

# **Exploration of job relocation in a military context**

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## **Abstract**

Australian Defence Force (ADF) staff members experience a job relocation every 3 to 5 years. This research explores the perceptions of a group of ADF staff regarding job relocation. Grounded Theory methodology was used to examine the respondents' perceptions of moving and settling into a new job. A schema called *MOVING WORK* was developed as a way to illustrate the respondents' experience and to provide an insight into the widespread workplace practice of job relocation in the ADF.

The results revealed that a characteristic of the ADF military context is for ADF staff to support each other at the workplace. As such, it was established that ADF staff function as a 'community of practice'. Also, definitions of legitimacy and peripherality were established with reference to how the respondents act. From the analysis of the data it was demonstrated that the respondents' actions could be examined and explained using the theoretical framework of Situated Learning.

The outcomes of this research can be used by researchers and ADF senior staff as a means to examine, or manage, the ADF workplace practice of job relocation.

## Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree at this or any other university. I have acknowledged information derived from the published work of others in the text and in the list of references.

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Signature

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Date

## **Acknowledgements**

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trust and confidence of the commanding officer and senior RAAF staff at WASP.

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# Definitions and Terminology

This section describes the acronyms and terms commonly used in this dissertation as they have particular meaning in the context of this research.

## Acronyms

**ADF:** Australian Defence Force

**CO:** Commanding Officer

**CoP:** Community of Practice

**DSTO:** Defence Science and Technology Organisation

**DFDA:** Defence Force Disciplinary Act 1982

**LPP:** Legitimate Peripheral Participation

**RAAF:** Royal Australian Air Force

**WASP:** Wide Area Surveillance Platform

**XO:** Executive Officer

## Terminology

**Esprit de corp:** The capacity of a group of ADF staff to work together and maintain their belief in the aims and values of the ADF.

**Camaraderie:** The loyalty ADF staff have to each other in the context of sharing the same belief in the aims and values of the ADF.

**Commanding Officer:** The senior officer in charge of a Royal Australian Air Force military unit.

**Community of Practice:** A concept that is a part of the theory of Situated Learning where people learn collectively as they mutually engage in a joint enterprise (Wenger, 1998).

**Grounded Theory methodology:** Grounded Theory methodology is a general research method where a set of rigorous research procedures lead to the emergence of codes, concepts, and categories from the data. These concepts/categories are related to each other as a theoretical explanation that is grounded in the data.

**Learning:** Learning is experienced by individuals when they construct new knowledge that affects their behaviour, develops skills, changes their values, preferences, or understanding of what constitutes reality.

**Legitimate Peripheral Participation:** A concept that is a part of the theory of Situated Learning about how people participate in the activity of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

**Losing Locality:** When ADF staff make a job relocation from a previous location to a new geographic location the previous location is known as the 'losing locality'.

**Manning Staff:** ADF staff employed to manage promotion and postings of ADF staff.

**Mess(es):** A place on an ADF installation where ADF staff may meet, socialise, eat, and live. There are usually three messes where access is based on military rank. One for junior ranks, another for senior non-commissioned officers, and another for commissioned officers.

**Mustering:** The employment stream to which an Royal Australian Air Force staff member belongs. For example, Engine Fitter, Air Surveillance Operator.

**Posting:** Formal allocation of a particular work role, geographic location, military rank, and military unit for an ADF staff member.

**Serving:** ADF staff serve the Australian public by working to maintain the national security of Australia.

**Situated Learning:** This is a theory of learning that is concerned with learning as a part of everyday activity and is a function of an individual's participation in that activity within the context and culture of a community of practice.

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Change has characterised the contemporary workplace and workplace practices over the past two decades. The impetus for change in practices, processes, and procedures has been, in part, “connected to changing economic imperatives and relationships in the competitive local and global market place and the emergence of sophisticated information and communication technologies” (McIntyre & Solomon, 1999, p. 9). Research interest about workplace change has been “stimulated by the desire to make enterprises and economies more productive, efficient, and competitive” (Foley, 2001, p. 54). This research concerns the workplace change Australian Defence Force (ADF) staff experience as a part of job relocation. It takes place in a contemporary workplace where ADF staff need to cope with continual change as well as regularly undergo job relocation.

An ADF staff member’s career is made up of a series of appointments as a consequence of regular job relocation (Jans & Frazer-Jans, 2004). This research investigates the experiences of a group of ADF staff after they make a job relocation to a particular Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) workplace,

known in this research by the pseudonym WASP<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, this research is concerned with the perceptions of a particular group of RAAF staff about their experience of participation in work after they make a job relocation, settle in, and get ready for their job at WASP.

This chapter provides a brief background to the topic and presents the rationale and significance for the research. The aim, research questions, and objectives are also presented and the chapter concludes with an outline of the organisation of this dissertation.

## **1.2 Background**

This section provides a brief background to this research in order to characterise the research context. The context is further elaborated upon in chapters 2 and 3 and provides the reader with a foundation for the interpretation and explanation of results that come later in this dissertation.

### **1.2.1 The Contemporary Workplace**

Mournier (2001), and other researchers, have emphasised that whilst an employer may have a prime focus on improving performance of the

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'the particular ADF workplace that is the setting for this research' is cumbersome to use throughout this dissertation and is hereafter replaced with the pseudonym Wide Area Surveillance Platform abbreviated to the acronym 'WASP'.

workforce there is a flow on to the employee, the local community, and the country. In this respect the capacity of the individual's ongoing development through learning is "held as an important goal in the maintenance of individual, local and national wellbeing, including the standard of life and social provisions" (OECD, 1996, in Billett & Pavlova, 2005, p. 195). For example, Brooker and Butler (1997) found that the workplace was about "the imperative of productivity and profit" (p. 81). They also found that the learning of welding apprentices at a work site was aimed at getting apprentices productive as soon as possible. This is somewhat akin to ADF workplaces where regular job relocation requires staff to learn new skills and knowledge every three to five years.

Concerning the need to construct new knowledge and skills, Eraut, Alderton, Cole, and Senker (1997) found from a study about the "development of knowledge and skills at work... [that] the most important factors were the nature of the work, the way it was organised and managed, the climate of the immediate workplace, and the culture of the organisation" (p. 2). This suggests that the nature and organisation of work and the culture and customs of the ADF workplace could be important factors for ADF staff when they settle in and get ready for work following a job relocation. This aspect is

considered in chapter 3 which examines the contemporary ADF workplace and the factors that may affect ways of doing work at WASP.

The literature is abound with descriptions of change as a characteristic of the contemporary workplace and this is examined in chapter 2. For instance, Chappell (2003) found that the contemporary workplace is characterised by change in regard to many management and work practices, as well as globalisation, technology advancement, government policy, and increased customer sophistication. In an Australian context Chappell (2003) claims that the “conceptions of skill, knowledge and learning” (p. 1) have changed and that learning is perceived as something that occurs at work as well as a part of courses provided by Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education providers. In this respect Billett (2001) asserts that workers’ “understanding of their work ... [is made] more abstract and ... [is] displaced by a narrower range of perceptual tools” (p. 46), because of technological change, and in particular the change occurring in the fields of computing and communication. Given the importance of knowing how change in the workplace can affect workplace practices chapter 3 illuminates this matter in relation to this research at the contemporary ADF workplace. Chapter 3 elaborates upon the characteristics of the specific RAAF workplace, known as WASP, that is the target of this research. WASP was chosen because the

researcher was able to gain access to RAAF staff who had experienced a job relocation to WASP. Chapter 4 outlines the circumstances of this choice as a part of ethical considerations and limitations.

### **1.2.2 Job Relocation in the ADF Workplace**

In the ADF, job relocation is known as a “posting” and an ADF career is made up of a number of such postings. The ADF formalises postings and provides staff with financial and other support to facilitate a posting that typically involves a move from one geographical location to another. Other forms of support include provision of temporary accommodation, provision of permanent accommodation, advice on schooling for children, organisation of removal of personal effects, and advice about what to expect on arrival in the new geographical location and workplace.

There is relatively limited research literature concerning the effects of job relocation on people’s experience of work and personal matters. Despite this, Moyle and Parkes (1999) found from research conducted in the United Kingdom concerning job relocation, that people find job relocation difficult and that they need to adapt to the new situation particularly when it involves a change in duties and a change in geographic location. With reference to the same research, Frank (2000) asserts that people “avoid disruption to [their] equilibrium and are vulnerable while [they] struggle to restore it” (p. 122). In



research by Eby and Dematteo, (2000) it was shown that when job relocation is coupled with a geographical change, adaptation is also required “outside of the employee’s work role (e.g., learning one’s way around a new city, adjusting to cultural differences, adopting new non-work routines), magnify the extent of change encountered” (p. 678). This is akin to what ADF staff experience when they make job relocations every three to five years that often involve a change of geographical location and is elaborated upon in chapter 3.

### **1.2.3 Situated Learning**

The foregoing discussion intimates that context is important when exploring the respondent’s experiences as a part of settling in and getting ready for work after a job relocation. In this research the respondents were provided with access to formal learning programs about the processes and procedures of work. In addition to the formal learning programs, ADF staff experience informal learning as a part of their participation in the activity of work. As elaborated upon in chapter 2, when investigating the nature and type of learning experiences associated with work, it is deemed necessary to consider the influences of the context, socio-cultural practice, and situational factors. chapter 2 considers the theory of Situated Learning which is concerned with legitimate peripheral participation in Communities of Practice (CoPs) and arose from research by Lave and Wenger (1991). Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theory of Situated Learning is concerned with people’s learning experiences

that are embedded within the activity, context and culture of a CoP. This research seeks a deeper understanding of RAAF staff experiences of job relocation and to determine whether their actions can be examined using Situated Learning as a theoretical framework.

### **1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Research**

This researcher's interest in the problems and issues with change that ADF staff confront arises from the experiences of an RAAF career of over twenty years. This researcher's RAAF career covered many job relocations and moves of geographic location. Typically for each job relocation there was a need to construct new knowledge and skills about the processes and procedures of the new workplace. In addition there were changes to ways of acting and behaving at the new workplace that needed to be negotiated as a part of settling in and getting ready for work. Construction of new knowledge and skills and ways of being and acting at the new workplace were undertaken both formally and informally. As well as the workplace issues that were experienced by this researcher there was a range of personal, social, and family issues that arose as a consequence of the change of geographical location. These issues included: contact with friends and family, spouse finding and securing work, children's schooling, establishing social networks, and sporting and leisure pursuits.

### **1.3.1 Rationale**

There are three reasons for conducting this research. Firstly, a preliminary review of the literature shows that there is a large body of documented research about workplace change and learning at the workplace that is focused on economic imperatives. At the same time, as shown in chapter 2, there appears to be a relatively limited body of literature about the issues people confront and resolve following a job relocation. This includes literature about the issues people have of how work impacts on life goals and work performance. There is also a paucity of documented research about situations where it is a condition of employment for staff to regularly experience job relocation that involves a change of geographical location. This research is being conducted to address this gap in the literature and to identify and investigate problems and issues individuals perceive as important following a job relocation.

