uncertain moral direction – is given substantive meaning rooted in the subject’s deep understanding of their place in relation to the ‘good’ in the particular social context. This understanding of one’s self in relation to the ‘good’ is fundamental to an individual’s sense of meaning, sense of purpose, and sense of community. Drawing on Durkheim’s concept of the ‘collective consciousness’, I argue that this conception of the ‘good’ is rooted in a collective moral consensus that forms a subject’s implicit moral understanding of their social world. By emphasizing Durkheim’s conception of moral regulation in Steve Taylor’s certainty vs. uncertainty axis, one may gain a richer understanding of how ‘social currents’ – in the form of moral meaning-systems – form phenomenological states of existential certainty vs. anomic uncertainty.

A Durkheimian concept of morality as a socially integrative force provided by instituted regulatory structures, not only works to deepen Steve Taylor’s (1982) axis of certainty vs. uncertainty, but it also deepens an understanding of inner vs. outer directed subjects. Comparing this axis of directedness to Durkheim’s axes of integration, I argue that a concept of outer-directed morality – implicit within the collective consciousness – can be applied to individuals who are highly integrated within a particular social context. For Durkheim, this implies high levels of altruism. In Steve Taylor’s typology, this may imply altruism (in the sacrifice quadrant), but may also imply an identity crisis through the strong need for attachment to a group, but failure to gain acceptance within it due to a disjuncture between the individual’s moral compass and that of the collective. This disjuncture may also occur within the individual if they are faced with social pressure to carry out an act that contradicts their moral framework. This

issue is referred to as ‘moral injury’ in the psychological literature on veterans’ mental health and will be the subject of the beginning of the next section.

Relevant Psychological and Sociological Approaches to Morality

The Psychological Concept of ‘Moral Injury’

The concept of moral injury is gaining traction in the psychological literature on combat stress injuries facing U.S. military personnel and veterans. Upon conducting a review of this particular literature, there are currently twenty articles dedicated to developing the concept, eleven of which were published in 2013 alone. The concept was coined by psychologist Jonathan Shay who discovered through his clinical experience with veterans, that PTSD could not account for all the symptoms with which veterans presented him. In the DSM-5, PTSD is defined as a fear response resulting from the perceived threat of death or serious injury. The literature on moral injury dispels the idea that the concept of PTSD is sufficient to understand the difficulties faced by military personnel and veterans. Rather than a fear response (as in PTSD), the concept of moral injury highlights the importance of guilt and shame.

The definition of moral injury according to Shay (2010) has three components: 1) the betrayal of what is right, 2) a high-stakes situation, and 3) when the betrayal is committed by someone who holds legitimate power. This describes the sense of betrayal a soldier may feel after being given an order that they perceive to be unjust. For Shay, the primary concern is ethical leadership. Leaders who are trustworthy and able to maintain group cohesion prevent moral injury by handing down orders that fall in line with the group’s moral code.

The concept of moral injury has also been developed by Litz et al. (2009) in an article dedicated to developing a preliminary model of the concept. They define moral injury as, “perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations” (p. 700). From this social-cognitive perspective, moral injury is a form of cognitive dissonance in which an individual is unable to assimilate or accommodate an event within an existing self-identity or relational schema. In addition, the individual holds stable internal global attributions, experiences guilt, shame, or anxiety, and socially withdraws (Litz et al. 2009). An example of a morally injurious event according to this definition may include a soldier who experiences shame as self-blame after accidentally killing civilians who were initially thought to be enemy combatants.

Beyond the psychological literature, major developments on the spiritual perspective of moral injury can be credited to Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini in their book, *Soul Repair* (2012). Their book emphasizes moral injury as “...souls in anguish, not a psychological disorder” (p. 51). This occurs when veterans struggle with a lost sense of humanity after transgressing deeply held moral beliefs. Their book emphasizes the personal accounts of conscientious objectors in the U.S. military who suffered spiritual conflicts due to a morally injurious event.

These three main approaches to the concept of moral injury reflect the main streams in the current literature divided between psychological and theological perspectives. A recent article synthesizes the psychological approaches of Shay (2010) and Litz et al. (2009) to develop a measurement scale called the Moral Injury Events Scale (MIES). The MIES is designed to assess the level of moral injury in individual patients (Nash et al. 2013). The MIES consists of a two factor model of moral injury with questions that ask about perceived transgressions (as

described by Litz et al.) and questions that ask about perceived betrayals (as described by Shay).

The questions proposed on the scale are the following:

- (1) I saw things that were morally wrong
- (2) I am troubled by having witnessed others' immoral acts
- (3) I acted in ways that violated my own moral code or values
- (4) I am troubled by having acted in ways that violated my own morals or values
- (5) I violated my own morals by failing to do something that I felt I should have done
- (6) I am troubled because I violated my morals by failing to do something that I felt I should have done
- (7) I feel betrayed by leaders who I once trusted
- (8) I feel betrayed by fellow service members who I once trusted
- (9) I feel betrayed by others outside the U.S. military who I once trusted
- (10) I trust my leaders and fellow service members to always live up to their core values
- (11) I trust myself to always live up to my own moral code

Drescher et al. (2011), qualitatively analyze the concept of moral injury in terms of its viability and usefulness among war veterans. The results of their semi-structured interviews indicate that 'moral injury' is a useful construct to describe the complex consequences of combat. It is also seen to expand on issues not covered in the diagnostic criteria of PTSD. Lastly, the terminology of the concept was seen as accurate by the majority of participants but alternate terminology recommended also include: "spiritual injury, emotional injury, personal values injury, life values injury, moral trauma, moral wounds, and moral disruption" (p.11). Drescher and his colleagues conclude that 'moral injury' is a useful concept and that "research about the link between combat and changes in morality and spirituality is lacking" (p.8). It is precisely this

connection I explore in order to construct a sociological model of suicide. But instead of using the concept of moral injury as it has been developed in the psychological literature, I develop a sociological account of how morality plays a major role in affecting the transition from the military to civilian life. I bring back a focus on morality as a social entity that has been largely underdeveloped in suicide research and relatively neglected in recent sociological literature as a whole.

The Sociology of Morality and the Sacred

Sociology, in the time of its founding fathers, understood morality and society as inseparable. As mentioned above, Durkheim took morality as one of his central concepts and understood it as an essential social fact that must be studied in order to understand how individuals are integrated and regulated as subjects of an organic social system. Hitlin and Vaisey (2013) demonstrate how morality featured in the work of scholars responsible for building the foundations of sociology:

Adam Smith argued that economic transactions were inextricably bound up with moral sentiments. Durkheim claimed that morality was a reflection of the organization of society and bound it together. Marx argued that morality was a historically contingent social system tied up within class domination. And for Weber, the moral world was one of value rationality and the competing claims of historical ideas (p. 52).

Since this time, the study of morality has waned in sociology. Although this is the case, it is due for a revival, especially in light of the recent attention given to the concept of morality in law, neuroscience, philosophy, and psychology (Hitlin and Vaisey 2010).

The definition of morality has largely taken on two major forms in contemporary Western thought: morality as ‘rightness’, and morality as ‘goodness’. The former is associated

with law-like statements of ‘right and wrong’, as seen in the Kantian tradition. The latter is concerned with the question of what constitutes the ‘good life’, as seen in the Aristotelian tradition. Methodologically, there are two main ways of approaching questions of morality: prescriptively (in ethics and the humanities) and descriptively (in the social sciences). The former has been dominant in the field of philosophy and is an attempt to determine the correct rules of ‘rightness’, or to define what it means to live ‘the good life’. The latter has been dominant in politics and sociology and its aim is to describe the state of rules that govern what a specific culture or group holds as right or good. The gap between philosophy (the humanities) and sociology (a social science) has recently been bridged in the work of Charles Taylor on the moral sources of the ‘self’.

Charles Taylor, a philosopher and political theorist, has gained a good deal of positive reception in the field of contemporary social theory within the past two decades (Ancelovici and Dupuis-Deri 2001). His conception of ‘the good life’ can be seen as bridging the prescriptive approach to morality argued for by ethical philosophers and the descriptive approach typically associated with the social sciences. Similar to Durkheim, Taylor is interested in systems of meaning that constitute moral regulations for subjects within a specific context. For Taylor (1989), moral regulations constitute “horizons of meaning.” These horizons of meaning are constraining in the sense that a subject’s ideas on morality are shaped and limited by their context. For example, it is axiomatic in the modern West that owning slaves is wrong, and we cannot see this moral imperative otherwise. This moral imperative is unique to our particular context, and although we understand that this perspective is not necessarily universal, this is a conviction we hold as “true” based on contemporary principles of human rights. This is an example of a fundamental imperative that constitutes particular moral horizons for subjects

within a particular social system. ‘Horizons of meaning’ ultimately give situated subjects purpose, direction, and a self-identity based on a moral conception of the ‘good life’.

Charles Taylor (2011) continues with his earlier work on situated subjects in his recent writing on ‘the sacred’. Taylor argues that the modern narrative of ‘disenchantment’ of the world in a secular age, whereby all things sacred disappear, is inaccurate. Rather than the disappearance of the sacred, Taylor holds that the sacred has changed its form from the “anchored” to the “interstitial”. The “anchored” version of the sacred is posited as a transcendent ontological reality beyond the human realm, for example, the idea of a true code of commandments anchored in the transcendent reality of God. The modern “interstitial” version of the sacred exists in one’s imminent being in the world. An example of this interstitial sacred can be the universal declaration of human rights. This code of conduct is rooted in our “strong evaluation” (as Taylor would say) of the world and is rooted in our situated understanding within it, not an understanding of a reality beyond it. In reference to this interstitial version, Taylor gives the example of Durkheim’s concept of society as the sacred: “In Durkheim’s Rousseauian theory, the sacred, which is also the social, helps constitute us as moral beings, and is thus supremely important” (P. 118). The sacred directs our moral being toward a supreme idea of the ‘good’ – whether it is God or Society – whereby our identity is formed based on “strong evaluations” of what one fundamentally holds morally true.

Durkheim’s theory of the sacred in society combines cognitive-symbolic, affective, and ritual elements (Lynch 2005). The sacred arises in social situations characterized by ritual activity whereby intense “effervescent” emotion or social currents developed through collective feelings of excitement and exhilaration are generated. This affective state within the ritualized

behavior is associated with a sacred symbol that distinguishes the sacred from the everyday realm of the profane. This distinction is not between higher vs. lower value judgments, but rather, it is associated with radically distinct ontological types. According to Durkheim, the sacred transcends individuals and is experienced in collective ritual, whereas the profane is characterized by individual everyday activity.

Gordon Lynch (2005) critiques Durkheim's dichotomy of the sacred vs. the profane and reconfigures it into three elements: the sacred (ritual), the profane (the impure), and the mundane (everyday). By adding the category of the mundane, the concept of the sacred is no longer a distinct ontological type and can occur within the symbolic realm of the everyday. This takes away the necessity of ritual to experience the sacred and allows the individual to encounter the sacred within everyday acts and with common symbols. For Lynch, the sacred operates as a symbolic cultural ideal rather than a collective experience. Therefore, the profane is that which threatens the sacred ideal and is referred to as evil. This symbolic attribution of 'evil' is a process of 'othering,' – as in the work of Said (1979) on 'orientalism' – whereby the group assures its ontological security through turning an opposing group's threatening symbolic conception of the 'sacred' into an evil that must be terminated. Lynch states that the sacred “constructs the idea of human society as a meaningful moral collective” (p. 134). Similar to Charles Taylor's (2011) discussion of the sacred, the sacred is based on collective non-contingent moral realities. The sacred here is defined by Lynch as:

...what people collectively experience as absolute, non-contingent realities which present normative claims over the meanings and conduct of social life. Sacred forms are specific, historically contingent, instances of the sacred. Sacred forms are constituted by constellations of specific symbols, thought/discourse, emotions and actions grounded in the body. These constellations of embodied thought, feeling and action recursively reproduce the sacrality of the sacred form and constitute groups who share these discourses, sentiments and practices. The normative reality represented by a sacred form simultaneously constructs the evil which might profane it, and the

pollution of this sacred reality is experienced by its adherents as a painful wound for which some form of restitution is necessary (p.29).

This definition is particularly useful since it allows for the analysis of in-group/ out group antagonisms that result from competing discourses when one group's symbolic 'sacred' is another groups symbolic 'profane'. Here, successful social integration and regulation are achieved, but they are achieved at the cost of alienating an 'other'/ a common enemy.

This discussion of sacred forms is relevant to moral injury since it looks beyond individual feelings of guilt and shame in order to interrogate the deep-seated social roots of moral 'horizons of meaning', and how these meanings contribute to one's self identity. My project further analyzes the concept of moral identity and how, in particular, it affects veterans. But this work differs from that on moral injury since I am not focusing on moral transgressions; instead, my study focuses on the social/psychological impact of moral transition. By this, I mean the experience of transitioning from the moral environment of a military deployment to the moral environment of civilian life.

Smith and True (2014) analyze the impact of transition on veterans' mental health by focusing primarily on issues of self-identity in veterans leaving the military. They argue that "warring identities" clash with civilian identities, leaving veterans feeling alienated in a relatively individualized context. They state:

Although combat veterans reside in a place of relative tranquility upon return, they contend with existential questions about a changed identity that civilians rarely endure... The strict regimentation, order, and hierarchy that is found (and required) within the military all but disappears upon return to the civilian world. The harsh adjustment demands that combat veterans relinquish their more black-and-white, dichotomized framework of enemy/ally, superior/subordinate, and replace it with a more autonomous, even anomic, civilian identity (p. 11).

Although Smith and True present a very convincing argument about veterans' issues of self-identity, their analysis does not delve deeper into the moral underpinning of these identities. Rather than relying on Taylor's concept of moral identity, their work uses a symbolic interactionist concept of identity. Even though the word "anomie" is mentioned – as seen above – the concept is not pursued in depth and Durkheim's work on anomie is not referred to at any point in the article.

My own study delves deeper into the moral component of the transition from the military to civilian life. This moral component is based on Durkheim's concept of morality as social regulations that produce functional social integration. Since the concept of morality is the basis on which I build my study, I draw on the work of Charles Taylor for my working concept of self-identity. Therefore, disruptions of self-identity and feeling "alien" in the civilian context (as stated by Smith and True 2014) refers to being alienated from a moral community. The next section explores the primary literature on this experience in the context of veterans' in transition to civilian life.

Memoir and Documentary Accounts of Combat and Transition

This section looks at how Durkheimian themes of altruism (high moral integration) and anomie (low moral regulation) play out in the writing of individuals who have experienced combat and the transition to civilian life. It covers a wide array of individuals including WWI veteran and Sociologist Willard Waller, contemporary combat-embedded journalists Chris Hedges and Sebastian Junger, a U.S. veteran of combat in Vietnam and Iraq. Although I reviewed several other first-hand accounts of combat and transition, this selection from the literature relates to my particular focus.

American Sociologist and WWI Veteran, Willard Waller, mirrors Durkheim's emphasis on altruistic social integration in his (1944) book, *The Veteran Comes Back*. He writes:

The ex-soldier's cynicism is in great part a reaction to the thing that he had once and misses now. When he was one of a group of comrades his life had purpose and meaning, and he resents the fact that such sacred things could end so badly... for many Veterans, the comradeship in war remain the high point of their lives. (p. 42)

Waller argues that it is not enough to focus on getting Veterans jobs and benefits; the Veteran will not keep the job if they are not properly integrated back into a local community where they gain a sense of belonging. He states, "human beings are always reaching out to find something that might save their lives from utter meaninglessness" (p.194). According to Durkheim, a sense of social solidarity is the source of meaning that saves us from this meaninglessness. This drive to maintain solidarity after conflict can also be witnessed in historical examples of extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Freikorps that were initially veteran organizations. Waller (1944) describes the initial formation of the Klan as a social club for Civil War veterans. Their mandate was: "To protect the weak, innocent and defenseless from the indignities, wrongs, and outrage of the lawless, the violent, and the brutal; to relieve the injured and oppressed, especially the widows and orphans of ex-Confederate soldiers" (p. 9). The ideals of war lived on in this group, turning its morals surrounding racial purity to violently address the "indignities" of Whites' contact with Blacks. Shay (2010) described the formation of the German Freikorps death squads as an association of demoralized WWI veterans whose "alienation, bitterness, and boredom crystallized into street violence, extortion, murder, and political terrorism" (p. 222). Although these examples demonstrate the potential dangers of demoralized veterans who find solidarity in a new common enemy, Shay suggests keeping units together post-deployment can provide a form of solidarity that has the potential to reduce demoralization and promote successful reintegration into civilian life. This means training them together, deploying them

together, and bringing them home together. He contrasts this with the U.S deployment model used during combat in Vietnam which consisted of viewing members of a unit as spare parts to be swapped in and out which dramatically impacted the sense of unit cohesion and made the transition home far more isolating.

The feeling of belonging combined with a sense of mission is captured in the following lines from Chris Hedges' (2002) book, *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*: "We discover in the communal struggle, the shared sense of meaning and purpose, a cause. War fills our spiritual void. I do not miss war, but I miss what it brought" (p. 116). War builds very strong bonds between individuals. This bond fills a "spiritual" void once filled by religious affiliation in pre-modern times. Though unlike religious or nationalistic affiliation, individuals in modern combat are committed to the group itself, and demonstrate these commitments by self-sacrifice. Chris Hedges writes:

"Just remember," a Marine Corps lieutenant colonel told me as he strapped his pistol belt under his arm before we crossed into Kuwait, "that none of these boys is fighting for home, for the flag, for all that crap the politicians feed the public. They are fighting for each other, just for each other." (p. 38)

This signals an important insight into the micro-level of social integration. This high level of group integration requires explanation in relation to Durkheim's concept of altruism. In *Suicide*, Durkheim (1897/2005) defines altruistic suicide as an act of duty through self-sacrifice in a highly integrated collectivity, stating that the military provides this high level of integration which diminishes the value of individuality:

Now, the first quality of a soldier is a sort of impersonality not to be found anywhere in civilian life to the same degree. He must be trained to set little value upon himself, since he must be prepared to sacrifice himself upon being ordered to do so. Even aside from such exceptional circumstances, in peace time and in the regular exercise of his profession, discipline requires him to obey without question and sometimes even without understanding. For this an intellectual abnegation hardly consistent with individualism is required. He must have but a weak tie binding

him to his individuality, to obey external impulsion so docilely. In short, a soldier's principle of action is external to himself; which is the quality of the state of altruism (pp. 192-193).

Although this external principal of action may take the form of a national or religious ideology, it can also take the form of a commitment to a combat unit.

In his book, *War*, documenting an army airborne platoon, Sebastian Junger (2010) describes how injured soldiers on deployment designated to recover in rear bases often become deserters, leaving their position before full recovery in order to re-join their combat unit at the front. For these men, combat provides the strong and meaningful regulatory ideal of collective defence through a high degree of social integration at the unit level. The high level of altruistic social integration gives individuals a heightened sense of meaning and moral purpose. Junger writes:

Collective defense can be so compelling — so addictive, in fact — that eventually it becomes the rationale for why the group exists in the first place... throughout history, men... [at war] have come home to find themselves desperately missing what should have been the worst experience of their lives... they miss being in a world where everything is important and nothing is taken for granted. They miss being in a world where human relations are entirely governed by whether you can trust the other person with your life. It's such a pure, clean standard that men can completely remake themselves in war. (p. 234)

Coming from a situation where one is willing to give up one's life for a group, the veteran losing this bond loses a sense of morally guided life-purpose. I conceptualize this loss of morally guided life-purpose as a loss of moral purpose. In a memoir on his deployment to Iraq called *Through Our Eyes*, Jessie Odom describes how the military gave him a sense of purpose he lacked in civilian life:

The most devastating perpetual trauma I had to overcome was civilian transition... I know the changes I see in myself are not a result of the war in Iraq. Even though those memories are still there and are traumatic, it goes much deeper than that. The changes are the result of a man who wishes he was at war. (p. 171)

Concerning his experience embedded with troops in Afghanistan, Junger writes:

Civilians balk at recognizing that one of the most traumatic things about combat is having to give it up... to a combat vet, the civilian world can seem frivolous and dull, with very little at stake.... These hillsides of loose shale and holly trees are where the men feel not most alive... the most utilized. The most necessary. The most clear and certain and purposeful. If young men could get that feeling at home, no one would ever want to go to war again.... (p. 233)

O'Byrne, a soldier Junger was embedded with, describes his experience with civilian transition:

“It’s as if I’m self-destructive, trying to find the hardest thing possible to make me feel accomplished... (p. 268).” These veterans’ primary struggles were not traumas or morally injurious events in combat, but rather, the experience of civilian transition itself and the loss of the moral purpose provided by the altruistically structured combat unit.

Glen Gray, WWI veteran and philosopher, talks about the enduring appeals of combat in his (1959) book, *The Warriors*. He states: “Many veterans who are honest with themselves will admit, I believe, that the experience of communal effort in battle, even under the altered conditions of modern war, has been a high point in their lives” (p. 44). Central to this experience of combat as a high-point, Gray discusses the experience of comradeship. He characterizes comradeship similar to Durkheim’s concept of collective effervescence, where individuals are highly integrated in an altruistic social situation and experience a sense of joy in self-transcendence. Gray illustrates this theme in the following lines concerning the “ecstasy” of this “supra-individual” affect: “With the boundaries of the self expanded, they sense a kinship never known before. Their ‘I’ passes insensibly into a ‘we,’ ‘my’ becomes ‘our,’ and individual fate loses its central importance” (P. 45). Gray illustrates the Durkheimian theme of a relatively individualistic civilian life: “...the freedom of self-determination [in civilian life], appears to us [Veterans] most of the time as frivolous or burdensome. Such freedom leaves us empty and alone, feeling undirected and insignificant” (pp. 44-45). The enduring appeals of collective effervescence in combat contrasts with an individualistic civilian life, causing issues distinct

from PTSD and deeper than a surface-level identity disruption; it creates a unique existential crisis rooted in the moral structure of society.

Based on the common experiences in this primary literature and building on the debates in the secondary literature, my study investigates if and how this problem manifests in Canadian society among veterans who have recently returned from the war in Afghanistan. The purpose is to develop a sociological concept of transitional injury rooted in the experience of moral transitions and to determine its association with suicidal ideation in the transition experiences of the study population.

Altruism and the Military Community

“...and for that moment in your life it's true communal living, the closest you can ever get to pure altruism.” – Interview Participant

This section illustrates how the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) can be conceptualized as a highly altruistic professional community. I rely on a neo-Durkheimian definition of altruism as a commitment to a moral community based on a concern for collective goals (Durkheim 1897/2005; Sorokin 1950; Tönnies 1887/2001). Likewise, I use altruistic community as a set of collectivistic institutional norms and cultural customs that facilitates altruistic commitment by emphasizing collective goals. Lastly, I rely on the definition developed by Durkheim, Sorokin and Tönnies of profession as a specialized position in a modern occupational group. Before discussing how the CAF is an altruistic professional community, the concept of altruism, community, and profession will be expanded upon in light of the work of Émile Durkheim, Pitirim Sorokin, and Ferdinand Tönnies.

In his chapter on altruism in *Suicide*, Durkheim (1897/2005) stated that altruistic suicides occur in traditional societies characterized by a very high degree of social integration. Stating that traditionalism is the “chief opponent of the spirit of individualism” (p. 195), he demonstrates how altruistic suicides result from an extreme commitment to customs and ideals generally found in traditional societies. These types of suicides are what we would commonly refer to as martyrdom or sacrifice. Durkheim states that this is not a common form of suicide and only occurs in extreme cases of altruism; otherwise, moderately high degrees of traditionalism act as a protective factor against suicide. Altruism acted as a protective factor against suicide in Catholic societies in Durkheim’s analysis because they were more traditional and communal than their individualistic Protestant counterparts. The altruistic principal of strong customs and traditional ideals in the military has the dual effect of being both a means of compelling individuals to commit a self-sacrificial suicide, as well as being a protective factor against egoistic suicide. This protective factor is the result of a highly integrated social context that provides individuals with a unifying principal of action external to the individual. For Durkheim, altruistic behaviour is compelled by this external principal of action resulting from an individual’s high degree of integration into a social body. Regarding military altruism, Durkheim states that “the soldier is anything but isolated. He belongs to a strongly constructed society of a sort calculated partially to replace the family... a soldier’s principle of action is external to himself; which is the quality of the state of altruism” (p. 188-193). The high degree of social integration essential to Durkheim’s concept of altruism is also developed by Pitirim Sorokin who presents a sociological concept of love based on social integration. A concept of love is important when conceptualizing altruism because it ties individual affects to the broader social realm.

Sorokin is a prominent figure in sociology who studied altruism and is the founder of the Harvard Sociology Department, as well as the Harvard Research Center in Altruistic Integration and Creativity. A critic of his colleague Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism, Sorokin focuses on the vital importance of affect, particularly that of altruistic love. He states: "Ontologically love is, side by side with truth and beauty, one of the highest forms of a unifying, integrating, harmonizing creative energy or power" (Sorokin 1950, p. 11). This fits with Durkheim's concept of altruism since it is based on a high degree of social integration. On the individual level, love is experienced as the "highest peace of mind and happiness" (p. 22), which is reminiscent of Durkheim's (1897/2005) description of the individual expression of altruism as a state of "peaceful courage" (p. 257). Communal integration facilitates both peace of mind, but also altruistic commitment, leading to courage in the face of danger, particularly emphasized in Durkheim's description of altruistic suicide. On the social level, Sorokin describes love as, "a meaningful interaction – or relationship – between two or more persons where the aspirations and aims of one person are shared and helped in their realization by other persons" (p. 23). Based on shared aspirations, Sorokin's social concept of love is comparable to Durkheim's discussion of altruism because both require a high degree of social integration. What Sorokin adds to Durkheim is an emphasis on the power of altruistic love as an integrating affect. Sorokin suggests the following terms that denote various forms of love as a social relationship: "solidarity,' 'mutual aid,' 'co-operation,' 'unity of good neighbors,' [and] 'familistic relationship,'" (p. 23). Sorokin's concept of love is comparable to the "we feeling" referred to by Kanter (1972) in *Commitment and Community*, and Ferdinand Tönnies' (1887/2001) concept of 'concord' and 'gemeinschaft' which expresses the organizational basis for this "we feeling".

Ferdinand Tönnies' (1887/2001) in *Community and Civil Society* develops a concept of community that provides an organizational basis for both Durkheim's concept of altruism and Sorokin's concept of love. His concept of community points to specific forms of social organization that facilitate altruistic love. Like Durkheim's (1897/2005) description of the altruists' "peaceful courage" (p. 257), or Sorokin's (1950) description of the altruistic lover's "highest peace of mind and happiness" (p. 31), Tönnies (1887/2001) describes the individual in a highly integrated social context as, "his best and happiest when he is surrounded by his family and his own circle" (p. 28). Although Tönnies does not refer to the concept of altruism, his use of the word "concord" refers to the same highly integrated social state described by both Durkheim and Sorokin. Regarding the concept of 'love' and its relation to 'concord' Tönnies states:

Those who love and understand each other stay together and organize their joint existence. The aggregate of determinate will which governs a community, and which is as natural as language itself and contains a multitude of understandings regulated by its norms, I shall call concord or family spirit (the term concordia implies a heartfelt sense of integration and unanimity) (p. 34).

The concept of community as a heartfelt sense of integration and unanimity incorporates the affective realm into the analysis of social organization. This concept of community is the basis of Tönnies' classic distinction between 'gemeinschaft' and 'gesellschaft'. Tönnies (1887/2001) uses the concept of gemeinschaft (synonymous with community) to refer to forms of social organization based on close-knit ties where individuals share in customs and a common moral order. The form of moral order found in community, distinct from modern legal order, is based on heartfelt bonds connected to the group. Tönnies differentiates the forms of social regulation by pointing to the difference between the solemn oath and the contract. The solemn oath is a commitment to the ideals and functions of a community whereas a contract is made based on an arbitrary agreement between two or more individuals who agree on specific conditions. In brief,

legal contracts are individualistic and are concerned only with the limited parties involved in the contract, whereas the solemn oath is founded on a sacred obligation to collective beliefs and rituals of a moral community.

The common thread running through Durkheim, Sorokin, and implicit in Tönnies' work, as explored in the previous chapter, is a concern for the tenuous state of altruistic social life in the modern world. Based on their theories – and as stated before – I define altruism as a heartfelt commitment to a moral community based on a concern for the functional thriving of the group. Likewise, I define altruistic community as a set of institutional norms and cultural customs that facilitates altruistic commitment. In the work of both Durkheim and Tönnies, the highly integrative customs that promote altruistic communities are associated with traditional societies. Durkheim's (1897/2005) description of altruism is associated with what he calls "lower societies" characterized by unquestioning commitment to the group in a highly homogeneous or rigidly hierarchical social environment. Durkheim (1897/2005) compares the modern military to traditional societies. In order to understand how the military is both a modern profession, while maintaining the high degree of integrative solidarity associated with traditional societies, I turn to Durkheim's theorizing on forms of solidarity which highlights the importance of collective goals as a unifying principal of action.

In Durkheim's (1933) *The Division of Labour in Society*, he makes a distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity is a form of social solidarity found in pre-modern contexts with a low division of labour. Durkheim gives the example of hunters and gatherers as demonstrating this type of solidarity. In addition, Durkheim includes the military in his descriptions of mechanical solidarity. Although the professional military is a modern

organization, Durkheim compares it to primitive forms of solidarity that favor a high degree of shared belief and practice. Durkheim (1905/1976) argues that this form of solidarity is the basis of early religious life where sacred objects unified clans through highly integrating collective representations. The opposite of mechanical solidarity is organic solidarity which is found in modern contexts with a high degree of division where specialization is necessary. The modern world is bonded by organic solidarity since individuals must be highly specialized in their labour and like the various specialized organs of the human body, we require individuals in other specializations to function. Contrary to Tönnies' pessimistic outlook on the modern world, Durkheim argues that organic solidarity can replace the traditional function of mechanical solidarity, where the profession would take on the integrative and regulative social function. Organic solidarity binds individuals together through reciprocity and regulates them by limiting their activity to a specific profession.