The second reason for conducting the research is that there is limited documented research about the perceptions ADF staff have of their experience of work at the ADF workplace. It is difficult to gain access to an ADF workplace to conduct research. This is one important reason that limited documented research has been conducted about ADF staff's experience of regular job relocation. It is this researcher's employment in an ADF workplace

that made it possible to gain the permissions required to conduct this research. Furthermore, the research setting is an ADF workplace environment with modern, technically complex systems, which is characterised by widespread and accelerated rate of change. This characteristic change is reflected in a Department of Defence Public Affairs & Corporate Communication (2002) document which states that:

The Australian Defence Force is gearing itself to operate effectively in a rapidly changing world where investment, industry, information and individuals know few boundaries. The so-called Information Age already has had a profound impact on how political, diplomatic, economic, and military power will be exercised in the twenty-first century. To meet future challenges, the Australian Defence Force needs an intimate understanding of the changing nature of society. It must be a flexible and adaptable organisation, acknowledging the role and limitations of armed force as a means of resolving conflict (p. 1).

Therefore, the second reason for conducting this research is that there is a paucity of research about ADF staff's experience of workplace change in this specific military workplace setting.

As indicated above, this research concerns the experiences of individuals who have come together at a specific site as a part of their employment with the

RAAF. In this respect this research investigates the individual's experience of work at a new workplace. Therefore, the third reason for conducting this research is that there is a need for an informed understanding of problems and issues concerning ADF staff experiences. The findings may be useful for ADF staff when settling into and getting ready for work following a job relocation.

### **1.3.2 Significance**

As elaborated in chapter 2, there is a paucity of literature that investigates an individual's experience of an ADF career and the problems and issues they confront when they experience regular job relocation. It follows that this research is significant because it provides insight into the factors and issues that affect ADF staff's experience of regular job relocation and provides a way for ADF management to view the problems and issues ADF staff experience. Furthermore in order to provide a theoretical framework that can be used as a basis to examine the ADF workplace, this research explores to what extent the WASP can be examined and explained using the theoretical basis of Situated Learning.

## **1.4 Research Aim, Research Questions, and Objectives**

A condition of employment for ADF staff is to undergo regular job relocation. The major aim of this research is to explore the respondents' perceptions of

work in an ADF workplace following job relocation. Three sub-aims that arose out of the main aim that are examined in this research are as follows:

- To identify the characteristics of work at an ADF workplace to establish if the ADF workplace can be examined and explained using the theoretical basis of Situated Learning
- To examine the nature of work and the workplace practices following a job relocation
- To explore the influences of work activity on the settling in process during job relocation.

#### **1.4.1 Research Questions**

The above aims are addressed through the following research questions:

**Research Question 1 (RQ 1):** What are the perceptions of ADF staff of how they settle in and get ready for work after they relocate from a previous job at a new ADF workplace to be referred to as WASP?

The subordinate research questions are:

**Research Question 1.1 (RQ 1.1):** What is the influence of military customs and culture on work at WASP?

**Research Question 1.2 (RQ 1.2):** What is the nature of work and workplace practice at WASP?

**Research Question 1.3 (RQ 1.3):** What is the influence of job relocation on an ADF staff member's career path?

**Research Question 1.4 (RQ 1.4):** What is the influence of the social activity and personal matters on work at WASP following job relocation?

**Research Question 2 (RQ 2):** To what extent can WASP be examined and explained using the theoretical basis of Situated Learning?

### **1.4.2 Objectives**

The above-mentioned research questions are explored through the following research approach and objectives.

- Undertake a literature review to:
  - Identify the characteristics of the contemporary ADF workplace to provide a range of factors that can be investigated as having the potential to influence the respondents' ADF career (RQ 1.1 – 1.4).
  - Explore issues that may be associated with job relocation (RQ1.3).
  - Explore how the theoretical framework of Situated Learning may have application to the ADF workplace (RQ 1.1-1.4 & 2).

- Use a Grounded Theory methodology to:
  - Collect data about the respondents' lived experience of a job relocation and an ADF career trajectory (RQ 1.1-1.4).
  - Analyse the data to identify concepts and themes concerning perceptions about work and the workplace following job relocation (RQ 1.1-1.4).
  - Develop a conceptual scheme that explains the issues and concerns the respondents confront at the workplace following job relocation (RQ 1.1-1.4).
  
- Use the data collected to address RQ 1 and the literature review to determine how the learning that respondents experience at work can be viewed through the lens of the theoretical framework of Situated Learning (RQ 2).

## **1.5 Organisation of Dissertation**

This dissertation is set out in seven chapters to detail research that investigates a particular group of RAAF staff's experience of work in an RAAF workplace following a job relocation that is a part of their ADF career and employment with the ADF.



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter introduces the research with a brief background to the topic and the rationale and significance for the research. The aim, research questions, and objectives are also presented.

## **Chapter 2: The Contemporary Workplace**

This chapter presents a critical review of specific documented research concerning the experience of work and the characteristics of learning at the contemporary workplace.

## **Chapter 3: Context: The ADF Workplace**

This chapter provides a description of the context for this research. The contemporary ADF workplace has distinctive characteristics and therefore the background and foundation provide a necessary basis for the interpretations and explanations of results that come later in this dissertation.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

This chapter considers ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the research. This is followed by an outline of the Grounded Theory methodology used in this research. Details of the research design are presented as well as ethical considerations and limitations of this research.

## **Chapter 5: The WASP Experience**

This chapter presents findings obtained from the analysis of the data collected in this research as well as a consideration of RQ 1.

## **Chapter 6: Framing WASP as a CoP**

This chapter considers RQ 2 and the results are used to determine to what extent the ADF workplace can be examined and explained upon the theoretical framework of Situated Learning.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion and Implications.**

This chapter presents the conclusions of the research and major findings along with the implications for practice and future research.

## **Chapter 2: The Contemporary Workplace**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter 1 introduced this dissertation, and identified that context is important when researching the contemporary workplace. In this respect this chapter examines the contemporary workplace context that applies to this research. The chapter commences with a consideration of the experience of work at the contemporary workplace and the notion that individuals experience learning as a part of participation in work. The latter part of this chapter considers the concept of CoP, as an aspect of Situated Learning. This is done as a part of determining to what extent WASP can be examined and explained using the theoretical basis of Situated Learning. Towards this goal, this chapter identifies the factors that have been identified by theorists in this area as important in terms of how respondents cope with the change they experience as a consequence of job relocation.

### **2.2 Scope**

Preliminary examination of the literature concerning the contemporary workplace found an abundance. The most current documentation was examined first and references to earlier work were followed while the literature remained relevant. In this way, literature from the last decade of the

twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty first century were deemed relevant.

Literature about workplace research from ADF libraries and the Defence Restricted intranet was examined. Much of the documented research found in ADF sources is quantitative and based on surveys and there is a paucity of literature concerning an individual's perception of the influence of workplace practices.

### **2.3 The Experience of Work**

The literature indicates that the experience of work at the contemporary workplace is characterised by change in workplace practices and in the organisation and management of work. For instance, Richardson and Teese (2008) found that:

The fundamental source of a country's economic prosperity is the productive capacity of the national workforce. A well-skilled future is one where enterprises are encouraged to use sophisticated, high-productivity strategies, confident they can find the necessary high-quality workforce to match. The labour market is dynamic. People are constantly changing their jobs, learning new skills from their work or formal courses, moving to new locations and in and out of the labour force, changing the hours they work. At the same time, enterprises are

being born, are growing and dying, altering the size of their workforce, recruiting strategic new skills and training some of their existing staff with the required incremental skills (p. 7).

Concerning changing work organisation and skill requirements, Martin and Healy (2008) assert that “in Australia and similar societies it is often argued that such factors as increased global competition, rapidly changing consumer markets, and the expansion of the service sector all require much more flexible work practices” (p. 6). The reaction to this in Australia is that the workplace experience is one where employees need to work in teams and communicate and cooperate effectively as well as readily construct new skills and knowledge (Martin & Healy, 2008).

As well as the foregoing, Richardson and Liu (2008) found that in Australia: there have been major changes in the ways in which people are being employed. These changes are strongly away from the standard form of employment and towards all the alternatives and were especially pronounced for men. In 1992, 70% of all jobs were full-time and permanent, so it was appropriate to view such a form of employment as the norm, or standard. But since then, only 41% of the 1.9 million extra jobs created were full-time permanent jobs. Growth has been

particularly strong in casual employment and a new trend has developed—the full-time casual. All the changes are more pronounced for men than they are for women (p. 7).

The literature concerning the contemporary workplace abounds with references to change. It appears that change pervades all aspects of work and influences workers' attitude to work as well as the skills and knowledge they need to do work. Workers "must be able to respond in flexible ways... must be able to learn on the job as requirements emerge...[and as] new technologies are introduced, new collaborations formed and new competitive challenges are faced, individual workers must be able to learn to adapt" (Chappell, 2003, p. 11).

The research in this dissertation focuses on change in the workplace, specifically it is about the respondent's perception of the experience of work after a job relocation to WASP. Job relocation was introduced in chapter 1 and is elaborated upon in chapter 3. It can be viewed as a form of change that regularly occurs in contemporary ADF workplaces. Yet as indicated by a search of the literature within, and external to, the ADF libraries and intranet, there is limited documented research concerning workplaces characterised by regular and widespread job relocation, particularly military workplaces as

indicated earlier. This conclusion was reinforced by Dr N. Jans (personal communication, November 11, 2008) when he stated that he doubted that anyone had ever studied the “factors/processes that help or hinder” job relocation in the ADF despite it happening many times each year.

## **2.4 Learning in the Workplace**

The literature indicates that the contemporary workplace is characterised by change. As alluded to in chapter 1, if the respondents are to cope with the change they experience as a consequence of job relocation they may need to learn new skills and knowledge. Eraut (2004) asserts that learning in a workplace context “encompasses a wide range of more or less structured environments, which are only rarely structured with learning in mind” (p. 247). The learning individual’s experience is embedded in their participation in the activity of work and happens in a range of settings from formal to informal.

The remainder of this section explores the characteristics of the learning when it is viewed as integral to participation, the importance of context in learning, the formality of learning, and the embeddedness of learning in work. This will provide a basis for the interpretations and explanations of results that come later in this dissertation.

### **2.4.1 Participation and Context in Learning**

A view of learning as an integral part of participation suggests that action and learning are intertwined and people's learning is a part of the interaction with others and the environment (Felstead, Fuller, Unwin, Ashton, Butler, & Lee, 2005). It also suggests that learning is "the active construction of knowledge by individuals that is context dependant, socially mediated and situated in the 'real-world' by learners" (Chappell, 2003, p. 9).

### **2.4.2 Formality in Workplace Learning**

This section explores the notion of "formality" as a characteristic of learning as a part of participation in work. In the ADF it is acknowledged that staff experience learning in both formal and informal educational contexts.

Learning that could be considered "formal" is learning that ADF staff undertake as a part of participation in training courses characterised by documented and prescribed curriculum and assessment. Learning considered as "informal" is that which is embedded in the ADF staff members' participation in the activity of work and the social activity that surrounds work. An example of this is how ADF staff learn as a part of participation in work when it is acceptable to wear civilian dress at the workplace. This may appear to be an overly simplistic example but, in this researcher's experience, civilian dress has moved from being forbidden at the end of the Vietnam War to a more relaxed attitude in the twenty-first century. For instance RAAF staff



at WASP may be encouraged to wear the dress associated with fundraising events such as 'Jeans for Genes' day or 'Loud Shirt day'. Such changes that characterise WASP and the ADF workplace are elaborated upon in chapter 3.

Colley, Hodkinson, and Malcolm (2003) found that the notion of formality in learning varies as much as the body of literature is diverse. Also the terms used to describe formality in learning are often used to distinguish types of learning. In this respect, Colley et al. (2003) claim that all learning situations contain attributes of informality and that attributes of formality and informality are interrelated in different ways in different learning situations. Therefore it is reasonable to suggest that if learning is examined in relation to the wider contexts in which it takes place then these interrelationships and effects can be more fully understood. While acknowledging the existence of formality and informality in all learning situations, Colley et al. (2003) found that it was unhelpful to consider informal and formal learning as distinct because this pits one against the other. When in reality they complement rather than compete. Despite the foregoing commentary, Eraut (2004) perceives value in the concept of formality in learning because it emphasises the importance of context and thereby flexibility in learning.

### **2.4.3 Integral and Embedded Workplace Learning**

Another key area to emerge from the literature about workplace learning is the integral and embedded nature of learning in the everyday activity of work (McIntyre, 2000; Hager, 1999; Harris, Simons, & Bone, 2000; Falk, 2003; Billet, 2002). According to McIntyre (2000) learning can be considered to be a non-negotiable component of the ordinary texture of work activity. It also appears that working and learning are inextricably linked (Harris et al., 2000). For instance, Harris et al. (2000) contend that, in their study of the information technology industry, learning appears to be shaped by the project-based nature of their work, thus confirming that learning needs emerge from the everyday activity of work.

Furthermore, Hager (1999) suggests that learning at the workplace has a holistic character, appearing to be a seamless experience embedded in everyday activity. Henning (1998) provides a clear example of this through research into the informal learning of refrigeration technicians. He found that refrigeration service technicians learn through the use of “multiple resources derived from simultaneously occurring and overlapping physical and social domains” (p. 26) and that it was difficult to separate the learning from the work activity. Hager (2003) suggests the process of learning at the workplace has social, cultural, and political dimensions where meaning is constructed

and reconstructed as a part of participation in the social activities of everyday work. This suggests the nature and extent of an individual's participation in the social activities of everyday work can shape the learning a person undertakes as a part of everyday work activity. Furthermore, social interaction and social forces influence how people perceive the experience of learning.

If the foregoing discussion is accepted, the experience of learning for RAAF staff employed at WASP is a continuing notion that is a productive part of everyday work, embedded in structures, relationships and processes of ADF workplaces.

#### **2.4.4 Workplace Knowledge**

This section provides insight into the nature of knowledge the respondents might need to construct so they can cope with the change they experience as a consequence of job relocation. This will provide a basis for the interpretations and explanations of results that comes later in this dissertation. Workplace knowledge is a topic that has been investigated from many perspectives across a number of disciplines, and as a result there is a large and diverse body of literature (Hager, 1998). The literature about workplace knowledge can be separated into a number of perspectives.

Two of these perspectives are articulated by Boud and Garrick (1999) who assert that individuals undertake learning at work to serve two goals, one that contributes to the performance of the organisation and another that contributes to the individual flourishing at work and in wider society.

Wenger (1998) is positioned between the above two perspectives and considers that workplace knowledge is manifested in an individual's ability to participate in work and to make work fulfilling and palatable. On the other hand, Curtis and McKenzie (2001) adopt an economic perspective and assert that, "Australia, in common with most OECD countries, is placing an increasing emphasis on the development of 'human capital' – the knowledge, skills and motivations embodied in people" (p. 2). In this respect Mournier (2001) also adopts an economic perspective when he contends that the development of knowledge and skills is necessary to improve corporate performance and economic growth and that individual incomes are related to knowledge and skill levels.

Based on an extensive review of the literature, Colley et al. (2003) concluded that there is not one single complete definition of what constitutes workplace knowledge. It appears that workplace knowledge is poorly understood and contested (Mcintyre, 2000; Hager, 2004; Billet & Pavlova, 2005) in part because there are many researchers and theorists who define and characterise

workplace knowledge. Billet and Pavlova (2005) assert that “what initiates and directs individual’s learning throughout their working lives is far from fully understood” (p. 196). Similarly, Hager (2004) argues that learning at the workplace “is not a well understood concept at the start of the twenty-first century” (p. 4). The topic has been researched across disciplines and people employ different terminology to describe the same phenomenon, or employ the same terminology when meaning something quite different (Lee, Fuller, Ashton, Butler, Felstead, Unwin, & Walters, 2004). Hager (2004) asserts that it is often the case that what authors understand about workplace knowledge is based on the author’s understanding of knowledge in formal educational situations. This researchers epistemological and ontological assumptions are detailed in chapter 4.

#### **2.4.5 A Curriculum of the Workplace**

From the foregoing discussion it can be concluded that the learning individual’s experience as a part of work is embedded in work and affected by the nature and organisation of work and workplace practices. Billett (2000) captures these characteristics of workplace learning and proposes that workplace knowledge is shaped by the context and nature of work. Also that learning as part of the participation in the activities of the workplace is interdependent and mediated by the “access to workplace activities and guidance” (Billett, 2000, p. 2) and the interaction with others and the

environment of the workplace. Billett (2001) proposes that workplace learning has a curriculum “founded in the contribution of activities and guidance as a part of everyday work practice” (p. 5). The notion of a curriculum in this research and for the ADF staff at WASP intimates that there is a developmental pathway they might follow.

Billet (2001a) conceptualises workplace knowledge as made up of propositional knowledge, procedural knowledge, and dispositions.

Dispositions are the values, attitudes, and preferences that underpin how individuals think and learn. Propositional knowledge “comprises facts, information, propositions, assertions, and concepts” (Billett, 2001a, p. 51).

Procedural knowledge comprises the techniques, skills, and ability which Billet (2001a) places on a continuum from the simple to the complex. Billett (2001a) describes this continuum as having depth that is limitless and constantly evolving. The notion that propositional knowledge is constantly evolving is consistent with the view of the contemporary workplace as characterised by constant change. Depth is a metaphor that suggests that a knowledgeable operator is able to see past the front panel of a device. The individual has an understanding of the inner-workings of the device and can make judgements about quality of outcomes, complete problem solving, or assess effects on other parts of the system.

The learning individual's experience is integral and embedded in work and happens as a part of the participation in the activity of work. The learning that individuals experience in the workplace can happen in a range of contexts, often characterised as formal to informal. Billett (2004) asserts that "workplaces intentionally regulate individuals' participation" (p. 312) and therefore an individual's potential learning experience. As will be considered in chapter 3, workplace knowledge and learning at WASP is experienced by ADF staff as a part of participation in activities they can access and the guidance they receive as a part of work. Therefore, when investigating the learning individuals experience at WASP it is deemed necessary to consider the influences of the context, socio-cultural practice, and situational factors. In this respect McIntyre (2000) suggests that the workplace environment mediates what learning individuals undertake and that "it is necessary to take a social theoretical perspective in which work is understood as a 'community of practice' with many situated learning elements" (p. 5).

## **2.5 Communities of Practice (CoPs)**

As it concerns this research investigation the concept of a CoP, as an aspect of Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of Situated Learning, is examined in this section. As stated in chapter 1, this research seeks a deeper understanding of ADF staff experiences of job relocation and to establish to what extent WASP

can be examined and explained using the theoretical basis of Situated Learning.

Wenger (1998) asserts that CoPs exist everywhere and they do not have to be named as CoPs to exist. On his personal website, Wenger (n.d.) defines CoPs as follows:

Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope" (n.p.).

Wenger (1998) established three dimensions of a CoP that are used in chapter 6 to address RQ 1 and to consider the extent the respondents can be viewed as members of a CoP. These dimensions are mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire and are detailed in the following sections of this chapter.



### **2.5.1 Mutual Engagement**

The members of a CoP mutually engage in practice which is the source of coherence of their community (Wenger, 1998). In this research this is explored by examining what is it that brings this group of respondents together. It asks in what do they mutually engage that results in them becoming members of a CoP. Stating that the respondents were staff members of the RAAF, worked in the same place, and that relationships existed among respondents is insufficient to consider whether the respondents were members of a CoP. The next three sub-sections explore mutual engagement under Wenger's (1998) headings of enabling engagement, diversity and partiality, and mutual relationships.

#### **2.5.1.1 Enabling engagement**

Wenger (1998) views "enabling engagement" as the process that connects people into a community. Enabling engagement may happen through social interaction that occurs among members of the CoP, or it may be that participants are connected to the same artefacts or work output. Wenger (1998) asserts that enabling engagement can be very subtle and delicate and may be as simple as understanding the latest gossip or memo. Whatever enables engagement is, it must be an intrinsic part of practice, and endure, and continue.

#### 2.5.1.2 Diversity and partiality

Wenger (1998) states that if it is practice of a CoP that enables mutual engagement then “it is the kind of community that does not entail homogeneity” (p. 75). So the people that make up the CoP are usually diverse. They can come from different backgrounds, be of different ages, and have different intents and aspirations. “Each participant in a community of practice finds a unique place and gains a unique identity” (Wenger, 1998, p. 76). The diverse range of people mutually engaged in practice means that participants will have a range of knowledge, skills, and ability. As Wenger (1998) points out, this is obvious when the participants have different roles in the practice that defines the community.

#### 2.5.1.3 Mutual relationships

If a diverse group of people participate in a community where they mutually engage in practice then, according to Wenger (1998), “mutual relationships” exist. When these relationships are “sustained, it[sic] connects participants in ways that can be deeper than more abstract similarities in terms of personal features of social categories” (Wenger, 1998, p. 76). Wenger (1998) found, in his study of claims processors, that “in spite of [a] ... rather successful ‘corporate culture’ of personableness, there are jealousies, gossips, and cliques” (p. 77). Wenger (1998) asserts that disagreement, challenges, and competition may exist in CoPs and “rebellion often reveals a greater

commitment than does passive conformity” (p. 77). When participation in practice enables mutual engagement among a diverse group of participants the result will be a full range of mutual relationships.

### **2.5.2 Joint Enterprise**

Wenger (1998) describes the dimension of “joint enterprise” in a CoP under the aspects of negotiated enterprise, indigenous enterprise, and regime of mutual accountability. The members of a CoP mutually engage in practice and as a part of that negotiated joint enterprise. Joint enterprise, as a dimension of a CoP, is a source of coherence for the community. Wenger (1998) asserts that “it is defined by the participants in the very process of pursuing it...and thus belongs to them in a profound sense...and creates among participants relations of mutual accountability” (p. 77).

#### **2.5.2.1 Negotiated enterprise**

Wenger (1998) asserts that “joint enterprise” is not as simple as people sharing participation in the process of work. Joint enterprise is the result of negotiation of a diverse and partial community of individuals. The negotiation allows the individuals to “maintain a sense of self ...while they share working conditions” (Wenger, 1998, p.78). They do not all react the same but are connected because they are engaged in the joint enterprise of making their practice palatable (Wenger, 1998). In this respect the words of an RAAF recruiting slogan that describe the RAAF as “a team of individuals” of

the 1980s may appear contradictory. However when this slogan is considered as a part of the notion of negotiated enterprise it may be considered that it indicates that individuals, with individual subjectivity, can mutually engage in joint enterprise as a group or team.

#### 2.5.2.2 Indigenous enterprise

Wenger (1998) explains that the members of a CoP are individuals and come together in a wider context. In the context of this research the RAAF staff at WASP might provide their own definition of their joint enterprise. This does not deny their position within the ADF and the pervasive influence of the ADF as their employer. For, as Wenger (1998) asserts from a study about claims processors, the staff would not be able to change the institutional conditions and “produce a practice with an inventiveness that is all theirs” (Wenger, 1998, p. 79). This implies that if the RAAF staff are members of a CoP they can retain their individual subjectivity while conforming to the rules and regulations of an RAAF workplace.