In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim (1905/1976) best illustrates his theory of culture regarding traditional religious forms of solidarity. Rather than a set of delusional beliefs to be disregarded, Durkheim demonstrates how religion functioned as a means of creating social solidarity, and elevated man beyond mere individual existence. He writes:

Howsoever complex the outward manifestations of the religious life may be, at bottom it is one and simple. It responds everywhere to one and the same need, and is everywhere derived from one and the same mental state. In all its forms, its object is to raise man above himself and to make him lead a life superior to that which he would lead, if he followed only his own individual whims: beliefs express this life in representations; rites organize it and regulate its working (p. 447).

Although religion fulfilled this function for a great deal of human history, Durkheim recognizes that it is no longer applicable in a modern world characterized by individualistic rationalism and a high degree of interaction in the global sphere of cultural heterogeneity. Opposed to a model of

market individualism, Durkheim (1933) argues that the specialized professional occupation has the potential to replace traditional forms of solidarity:

We are thus led to the recognition of a new reason why the division of labor is a source of social cohesion. It makes individuals solidary, as we have said before, not only because it limits the activity of each, but also because it increases it. It adds to the unity of the organism, solely through adding to its life. At least, in its normal state, it does not produce one of these effects without the other (p. 395).

Although individuals are narrowly specialized and regulated, they are moved beyond their state of individual limitations and egoistic isolation by virtue of being part of a larger organic whole. Just as Durkheim states the function of religion is “to raise man above himself and to make him lead a life superior to that which he would lead, if he followed only his own individual whims” (p. 447), the profession is the means through which this occurs in the modern world. The question is whether or not this has come to fruition in our highly individualistic modern world. Below I argue that Durkheim’s hypothesis regarding the integrative and regulative social function of professional organizations is accurate in the case of the modern military profession, but is often not the case in the civilian world.

Contrary to Durkheim’s (1897/2005) comparisons of the military to homogeneous societies regulated by mechanical solidarity, I argue that the military is a modern professional organization that functions based on a very high degree of organic solidarity. Organic solidarity integrates individuals into reciprocal relations based on specialized roles. Durkheim (1933) saw the division of labour as the source of modern solidarity because in a globalizing world of increasing specialization, individuals, communities, and nations increasingly rely on one another. Like organs functionally assembled in the body, none are completely self-sufficient. Durkheim states that organic solidarity is in its early stages – at the turn of the twentieth century – and that

it would continue to grow, filling in the regulatory void left by the loss of mechanical solidarity and traditional religious customs and cosmologies.

As we now see, Durkheim's predictions were partly accurate; we are living in a highly interdependent global economy. But contrary to Durkheim, the division of labour's capacity to create solidarity has fallen into question since the rise of neoliberalism, where corporate capitalism increasingly took over the role of the nation-state. Rather than solid modern institutions that guarantee lifetime employment, individuals are forced to market their skills on an ongoing basis in several professions without regard for maintaining loyalty to any particular group. Contemporary sociologists Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) refute the idea that individualization necessarily leads to social disintegration. Calling the current age, "second modernity" (p. xxi), where individualism has been institutionalized through a conscious and reflexive engagement in second modernity, contemporary individuals are still able to obtain a high level of social integration. They state that, "[i]n developed modernity – to be quite blunt about it – human mutuality and community rest no longer on solidly established traditions, but, rather, on a paradoxical collectivity of reciprocal individualization" (p. xxi). This statement by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim echoes Durkheim's (1933) theory of organic solidarity based on the reciprocal relations of specialized individuals. They even use the concept of "altruistic individualism" to illustrate how individuals maintain a life of their own while living for others. An example includes the contemporary move to value universal human rights by respecting minority groups that were previously categorized as outcasts. This also mirrors Durkheim's (1973) piece titled *Individualism and the Intellectuals* where he calls for a commitment to the universal dignity of the human person, replacing the old ideals of traditional authority.

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2001) distinction between the traditional family and the post-familial family provides a more nuanced understanding of altruism. Their work in *Individualization* builds on Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity which allows for a reconstitution of the concept of altruism that fits with contemporary highly organic societies. They do this by presenting two forms of organic solidarity: the community of needs vs. elective affinity. The former is characterized by mutual needs, the latter by mutual interests, and both are based on organic interdependence. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim illustrate the "community of needs" with the model of the pre-industrial and early industrial family which is based on a strict division of labour, where each spouse inhabited strictly defined gender roles and required the other to fulfill certain functions. For example, the traditional role of the husband and wife are complimentary, neither being self-sufficient on their own. In the contemporary family, there are less defined roles and women are encouraged to have a life of their own outside the family. This allows the contemporary family to be more fluid, and maintains functionality when marriages dissolve and reconstitute in remarriage. In this context Beck and Beck-Gernsheim state that the contemporary family – or "post-familial family" – "is becoming more of an elective relationship, an association of individual persons, who each bring to it their own interests, experiences and plans and who are each subjected to different controls, risks and constraints" (p. 97). Both families based on need and families based on affinity function by organic solidarity. This organic solidarity produces altruism not only because individuals require one another (Durkheim 1933), but because individuals electively cooperate based on mutual interest. The distinction between the traditional family based on need and the post-familial family based on affinity is that in the former, the regulatory power of tradition and custom held the social unit together whereas the latter is held together by the ongoing choice of the individuals involved.

For Durkheim (1897/2005), egoistic and anomic social contexts are the antithesis of altruistic solidarity. Both egoism and anomie are complimentary and are often found in combination, distinct from altruism which has the opposite character of both. What egoistic and anomic social milieus have in common are their lack of adequate moral forces, the glue binding the individual to society. Without adequate moral integration, individuals are vulnerable to suicide since, according to Durkheim, it is the presence of society in the individual that keeps the individual from the pain of an atomized existence. As Durkheim states, egoism and anomie are “merely two different aspects of one social state” (p. 251); thus, the individual affected by a state of egoism (lacking integration) would also experience anomie (lacking regulation) because of the lack of attachment to society, the source of moral regulations. Although they are related, the main difference between egoism and anomie is that the former is found in environments that are predominantly characterized by intellectual atomization (e.g. 18th century Protestantism), whereas the latter is found in environments that are predominantly characterized by a lack of moral regulation (e.g. modern capitalism); Durkheim writes:

In one, reflective intelligence is affected and immoderately overnourished; in the other, emotion is over-excited and freed from all restraint. In one, thought, by dint of falling back upon itself, has no object left; in the other, passion, no longer recognizing bounds, has no goal left. The former is lost in the infinity of dreams, the second in the infinity of desires (p. 250).

In both cases, infinitude is the culprit, causing individuals to experience what Durkheim calls the “constantly renewed torture” of an “unquenchable thirst” (p. 208). This unquenchable thirst is Durkheim’s metaphor for the individual’s constant lack of fulfillment due to the absence of social integration and regulation. The lack of these social effects produces a personal disintegration, weakening ties that bind the individual to society. For Durkheim, it is fundamentally important that individuals are adequately tied to society; it is this social

understanding of human nature that runs through his whole body of work, and that forms the basis of all of his theoretical positions.

In his work titled, “The Dualism of Human Nature and Its Social Conditions,” Durkheim (1973b) elaborates on the importance of man as both individual and social through his concept of man as “homo-duplex” – the individual physical aspect and the collective aspect of man. In *Suicide*, Durkheim (1897/2005) emphasizes this dual concept of man when he writes:

...man is double, that is because social man superimposes himself upon physical man. Social man necessarily presupposes a society which he expresses and serves. If this dissolves, if we no longer feel it in existence and action about and above us, whatever is social in us is deprived of all objective foundation (P.171).

Depriving our social nature means isolating man by separating him from “a society which he expresses and serves,” therefore leading the individual to experience a state of egoism.

Recalling Durkheim’s (1897/2005) concept of altruism as a principle of action external to oneself, both the traditional family and the post-familial family described by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) have an altruistic character. The main distinction is that the former is institutionalized altruistic communalism whereas the latter is institutionalized altruistic individualism. Altruistic communalism forms self-identities through socialization into clear and specified social roles, outwardly directing one’s goals toward one’s community. This promotes a form of organic solidarity where in-group loyalty is encouraged. In altruistic individualism self-identities are achieved through individual exploration in a pluralistic environment, directing one’s goals toward global concerns. This promotes a form of organic solidarity where cosmopolitanism is encouraged. These two forms of organic solidarity correspond with what moral psychologists Haidt and Graham (2008) refer to as the main distinction between the moral foundations of liberals and conservatives. Liberal moral foundations promote organic solidarity

in pluralistic cosmopolitan contexts where elective affinity prevails, whereas conservative moral foundations promote organic solidarity in local in-group communal contexts.

Research by contemporary moral psychologists, Haidt and Graham (2008), demonstrates how individuals who self-identify as liberal primarily base their moral decisions on the cosmopolitan principal of not doing harm to others, whereas those who self-identify as conservative primarily base their moral decisions on the principal of in-group loyalty, hierarchical authority, and purity/ sanctity. This has led to a great misunderstanding between liberals and conservatives. The moral foundation associated with liberalism is particularly valuable for maintaining organic solidarity in a pluralistic cosmopolitan context where the harm principal prevails, as seen in cosmopolitan legal documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The extra three moral foundations associated with conservatism are particularly valuable for maintaining organic solidarity in local communal contexts where in-group loyalty is founded on reciprocal needs and hierarchical authority and rules of purity/ sanctity are written into the customs and complimentary role norms of a particular context. These moral foundations distinguish altruistic individualism from altruistic communalism.

Johnathan Haidt, corroborates Durkheim's stance on the altruistic needs of "social man" by metaphorically stating that humans are 90% chimp and 10% bee. In a clever piece titled, "Planet of the Durkheimians," Haidt and Graham (2008) paint a picture of a world of Durkheimian subjects who, "crave, above all else, being tightly integrated into strong groups that cooperatively pursue common goals.... For any action, they ask: Does it undermine or strengthen the group?" (pp. 371-172). They argue that American social conservatives value this from of highly integrated morality which places a high degree of emphasis on in-group loyalty. They

argue that American social progressives on the other hand, value *global* understandings of rights and fairness as primary moral concerns. The fundamental distinction is the scope of each group's moral concern; the former works best in small tight-knit, value-homogenous communities or groups engaged in collective defense such as combat units, and the latter works best in larger, value-heterogeneous cosmopolitan environments where ties to individuals in one's immediate surroundings are not as strong, such as in the modern city. In both cases, two different moral foundations fulfill "social man's" need for commitment to a social cause, but the former does it at a significantly higher degree, encouraging more altruistic levels of social integration and collective effervescence, whereas the latter tends to have the issue of bordering on egoistic levels of disintegration since the more abstract principle of universal humanity is less immediate and tangible.

Based on Haidt and Graham's (2008) support for Durkheim's (1897/2005) characterization of social man, I argue that veterans who have recently left the military after a deployment are ideal figures of altruistic social man due to the institutional norms instilled in them by the military. These institutional norms facilitate a high degree of social integration through the moral foundation Haidt and Graham characterize as associated with American social conservatives: a high degree of in-group loyalty. Separating the veteran (an ideal expression of altruistic social man) from the group that he serves (the combat unit) risks creating an egoistic and anomic experience for that individual. In the context of combat, the 'in-group' refers to the co-combatants, not the broader national society, as demonstrated in the primary literature thus far.

I argue that the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is a modern professional organization based on the “need” oriented organic solidarity of altruistic communalism, distinct from civilian professions and communities where elective affinity and altruistic individualism prevails. The key distinction between these two forms of altruism is the level of social integration required. In need-based organic solidarity the moral foundations of loyalty, authority, and sanctity bind individuals tightly together. In affinity-based organic solidarity individuals are not required to be highly integrated into local communal contexts. I argue that the relative gap in levels of integration between the communal military context and the individualistic civilian context produces a state of anomie. This state of anomie is the product of losing the sense of moral purpose associated with one’s position in the altruistically communal military context.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this research is to help identify social factors that contribute to successful and unsuccessful transitions from the military to civilian life. Successful transitions are defined as the subject's ability to regain a sense of moral purpose through reintegrating into civilian occupations. Unsuccessful transitions are defined as the temporary or ongoing period where the subject fails to regain a sense of moral purpose, a concept I developed in chapter two. To accomplish the goals of this project, I conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with 35 Canadian veterans of Afghanistan. Lasting roughly an hour each, all of the interviews were audio-recorded with consent (See consent form in Appendix 1). Interviews were then selectively transcribed and thematically analyzed based on Durkheim's concepts of altruism, egoism, and anomie (1897/2005). This chapter describes the following areas: 1) the rationale for a qualitative method in light of Durkheim's quantitative methodological approach to suicide; 2) the interview questions and structure with ethical considerations; and 3) the methodology concerning the thematic analysis of the interview material. This research has been approved by the Queen's General Research Ethics Board (see application and approval in Appendix 2).

Rationale for a Qualitative Interview Method

According to Hjelmeland and Loa Knizek (2011) in their chapter titled "What Kind of Research Do We Need in Suicidology Today?" in *The International Handbook of Suicide Prevention*, the field needs: "(1) studies which take cultural/ contextual perspectives into consideration; and (2) studies using different types of qualitative methodology" (p. 596). According to these authors, qualitative approaches account for only 3% of studies published in suicide journals. They argue that the field of suicidology needs to go beyond simply describing

suicidal behavior and that we need to *understand* it. This understanding requires socially reflexive studies that take into account local perspectives of lived phenomena.

This section addresses the rationale behind the qualitative interview method used in this study, contrasted with Durkheim's statistical work on suicide, for which he has been criticized for neglecting the meaning of individual acts of suicide (Douglas 1967; Taylor 1982). Contrary to this perspective, I base my qualitative inquiry on Durkheim's (1897/2005) analysis in chapter six of *Suicide*, titled "Individual Forms of the Different Types of Suicide" (p. 240), which I argue forms the basis of a qualitative approach to suicide and activates Durkheim's concepts of altruism, egoism, and anomie in a micro-level analysis. Durkheim states:

Each victim of suicide gives his act a personal stamp which expresses his temperament, the special conditions in which he is involved, and which, consequently, cannot be explained by the social and general causes of the phenomenon. But these causes in turn must stamp the suicides they determine with a shade all their own, a special mark expressive of them. This collective mark we must find (p. 241).

In order to, "follow the various currents which generate suicide from their social origins to their individual manifestations" (p. 240), Durkheim takes an unexpected turn in chapter six from his macro-level statistical analysis in the previous chapters where he used deductive logic to build his typology of suicide. In this chapter on individual forms of suicide he applies his typology to the micro-level analysis of specific suicides, drawing on major figures in French literature to illustrate how his concepts manifest on the individual level.

Durkheim provides the example of Lamartine's Raphaël as an ideal type to illustrate his concept of egoistic suicide. He describes the details of how Raphaël wrapped himself up in his own world of thought, isolating himself from the social world. Durkheim compares this detached intellectualism to his description of heightened protestant suicide rates resulting from the lack of

integrating traditional religious beliefs as found in Catholicism and communal forms of intellectual life as found in Judaism. Basing Raphaël's actions in egoistic social currents, Durkheim states:

If the individual isolates himself, it is because the ties uniting him with others are slackened or broken, because society is not sufficiently integrated at the points where he is in contact with it. These gaps between one and another individual consciousness, estranging them from each other, are authentic results of the weakening of the social fabric (pp. 244-345).