#### 2.5.2.3 A regime of mutual accountability

According to Wenger (1998), as a part of negotiating joint enterprise, members of a CoP develop relations of accountability and understanding of how to be and act. In this regard Wenger (1998) found that members of a CoP develop an understanding of:

- what matters and what doesn't

- what is important and what isn't
- what to do and what not to do
- what to pay attention to and what to ignore
- what to talk about and what to leave unsaid
- what to justify and what to take for granted
- what to display and what to withhold
- when actions and artefacts are good enough and when do they need improvement or refinement.

Wenger (1998) likens joint enterprise to practice as rhythm is to music. Joint enterprise as rhythm is not random it is a part of practice and coordinates the process of negotiating joint enterprise. The members of a CoP dance to their own tune when mutually engaged in practice. In the context of WASP this aspect is further considered in chapter 6 as a part of determining to what extent the respondents and RAAF staff can be viewed as members of a CoP at WASP.

### **2.5.3 Shared Repertoire**

For Wenger (1998) "shared repertoire" is a medley of "specific activities, symbols, artefacts... [that] belong to the practice of a community" (p. 82).

"The repertoire of a community of practice includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts

that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice” (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). Repertoire is a way of speaking and being in practice. That is, it is the case that the repertoire of the CoP is a shared point of reference that allows for renegotiation in new situations (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) notes the dynamic nature of the social activity of a CoP and that the renegotiation of meaning is a resource of mutual engagement as described earlier. Mutual engagement endures over time because “shared practice is a dynamic form of coordination, one that generates ‘on the fly’ the coordinated meanings that allow it to proceed” (Wenger, 1998, p. 84). Ambiguity may appear to threaten mutual engagement when in reality it is continual negotiation that is a source of new meaning and a resource of mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998).

#### **2.5.4 Summary**

If the respondents at WASP are to be viewed as a CoP the foregoing discussion suggest that the wider ADF context needs to be taken into account. Chapter 3 describes the wider ADF context and when combined with the foregoing discussion provides a foundation to investigate the extent to which the respondents can be viewed as members of a CoP.

## 2.6 Situated Learning

Situated Learning, as described by Lave and Wenger (1991), is a theory of learning that is concerned with concepts of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) and CoPs. The concept of CoPs has been outlined in the previous section. The concept of legitimate peripheral participation is a way to speak about the relationships among the diverse group of members of a CoP and the process of becoming a full participant in a socio-cultural practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The concept of legitimate peripheral participation is elaborated upon in Section 2.6.4 and is outlined in chapter 6, as it relates to this research. Situated Learning considers the notion of learning through participation in a CoP and encompasses the construction of identity and belonging in a socio-cultural context (Wenger, 1998). Lave and Wenger (1991) state that the concept of Situated Learning “has strongly influenced thinking in the field of learning at work” (cited in Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson, & Unwin, 2005, p. 49). Lave and Wenger (1991) have contributed seminal ideas which have “enjoyed widespread currency within workplace learning theory and research” (Lee et al., 2004, p. 10).

Six key aspects that are pertinent to this research emerge from the literature concerning the theory of Situated Learning. These six key aspects are used to review the theory of Situated Learning under the following headings:

- Terms - Social and Situated
- Abstract Learning
- Conforming in CoPs
- That Nature of LPP
- Power Relationships
- Learner Identity

### **2.6.1 Terms – ‘Social’ and ‘Situated’**

The literature concerning Situated Learning highlights the importance of context, cultural and social aspects in understanding learning and the construction of meaning. Reder and Klatzky (1994) identify one claim of Situated Learning is that “instruction needs to be done in complex social environments” (p. 5). This is accepted by many including Anderson, Reder, and Simon (1996) who also criticise the theory of Situated Learning because they see it “as sometimes exaggerated to assert that all knowledge is specific to the situation in which the task is performed” (p. 6). It needs to be noted that Lave and Wenger (1991) never made such claims. Lave and Wenger (1991) consider Situated Learning to be a “general theoretical perspective, the basis of claims about the relational character of knowledge and learning, about the negotiated character of meaning, and about the concerned (engaged, dilemma driven) nature of learning activity for the people involved” (p. 33). It was noted by Hansman and Wilson (1998) that learning is



situated in that it “is not just an independent internal mental process, but is fundamentally situated as a product of activity, context, and culture” (p. 4). That is, knowledge is unique to the individual and “humans construct meaning idiosyncratically, based on their personal experiences” (Billett, 2002, p. 7).

### **2.6.2 Abstract Learning**

The theory of Situated Learning does not deny the value of abstract learning, but it does recognise the increasing complexity with the issue of transfer of abstract learning to practice. Abstract learning removes the connection with context and learners need to make sense of ideas in the context of practice. According to Reder and Klatzky (1994) abstract learning is rarely completely abstract and “it is important to emphasise that abstract instruction in the absence of concrete examples is a bad idea” (p. 10).

### **2.6.3 Conforming in CoPs**

Sharp (1997) defines CoPs as groups of people brought together through a “common sense of purpose” (p. 1). In this respect Elmholdt (2001) asserts that the individual “is not conceptualised and disappears consequently in a community of practice” (p. 14). Participation in a CoP does not necessarily mean that participants lose all identity and that they conform to the common will. Wenger (1998) asserts that individuals in a CoP are diverse and partial

and that is what makes their participation special. That is, it is the case that people can maintain their individual subjectivity while participating in a CoP.

#### **2.6.4 Legitimate Peripheral Participation**

Fuller et al. (2005) found that Lave and Wenger's (1991) "attempt to stretch legitimate peripheral participation to cover all workplace learning is unconvincing" (p. 65). Wenger (1998) attempts to address this gap and while not defining legitimate peripheral participation, provides a view of legitimate peripheral participation as a shifting trajectory of participation that does not follow a direct pathway. The Wenger (1998) concept of a trajectory of participation is a complex one that is directed by many forces and tensions in the workplace and is intrinsically held in the subject. A trajectory of participation is therefore mediated by the individual's subjectivity and the forces and tensions that impact upon participation at the workplace. Lave and Wenger (1991) make it clear that legitimacy and peripherality are complex notions about ways of belonging to a CoP that are affected by the power relationships found in the workplace. Chapter 6 outlines a view of legitimate peripheral participation, as it relates to this research. This is done to overcome the over-simplified view of legitimate peripheral participation as moving from neophyte to mastery in a CoP and provide an illustration of the relationships among the diverse group of members of a CoP. The foregoing

commentary suggests that legitimacy and peripherality have not been the subject of research and therefore not adequately defined.

#### **2.6.5 Power Relationships**

Fuller et al. (2005) find that “Lave and Wenger [1991] acknowledge, but never fully explore, the significance of conflict and unequal power relations as part of their theorising on the internal operation of communities of practice and its relationship with the wider context” (p. 66). Billett (2000) notes that the issue of power in workplace learning has not been directly addressed in the literature. In this respect Lee et al. (2004) note that “how organisational structures and workplace contexts constitute sites of engagement for individual learners and concomitantly, how these shape, facilitate or restrict their learning at the workplace” (p. 23).

#### **2.6.6 Learner Identity**

Fuller et al. (2005) found that “although Lave and Wenger (1991) acknowledge the significance of learner identity, they never fully develop this idea in relation to particular learners. ...[and that] Lave and Wenger (1991) implicitly treat their newcomers as tabula rasa” (p. 66). Fuller et al. (2005) make reference to Wenger (1998) as taking some time to investigate identity, becoming, and belonging. Wenger (1998) argues that individuals know who they are by what scope of participation is possible for them, in what they choose to participate, and in what they choose not to participate. The view is

that learning “is not a passive process of socialisation or enculturalisation” and that individuals retain their individual subjectivity and exercise agentic action to choose the experiences in which they might engage and construct knowledge (Billett, 2004, p. 316).

### **2.6.7 Summary**

The foregoing discussion has established that the theory of Situated Learning as legitimate peripheral participation in CoPs takes into account the importance of context in workplace practice. Fuller et al. (2005) also consider that “legitimate peripheral participation is a useful component of any comprehensive explanation of how people learn at work...[and] sheds considerable light on the processes involved when people newly enter a community” (p. 65).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The literature reviewed in this chapter has established that the contemporary workplace is characterised by continuous and ongoing change. The literature suggests that there is a need imposed on workers to improve their skills and knowledge so they might keep pace with change and achieve productivity improvement. The literature has also revealed that learning at the workplace can be experienced through participation in formal and informal educational contexts, which are integral to, and embedded in work, and it is a continuous

construction. In this respect Billett (2001) asserts that the individual worker and workplace factors predicate learning that is important for the organisation and the individuals and address the need to cope with ongoing and continuous change. For such purposes Billett (2001) uses a curriculum model that makes full use of learning available through everyday participation in work activities that are guided by expert co-workers, assisted by the contribution of other workers, and the workplace environment itself and workers follow a developmental process. That is, it is the case that the level of participation in the activity of the workplace and thereby learning can be mediated by the affordances of the workplace, socio-cultural forces and tensions, and individual agency (Billett, 2004).

It can be concluded from the foregoing review that it is likely that action of the respondents' may be examined and explained using the theoretical basis of Situated Learning. Furthermore, when considered in terms of a CoP, as described by Wenger (1998), that individuals' participation in work places them on a developmental pathway. Furthermore that the developmental pathway can be mediated by the forces and tensions associated with the individual interacting with others and the environment of the workplace.

Finally, this review of the literature indicates that there is only limited documented research about job relocation in military workplaces or workplaces characterised by regular and widespread job relocation. Also this review of the literature concerning Situated Learning suggests that the criticism of Situated Learning may be somewhat ill-founded and reflects alternative stances rather than coming from documented research. Therefore, as Fuller et al. (2005) asserts, “further in-depth studies of workplace learning in a wide a range of contexts are required if all the issues affecting learning and their inter-relationships are to be fully understood and theorised” (p. 67). This is certainly the case in military workplaces where there is a paucity of documented research about individuals’ perceptions of workplace practices.

The foregoing discussion emphasises the assertion made in the introduction to this chapter that context is important in workplace research. This also suggests that the use of Situated Learning as a theoretical basis to examine and explain the ADF workplace may be appropriate. This is because it provides a way to investigate the relationships among context, participation, and learning when ADF staff cope with the change they experience as a consequence of a job relocation. The next chapter provides a description of the ADF workplace in general, and the specific RAAF workplace that is the context for this research.

## **Chapter 3: Context: The ADF Workplace**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter 2 is a literature review that identified some characteristics of the contemporary workplace from a broad perspective. In addition chapters 1 and 2 identified the importance of context in research about workplace practice. To move towards the context for this research this chapter will provide a description of the ADF military workplace and specifically the RAAF workplace, WASP.

In many ways the ADF and its staff are much like any other employers and employees at mainstream workplaces in Australia. Furthermore, the ADF workplace has many characteristics that can be found in other workplaces in Australia. However, the ADF workplace has four distinctive characteristics that concern:

- military rank and discipline
- security
- the culture and customs of the ADF
- the nature of the work.

The ADF is comprised of three services, the Army, Navy and RAAF. Each service has its own culture and customs within the four distinctive

characteristics of the ADF. In much the same way, the staff of the three services wear a military uniform, with rank and campaign medals, that are quite different. This research is about an RAAF workplace and recognises its distinctive characteristics as a separate entity under the broader context of the ADF. The following sections provide an overview of the ADF as an organisation, consider each of four distinctive characteristics of the ADF workplace, and then the characteristics of the RAAF workplace, specifically WASP.

## **3.2 The Australian Defence Force (ADF)**

### **3.2.1 Overview of the Organisation**

The ADF is a large organisation by Australian standards but is a small military force by world standards. In this dissertation the term “ADF staff” refers to permanent serving members of the ADF. The term “serving” reflects the notion that ADF staff serve the Australian public by working to maintain the national security of Australia. The Defence Annual Report 2006-07 (2007) placed the number of ADF permanent military staff at 51,504 and part-time military reserve staff at 14,516. These military staff are supported by 19,562 permanent civilian staff employed by the Department of Defence. The ADF also relies on outsourcing of support services with contractors providing most of the general support services on permanent military installations within



Australia. Contractors also provide the ADF with stores and general military equipment, vehicles, ships, aircraft, and through life support for such equipment.

The Australian Government directs the activities of the ADF as it does other parts of the Commonwealth Public Service. This direction was evident in the reaction to illegal immigration by sea from South East Asia that happened in the first decade of this century. The then Prime Minister, John Howard, was reported in the popular media to have stated that it was a job for the Navy. The Navy deployed a ship to Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean, and patrolling by sea and air was conducted.

The direction of the ADF by the Australian Government and the relationship to Australian community values and beliefs are articulated in the following extract from a Department of Defence, Public Affairs & Corporate Communication (2002) document.

The Australian Defence Force is an important national institution in Australia. Its core function is to defend Australia from armed attack. In carrying out this and all its other functions, the Australian Defence Force is dependent on the support of the Australian people, is governed by the rule of law, and is subject to the direction of the

Commonwealth Government as the civil authority. The way that the Australian Defence Force is employed reflects Australian values about the primacy of the rule of law and of the civil authority in upholding the rule of law. The Government's use of the Australian Defence Force also reflects community values about the need for Australia, where it can, to seek to resist international aggression, relieve human suffering, promote justice and freedom internationally, and protect our borders and Exclusive Economic Zone. A military force is therefore not simply an instrument of state power; it is also a reflection of the society from which it is drawn. ... Also the Australian community should appreciate the factors that shape the ethos of its armed forces and how these factors interact with community standards and ideals. At the same time – and as part of the Australian Defence Force's commitment to regional cooperation and security – it is useful for other nations to be aware of the values and commitment to professionalism of the Australian Defence Force (p. 1).

The conditions of employment for ADF staff and the day to day conduct of business are much like that of a public sector position in Australia. The remuneration that ADF staff receive is also much like that of other people employed by the Commonwealth Public Service. It is a condition of

employment that ADF staff may be deployed to any one of a number of military locations to participate in armed conflict, peacekeeping, and humanitarian duties. The physical demands of such duties of ADF staff necessitate a minimum level of physical fitness. Accordingly, it is a condition of employment that ADF staff maintain a minimum level of physical fitness. The duties of ADF staff may require them to be away from Australia and have only minimal support services that may be limited to just what is necessary to sustain life. Such deployments can be a life changing experience. Death may occur during a deployment and can result in ADF staff contracting disease or experiencing post traumatic stress disorder. The remuneration ADF staff receive for deployment to theatres of armed conflict, peacekeeping, or humanitarian duties are consistent with the risks and hardship that go with serving the Australian people in such situations.

In an Education Resource Kit (Department of Defence, 2003) provided as a part of the Defence 2020 Education Resource Project, there are references to transcripts of interviews completed in September 2002 with serving ADF personnel. The interview transcripts reflect the four distinctive characteristics of the ADF that concern:

- military rank and discipline
- security

- the culture and customs of the ADF
- the nature of the work.

These characteristics are evident in the following excerpt from a transcript of such an interview from Lewis and Gurry (2003).

A Defence career might look similar to a civilian one, but there are some key differences. We have to exercise leadership and management responsibilities often under difficult and dangerous circumstances. We also have society's expectations to take into account in a way that non-military people do not. We are also seen as representatives of our Service, and our nation, in a way that few other people are. Meeting these high expectations mean that there is a greater pride in achievement and of being part of something important in society, than you will feel by being part of a private company. ...The best part of my job is I get to use multimillion dollar advanced equipment. Although it's hard work I find my job is always exciting and I enjoy the responsibility that I have. Things happen every day and there is not a day that goes by where you don't learn something. I just wanted adventure, you get to travel and you do different things all the time so it's not boring. Then I realised that the mates you make, the team spirit and the good times you have after work, as a package, is excellent. You have some great experiences that money can't buy so that's why I

stay...The discipline is no real problem but having to be away from your family can be really hard. But overall I find it's really worth it – the skills you develop, and the sense of being part of something bigger and more important than yourself (p. 163).

This excerpt presents a positive perspective of life in the ADF and perhaps is not a balanced representation of the ADF staff perceptions of work.

Nonetheless, the citation reflects the four characteristics, listed in the previous section, that make the ADF workplace distinctive. These four characteristics are expanded upon in the following sections.

### **3.2.2 Military Rank and Military Discipline**

The ADF workplace has a hierarchical structure and work is organised around military rank. Appendix A shows the ADF badges of rank chart that displays the equivalence of military rank across the three services of the ADF; Army, Navy, and RAAF. The most senior Army, Navy, and RAAF ranks are the commissioned officers. The commissioned officers are the managers and leaders while the other ranks are the workforce made up of semi-skilled to paraprofessional workforce. Commissioned officers are known as such because they derive authority directly from the Queen of Australia and hold a Queen's Commission charging them with their specific duties and responsibilities. This structure and the associated separation of ADF staff by

rank are signified by the wearing of badges on the shoulder or sleeve and hats that denote rank.

The hierarchy of rank is emphasised in everyday activity by the organisationally mandated acts of saluting and addressing people by the rank they hold. For instance, John Jones with the rank of corporal is called corporal or Corporal Jones. Corporal Jones calls someone of the rank of captain, sir or ma'am. Other signifiers of rank are less visible by outward display. Senior ADF officers are eligible for improved working conditions, increased access to services, better accommodation, provision of privacy, higher remuneration, more control over subordinates, powers of arrest, and increased autonomy. This means that senior ADF officers are paid more, do not have to share resources with as many other people, and may have their own private office and facilities. They have the responsibility to direct the actions of others and receive less direction from their superiors.

A person of senior rank is not necessarily competent with the processes and procedures required of the roles fulfilled by his/her subordinates. A person of senior rank controls, directs, and evaluates the work of subordinates but is not necessarily able to do the work of subordinates. The training and professional development for supervisors and managers concentrates on management,

command, and control. The task of actually completing the work and the details of the process and procedures of the work may be left to subordinates. There are exceptions and some supervisory/management roles require intimate knowledge and experience of their subordinates' role. For instance an RAAF flying squadron will have an experienced pilot in charge and an engineer to manage maintenance services.

The ways of acting and being surrounding the hierarchy of military rank is known as military discipline. Gulam (2004), in a paper about the Defence Force Disciplinary Act (DFDA), notes the importance of discipline in the military generally and how this has endured into recent times. He asserts that "soldiers by donning uniform do not shed their civic responsibilities, they accept additional 'rules' to govern their lives" (Gulam, 2004, n.p.). He also provides the following overview of military discipline that is accepted throughout the ADF and reflected in ADF military orders and instructions:

Military discipline exists for the protection, not the persecution, of ADF personnel. Discipline is not the fear of punishment for doing something wrong, but faith in the value of doing something right. This aspect of military discipline is often misunderstood. A disciplined defence force does not mean cowering in fear of the punishment. It means requiring personnel who will do the right thing in all situations[sic]. It is this

discipline that is the feature that motivates an individual and an organisation to do the right thing even when the right thing is hard to do (Gulam, 2004, n.p.).

It is military discipline and the positional authority of military rank backed up by the DFDA legislation that is a distinctive characteristic of the ADF workplace. The principles that underpin military discipline emphasise the needs of the group over the individual. At the same time military discipline firmly places “the welfare of personnel under command of seminal importance to a commander” (Gulam, 2004, n.p.). Gulam (2004) also asserts that “there are very few civilian jobs where a manager or supervisor can enforce a direction to a subordinate with the weight of legislation behind them and take punitive action if that direction is not followed” (n.p.). This is poignant when it is considered that when a supervisor takes punitive action against an individual that the supervisor also holds the welfare of the subordinate of paramount importance.

The notion of military rank and discipline is summed up by a recent instance. Earlier it was stated that the then Prime Minister, John Howard, was reported in the popular media as having said that dealing with certain aspects of illegal immigration was a job for the Navy. The reason Mr Howard gave was that the Navy was a disciplined force. The inference was that while the work may



have been unpalatable the sailors of the Navy would do what they were directed by the Australian Government. This is because the Navy, as a disciplined force, do what they are directed because they consider it to be their duty to do so.

In summary the effect of military rank and discipline in the ADF imposes responsibilities and obligations that ADF staff accept as a part of their employment. The responsibilities and obligations are not only to follow rules but also to support other ADF staff and in particular junior ADF staff.

### **3.2.3 Security**

Another distinctive characteristic of an ADF workplace is the requirement to adhere to security practices and procedures at the workplace. This is particularly true in the current global environment characterised by terrorism and armed conflict where security practices and procedures have a direct link to the safety of ADF staff. If ADF staff do not adhere to security practices and procedures they are in contravention of the Commonwealth Secrecy Act, which has a maximum penalty of imprisonment with hard labour for seven years. There are two aspects to security, namely, information security and physical security. These practices and procedures that affect the workplace are considered below.

#### 3.2.3.1 Information security

In an ADF workplace, security processes and procedures are based on a “need to know” principle. A “need to know” principle means that certain information, whether it be electronic, hardcopy, or artefacts, must remain secured and behind a locked door. Such information is then available to only those individuals that have a need, and then only when needed. This precludes inclusion of classified information as a topic of conversation as a part of social interaction outside of the ADF workplace. Work related documents or information cannot be accessed by ADF staff out of working hours and artefacts of work may not be available and locked away.

#### 3.2.3.2 Physical security

Physical security starts at the entry to an ADF establishment. Unless a person has business to conduct and has an identified need to gain entry to an ADF establishment they are denied entry. Once people have gained access to an ADF establishment there are many levels of control for people that include access to buildings. Once within a building, access for people to areas within that building may also be controlled. Then there may be varying levels of control for people to access activities and information within those areas. Within each of those areas there are further processes and procedures that protect physical and electronic information systems security. These processes and procedures include the securing of information in safes, safe combination

changes, keys to rooms and containers, security reviews, security audits, and lockup procedures.

The maintenance of security processes and procedures is a shared responsibility among stakeholders and the business of the workplace is kept at the workplace. Therefore security considerations are an aspect of the distinctive characteristics of an ADF workplace. The need for adherence to security practices and procedures can be viewed as another form of discipline because ADF staff are motivated “to do the right thing even when the right thing is hard to do” (Gulam, 2004, n.p.). The effect of security practices and procedures are essentially responsibilities and obligations that ADF staff accept as a part of their employment.