Durkheim goes on to describe egoism's opposite: individual manifestations of altruistic suicide caused by a high degree of social integration. Durkheim uses the death of Cato the Younger and Commander Beaurepaire as historic ideal types of altruistic suicide. Both of these men chose death before dishonor as the result of their high degree of social integration and unwillingness to forgo their moral ideals following great political losses after key conflicts. Sacrifice is the word that best describes this form of suicide. Concerning individuals who choose to sacrifice themselves, Durkheim states: "The individual kills himself at the command of his conscience; he submits to an imperative. Thus, the dominant note of his act is the serene conviction derived from the feeling of duty accomplished..." (p. 246). As demonstrated in these examples of egoistic and altruistic suicide, Durkheim is highly attentive to the individual manifestations of integrative social currents. Concerning anomic suicide, resulting from the lack of regulative moral forces, Durkheim illustrates the individual manifestation in the French literary figure of Chateaubriand's René. Constantly in search of fulfillment, René's insatiable appetite and the resulting sense of alienation from his social context led him into a life of errant wandering in search of an unattainable affect, never able to feel at home. For Durkheim, René embodies the individual manifestation of anomie which is characterized by insatiable appetites that lead to constant irritation and dissatisfaction at the resulting inability to gain a sense of fulfillment.

In order to find expressions of altruistic, egoistic, and anomic social states in individuals I interviewed, I drew on Durkheim's specific descriptions of individual signs of these social states. Durkheim provides descriptions of the primary and secondary characteristics of individual expressions of these states in the conclusion of chapter six of *Suicide*. He states that the primary individual expression of an egoistic social state is apathy. This apathy leads to a state of melancholic lethargy and to withdrawal from society. An altruistic social environment on the other hand, primarily expresses itself through individuals' passionate engagement and determination of will. This altruism leads to a state of calm courage or enthusiastic commitment. Lastly, an anomic environment is primarily expressed in terms of individual irritation and disgust. This leads to a state of constant discontent and agitation that can manifest in violence toward one's self or others.

In *Suicide*, Durkheim (1897/2005: 257) presents a table of his etiological and morphological classifications of suicide. Durkheim states that egoistic suicide manifests on an individual level as "apathy," altruistic suicide manifests as "energy of passion or will," and anomic suicide manifests as irritation/ disgust. From the beginning of the book, Durkheim is clear that individual forms of suicide cannot explain the etiology of suicide, but after a great deal of statistical analyses and deductive logic in the book preceding chapter six, Durkheim arrives at these morphological types and an etiology of suicide. He then links this etiology to qualitative analyses of individual persons, as demonstrated above when he applies the various types of suicide to an array of literary figures. Chapter six in *Suicide* holds the key to using the morphological types for qualitative analysis.

Durkheim's (1897/2005) form of literary application is methodologically consistent with his statement in the introduction of *Suicide* where he defines suicide as an act committed by an individual who is fully aware of the potential fatal outcome of their action. Although he believes individuals necessarily require rational awareness of the outcome, he warns researchers not to take an individual's own perception of their motives as the true reason for their actions: "How often we mistake the true reasons for our acts! We constantly explain acts due to petty feelings or blind routine by generous passions or lofty considerations" (p. xli). By using national suicide statistics and drawing on literary examples, Durkheim is consistent in this regard; he does not factor in an individual's perception of their motives, rather, he looks at the characteristics of the social environment. In the case of his literary applications in chapter six, although he is concerned with the individual's phenomenological experience, he demonstrates consistency in not relying on the individuals' own perceptions of their motives, but instead looks at how their suicides are the result of social forces external to the individual.

Durkheim's choice of Chateaubriand's René as an example of anomie is also key to understanding how he saw his theory being applied to the analysis of individual persons who engage in suicidal ideation, without necessarily committing suicide. Up until this example in the text, all of the statistical data Durkheim draws upon is based on completed suicides. The difference with René is that he never actually attempts suicide. René considers suicide, but is dissuaded by his sister to act, only to go on living an unfulfilled life up until his unwilling death in a massacre. This demonstrates how Durkheim saw his morphological classifications fit for understanding suicidal ideation and melancholic discontent in general – an important point regarding my own work since none of my own participants actually completed suicide. My study is theoretically based on Durkheim's work in *Suicide*, as well as methodologically based on his

insights in the text, particularly his analysis of individual cases of suicide as it is relevant to suicidal ideation.

Participant Recruitment

Participants of this study were recruited randomly through local networks following the snowball sampling technique. This technique consists of asking each participant if they know of anyone else who may be willing to participate, eventually resulting in an increasing rate of participants as the study proceeds. Participants were not excluded based on age, race, position in service, or whether they define their transition as “successful” or not. In addition, this study only focuses on male veterans. This decision was made due to the need to control for the impact of gender on transition. Although a gender comparison would provide fruitful insights, this should be left to a future study. In addition, participants were not screened out based on whether or not they have contemplated suicide.

Eight of the initial participants were recruited through a snowball sample of personal or local networks consisting of individuals associated with both the Veterans’ health research community and non-profit organizations that assist Veterans. After facing difficulty finding further participants, I created an online call for participants which was posted into a veterans’ Facebook group with over 2000 members. This yielded a further sixteen participants. Thirteen participants were then recruited through snowball sampling from this expanded number of contacts who completed interviews, in combination with snowball sampling from new contacts made among Canadian veteran organizations. Overall, two individuals who initially offered to participate backed out before being interviewed, one of which had a “change of heart,” and the other was too busy. In total, thirty-five participants completed interviews. I decided to stop

recruiting at this point due to qualitative saturation. Several themes began to overlap between participants, allowing for a sufficient amount of data to qualitatively analyze.

Interview Structure

The interview structure consisted of the following five part sequence: 1) entering the military, 2) deployment, 3) transitioning back to the base, 4) transitioning into civilian life, and 5) current situation. Each participant was guided to tell their story in this particular sequence through my questions listed below in the interview question template. If the participant transitioned directly from deployment into civilian life, part three was omitted. Each of these sections are divided into two parts: 1) Broad-based informational questions about rank, job description, location, time-frame, etc., and 2) specific questions about significant memorable events, motives, and nature of the environment.

The narrative structure of the interview was intended to facilitate an understanding of how subjects narrate their roles within various positions along a timeline characterized by significantly distinct social environments. Within each section of the narration, participants were encouraged to elaborate on the following items related to theoretical constructs discussed in the literature review: sacrifice, collective goals, self-transcending emotions [or any experience related to Durkheim's 'collective effervescence' in *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*], a sense of purpose, and sense of belonging [related to Durkheim's 'integration' and 'regulation' in *Suicide*], perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and hopelessness about these states [related to Joiner's (2005) interpersonal theory of suicide], thrill-seeking, risk-taking, or identity, [related to Steve Taylor's (1982) reformulation of Durkheim], and apathy, passion, or agitation, [related to Durkheim's (1897/2005) individual descriptions of morphological types of

suicide]. This theoretical backdrop guided the focus of the interview, but was not directly articulated in detail to participants.

The following is the question template used to guide the narrative arc of the semi-structured interview:

1) Entering the military

- How old were you upon entering?
- What were your reasons for choosing this career?
- How would you describe your experience in training?

2) Deployment

- Where were you specifically deployed to?
- What was your position on deployment?
- What were your roles and responsibilities in this position?
- How would you describe the level of danger you encountered on a daily basis?
- How did you cope with/ overcome these dangers? (Formal/ informal arrangements?)
- What became your motivation when deployed? Different from initial motivations?
- Are there any specific memorable events that stand out during this period?
- Overall, how would you describe your experience on deployment?

3) Transitioning back to the base or decompression location (Optional section)

- Which base/ location did you transition to?
- What were your roles/ responsibilities?
- How would you characterize your experience here?
- Were there any programs to assist in transition?

4) Transitioning into civilian life

- When leaving the military, where did/ do you live?
- Did you seek employment directly after?
- Can you describe your experience finding employment?
- How would you describe your experience with family?
- How would you characterize relationships with friends?
- If there were difficulties, did you seek assistance? (Formal/ informal)
- Overall, how would you describe your experience of the transition?

5) Current situation (optional)

- How would you describe your current situation?
- If progress was made, how was this achieved? (Family, friends, formal supports)
- If regress, how would you characterize these struggles?
- Are you currently employed?
- How would you describe your current experience with family?
- How would you characterize your current relationships with friends?
- Do you feel like you can talk about your experiences with family or friends?

These questions served as a basic framework directing the flow of the narrative. Each question was followed up by probes inquiring further into the participants' individual senses of belongingness to each of the groups mentioned. If the participant demonstrated a high degree of belonging and clear sense of purpose and goals either within the military, upon return, or both, further questions probed into the meaning these ties held/ hold for the individual. If the participant responded with negative indicators of belonging (e.g. family problems, trouble relating to friends, and difficulty in terms of work), probing questions inquired into these

particular areas. Individuals were not expected to know the full extent to why or how they have been affected by the transition, but rather, were asked about how these changes were experienced and how they affect their sense of purpose, belonging, and identity. Conflict with family, peer-groups, or employment were assessed as stemming from the transition itself or from other interpersonal factors by further inquiry into how these conflicts occurred and whether or not these problems were novel or preexisting.

Ethical clearance was granted by the General Research Ethics Board at Queen's University, as previously mentioned (see appendix 1). Each participant signed a letter of informed consent before the interview that included permission to use audio recording (see appendix 2). Proper measures have been considered in the interview due to the sensitive nature of the issues discussed. If the topic of suicide had not been raised by the participant after describing their current situation, I asked if they had suicidal thoughts during or since the deployment. If the participant had suicidal thoughts, I inquired whether or not they feel comfortable sharing any details regarding the context of these thoughts. If the participant shared these details, I then inquired into the quality of their interpersonal relations at this time (e.g. relationship with family, friends, and employment). I then inquired into their experience navigating everyday life during this period, as well as what they felt prevented them from connecting with others and how they perceived their sense of identity. If they reported to have not experienced suicidal ideation, I then asked about factors such as family and occupation that allowed them to experience a sense of purpose, a sense of belonging, and how their perception of everyday-life has changed since their readjustment. To conclude, I asked each participant their opinion on what can be done institutionally (military and civilian) to better prepare veterans for the transition to civilian life. Should any participant have experienced psychological distress,

they would have been encouraged to contact local resources for veterans listed at on the following website: <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/services/health/mental-health>.

Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis was used to analyze and interpret the interview data. Based on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006), a thematic analysis consists of coding interview transcripts to generate thematic clusters. This means familiarizing oneself with the data, coding lines based on their specific relevance to the research question, finding common themes based on these codes, then interpreting the results in a write-up based on the themes while making consistent reference to the interview material to support the interpretations. This qualitative method is flexible and can be used with both realist and constructivist epistemologies, as well as inductive and deductive approaches.

My epistemological stance is social realist because I aim to highlight the lived-experiences of the individuals I interviewed as it is tied to their social environment. Like Durkheim, I take society to be a reality “sui generis,” meaning it is distinct and different from individuals, but yet intimately affects the lives of individuals through institutional norms and social currents from euphoric collective effervescence to depressive social disintegration (Durkheim 1897/2005). My approach is deductive or ‘top down,’ comparing Durkheim’s theory of suicide with the individuals’ responses. Taking his theory as a starting point, questions are designed to provoke discussion concerning the individual’s emotional state and perception of social supports and sense of belonging at various points along the narrative of their transition. If Durkheimian themes were supported by the participant’s responses – such as isolation/ apathy

(egoism), lack of fulfillment (anomie), or a strong sense of communal belonging (altruism) – I probed deeper into that particular aspect of the experience.

Upon completing the interviews, brief summaries of each interview were created through transcription of verbatim quotes in combination with a point-form summary of the participant's experience. To further ensure the validity of these summaries, each summary was sent to the corresponding participant asking if they were satisfied and offered the opportunity to add or change any information. Only three participants requested minor changes which further clarified factual details in their summaries, while the other thirty-two were satisfied with their interview summary.

After composing summaries, themes were created based on Durkheim's typology and my familiarity with the data through the interview and summary process. This led to three categories of themes: sociological, psychological, and personal development advice. Amongst the sociological themes are Durkheim's concepts of altruism, egoism, and anomie. Amongst the psychological themes are PTSD, Moral Injury, adrenaline rush, and grieving death. Amongst the personal development theme is practical advice for individuals who are trying to navigate the transition effectively. Each of these themes were then assigned a colour coding and the interview summaries were highlighted according to where each theme was evident. The following chapters interpret the data by highlighting the sociological themes as they play out in the narratives of transition from the military to civilian life.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter describes the research population and presents the thematically analyzed interview data and interprets what contributes to successful and unsuccessful social transitions from the military to civilian life. The data demonstrates the contemporary relevance of Durkheim's sociology of morality, particularly its ability to assist in qualitatively interpreting the experiences of Canadian Veterans in transition to civilian life, and the risk of suicide produced by the unique nature of the transition. After describing the interview population, this chapter is divided into three major sections that thematically present the interview material according to the concepts developed in the previous chapter: 1) The experience of altruism in the military community; 2) the experience of an anomic transition to civilian life; and 3) the experience of finding home. Overall, this chapter demonstrates that the transition from the military to civilian life can cause a form of social injury when adequate reintegration does not occur. I refer to this phenomenon as "transitional injury," and illustrate how this form of injury was experienced by the Canadian Veterans I interviewed. We shall see how their lived experiences are individual manifestations of an anomic social reality, resulting in a lack of belonging and lack of direction in civilian life. I also consider potential remedies to this transitional injury by examining the family, the transfer to a civilian profession, and community organizations that promote social integration, all of which may reduce egoic and anomic social conditions. I look at how these integrative institutions provide a remedy to what I refer to as 'transitional injury', and promotes a sense of 'moral purpose', a concept I define as the sense of existential purpose rooted in forms of social support to facilitate one's path toward a concept of the good. I present the experiences of Veterans I interviewed who regained a sense of being "home" to illustrate how transitional injury was remedied by the moral purpose provided by families, careers, and communities. My

interview data is thematically presented in the subsections that follow, illustrating the connection between Durkheimian theory and the lived-experiences of the thirty-five Canadian Veterans in the population examined here.

Description of the Research Population

My study consists of 35 male Canadian veterans of Afghanistan who have made a transition to civilian life by either leaving the military or transferring to Class 'A' Reserve Force which only requires attending one weekend and four evenings of training per month. Individuals who deployed under a reservist contract compose roughly one-third of the participants and regular force members compose the other two-thirds – which approximates that actual proportion of Regular Force to Reserve Force members deployed to Afghanistan. The average age of the participant is 39, with 62 being the oldest and 28 being the youngest. The average in terms of the year joining the military is 1993 with a large cluster of individuals who joined in 2002 (one-third of the sample). The average number of deployments ranges between one and two per individual. Six individuals went on three deployments, two went on four deployments, one went on five deployments, one went on six deployments, and one went on seven deployments. Every person had been deployed to Afghanistan at least once, with the average year of deployment to Afghanistan in 2007. Deployments ranged from the initial deployments in 2002 to the later stages of the war in 2010.