#### **3.2.4 Culture and Customs**

This section provides a brief description of the culture and customs of the ADF that relate to the usual ways of acting and being and the values and beliefs held by ADF staff. Ways of acting and being, and values and beliefs are negotiated among ADF staff and transmitted from one “generation” to another as a part of the activity of the ADF workplace. An example is the certain ways of being and acting for members of ADF messes. An instance of this is how it becomes known that hats are not worn inside military messes. This is not enforced by the DFDA, it is inculcated and enforced by the ADF

staff who are members of the mess. Anyone caught wearing a hat in the mess is fined with general ridicule and the cost of buying everyone a drink. In this way the culture and customs are negotiated and transmitted from ADF staff to ADF staff.

Culture and customs are usually passed from the more experienced staff to neophytes as a part of settling into new jobs and helping others settle into new jobs. In this fashion the cultures and customs gradually change over time to reflect the change occurring in wider Australian society and around the world. A concrete example of the change that occurs in the ADF workplace along with wider Australian society is the use of the ties worn by RAAF staff as a part of military dress. Although uniforms are a part of military tradition that is closely protected, the ties worn by RAAF staff have widened and narrowed along with clothing fashion in Australian society. There are less tangible examples of culture and customs that change over time such as the *esprit de corps* that the ADF instils in its staff.

#### 3.2.4.1 Esprit de corps

One indication of culture and customs is military dress and bearing. Military dress and bearing is a combination of the uniform ADF staff wear and how they wear that uniform. ADF staff are expected to have pride in how their uniform looks and how they portray themselves by the way they stand and

move and the activities in which they participate. In this researcher's experience even recalcitrant staff will not let his/her peers down when called upon to fulfil a role, particularly if that role is visible to people outside of the ADF. This is a marker of the esprit de corps that the ADF instils in its staff.

The ADF espouses the view that esprit de corps is shaped by core values of "professionalism, trustworthiness, morality and legitimacy of action, teamwork and initiative, courage and compassion, fairness and respect for the individual, [and] carefully directed effort" (Department of Defence Public Affairs & Corporate Communication, 2002, p. 26). Esprit de corps is noticeable in the social networks and camaraderie that forms among the members of the ADF. It is also noticeable in tangible ways when ADF staff provide physical and emotional support to each other. Such support is provided to the families of ADF staff who are deployed, or experience personal or family tragedies.

When ADF staff are separated from their families it is common for ADF staff to come together at times when families traditionally spend time together. An instance of this is Christmas Day where ADF staff and their immediate family, who are separated from wider family, come together with other ADF families for an "orphans" Christmas.

Esprit de corps is not limited to males or females, senior or junior ranks, or arms of the service. ADF staff who have worked together keep in contact along their ADF career. Before email was readily available to ADF staff contact was achieved by word of mouth. ADF staff were, and remain, prolific storytellers and share stories about people and events, thereby retaining contact as they move along their ADF career. These stories are about real people and real events and make connections across space and time. The telling of stories (gossip) about people employed at the workplace passes reputations back and forth and people develop a library of other people's strengths and weaknesses. This can be likened to a database of resources and allows ADF staff to seek out a person who has certain skills, knowledge, or abilities.

The significance of esprit de corps in the ADF is that it endures across time, location, job roles, and responsibilities and can be picked up easily.

Friendship is a part of mainstream society, the distinction made here is that esprit de corps does not necessarily include friendship, crosses many boundaries, and includes an accepted responsibility for the welfare of others and the good of the group. As a part of esprit de corps ADF staff expect that they will help other ADF staff to learn their job and appropriate ways of being and acting and others will do the same for them. ADF staff keep in contact

across the space and time of their ADF career through direct communication of email, telephone, and letters as well as prolific storytelling. Esprit de corps may also be thought of as similar to military discipline as a responsibility and an obligation that ADF staff accept as a part of their employment.

### **3.2.5 ADF Work**

There are three components to work in the ADF: military, professional, and job relocation. A brief description of each of these components is provided in the following sections.

#### **3.2.5.1 Military work**

ADF staff have a military role which requires them to maintain deployment readiness. ADF staff must maintain medical, dental, and physical fitness.

Individuals must regularly participate in weapons handling training, physical fitness training, parades and ceremonial duties, military law training, combat exercises, security exercises, and adventure training. Administrative action is taken for those who do not attain readiness to be deployed. If an ADF staff member cannot achieve a minimum standard of medical, dental, or physical fitness, administrative action could result in termination of employment with the ADF. The requirement for readiness to be deployed is well resourced by the ADF with provision of access to free medical and dental treatment. As

well, ADF staff are encouraged, if not required, to participate in sport and physical exercise as a part of paid work.

The delimiting boundaries of the professional work and military work are reinforced by rites of passage that control participation in the ADF workplace.

Before individuals can participate in any particular role they have to:

- hold a particular military rank
- be nominated for a training course
- successfully complete the training course
- be assessed as competent.

Matters as fundamental as the use of weapons are controlled in this fashion.

Rank and role will dictate what weapons an ADF staff member may be required to use. A pilot may be issued with a pistol while an infantry soldier may be required to be competent with a range of weapons. Neither can use such weapons until they have had training with those weapons and been assessed as competent in their use.

#### 3.2.5.2 Professional work

Professional work in the ADF is very similar to a civilian workplace. ADF professional work can be diverse and includes a range of professions and trades. This includes working with electronic systems, interacting with communications and other electronic interfaces of military equipment. These



professions are supported by a range of positions including drivers, plumbers, store persons, mechanics, medical and dental workers. Some ADF professional work may have a direct equivalent in civilian life while others are unique to the military. Work that is unique to the military can have some synergy with civilian work. For instance, people holding management and leadership roles in the ADF can transition into management positions in civilian life. People working in operational radar, communication, or general operational roles may transition to employment with air traffic control, coastwatch, customs, or mining. The professional work completed by respondents at WASP and the nature of work will be explored in Section 3.3.

#### 3.2.5.3 Job relocation

The notion of an ADF career as a series of jobs occupied combined with regular job relocation as work is a distinctive characteristic of the ADF workplace. In this research the respondents refer to job relocation as a “posting cycle” and consider this to be a workplace practice. As noted by Jans and Frazer-Jans (2004) “The practice of widespread job rotation is one of the most idiosyncratic features of the military profession in developed countries” (p. 255). The purpose of job relocation is a reaction to the unavoidable movement of staff due to promotion and resignation in a geographically dispersed organisation. “The rate of job geographic mobility of Australian serving families has scarcely changed over the past fifteen years” (Jans &

Frazer-Jans, 2004, p. 257). According to these authors the ADF appears to continue the workplace practice of job relocation as a way to prepare ADF staff for more senior positions: commissioned officers as executives (Jans & Frazer-Jans, 2004) and senior non-commissioned ranks as a stabilising force in an environment of change.

Job relocation can be deemed as work on the following basis:

- it is mandated and administered by an ADF organisational authority
- ADF staff are provided with the necessary time, money, accommodation, travel, and administrative resources to effect their move to a new location
- ADF staff are provided with the necessary time and training to get ready for their new job.

Along with regular job relocations that occur every three to five years ADF staff's military role may result in deployments that are short term job relocations. Deployments are typically weeks or months, but usually less than one year in duration. ADF staff may be deployed to participate in training courses, operational exercises, theatres of armed conflict, and border security activities. The effect of the change associated with job relocation may be exacerbated because of the underlying change that occurs within a single job as ADF staff move between military and professional work. Therefore another

distinctive characteristic of ADF work is the change that ADF staff experience as a part of both long term and short term job relocation.

### **3.3 Work at the Wide Area Surveillance Platform**

WASP is a small RAAF unit that has approximately one hundred and ten RAAF staff. This is made up of a small executive and administrative staff of a total of about ten people. The remainder of the RAAF staff are involved in WASP's operational role and either conduct operations or train others to conduct operations. The operational role is to provide wide area surveillance of a particular geographic region near the Australian coastline. Civilian contractors maintain the surveillance systems while RAAF staff operate the surveillance systems to meet externally provided mission tasking. The output of surveillance operations is transmitted to another RAAF unit for identification and action as deemed necessary.

The work of each operator is distanced from the complexity of the surveillance system by a computer interface. Nonetheless the computer interface is relatively complex and the underlying concepts sophisticated. RAAF staff are provided with access to formal training programs where they construct the skills and knowledge required of their new job. Successful completion of such programs is measured by an assessment of their competency in their work role. Once RAAF staff are assessed as competent

they are then allocated to an operational crew and are able to participate in work at WASP.

Work at WASP is organised around the hierarchy of military rank as depicted in Figure 3.1. This figure shows how military rank organises RAAF staff into lateral layers and vertical layers that separate RAAF staff into professional work roles. Specifically, at WASP, it illustrates how military rank and professional work delimit the scope of participation for RAAF staff in the work activity. It can be seen from Figure 3.1 that military rank is divided into five horizontal layers, the Commanding Officer (CO), executives, middle management, experienced, and junior ranks. The military ranks that RAAF staff hold and where they are along their RAAF career determines where they participate in the activity of work at WASP.

Figure 3.1. Workplace structure as conceptualised

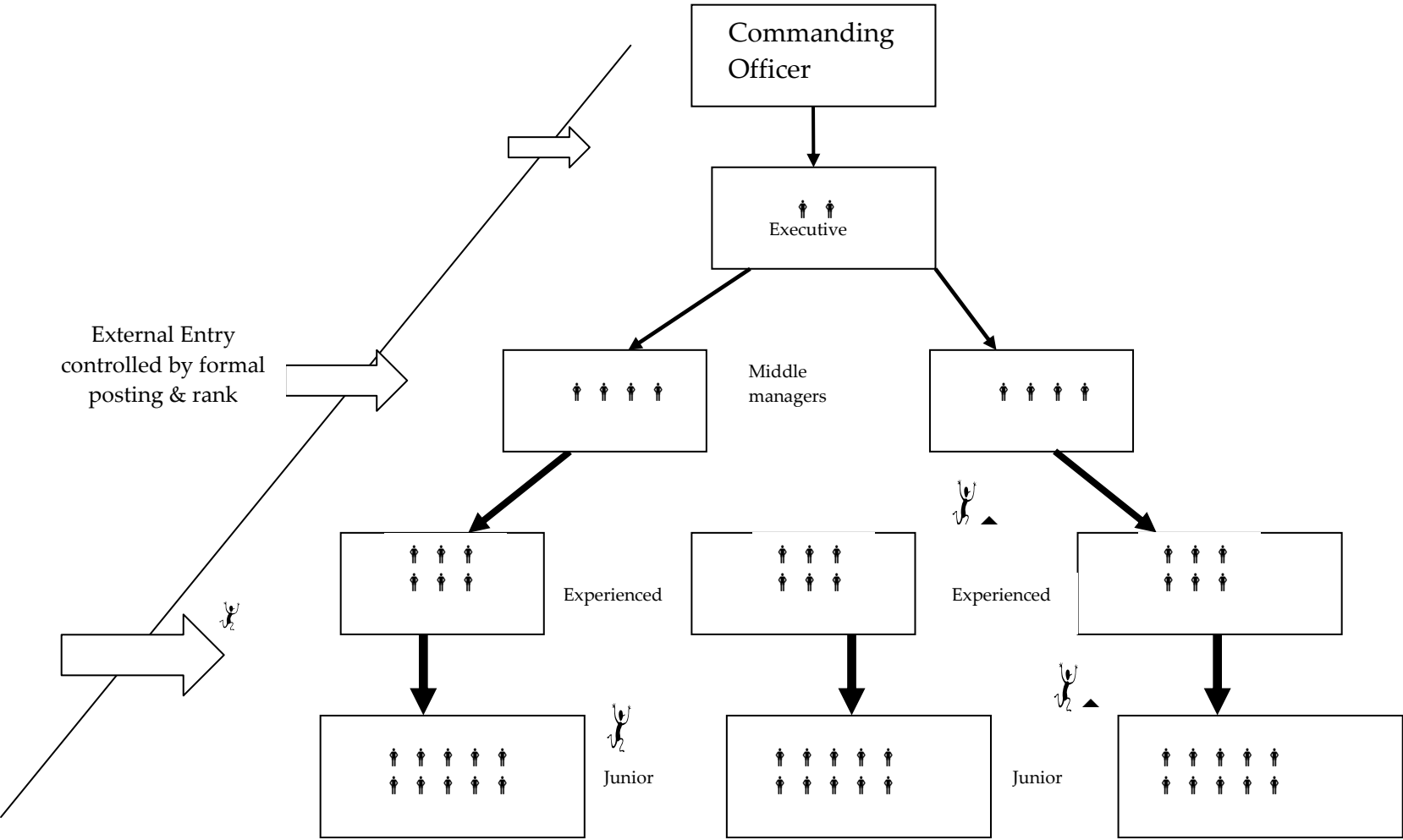


Figure 3.1 also shows that there are vertical layers that are delineated by functional work areas. The functional areas are: operations crew A, operations crew B, and training staff. When RAAF staff posted to WASP complete their formal training they are assigned to either operations crew A or operations crew B. The operations crews work shiftwork to cover sixteen hours per day and seven days per week. This is completed using a shift cycle that consists of two early starts and then two late starts of twelve hours duration and then four days off. The RAAF staff on operations crews have little contact with the members of the other crew and movement across crews is unusual. There is movement of staff from operations crews to roles with training. Training staff are selected from the more experienced staff on operations crews.