In terms of position, participants ranged from the lowest levels of regular infantry to Company Commander. In terms of rank, participants ranged from non-officer ranks, to non-commissioned officer ranks, to officer ranks. Almost all of the participants were in the Army except for two who were in the Navy. All but three of the individuals experienced combat during at least one point throughout their tour. Although all of the participants are Canadian and

transitioned back to Canada, two of them served with the British Army and one of them was “virtually deployed” through the use of remote unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) and engaged in close communication with ground troops as part of a remote posting with a U.S. military intelligence sector. A quarter of the participants experienced suicidal ideation following their tour to Afghanistan. Having participants who have and have not considered suicide is beneficial to the study since the purpose of this research is to highlight the social factors associated with both successful and unsuccessful transitions from the military to civilian life.

Participants were in combatant roles, combat-support roles, and in the medical services. They comprised many rank levels from Private to Lieutenant Colonel. Three quarters of the individuals interviewed primarily operated out of Kandahar Airfield (KAF), leaving the base to conduct regular patrols. A quarter of the individuals interviewed primarily worked out of Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). Individuals in medical, intelligence or logistical support primarily worked out of KAF, but were also sometimes employed in front line support roles in FOBs. They assumed all positions from basic combatant to executive officer and represent a broad range of experiences of those who served in Afghanistan. Individuals who experienced the highest levels of direct combat consist of Special Forces operators and regular infantry. Common combat support positions consisted of vehicle drivers, supply transporters, vehicle mechanics, medics, intelligence analysts, and psychological operators.

Altruism in the Military Community

As described in the previous chapter, Durkheim’s concept of altruism refers to social contexts with a high degree of integration. In the CAF, social integration is initially facilitated through indoctrination. In a Canadian Joint Forces Publication (2009), four core military values

are listed: duty, loyalty, integrity, and courage (p. 44).¹ Resembling the moral foundations Haidt and Graham (2008) associate with conservatism, these core values are based on altruistic communalism and in-group solidarity. The CAF's core value of duty is the most explicitly altruistic since it, "demands that CAF members place the mission requirements above personal considerations" (p. 44). Regarding loyalty, it is "related to duty and reflects personal allegiance to Canada and Canadian values as well as faithfulness to comrades in arms" (p. 44). It also dictates loyalty to the chain of command and therefore respect for its hierarchical authority. Integrity solidifies the personal altruistic commitment of CAF members to its "moral principles and obligations" (p. 44), and courage ensures that these altruistic principals and obligations are carried out in practice, enabling the CAF member to "disregard the potential risks of an action in the interests of the broader good" (p. 44).

Altruistic institutional values are instilled in new recruits through indoctrination from the time they enter basic training. A publication by the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School (2014) illustrates what incoming individuals can expect during this initial training. The core doctrinal values are referred to in this document:

During your training, you will be required to adhere to the fundamental military values such as loyalty, duty, courage and integrity. You will have to apply these values in a context where the discipline level will be very high and team work is essential to your success (p. 8).

In a four week "indoctrination period," new recruits are strictly regimented and their day is organized into the following itinerary:

5:00 am: wake up
5:10 am: morning physical training
6:30 am: breakfast
7:00 am: quarters' inspection and beginning of instruction
11:30 am: lunch

¹ The Department of National Defence (2012) has issued a more recent code of conduct, but it is not cited due to its broad focus on all public-sector employees rather than a specific focus on the military profession.

12:30 pm: instruction
5:00 pm: supper
6:00 pm: common station jobs, personal hygiene, study period
11:00 pm: lights out (p. 8)

The purpose of this tight regulation is to facilitate “integration to the military life and [to develop] team spirit among the members” (p. 9). Throughout the Basic Military Qualification Course and the Basic Military Officer Qualification Course, new recruits quickly learn that what the person next to you does matter. As one interview participant states: “In the army, everybody sinks or swims together.”

Communal living in common quarters, group physical training, and group punishment characterize aspects of this training. In the classroom, recruits learn about the profession of arms. The CAF is a unique modern profession in Canada since it is the only one that requires its members to abide by the principal of unlimited liability to the point of sacrificing one’s own life. In a military doctrinal publication entitled, *Duty with Honour, The Profession of Arms in Canada* (2009), unlimited liability is described as the following:

...all members accept and understand that they are subject to being lawfully ordered into harm’s way under conditions that could lead to the loss of their lives.... It also modifies the notion of service before self, extending its meaning beyond merely enduring inconvenience or great hardship. It is an attitude associated with the military professional’s philosophy of service. The concept of unlimited liability is integral to the military ethos and lies at the heart of the military professional’s understanding of duty (p. 26).

Unlimited liability is unique to the military profession, requiring members to sacrifice themselves as a part of lawful duty of the military to complete the mission and to protect one’s fellow service members. This legal code is a social fact that illustrates the high degree of altruistic integration required by the military.

Like a highly efficient organic body, each part of the CAF consists of a specialized role integrated into functional interdependence with the others. Far from Durkheim’s (1897/2005)

associations of the military with simple societies that have a low division of labour and operate according to mechanical solidarity, the modern “profession of arms” in Canada is based on a high degree of specialization and operates according to the principles of organic solidarity. Far from hordes of make-shift militias, the Canadian Armed forces has over eighty different full-time specialized positions including health care specialists, engineers, technicians, sensor & radar specialists, administration & support staff, combat specialists, public protection specialists, telecommunications specialists and air/ship crew. Each part of the force is integral to maintaining its functional capacity.

The high degree of altruistic integration demonstrated at the institutional level can also be seen at the individual level in terms of the phenomenological experience of unlimited liability and altruistic organic solidity. One interview participant states:

Joining the military is the only occupation where you can truly serve Canada in an unlimited capacity... if the government asks you to die in service to the country, then you can make that sacrifice, so I joined the military to express my pride in citizenship.

Although joining the military for the explicit purpose of making a personal sacrifice for one’s nation is an answer one might expect to be quite common, most individuals did not explicitly give such lofty considerations when asked about why they joined. Most stated that it was a career they had always wanted to pursue since childhood and thought the career seemed exciting. Furthermore, national sacrifice was not a common motivator to get through the deployment. The most common motivator to get through the deployment was mission completion and keeping oneself and one’s fellow troops alive. The altruistic bonds of solidarity formed throughout training and during deployment were with those they depended on for survival. An interview participant states: “I might fucking hate you because of what you did to my girlfriend last Saturday, but in this moment, I need you, we now have that bond – everything I did over there

was for them.” This micro-level altruistic commitment to one’s immediate group based on mutual needs, in addition to commitment to the mission was the most common reason given for one’s motivation during deployment.

Whether or not the individual supported the politics of the war or the decisions of superiors, the altruistic concern for one’s immediate group primarily fueled the sense of solidarity. An interview participant states, “I did agree with why we were there, but that wasn’t necessarily the main thing; my main motivation was to keep my guys strong, get them home alive, and take care of my guys.” This concern puts a human face on the institutional imperative of unlimited liability. Going beyond “just following orders,” those who risk their lives in combat do so out of an intense familial bond with those who they fought alongside. An interview participant states:

What ultimately matters to you most are the guys in your section. The thing that people forget when they watch World War II footage... you see these faceless soldiers in black and white and in uniform, but what you’ve got to remember is that these guys are friends, these guys know every detail about each other’s lives... what keeps you going is that you’re there to look after each other.

The need to look after one another is the foundation of military organic solidarity. An interview participant illustrates this by stating: “there is an implicit agreement that I got your back and you’ve got mine, we know that bullets don’t discriminate, so watching each other’s back is an unwritten rule that binds us together.” In combat, the legal obligation to unlimited liability is more than just words written in military doctrine, it becomes an “unwritten rule” that is internalized as a norm. Military indoctrination goes beyond learning to merely obey – a negative connotation often associated with the concept of indoctrination. Military indoctrination facilitates a high degree of communal solidarity and collective identity. Rather than diminishing one’s sense of individual significance, the collective identity increases one’s sense of significance. As

one interview participant states: “There is a certain utopia to it... everyone’s focused on the same thing.” Focused on the same external goal, each individual has a specialized role whereby they contribute to the organic functioning of the group. The CAF is a social institution that facilitates a highly altruistic professional community, distinct from the professional landscape of civilian life where a high degree of communal altruism is rare and liability is never extended to the point of death by self-sacrifice.

The Anomic Transition to Civilian Life

This second major section presents the interview data that illustrates the experience of transitional injury. As described in the previous chapter, I draw on Durkheim’s (1897/2005) concept of anomie, defined as a social context lacking integrative moral regulation. I demonstrate how the transition to civilian life is marked by a relative lack of moral regulation, in turn, causing the loss of morally guided life-purpose in individuals. As previously discussed, I conceptualize this loss of morally guided life-purpose as a loss of moral purpose. Through the concept of moral purpose I build on Durkheim’s individualized manifestations of anomie: disgust, discontent, and agitation. There are six themes that emerge from the interview data on anomic transitions: missing the military; feeling lost and apathetic in civilian life; feeling cut off from an elite family; difficulty connecting with civilians; the loss of structure; and the loss of a sense of service. Below, I describe how each of these themes are related to an anomic transition, manifesting in the individualized loss of moral purpose, causing what I call “transitional injury”.

Missing the Military

As one participant states, “I don’t necessarily miss being blown up and shot at, but you miss the purpose that comes with the combat.” Several individuals made similar statements about

combat providing purpose, one stating he would want to go back “in a heartbeat” because he missed the sense of action and comradery on deployment. Another participant states he would “go back tomorrow,” followed by the reason that, “there is a certain utopia to it... everyone’s focused on the same thing... everyone’s focused on the deployment and getting the job done....”

Another makes the following statement:

Slowly I think I am figuring out this whole brother/sister in arms thing and slowly, slowly I am starting to understand why once we've tasted the experience of being deployed, patrolling, being attacked, hungry, tired, wet, stinky, no shower or shitter, why it can never be the same. When I was deployed on tours, whether I liked the guys and gals I was with didn't matter, it's not like being in Canada, there is an implicit agreement that I got your back and you've got mine, we know that bullets don't discriminate, so watching each other's back it's an unwritten rule that binds us together.... Once we are done our tour, once we leave, we are thrown back into our Canadian society where we are back to dog-eat-dog competition, individualism and materialism, and even if suffering from PTSD or difficulty with adjusting to life back in Canada, we would rather redeploy on a dime and get back to that balance that being in combat brings, that leveller of us all. And that is what I have figured out in the last five months since I retired.

The “balance” combat brings is the communal altruism based on the shared needs, shared experiences, and a common goal, as previously discussed. The moral regulation of the “unwritten rule” of trust in having each other’s backs is implicit in the combat unit, providing members with a sense of moral purpose.

The sense of moral purpose derived from the altruistic bonds on deployment contrasts with the consumer culture of civilian life that promotes an unrestrained pursuit of wealth. The experience of this under-regulated materialism and “dog-eat dog-competition” is akin to Durkheim’s (1897/2005) description of anomie as the “constantly renewed torture [of an] unquenchable thirst” (p. 208). The unlimited thirst for material possessions driving individualistic competition is a prime example of how anomie breeds egoistic social relations.

Although missing the communal life of combat is a common theme, this analysis does not intend on romanticizing combat. As one participant states: “Would I go back? Fuck no! The

place fuckin' sucks... if my unit was going back? If all the guys I went with were all getting back together, if we could all be in the same section? Yeah, probably." The level of intimacy between members of the combat unit is extremely high. Another states, "I was married to my men in Afghanistan." Distinct from the popular idea that soldiers are fighting for their country, held together by the symbolic power of their flag, this is not the case when it comes to the moral solidarity of the combat unit. As demonstrated, the men I interviewed made it very clear that their moral purpose was fundamentally based in a commitment to one another. This commitment, in the midst of life or death situations, provided individuals with an unparalleled sense of responsibility. In addition to missing the communal solidarity, missing life on deployment was also tied to missing a high degree of responsibility.

Higher levels of responsibility given to serving members contributes to their loss of moral purpose in the transition to civilian life when their heightened sense of responsibility is replaced by roles that are inconsequential in comparison. A participant states:

It's the idea that for six months or whatever, you're really in the shit, you're in the thick of it, you are really doing something; you're doing something that people are talking about, you're doing something that's cool, you're doing something with your friends, it's hard, it's crazy, and it feels like you're really alive for the first time in your life, and when you come back and you don't have that anymore, it's hard. It's hard to think to yourself, 'I'm never going to do that again, I'm never going to be that cool again,' I'm never going to be able to go back to that.

In his mid-twenties, this individual had the opportunity to work directly with Afghans, doing work highly relevant to Canadian foreign policy. The increased level of responsibility contributes to a sense of purpose in combat, and its loss or reduction on return to civilian life can lead to problems adjusting. This respondent continues:

Once you're out of that environment you realize, okay what do I do now? How can I possibly top that? Where do you go from here? You're at the top of your game, you were doing something meaningful, relevant, you had a focus, you had direction, you had support, you had comradery... it's like god, what do I do now, everybody's kinda sleepwalking through life here, there's no purpose, nobody stands for anything, life seems very shallow after that.

This loss of purpose in transition is reminiscent of Durkheim's (1933) statement that, "...for the sentiment of duty to be fixed strongly in us, the circumstances in which we live must keep us awake" (p. 4). Service-personnel thrive on a sense of duty through service – the title "service-personnel" itself is based on the idea of duty. When the social circumstances that keep one awake to a life of duty fades, one is thrown into a world of proverbial sleepwalkers. As Durkheim (1897/2005) states, "when community becomes foreign to the individual, he becomes a mystery to himself, unable to escape the exasperating and agonizing question: to what purpose?" (p. 171). After coming back to the relatively unregulated moral milieu of civilian life, this same individual also suffered from issues with self-identity:

I was just another loser... I went from being the guy who the governor of Kandahar calls when he needs to talk to people who are important on our side... to being another schmuck who likes to throw his socks next to the hamper, puts his feet up on the table, and kind of wants to sleep and just do nothing while he's on leave.

Another participant described the loss of identity as the following: "I had to be my five year old self all over again and think, 'what do you want to be when you grow up?'" But unlike being five years old, there are no strict structural constraints of mandatory school and family guiding you along your life course when you leave the military. Like Charles Taylor's (1989) concept of social-identity, moral regulations constitute "horizons of meaning," that give situated subjects a sense of self. Unlike civilian occupations, the military draws on the discourse of vocation, giving members a heightened sense of attachment to their role. A participant states, "It's not a job, we're always military." When leaving the institution that supported this deep vocational attachment, it may cause an identity disruption – especially in individuals forced to leave the military for medical reasons. One medically discharged participant states, "I miss being in the forces every day, it's who I was." Being identified as "always military," but no longer living in

the moral milieu of the military may cause strained identities for individuals trying to reintegrate into civilian life, resulting in missing military life.

Missing life in the military – particularly life on deployment – is the result of missing being a part of a highly regulated social group held together by a shared experience, a common purpose, mutual trust, deep intimacy, and a sense of heightened responsibility, all of which contribute to a strong sense of social identity.

Feeling Lost and Apathetic in Civilian Life

Illustrating Taylor's (1989) concept of social-identity where a loss of identity is directly tied to the loss of a moral milieu, I highlight how feeling lost and apathetic in civilian life is associated with an identity disruption during the transition. As a participant states: "You don't have an answer for who you are, you're just kind of a lost soul..." Another describes the experience as the following: "My transition has been nothing short of brutal. I'm trying to find my place now; who am I? Where am I going to go? What am I going to do now? I have been seriously struggling with transition." This same participant went on to describe the military's moral milieu in terms of providing a "psychological paycheck":

You get two paychecks in the military: you get your pay monetarily, but you also get paid psychologically in the military... a sense of purpose, focus, comradery, mission, and all those kinds of things... but when you leave the military often times they take away both of those paychecks, or at least one of them; they take the psychological pay.

Besides the loss of "psychological pay" provided by the moral solidarity of the combat unit, the high level of responsibility provided by the role also contributes to feeling lost due to an inability to find meaning in civilian life. As a participant states: "I feel like that was the pinnacle of my life, for good and bad, and now you're supposed to find something else and find new meaning?" Several participants made similar comments along these lines, feeling that things that mattered to

civilians seemed very petty or inconsequential by comparison. This leads to a feeling of apathy among several participants.

The feeling of apathy can be summed up in the statement: “It’s hard to care about things you should care about in civilian life.” Another participant states, “There was just an overwhelming sense that nothing mattered.” This was followed by the statement, “Either nothing mattered or everything mattered way too much.” This statement is key to understanding the distinction between anomie and PTSD. The hypervigilance experienced by PTSD sufferers creates a psychological state where the fight or flight instincts remain engaged, making the individual hyperaware of potentially harmful stimuli. The co-presence of both PTSD and anomie in this individual created a pendulum-like state of fluctuation between everything mattering way too much when the PTSD symptoms flared up, and the experience that “nothing mattered” when anomie became the primary psychological experience. This particular individual also had frequent thoughts of suicide, but he did not act on them out of care and concern for his family. Several individuals who displayed this type of apathy maintained a sense of responsibility toward their family, preventing consequences that could have been far worse without such obligations and purpose.

The sense of responsibility and moral purpose provided by family obligations, along with the identity as father and/or husband attached to a moral purpose of family certainly assisted some individuals in their transition. However, from the interview data I found that having a family to come back to does not necessarily make the transition easy. The military itself had become a form of family to many participants interviewed, and the costs of losing one’s military family can conflict with the benefits of regaining one’s conjugal family.

Feeling Cut off From an Elite Family

Coming back to one's conjugal family means leaving one's military family, causing potential problems due to this loss. Individuals I interviewed who had particularly difficult experiences coming to terms with the loss of their military family were those who were injured and forced to leave their unit. One individual describes the military in terms of an elite family characterized by a sense of invincibility. Getting injured, "you get cut off from the family," this individual states. He felt shunned because he felt his injuries reminded others of their lack of invincibility. This individual was not nearly as distressed by the pain of his physical injury as he was by the loss of the military family – a by-product of the physical injury. This individual experienced suicidal ideation after this loss and feeling shunned by his military family.

The elite mentality in the military of "being better than everyone else" – as one participant characterized it – creates a heightened sense of loss when one is injured and forced to leave. Another participant corroborates this sentiment in the statement: "...when you're in the military, you really believe you're part of the high end of society... you feel like you're somehow better." This sentiment is prevalent and it is based in the fact that the military is a high performing organization and its members are in peak athletic condition. This participant went on to state: "I would compare the structure of the military to an F-1 [race car] in comparison to the company I am at now." The highly functional organic solidarity is held together by a highly integrated and regulated moral environment. Leaving this environment, and the loss of identity that comes with it, caused this individual to state: "When you come back to Canada, you go from a hero to a zero."

Difficulty Connecting with Civilians

The military's elite mentality also contributes to another major theme that emerges from the interviews: difficulty connecting with civilians. As one participant states:

If you're around army guys, every civvy is a dirty, long haired, bone-idle, slack, dope smoking civvy, every one of them... he can grow his hair, he can be fuckin' bone idle, smoke dope... perfect example of freedom, that's for sure... he's idle, fuck is he idle, and he'll never be as badass as me, but shit is he free.

This mentality is reinforced among those who transitioned into organizations that were perceived as frustrating due to their inefficiency: "people are going from working in a high performance team to working in a B team or a C team." Even an individual who went into civilian policing after their deployment felt this frustration: "Coming back to the civilian world, there was no sense of urgency here; people are slack and they are bone-idle... they are unmotivated, and they don't know how good they've got it." He states that he was losing his mind in terms of the utter inefficiency and lack of focus in the civilian work world: "It was absolutely horrible... I would walk out of meetings going, 'that was two hours of god-damn time wasted.'"

Several participants also described their frustrations dealing with civilians who complain about "first world problems." Experiencing a great deal of adversity on deployment resulted in a radical change in perspective after witnessing the contrast between the conditions in Afghanistan and the high quality of life in Canada. As a participant states:

There are no common experiences... 99% of civilians aren't going to see anything like what I've seen when overseas... part of my reason for joining the forces was so that people I cared about wouldn't have to see those things... but seeing those things creates a barrier between me and civvies.

This barrier was experienced by another participant who states: "I couldn't interact with civilians; there was no common ground..." and "Everything's amazing here and people are still miserable... now try making friends with those people." Another states: "...civvy life is the easiest thing ever; my biggest problem is that when I'm on the expressway, somebody's slow in the fuckin' fast lane." The experience of adversity overseas also leads many participants to express a disdain for civilians who act selfish and entitled, or unnecessarily put others in danger. One participant in particular described his aggressive reaction to civilians as a heightened sense

of justice, distinct from his diagnosis of PTSD. He described his reaction to drivers who put others in danger, stating that he would force them to pull over, throw them out of the car, and “teach them a life lesson.” He clarifies, “It’s not aggression like I just want to fight or anything like that; it’s aggression towards people who are putting other people in danger.” Being overseas and witnessing the fragility of life has contributed to this perspective. After seeing how good we have it here in Canada relative to the abject poverty and dangerous conditions in Afghanistan, individuals in Canada who unnecessarily put others at risk appeared to be ungrateful and self centered. This unnecessary risky self-centered behaviour takes our safety for granted, contrasting with the fragility of life on deployment.

In terms of civilian friendships, several participants expressed difficulty deeply connecting with civilian friends or the absence of close civilian friends altogether. Difficulty building new friendships after leaving the military is often associated with the sense that the deep bonds of trust and intimacy built with friends in the military cannot be replicated in civilian life, resulting in a sense of distrust or superficiality. A participant states, “When you get out in civilian life, from what I’ve seen, you don’t know who your friends are truly.” This individual experienced a great deal of difficulty dealing with a workplace union, describing his union as lacking comradery, feeling like the individual union members were merely looking out for themselves. A lack of trust and intimacy was also described by several participants in terms of troubles with social communication in civilian life. One participant described how members in his unit “forgot normal social skills” while on deployment, citing that they found themselves swearing incessantly and not speaking in complete sentences. This individual expressed the sense that in civilian life, by contrast, people are very concerned with possibly being offensive, causing them to heavily filter their speech and not always say what they mean. This contrast in

communication style between military members and civilians adds a further layer to barriers to trust, and contributes to the general difficulty connecting with civilians.

The Loss of Structure

The regimented military structure encourages a strong sense of collective responsibility and accountability among service members, as discussed in the section on military communal altruism. Coming into civilian life, individuals are forced to quickly adjust to individualized responsibility and accountability: “Now I just have to be accountable to myself, and that’s a problem.” Intensive indoctrination into the military and experiences on deployment resocialized serving members to internalize the collective accountability of the military making the shift to individualized responsibility and purpose difficult:

You don’t have that military conscience on your shoulder anymore telling you what you should and shouldn’t do... the military is like your parents, you’re taught a certain way how to behave, how to look, how to react to things, and you’re basically a lamb thrown to the lions when you’re on your own.

The high degree of structured behaviour in combat is necessitated by the risk of death. Military members on deployment exist in a constant state of anxious anticipation, are very reliant on their compatriots, and behave according to strict codes of conduct. When in civilian life, Veterans need to adjust to the relative lack of urgency, individualized responsibility, and loosely structured organizational behaviour. A participant states:

Everything is so black and white and clearly defined when you’re in the military that there’s really no room for misinterpretations... when you do something wrong, you get jacked up hard, you may even get charged... in the civilian world things are subject to interpretation and you can do things your own way, so long as you get it done... Sometimes it seems like there’s no accountability... like “oh, something got missed; oh well, we’ll get it next time,” and to me that’s like ‘what? Get it next time? Coming from an environment where sometimes there is no next time, you don’t get a second chance, you do this right or that’s it, somebody fucking dies.

Transitioning into a banking position, another participant states: “When you pass the ball, you expect somebody to be there... there’s no real accountability, no real responsibility.” The

relative lack of clearly structured accountability and responsibility in civilian life contributes to the anomic conditions of the transition.

The military's organizational need for its members to quickly build strong bonds of trust and intimacy is a key distinction between military and civilian organizations. A participant states:

The bond is very strong between service-people and there's a lot of importance placed on relationships... as soon as you join a team everybody will intuitively connect as much and as fast as they can with people around them, and that would actually freak out my civilian counterparts.

For another participant, this was the major distinction between his experience at the Royal Military College and his experience at a university in a large metropolitan area:

[At the] Royal Military College you were accountable for everything you did, you were part of the team... then you go to [a civilian university], you're not really part of anything, you're just a number. On one hand the freedom was good, on the other, the freedom was overwhelming as well.

The overwhelming nature of this relative freedom in the individualistic context of civilian life is the individual manifestation of anomie. This individual goes on to describe the experience of law school as "being alone" despite being in a large group, whereas in the military, "you can bet someone is always looking out for you... you're always accountable to one another – which is a great thing – but when you take that away it can be isolating.

The structure provided by the military gave individuals a sense of security and resilience unparalleled in the civilian life. One participant actually states: "I found it safer there than I do sometimes here." In the military, there is a contingency plan for everything, but in civilian life there is no such collective plan regulating one's sense of security: "We don't have a contingency plan for bar fights... over there you just knew what to do... there was a feeling of invincibility with certain people around." Leaving a context where collective regulations organize every aspect of life results in a disorienting lack of structure. This same individual went on to say: "I

found it easier to think on my feet for eight guys than it is to organize my day-to-day here.”

When coming back onto the base after deployment, he maintained the sense of collectivity with many of the people he served with, but moving back to his home-city across the country posed a great deal of difficulty: “despite the fact that I had a close family, I did not have my brothers in arms, the guys I served with, the guys who knew me, and we all knew each other so well.” After moving he states: “not having that balance of people I could lean on here, things got worse; my drug-use escalated.” Suicidal ideation became an issue during this period of transition back to his home-city. This participant was able to gain respite from suicidal ideation during contracts where he was hired to assist fellow Veterans during the transition by sharing his personal experience. This experience of working for the military during these contracts provided structure to his life and allowed him to regain a sense of purpose through serving his fellow transitioning service-members.

Loss of a Sense of Service

A sense of service is another major factor contributing to moral purpose amongst service-members. A sense of serving in the military provides a high degree of moral purpose, leaving individuals vulnerable to the feeling of apathy and lacking direction in civilian life. As a participant states, “We want to serve, that’s our mantra... a lot of guys will join the paramedics, police, or fire-department, because they want to be in that position of service to other people... that’s who we are.” By adding, “that’s who we are,” this participant points to the importance of maintaining a social-identity based on service. Veterans gained a great deal of their social-identity and moral purpose from serving in the military and therefore require the opportunity to continue serving once they return to civilian life. Coming out of the military, as one participant states:

You lose the sense that you are serving your country. Serving your country tends to be an undervalued activity, but it is one that Veterans have embraced. Unlike any other profession, they put their life on the line. What they are looking for is something like what they just left, and that doesn't exist anymore, so that's why so many people don't actually leave the military; they go to the reserves or they go into organizations that deliver projects to the military or they go on as trainers.

This individual states that his stepson, who also served in the Canadian Armed Forces, valued service. He said that although his stepson embraced the consumerist and self-serving values of his generation – making a lot of money in the banking industry – his heart was in public service and he spent a great deal of his spare time serving his military reserve unit. Another subject who struggled to regain a sense of moral purpose through service in civilian life states:

I wait every day for a car accident... I think 'can somebody please flip your car so I can save your life...' I'm looking for a rush, I'm looking for a reason to help people, I want near-deadly experiences, I want an apocalypse of this world, I want everything to go bad, I want you all to fucking need me to fucking save your life.

This is the extreme end of frustration caused by missing the sense of purpose that comes through service.

Service also builds a sense of moral purpose through contribution. Coming home and losing the moral community one served creates the need to regain a sense of contribution. As one Veteran states: "...no one tells us, 'hey, you're still worthy of making a contribution.'"

Facilitating social environments that give Veterans the opportunity to apply their skills in civilian professions allows them to potentially regain a sense of service. Another participant has a positive work experience regaining a sense of serving a team at a tech start-up, stating: "I work really long hours... but that's our commitment, that's our dedication, and I find meaning out of that... working with a bunch of people that are motivated, driven, and ambitious, that's what I had in Afghanistan." He goes on to say: "Now, if I make the wrong decision, the whole company fails, and that sort of level of responsibility is awesome... my decisions, my actions have a bigger impact than they would at a larger organization." This individual was able to regain a

sense of service in the private sector, regaining moral purpose by applying his leadership skills to serve the team.

Those who leave the military and the sense of purpose it offers through service, need to be given similar opportunities in civilian life; otherwise, they will not be able to gain a sense of fully returning home. One individual was able to apply his military experience to his civilian policing career in order to teach fellow officers how to better protect themselves while on duty. He emphasized that Veterans need a very specific thing to do to feel valued and feel a sense of contribution – not a make-work project, but rather, something that has a concrete communal goal.

To conclude, this section illustrates the transition to civilian life as individual manifestations of anomie experienced by participants who expressed a sense of missing the military, felt lost and apathetic in civilian life, felt cut off from an elite military family, had difficulty connecting with civilians following deployment, experienced the loss of collective regulation, and the loss of a sense of service when entering into an individualistic civilian context. Despite these struggles, many of these participants were able to regain a sense of moral purpose in civilian life by translating military responsibilities and team building skills to civilian work. Also, there are several participants who did not experience a difficult transition and were able to smoothly reintegrate into civilian life with only minor frustrations. The third major section in this chapter will expand on these positive experiences in order to explore what it means to fully return home.

Finding Home

As discussed in the previous chapter, I define 'home' as social integration into an altruistic moral community bound together by the affects of what Sorkokin calls 'love' and what Tönnies calls 'concord'. This level of social integration, in addition to a commitment to one's family or profession provides individuals with a sense of moral purpose. Finding a sense of community is vital to Veterans regaining a sense of fully coming home. Tönnies (1887/2001) best illustrates my approach to community in his statement on concord as "a heartfelt sense of integration and unanimity" (P. 34). The military offered this sense of community to individuals at a very high degree. Coming out of a tightly bound community, Veterans experience an anomic transition to an egoistic civilian life, where typically family and professional life become important areas for many individuals as they rebuild a sense of community. One participant found this sense of community at a local gym:

So now I have purpose, I have a reason, I have accountability, so I have what the army gave us. The gym gave me what the army gave me. I have a group of friends now, so I have the comradery back, I have the adrenaline rush, and I've got accountability through my boss [the gym owner]. If I'm not there, he's like 'why aren't you in'.

The intense accountability derived from life or death situations in combat can never fully be replaced, but several participants were able to come back 'home' psychologically when the sense of moral purpose gained through communal integration and regulation was present, sociologically speaking. Four major therapeutic social programs for returning Veterans were helpful to several participants, facilitating their reintegration into family and professional life: the Veterans Transition Network Transition Course, Operational Stress Injury Social Support centers, the Treble Victor Group, and the Joint Personnel Support Unit.