The professional work role of the respondents at WASP does not have an easily identified equivalent outside of the ADF and military workplaces. It involves the use of electronic systems and tools that are typically modern, technically complex, and unique to military applications. Continual and ongoing change happens with electronic systems and with the tools at the workplace due to an ongoing research, development, and implementation program. Civilian contractors provide engineering services to implement the technological advances that are the outcome of the research work of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO). This means that access

to learning resources for RAAF staff who work with the electronic systems and tools of the workplace is limited. The electronic systems and tools are provided as a complete and ready to use package with introductory training sessions. Public, DSTO, and ADF libraries do not hold relevant reference material because the material is yet to be published. Scientific journals may contain some information but are written for research peers. Therefore those journals are inaccessible to RAAF staff whose usual most senior education level attained is year eleven secondary schooling.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided the reader with an outline of the research context. It has shown that the ADF workplace environment is influenced by four distinctive characteristics. These are:

- military rank and discipline
- security
- the culture and customs of the ADF
- the nature of work.

ADF staff have a military role, wear a uniform, and accept responsibilities and obligations and prescribed ways of being and acting. Work in the ADF, as shown in this chapter, proceeds through a series of job relocations, known as postings, for the purpose of undertaking military and professional work. The

relocation between postings is deemed as work because it is mandated by the ADF. This is evidenced by the fact that the ADF staff expend resources and attend training courses to facilitate moving and getting ready for their new job. An ADF career is a series of postings of three to five years duration requiring regular job relocation made up of moving, settling in, and getting ready for their new job. Therefore ADF staff proceed along an ADF career where they continually cope with change at the workplace that affects all aspects of their life.

It was noted that this research is about an RAAF workplace and recognises its distinctive characteristics as a separate entity under the broader context of the ADF. The above distinguishing characteristics of the ADF and this RAAF workplace, WASP, have a bearing on the research design of the study which is outlined in the next chapter. The next chapter also presents the methodology used in this research to study the perceptions individual RAAF staff members have of their participation in the activity of work, after a job relocation to WASP.



## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter commences with a consideration of the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the constructivist Grounded Theory methodology used in this research. This is followed by a description of this methodology. Then the research design for the investigation of the Research Questions is detailed before the chapter concludes with the treatment of ethical considerations, and a discussion of the limitations of this research.

### **4.2 Philosophical Assumptions**

There are many research approaches and a “general framework [should] be adopted to provide guidance about all facets” of the research (Creswell, 2003, p. 3). In this section the two general frameworks, the positivist and interpretive/constructivist research approaches, are presented as a background to the stance and assumptions made by the researcher in this investigation.

#### **4.2.1 Positivist Philosophical Assumptions**

In a positivist approach to research the researcher assumes that there is an objective reality and that the researcher is neutral and research should be value free (Lichtman, 2006). Jackson (2003) provides seven assumptions that positivists make in approaching their research:

- all behaviour is naturally determined
- humans are a part of the natural world
- nature is orderly and regular
- all objective phenomena are eventually knowable
- nothing is self evident
- truth is relative
- knowledge comes from experience.

Jackson (2003) asserts that the positivist approach to research relies mainly on “experiments, surveys, secondary data, or data collected by others. Typically, positivist approaches rely on some form of numerical analysis rather than on verbal descriptions” (p. 8).

#### **4.2.2 Interpretive/Constructivist Philosophical Assumptions**

An interpretive/constructivist approach to research relies on interpretation. It is based on the researcher’s viewpoint and is informed by his/her

assumptions of the nature of reality and the relationship of the knower to known. Therefore interpretive/constructivist researchers consider that objectivity is not possible and hence not desirable. Jackson (2003) compares positivist with interpretive assumptions and describes an interpretivist researcher as being interested in how “people make sense of their lives, how they define their situation, and how their sense of self develops in interaction with others” (p. 9). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) assert that interpretive research is “guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (p. 31). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) also contend that:

... any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of—and between—the observer and the observed. Subjects or individuals are seldom able to give a full explanation of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts, or stories, about what they have done and why (p. 29).

Interpretive/constructivist researchers consider that subjectivity exists only as a perception; objectivity exists independent of perception and “the problem is that trying to objectify the subjective is to miss the point” (Mournier, 2001, p.2). Criticism of an interpretive/constructivist research approach rests on this

notion of subjectivity displacing an objective reality. Therefore the results of an interpretive/constructivist approach to research cannot be generalised (Jackson, 2003).

### 4.2.3 Summary

This research explores the perceptions of people. Therefore it is not consistent with a positivist approach, as detailed above, and it is therefore deemed more appropriate to use an interpretive/constructivist approach. Table 4.1 below is adapted from Jackson (2003) and summarises the positivist and interpretive constructivist approaches to research.

**Table 4.1** Two General Frameworks

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Positivist</b>	<b>Interpretive/constructivist</b>
View of science	A tool for uncovering general laws of cause and effect in social behaviour	A tool for understanding the reality experienced by people
View of human behaviour	Caused by forces acting on the individual	Determined by context and individual perception of meaning
Goals of research	To predict behaviour; to test general theories of behaviour by testing hypotheses	To provide an adequate reflection of people's experience of the social world; testing Grounded Theory
Role of values in research	Research should be value-free; relativistic	Research should be value-free; relativistic
Research designs	Associated with surveys, experiments, quasi-experiments, secondary data, historical analysis, tends toward quantitative orientation	Associated with in-depth interviews, participant observations, field studies, document analysis: tends toward qualitative orientation

The ontological assumption that informed this research is that reality is intrinsic and unique to the individual RAAF staff members who were the respondents in the research. The epistemological assumption that underpins this research is that respondents construct multiple realities and construct meaning based on participation in the activity of work at WASP and the associated interaction with others and the environment. Table 4.2 compares the philosophical assumptions of this research with this interpretive/constructivist approach.

**Table 4.2** Research Philosophical Framework

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Interpretive/constructivist</b>	<b>This research</b>
View of science	A tool for understanding the reality experienced by people	Concerns the perceptions of ADF staff at WASP
View of human behaviour	Determined by context and individual perception of meaning	Context is important in this research set in the contemporary workplace
Goals of research	To provide an adequate reflection of people's experience of the social world; testing Grounded Theory	To explore and theorise the respondents' perception of work in the ADF following job relocation.
Role of values in research	Research should be value-free; relativistic	Research should be value-free; relativistic
Research designs	Associated with in-depth interviews, participant observations, field studies, document analysis: tends toward qualitative orientation	Used semi-structured interviews and a qualitative orientation

As shown in Table 4.2, this research adopts an interpretivist/constructivist research approach because it concerns the perceptions of the respondents and their experience of reality. Also, as shown in Table 4.2, in an interpretivist/constructivist research approach human behaviour is determined by context and an individual's perception of reality. Furthermore, this research interprets the respondents' perception of experience of the social world. Therefore it can be seen from Table 4.2 that this fits with an interpretive/constructivist approach to research. This is reinforced when it is considered that the research uses semi-structured interviews to gather data.

### **4.3 Qualitative Research Design**

It follows that a qualitative research design has been chosen because it is consistent with the ontological assumption that reality is subjective, an individual's perception, and a product of interpretation. Specifically, this research investigates the perceptions that individual RAAF staff members have of the realities they constructed, based on their experience of participation in the activity of work. According to Jackson (2003), research design:

... can be classified as either quantitative or qualitative. The distinction is based on the degree to which the analysis is done by converting observations into numbers. The distinction also reflects the differences

in types of questions asked, the kind of evidence considered appropriate for answering a question, and the methods used to process this evidence (p. 12).

In this research a qualitative approach has been chosen over a quantitative approach. It was chosen because, in this research, “instead of intervening in experience by removing it from its natural setting ... qualitative research looks for social and cultural patterns of experience, or relationships among various occurrences, or the significance of such events as they affect specific human purposes” (Kinchloe, 1991, p. 145).

#### **4.4 Research Paradigm**

The researcher’s philosophical assumptions and the selection of a qualitative research design are the basis for selection of a research paradigm. Guba (1990, as cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p. 31) defines a paradigm as a “basic set of beliefs that guides action”. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) contend that a paradigm is “the net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises” (p. 31).

The decision to use a qualitative research design reduced the choice of research paradigm to the common paradigms of: interpretivist/constructivist,

transformative, and pragmatic (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). As argued earlier this research adopts a constructivist paradigm because it allows for the interpretation of a real life situation where RAAF staff participated in the activity of work at WASP.

Creswell (2000) points out that a transformative paradigm departs from a constructivist/interpretivist paradigm by focusing on marginalised people and social justice. In a transformative research paradigm the aim is to advance an action agenda for change, help empower individuals, create political debate surrounding individual's self determination, and essentially it is collaborative with respondents (Creswell, 2003). This differs from a pragmatic paradigm in that pragmatists admit that research takes place in many contexts, they do not see a need to question the nature of reality, and they do not see the world "as an absolute unity... and truth is what works at the time" (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006, n.p.).

In a constructivist paradigm, knowledge is not fixed and people construct meaning as they interact with others and the environment on the foundation of past experience and existing knowledge. Thereby, the meaning people construct is mediated by both their existing knowledge and the context.



Social constructivism extends constructivism into social settings, where people share the construction of meaning together in the context of that experience.

In this research, a social constructivist paradigm is used to interpret the construction of meaning by RAAF staff members as they “invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, ... against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language and so forth” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 197). By using a social constructivist paradigm, as noted by Schwandt (2000), the underlying constructivist assumption that people construct meaning rather than discovering it still underpins the approach. The decision to use a social constructivist paradigm still reflects the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this research that reality is intrinsic to the respondents. It also assumes that reality needs to be interpreted and that multiple realities exist as constructions through social interactions against a backdrop of past history and lived experience (Merriam, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A qualitative research approach and a social constructivist paradigm are complementary because a “qualitative research [approach] assumes that there are multiple realities; that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception” (Merriam, 1988, p. 17).