The Veterans Transition Network Transition Course (VTN Transition Course), is a retreat program that provides dramaturgical group therapy. Beyond its cognitive psychological benefits, this program normalizes the experiences of Veterans, allowing them to open up and express their emotions with the group and to move away from the stoic masculine stereotype dominant in the military. The open sharing environment allows individuals who feel isolated in civilian life to engage in open dialogue with those who have been through similar experiences, showing them they are not alone and giving them a level of peer social-support that would be difficult to find on one's own. One participant in particular found the program greatly beneficial and decided to go back as a volunteer:

It's an opportunity for you to give back and that in itself is so therapeutic, it's just huge. When you can have a purpose, when you can have a mission, that's how you defeat anomie... you give people a mission, you give people a purpose, you give people a reason.

This particular participant was familiar with the concept of anomie before the interview, using it to demonstrate the therapeutic value of giving back to the VTN Transition Course. The sense of mutual aid that occurs when interacting with individuals on the program provides participants with a sense of moral purpose in a space with a high degree of emotional openness.

Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) is another program that facilitated similar feelings of social integration. This program is also based on a peer-support model but uses a more traditional one-on-one therapeutic setting where individuals who have been through the program and have made significant progress, assist others who are struggling with their psychological issues. Beyond the cognitive benefits of specific therapeutic practices, a participant who benefited from this program referred to the sense of connection it provides amidst the feelings of isolation in civilian life:

...you realize that you are not alone... you're not the only one who has gone through it, and that's a big deal because when you're suffering yourself, yeah you may be told you're not the only one,

but it's totally different when you're talking about what's going on in your head – the things you feel, the things you see, the things you hear, and there's somebody else sitting there at the other side of the table saying 'yeah, I recognize that, I've done that too, don't feel bad... and this is how I got through it, maybe this will work for you'... that networking is huge.

In addition to the networking opportunity OSISS provides, the Treble Victor Group (also known as 3V) has shown great potential for Veterans who are looking for business or entrepreneurial opportunities. One participant referred to it as the modern-day legion. He describes his experience of “coming home” during his first encounter with Treble Victor:

The experience [of transition] had been marked by quasi-isolation and challenges to connect with people. When I got to 3V, I just walked in the room and the group felt very familiar and extremely welcoming, it was very much a social setting that was similar to what I had experienced while I was serving, so the comradery, the openness to connect, and the sense of trust, it's like meeting family you never met.

In addition to the sense of familial community, Treble Victor acts as a bridge to the business world, holding annual “Veterans on Bay Street” events where Veterans and business leaders come together to bridge the gap between the military Veterans and the civilian private sector.

Bridging the gap between military service and service to a civilian organization requires overcoming two key barriers: potential negative connotations associated with the concept of ‘Veteran’, and the translation of military skills to civilian employers who do not understand a military resume. The concept of ‘Veteran’ is usually associated with honour, but in some cases it carries the stigma of injury (especially PTSD) and stereotypical masculinity. One participant states that he experienced “two years of endless disappointment” trying to find work. Another individual states, “Nothing was more demoralizing than trying to find work with a military resume... the literacy of the general population to reading military, they all read it as a PTSD case.” Embittered and shocked at how difficult it was to find employment, this individual took certain things off of his resume hoping to reduce the perceived stigma, minimizing his deployment to Afghanistan to the point where it was not readily visible. This same individual

also encountered an employer who believed the Canadian Forces had a ‘don’t ask, don’t tell policy’, and so stereotyped Veterans as anti-homosexual. Another participant believes that rebranding Veterans can be beneficial: “we need to think of Veterans as military alumni.” The word ‘alumni’ has the connotation of prestige derived from post-secondary education. The word ‘Veteran’ has the highly regarded connotations of honor and sacrifice, but these values are difficult for employers to translate into skills required to maximize returns on investment. Also in the case of employers who stigmatize Veterans as mentally weak, PTSD afflicted, and stereotypically hyper masculine, returning Veterans are sometimes seen as a potential liability in the civilian workplace. Civilian employers who fail to see the employment value Veterans offer are perceived to be a major barrier to employment by several veterans I interviewed.

Beyond stigma, civilian employers often do not know how to interpret military work experience. The military has a very mobile and flexible work force creating a resume with a large number of different jobs listed, which may draw suspicions of resume padding. The wide range of duties and skills is a positive thing in the military because it means the individual is being promoted, but in civilian life it looks as if the individual cannot hold down a job. The civilian-military gap in experience is so vast, one participant quipped: “...there were times I thought to myself jokingly that it would have been better if I lived in my parents basement and played videogames for five years, at least then somebody would have understood what I had done.” Another participant states: “In my mind, I was thinking, ‘civilians are stupid’ ... a proven leader under high stress with the ability to manage finances, resources, motivate people, make hard decisions, and people didn’t want to hire me.” Both of these individuals went from relatively high-ranking officer positions and had overcome a great deal of adversity working in dangerous combat environments, yet they both had difficulty translating this experience to the

value they can offer civilian employers. The individual who used the concept of ‘military alumni’ above stated that the military processes people on an industrial scale but does a poor job at preparing individuals for civilian life. Marketing Veterans as valuable alumni requires a transitional institution that prepares individuals for work in civilian life. Serving members receive a great deal of training when they enter the military, but are offered far less training on how to return to civilian life, including on effectively seeking employment commensurate with their military skill sets.

One military transitional institution that has the potential to help bridge the gap between the military and civilian life is the Joint Personnel Support Unit (JPSU). The purpose of this unit is to provide institutional support for injured military personnel by helping them find a new mission and reintegrate them into meaningful social networks. Acting as an institutional bridge between military and civilian-life, the JPSU has significant potential to prevent anomic transitions by providing a morally regulative environment directed toward social reintegration. Two participants in this study had direct experience with the JPSU, one had a “mostly good” experience, and the other had very good experience overall. This was seen as a good place to sort things out and to get taken care of physically, mentally, and socially (with schooling and work). Both individuals engaged in a program that offers education and on-the-job placements. Several other participants who have not been through the program saw the value of education career retraining, but were not given similar opportunities. The negative aspects of this program consist of two major factors according to one participant: problems with personnel leadership skills and problems with a lack of personnel and funding. He felt that some of the leadership at the JPSU consisted of individuals who were transferred and effectively promoted by other units who didn’t want them. Besides this experience with an “incompetent” leader, this individual also recognized

the broader issue with the lack of personnel and tried to remain as independent as possible so that he did not use too many of their resources.

Besides institutional support for reintegration, several participants emphasize the importance of individual agency, and provide recommendations on how Veterans can more effectively navigate the transition to civilian life. These recommendations fit into three categories: applying the discipline and professional mindset of the military, learning to translate skills to an employer, and finding a new personal mission. Coming back to civilian life, one participant found himself focusing the pent up energy he gained from the military toward exercise and ended up losing thirty pounds fairly quickly. He emphasizes the value of discipline and the professional mindset gained throughout military service. Several Veterans feel that this high level of discipline and professional mindset sets Veterans apart from the average civilian. “Never pass a fault” is one applicable military maxim that was mentioned by a few participants. One individual who places a particularly high emphasis on autonomous agency states that Veterans need to “man up, do their business, and not be entitled”.

Another aspect of the transition that can be handled by Veterans themselves is the ability to effectively communicate the skills they offer civilian businesses. One participant uses a courtship analogy to describe the importance of interpersonal skills:

It’s like dating; both sides have to dress up a little for the date... Veterans need to be retrained, learn a new language, and be prepared for a world where there is a lot of ‘no’ before there is a ‘yes’.

This same participant also uses the analogy of a military mission to describe how individuals need to exert a high degree of focused effort to make the transition effectively:

Transition out of the military is effort... you don’t just hand in your uniform and leave unless you want to stay home and watch TV... It’s just like a military mission, you have to have an

objective, you have to get resources, you have to retrain yourself, you have to mobilize a network, and then you have to carry out that mission in a very focused way.

Planning for the transition early is recommended by several individuals.

Regarding the experiences of reservists vs. regular force Veterans, reservists I talked to generally had a smoother transition due to keeping strong ties with the civilian world throughout their service and having the foresight that their life in the military is limited. Reservists I talked to generally have a good idea of what they are going to do after their deployment, most having educational opportunities lined up or civilian careers to come back to. The major frustration I found with reservists was the weaker sense of community when returning to their reserve units where in some cases, fellow unit members were unaware that the individual had even deployed. Another major frustration in reserve units was the fact that individuals who didn't deploy were more often promoted, putting them above individuals who returned with deployment experience. Aside from these frustrations, individuals I talked to who served in the Reserve Force are better prepared to socially reintegrate into civilian life due to their pre-deployment ties and educational/professional pre-planning.

In addition to pre-planning, finding a new mission to serve is another personal-development recommendation. As a participant states:

If you're into public service, there are lots of people in Canada that need our help – you don't have to go to Afghanistan to help people... there are all sorts of things you can do with your energy, passion, and time that are very positive; you just need to figure out what that is for you and direct your energy toward that.

Aside from public service some individuals, as described above, found a new group to serve in the private sector. One individual even found this temporarily in his recreational life. Having bought a Porsche and driving across North America, he states, “the week that I took to do that was the most normal I felt, and it was simply because I had a mission that was clearly defined.”

He also described his fascination with climbing Mount Everest in the same mission-oriented language:

Doing something exceptional, like climbing Mount Everest, is a mission beyond simply making up your mind and going out to do it in the short term... the big mission is broken up into a series of tinier missions, each of which is exceptional.

Canada's True Patriot Love organization recognizes the power of providing Veterans with a new mission to serve by offering an opportunity for Veterans to go on an expedition to the North Pole. In addition to raising awareness, this program offers Veterans the chance to work together in adverse conditions to pursue a common goal. This expedition has the ability to temporarily provide the sense of purpose, but may not provide the long-term moral purpose in civilian life where Veterans can grow in their commitments to family and civilian employment.

The Veterans I interviewed who have supportive families to come back to generally had smoother transitions. One participant states: "I stand by this statement to my dying day, that if it wasn't for family, I don't know where I'd be. I'd probably be in a deep dark hole, probably drugs or alcohol, I don't know." Supportive and understanding spouses or significant others are common themes associated with an individual's ability to reintegrate. One individual became unable to function outside of the house and said that he was only able to get through the large quantity of paperwork from Veterans Affairs due to the persistence of his girlfriend who kept putting the necessary documents in front of him. Another individual had difficulties readjusting, started drinking too much, and taking unnecessary Advil. He was able to stop drinking and readjust, stating: "I have a very understanding wife who was able to slap me upside the head." He also began spending a great deal of time with his wife's tight-knit family. Two individuals directly mention family or a supportive spouse as the reason why they didn't go through with committing suicide.

Although family provides a great deal of social support for some individuals, it provides an additional stress for others. The inability to emotionally connect with family after service is a major reason given for additional stress in the relationship or eventual breakup. Failure to emotionally reconnect with family upon a Veterans' return would be worth future study. Aside from this issue, trauma to the family as the result of deployment features as the main issue for one individual. The most difficult part of his deployment was coming home to his wife who had been traumatized by the pressure of worrying about him while he was gone. This experience tragically ended in his wife's passing due to an illness that was a by-product of the high levels of anxiety. Issues faced by the families of Veterans is another area worthy of further research due to the high level of stress they undergo and the importance of the family in providing social support for Veterans making the transition home.

For many, coming back to civilian life does not necessarily mean coming 'home'. 'Home' is more than a physical place, it is a dense space of moral commitments. It is a space of integrative heartfelt obligations where individuals gain a sense of moral purpose. Although individual agency and elective affinity plays a strong role in maintaining contemporary communities, transitional institutions are necessary to minimize the anomic conditions Veterans face when returning home. To come home in a psychologically healthy manner, communal integration and regulation must be present. Some of the existing transitional institutions that are seen to assist in this work include the Veterans Transition Network, Operational Stress Injury Social Support programs, Treble Victor, and the Joint Personnel Support Unit. In addition to these programs, it is important that Veterans gain public recognition as valuable assets in civilian life and that their injuries are not just from combat, but are also due to the social transition itself.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

This research contributes to recent academic discussions in three main areas: Veterans' transition issues in the Canadian context, contemporary theories of suicidal ideation, and sociological understandings of morality. It contributes to these areas through a qualitative understanding of the transition from the military to civilian life, illustrating how the social transition itself is a major issue for many individuals, beyond physical injuries or psychological traumas incurred on operational duty. It demonstrates how an injurious transition is the result of relatively anomic social conditions in civilian life, compared to life in the military, particularly life on deployment. As stated in the previous chapters, the intense accountability derived from life or death situations in combat can never fully be replaced, but several participants were able to come back 'home' psychologically when a sense of moral purpose (sociologically speaking) gained through communal integration and regulation was established post deployment. This conclusion highlights the importance of sociological inquiry into Veterans' health and suicide prevention, two areas which are currently dominated by the field of psychology.

As discussed in the literature review, discussions of Veterans' health issues tend to center on Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In the DSM-5, PTSD is defined as a fear response resulting from the perceived threat of death or serious injury. Building on the concept of PTSD, Litz et al. (2009) and Shay (2010) developed the concept of moral injury to highlight the importance of combat injuries that result in a profound sense of guilt or shame. I build on the idea of morally injurious events sociologically through the concept of moral purpose defined by external social constraints that guide one's actions toward an idea of the good. I propose that a transitional injury occurs when there is a drastic loss of moral purpose in the Veteran's transition to the conditions of civilian life, which can be experienced as relatively anomic. This approach

builds on the growing military and Veteran health literature on moral injuries and demonstrates that beyond the experience of guilt and shame from perceived individual moral transgressions, transitions between radically distinct moral social contexts may also be injurious. This approach was inspired by what Canadian researchers have referred to as a “reverse culture shock” (Westwood, Black, and McLean 2002), Canadian Veterans speak of losing their closely bonded “military family” upon leaving the forces and experience a sense of identity disorientation as they attempt to navigate within a now unfamiliar civilian world (Pranger, Murphy, and Thompson 2009).

Veterans’ transition issues in the Canadian context

This research provides a qualitative basis for a sociological concept of transitional injuries, caused by the loss of moral purpose during transition invoked by a sense of anomie. By conceptualizing this transition experience as anomic, I bring the Canadian discussions of transition into the sociological realm, demonstrating how the Veterans Transition Network (VTN) does not just aid in recovery from war traumas (Westwood et al. 2010), but aids in transitional injuries as well. This approach is in line with Black and Papile’s (2010) statement that, “...it can be helpful for veterans to take part in any type and number of social support groups geared specifically to them” (p. 396), to counteract the negative effect of losing one’s tightly formed communal bonds when leaving the military: “The experience of having a loyal group of buddies abruptly comes to an end, and as the separation from this primary community that has lent meaning to their lives continues, no substitute is found” (p. 384). This research also provides a qualitative and conceptual basis to the social determinants of health in the ongoing Life After Service Studies (LASS) by Veteran Affairs Canada. Thompson et al. (2014) found that compared to the general Canadian population, Regular Force Veterans were less likely to

have a sense of community belonging and were less often satisfied with life. In addition, past year suicidal ideation among Regular Force Veterans was 7%, compared to 5% among Class C reservist Veterans. These data are cross-sectional in nature, and therefore we cannot compare this number to the Canadian population in general, but they are interesting none-the-less. Thompson et al. also state that, “Suicidality in Veterans, as in civilians, is also influenced by physical health... psychological predisposition and socioeconomic factors” (p. 40). In addition to socioeconomic factors, my research highlights the salience of sociocultural factors in suicidal ideation. Although these sociocultural factors are highlighted by both Thompson et al. and Black and Papile when referring to the loss of a sense of community, this factor is not discussed in regard to its impact on suicidal ideation.

Contemporary theories of suicidal ideation

In addition to building on recent Canadian research on Veterans in transition, this research also has implications for contemporary suicidology, demonstrating Durkheim’s continued relevance in light of contemporary psychological developments in the area. Thomas Joiner’s Interpersonal Theory of Suicide, as discussed in the literature review, states that the desire to die by suicide is the result of thwarted belongingness, perceived burdensomeness, and hopelessness regarding both of these states (Van Orden et al. 2010). The thwarted belongingness factor is characterized by the statement “I am alone”. This factor is composed of two aspects: loneliness as the result of feeling disconnected from others, for example living alone, single, no children etc., and the absence of reciprocal care such as family conflict, loss through death or divorce, domestic or child abuse etc.. The perceived burdensomeness factor also has two aspects: liability, believing one’s death is worth more than one’s life to others; and self-hate, low self-esteem, self-blame, and agitation. These two factors, thwarted belongingness and perceived

burdensomeness, form the basis of the interpersonal theory of suicide, and can be integrated with Durkheim's sociological model. Both Durkheim and Joiner emphasise the danger of social isolation and the benefits of social support – highlighting the similarity between Durkheim's concept of egoism and Joiner's thwarted belongingness factor. Joiner (2007) gives credit to Durkheim's theory for standing the test of time stating that, "...he [Durkheim] anticipated my model's emphasis on social disconnection as a major source for the desire for suicide" (p. 46). In addition, Joiner states: "Through his emphasis on altruistic suicide, he also anticipated my theory's inclusion of perceived burdensomeness as a key precursor to serious suicidal behavior, though we differ on the details" (p. 46). Exploring these details further, I demonstrate Durkheim's continued relevance in light of contemporary psychological developments in suicidology.

According to Durkheim (1897/2005), altruistic suicide occurs in social contexts that have a very high degree of social integration. He gives the example of religious martyrs as well as soldiers in combat whose high degree of emphasis on collective life allows them to attach lesser importance to their individual interests. Although Durkheim's concept of altruism has elements in common with Joiner's concept of perceived burdensomeness – in the sense that suicidal desire is related to the need for social contribution – Joiner's concept is distinct from Durkheim's. In Durkheim's model, suicide is the result of a high degree of contribution in a highly integrated social context, called a positive sacrificial act, whereas Joiner's model is based on the lack of perceived contribution within a highly integrated social context, a negative sacrificial act. In the former, the individual contributes to a cause through their sacrifice, whereas in the latter, the individual eliminates themselves as a perceived burden. These perspectives are similar due to their shared emphasis on social contribution within a highly integrated social context that gives

individuals a strong sense of moral purpose when deciding to end their life. In both Durkheim's concept of altruistic suicide and Joiner's burdensomeness factor, the individual in a highly integrated social context kills himself because of a high degree of moral purpose. Just as Durkheim's altruistic suicide may apply to the battlefield, Joiner's may apply to the scenario of an individual coming home with PTSD and deciding to commit suicide as they perceive that they are a burden to their family due to their mental health symptoms. In both cases, moral purpose is directed toward the good of a particular altruistic social context either through sacrificing oneself to achieve a larger social goal, or eliminating oneself as a social burden. Although these scenarios theoretically link the two perspectives, suicide as the result of a high degree of moral purpose was not the focus of my own research. Rather, recalling chapter four, my focus has been on suicidal ideation due to the loss of moral purpose as a function of social anomie.

Recalling my definition, moral purpose is the internalized sense of purpose facilitated in integrated social contexts that direct one's actions toward a concept of the good. Among the participants I interviewed, altruistic/highly integrated military life provided a high degree of moral purpose, demonstrated by the examples given in chapter four's section titled, "Altruism in the Military Community." Recalling the next section in chapter four, "The Anomic Transition to Civilian Life," the loss of moral purpose manifests among my participants as: the experience of missing the military, feeling lost and apathetic in civilian life, feeling cut off from an elite family, difficulty connecting with civilians, the loss of structure and, the loss of a sense of service. Individuals who admitted to thoughts of suicide experienced one or many of these themes to a high degree, particularly during their transition. I conceptualize the transition to civilian life as anomic rather than egoic, altruism's typological opposite, because the individuals who had the most difficult transitions didn't just feel socially disconnected, but this social

disconnection was highly associated with the loss of the military's moral environment that provided a communal structure based on loyalty and trust, providing a sense of shared responsibility and contribution through service. These elements of the transition point to the relevance of anomie, Durkheim's concept for contexts lacking social regulation.

Just as Durkheim's theory of anomie is distinct from egoism, Durkheim's theory has an additional component not emphasized in Joiner's interpersonal theory of suicide: the lack of socially regulative contexts. The concept of anomie goes beyond loneliness in Joiner's thwarted belongingness factor, akin to Durkheim's egoism, as well as the liability in Joiner's perceived burdensomeness factor, akin to altruism. The main difference between my Durkheimian analysis and the factors listed in Joiner's Interpersonal Theory is that my analysis looks at how regulatory social factors provide a sense of moral purpose to individuals. The added value of the anomic dimension is that it looks at how individuals are affected by the perceived change in moral purpose during social transitions between radically distinct moral contexts. Joiner's burdensomeness factor has a strong moral component since individuals may end their lives when they perceive themselves to be a severe social liability, but this is still on the level of altruism since it necessarily implies a highly integrated social context in which the individual measures their social worth. In an anomic context, it's not the failure to attain a moral ideal that leads to suicide, but rather, the absence of moral ideals. Rather than perceiving oneself as a liability to a moral community, the individual in an anomic context is not able to build an adequate social-identity or find a moral purpose to life. Recall the example of a participant who states: "I had to be my five year old self all over again and think, 'what do you want to be when you grow up?'" and another who states, "You don't have an answer for who you are, you're just kind of a lost soul...." and lastly, the statement that, "[in civilian life] there's no purpose, nobody stands for

anything, life seems very shallow after that.” These are not individuals whose main concern is perceived burdensomeness. And although their concerns have a lot in common with a sense of thwarted belongingness, there is a moral overlay to these concerns that goes beyond just loneliness. The sense of being lost, apathetic, and missing the sense of responsibility found through military service points to the need to recognize the potentially anomic reality of transition.

Sociological understandings of morality

Durkheim’s sociology is fundamentally a sociology of morality. In Stephen Turner’s (1993) book *Durkheim, Sociologist and Moralist*, he writes: “Durkheim did his utmost to link morality with the sociology of morality with a view to establishing morality on a scientific footing” (p. 188). My analysis is also in line with Turner’s statement that Durkheim’s “*Suicide* is concerned first and foremost with morality” (p. 200). W. Watts Miller, another contemporary Durkheimian scholar states in his *Durkheim, Morals, and Modernity* (1996) that Durkheim’s moral concern is based on “...a search for groups that, in locking us into particular connexions, lock us into the world” (p. 5). Miller’s analysis illustrates Durkheim’s complexity. In line with Frank Pearce’s (2001) argument that Durkheim is not a conservative traditionalist, Miller states that Durkheim sought an escape from “imprisonment in the loyalties of the traditional, confined community” (p. 5). This perspective is distinct from Bauman’s (2005) criticism of Durkheim’s sociology as an attempt at a modernist managerial mechanism, attempting to impose order to fill the regulatory void left by the fall of the Ancien Régime. Bauman supports “Foucault’s (some may say prophetic) suggestion” (p. 279) that contemporary social realities call for flexibility, in line with the metaphor of a pilot navigating the risks and uncertainties of a journey. Although Bauman paints a picture of Durkheim as a rigid authoritarian modernist, unsuitable for

contemporary theorizing and unable to deal with the complexities of “fluid” social life, my analysis suggests the contrary.

The key is that Durkheim never advocates for a particular set of eternal and universal values, but rather, he emphasizes the necessity that the values are fitting to the requirements of the particular social context. Durkheim’s use of “anomie” is based on anomic forms of social development – such as revolutions or a market crash, not based on a fixed set of universal ideas. My own analysis follows this developmental approach to anomie since it relies on socially contextual points of comparison between the military and civilian life to demonstrate how the transition is anomic for individuals who don’t have the necessary institutional supports bridging their transition. The problem is not that contemporary Canadian civilian life is fundamentally anomic; the problem is that the flow of individuals transitioning from the military to civilian life is anomic. The experience of Veterans in transition to civilian life illuminates the profound impact of anomie on the existential state of the individual. Veterans have been socialized into a highly communally altruistic institution, then are let go with minimal resocialization in the transition to civilian life. Rather than expecting Veterans to simply adjust to civilian life upon release, we need to look at the process of transition and figure out how to resocialize Veterans properly, from a sociological perspective. As demonstrated, Durkheim’s sociology of morality is a relevant theoretical orientation to problematic life transitions and can contribute to contemporary understandings of why Veterans may be at risk of suicide.

Future directions

This research has demonstrated how participants were able to come back ‘home’ socio-psychologically when the sense of moral purpose gained through communal integration and social regulation was present. Future research on determinants of successful transitions can build

on my concept of transitional injury that hinges on social integration and sociological moral regulation. The radically distinct type and level of moral regulation between these two social contexts should be explored further for the purpose of resocializing Veterans to prevent transitional injuries. Future research on suicidal ideation can build on my application of Durkheim's concept of anomie and my concept of moral purpose. In addition, contemporary sociological theory can benefit from Durkheim's dynamic sociology of morality.

Although this study focuses on the elements of Veterans' experiences related to social integration and regulation in the transition to civilian life, other issues emerge from my interviews. Some of these issues include PTSD, depression, substance abuse, financial issues, dealing with the death of fellow comrades in arms, survivor's guilt, moral injury from witnessing atrocity, moral injury from a perceived institutional betrayal, and trauma to spouses who develop severe anxiety while a partner is on deployment. Each of these important areas merit their own lines of inquiry.

Limitations

This research has probed into the in-depth experiences of thirty-five Canadian Veterans who served in Afghanistan, particularly focused on their social transition to civilian life. This limited number of research participants has implications for the generalizability of the findings. This population, therefore, cannot therefore represent Canadian Veterans as a whole. In addition, because of the narrow focus on the social transition between the military and civilian life, several other important areas could not be adequately explored and addressed, including the above list of issues that surfaced in this study: PTSD, depression, substance abuse, financial issues, dealing with the death of fellow comrades in arms, survivor's guilt, moral injury from witnessing atrocity, moral injury from a perceived institutional betrayal, and trauma to spouses. In addition,

the scope of this study is also limited to a male population and cannot speak to issues related to gender difference.

Conclusion

This research has inquired into the experiences of Canadian Veterans who served in Afghanistan and highlighted the social conditions associated with difficult transitions, particularly as it relates to the risk of suicidal ideation. I have found that many Veterans I spoke with experienced what I have called “transitional injury,” characterized by feeling lost and apathetic in civilian life, missing the military, feeling cut off from an elite family, difficulty connecting with civilians, the loss of structure, and the loss of a sense of service. For those who had an easier transition experience, these factors were only a minor barrier to reintegration, while for others, it played a large role in contributing to their thoughts of suicide.

The intense accountability derived from life or death situations in combat can never fully be replaced, but several participants were able to come back ‘home’ psychologically when the sense of moral purpose gained through communal integration and regulation was present, sociologically speaking. The anomic social conditions that produce transitional injury can be mitigated through institutional support to help bridge the cultural divide between the military and civilian life. These institutional supports may include programs such as the VTN Transition Course, Operational Stress Injury Social Support programs, Treble Victor, and the Joint Personnel Support Unit.

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Appendix 1

Letter of Information and Informed Consent



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: A Study of Altruism and Anomie in Recently Returning Canadian Combat Veterans

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Steve Rose As part of his doctoral research at Queens University under the supervision of Dr. Annette Burfoot and Dr. Alice Aiken.

This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen's policies.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact

Steve Rose at (519)-365-1517 s.rose@queensu.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of moral injury in transition to civilian life as it contributes to suicidal risk or resilience.

PROCEDURES

If you agree, you will participate in an approximately hour long interview. The semi-structured interview includes questions about your experience on deployment, questions about your experience in transition to civilian life, as well as any difficulties these have entailed.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Potential risks include the discussion of sensitive and personal matters as well as topics that may provoke psychological distress. Should you experience psychological distress, you are encouraged to contact local resources for veterans listed on the National Defence and Canadian Forces website at: <http://www.forces.gc.ca/health-sante/cfhscsco-cssfco/services/mh-sm-eng.asp>. For more immediate concerns, please see the below listing of local distress centers at: <http://www.dcontario.org/centres.html>.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While you may not directly benefit from this study, bringing attention to the social roots of mental health issues can potentially benefit society at large since this research focuses on a vulnerable population if left untreated and under-researched.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

You will be asked how you want to be identified based on a pseudonym not resembling your actual first or last name. This name will be correlated with your consent form via an encrypted document. The data will be stored in an untitled folder in a password protected hard-drive. Your first or last name will not be made public.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

If you wish to withdraw, you will be exempt from further questioning. You will then be asked if the information up until the point of withdraw may be used in the study. If you forbid the use of the interview up until that point, the information will not be used and immediately destroyed through digital deletion and any hard-copies will be shredded. You are free to withdraw at any time without consequence since your participation is voluntary and confidential.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in future research. This interview may be used to support subsequent projects or publications following the author's current dissertation project.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without consequences of any kind. Your consent to take part in the study provides you with information of whom to contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant. Should you have any further inquiries, you may contact the supervisors of this project:

Annette Burfoot: Email: burfoota@queensu.ca Phone: (613) 533-6000 ext 77857

Alice Aiken: Email: alice.aiken@queensu.ca Phone: (613)-533-6710

SIGNATURE

I understand the information provided for the study as described herein. I have a copy of this form for my own records. By signing, you also indicate that you have had all questions about the study answered to your satisfaction.

I agree to the use of audio recording (Please check box): I agree I do not

I agree to participate and wish to proceed with the interview.

Participant's Signature

Date

Appendix 2



October 18, 2013

Mr. Stephen Rose
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Sociology
Queen's University
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

GREB Ref #: GSOC-110-13; Romeo # 6010953

Title: "GSOC-110-13 Reformulating Durkheim's Typology of Suicide: A Study of Altruism and Anomie in Recently Returning Canadian Combat Veterans"

Dear Mr. Rose:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "**GSOC-110-13 Reformulating Durkheim's Typology of Suicide: A Study of Altruism and Anomie in Recently Returning Canadian Combat Veterans**" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Adverse Event Report). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To make an amendment, access the application at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Amendment to Approved Study Form. These changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or irvingg@queensu.ca for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Stevenson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c: Dr. Annette Burfott and Dr. Alice Aiken, Faculty Supervisors
Dr. Rob Beamish, Chair, Unit REB