## 4.5 Grounded Theory

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) assert that the “strategies of enquiry connect researchers to specific approaches and methods for collecting and analysing empirical materials” (p. 139). This research used a Grounded Theory methodology but methodologies such as case study, ethnography, or phenomenology could have been chosen. Case study attempts to shed light on a bounded phenomena; this can be simple or complex, long, or short but it is one specific case (Stake, 2003). Ethnography focuses on the sociology of meaning through close field observation of sociocultural phenomena and “places the researcher in the midst of whatever it is they study” (Berg, 1989, p. 86). Phenomenology “identifies the essence of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by the participants in the study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 15).

A Grounded Theory methodology was chosen for this research because it is known to be an appropriate research methodology when little is known about a particular topic (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Also, because little was known about the topic, it was difficult to identify one specific case for a case study or a phenomenon for phenomenology. The choice of ethnography may have been appropriate and while context is emphasised in this research the

researcher was not, as Berg (1995) states, “in the midst” (p. 86) of the respondents’ work at WASP following a job relocation.

As shown in chapters 2 and 3, there is no one complete theory presented about the experience of job relocation in a military context. When using Grounded Theory methodology, theory emerges from the intertwined process of data collection and analysis and is therefore grounded in the data.

Grounded Theory methodology is comparative and in this research was a process that involved comparison of all data, codes, categories, and the properties and dimensions of those categories against data and emerging theory (Charmaz, 2000).

The original Glaser and Strauss (1967) version of Grounded Theory methodology is underpinned by positivism and a view of reality as external and objective. Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) provide a version of Grounded Theory methodology that diverges from Glaser and Strauss (1967) but remains positivist with its “assumptions of an objective, external reality, a neutral observer... [and] also propose giving voice to their respondents” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 250). Charmaz (2000) considers that Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) remain in the positivist camp and adds a constructivist version of Grounded Theory.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) provide four broad steps to data analysis. Table 4.3 shows these steps and the underlying procedures and processes are detailed in Section 4.10 of this chapter.

**Table 4.3** Grounded Theory Data Analysis Steps

Step	Aim
Data collection	Provide a rich source of data analysis
Open coding	Collect data into categories of particular meaning
Axial coding	Extend open coding to develop the relationships among and within categories
Selective coding	Allow theoretical constructs to emerge and integrate into a theory or schema

This research uses Charmaz's (1994; 2000; 2005) constructivist version of Grounded Theory methodology. This is because it recognises the importance of context and researcher interpretation. Strauss and Corbin's (1990; 1998) four steps to data analysis shown in Table 4.3 are used along with the underlying processes and procedures detailed in Section 4.10. Charmaz (2005) explains that in a constructivist version of Grounded Theory methodology:

- theory is not assumed to be something waiting in the data and can be built with existing theory
- the researcher is not impartial and admits to his/her place in context
- the research involves the search for patterns from identified constructs.

Charmaz (2005) asserts that constructivist Grounded Theory methodology allows the researcher to tailor a methodology to the research context. In chapters 2 and 3 along with a description of the context of a contemporary ADF workplace, the concept of CoPs, as an aspect of the theoretical framework of Situated Learning, was outlined. This was done because, as Charmaz (2005) contends, it is necessary to have an interpretive framework and understanding of context before designing a tailored research strategy.

#### **4.5.1 Evaluation of Grounded Theory Research**

Grounded Theory “is not produced by conjecture nor is it logically deduced. It is procedurally generated” (Glaser, 2003, p. 131). Therefore the first step to judge Grounded Theory is to determine if the researcher rigorously followed Grounded Theory methodology processes that are “based on the unique methodology of constant comparison procedures” (Glaser, 2003, p. 131). The reader of this dissertation may do this by considering the level of confidence the researcher engenders in how the Grounded Theory was developed using constant comparison procedures. In this way the Grounded Theory needs to be evaluated by considering the areas of: fit, work, relevance, and modifiability (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 2003). With reference to these areas, Grounded Theory can be evaluated by considering whether it:

- fits with the instances in the data it represents
- works because it explains real issues and concerns of the respondents
- is relevant and encapsulates concerns the respondents confront regularly
- can be modified using the procedures of constant comparison.

In summary, this Grounded Theory can be evaluated by considering whether this dissertation engenders confidence in the adherence to the rigor of Grounded Theory methodology processes, and that the findings are closely associated with the concerns of the respondents and apply to the workplace that is the context for this research.

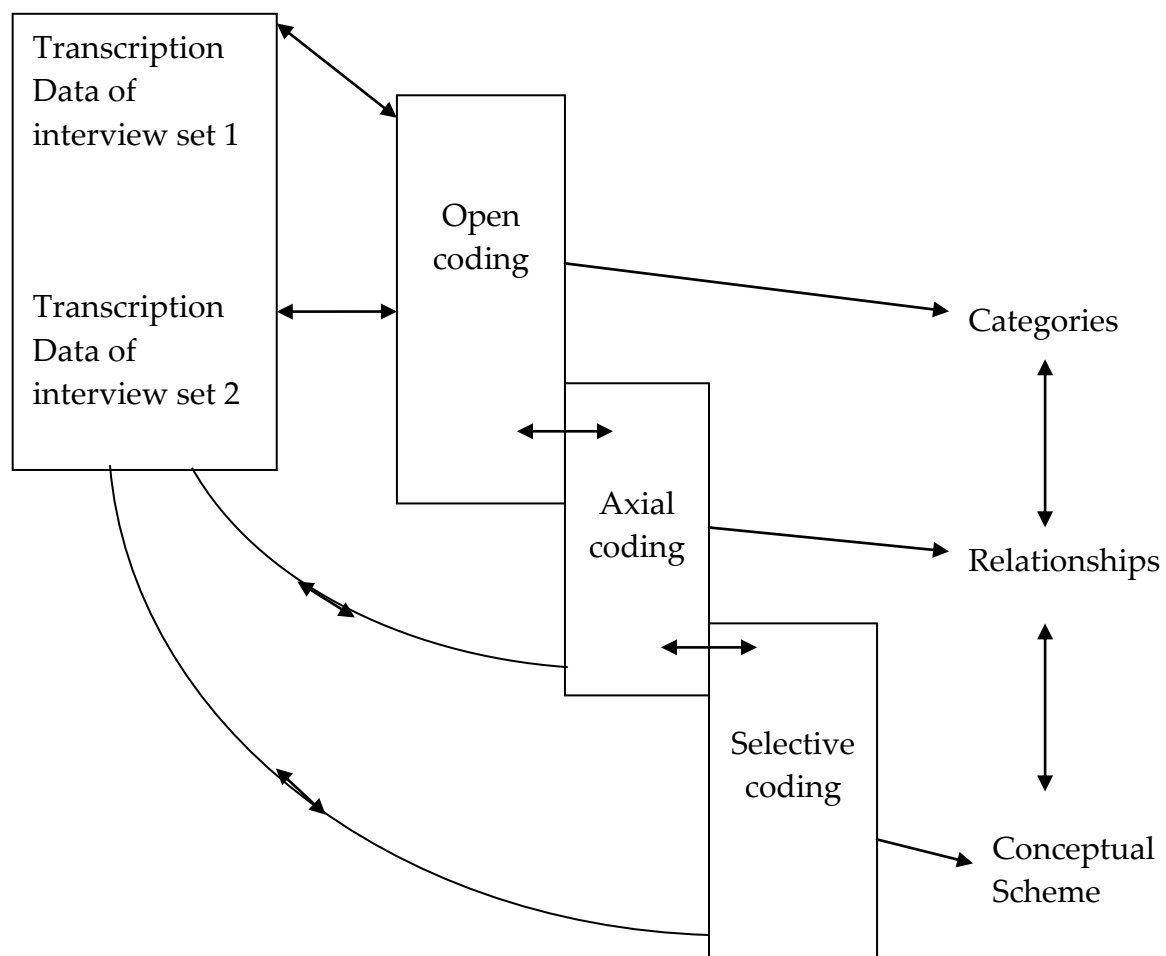
## **4.6 Research Design**

In a Grounded Theory methodology research can generate two types of theory: substantive and formal. In this research the aim is to generate a substantive theory because it is grounded in research that is about one substantive area (Glaser & Strauss 1967). A formal theory is generalisable because it is generated across a number of substantive areas (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Therefore, theory generated in this research is not generalisable but may have general implications (Glaser, 2004). The Grounded Theory method used in this research uses the steps as shown earlier in Table 4.3 that involve different types of coding methods that are detailed in Section 4.10. It

can be seen from Figure 4.1 that each step was sequential although the researcher moved back and forth between the data and data analysis.

The process of data analysis is expanded upon in Section 4.10 but an overview of the research design is shown in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1** Overview of Grounded Theory Data Analysis



In Figure 4.1 it can be seen that the researcher moved back and forth when working with the data to develop codes and categories in the open coding step in data analysis. Axial coding also required the researcher to move back

and forth with the data and coding. This was done to confirm the relationships among and between data, codes, and categories. It can also be seen from Figure 4.1 that the data was revisited in the selective coding step to confirm the emerging conceptual scheme.

#### **4.7 Data Collection Instrument**

It was deemed necessary to conduct two sets of interviews. One set of interviews was conducted as close as possible to the respondents' arrival at WASP. A second set of interviews was conducted later when the respondents had completed formal training courses and were participating in operational work at WASP. These later interviews were conducted because it was likely that the scope of participation for respondents would change with time. The adoption of a social constructivist paradigm and view of learning as embedded and integral to participation in work, sets up an expectation that if the respondents' scope of participation changes then so will the respondents' perceptions. Therefore it was anticipated that the data gathered from the second semi-structured interviews could be different from the first.

Semi-structured interview was chosen as the main source of data in this research because it provided broad topic areas that allowed the researcher and the respondents the freedom to explore, elucidate, and build a



conversation in that broad topic area (Patton, 1990). As Gillham (2005) states, the use of a semi-structured interview in this research has the potential to provide structure where:

- the same questions are asked
- the development of the questions ensures focus on the topic
- each interview has equivalent coverage of the topic area
- each interview takes about the same time.

The less structured part of a semi-structured interview used open questions and allowed the researcher to use probes when he considered that certain aspects had been left undisclosed. Therefore the semi-structured interview was used because “it facilitates a strong element of discovery, while its structured focus allows an analysis in terms of commonalities” (Gillham, 2005, p. 72).

In this research, open ended “grand tour” questions were asked that allowed the respondent to not only tell his/her story, but also to talk about his/her way of doing things (Glaser, 2002). Therefore the data collection instrument was designed such that questions were broad but all contained the word *you* and asked about the respondent’s perceptions. In this way there was no right or wrong answer and the topic of the questions was something the respondent

knew and could talk about. Considering the importance of context the questions were aimed at focusing discussion on the respondent's perceptions of their work, the context of the ADF workplace, and their experience of job relocation. In this way the data collection instrument was developed based on this researcher's "clear idea about the type of information ... [he] want[ed] to access and about the purpose and aims of ... [his] research" (Berg, 1995, p. 35). The questions used by the researcher are presented in Appendix B.

## **4.8 Sample**

### **4.8.1 Introduction**

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) note that "sample sizes in qualitative research should not be too small that it is difficult to achieve data saturation, theoretical saturation, or informational redundancy. At the same time, the sample should not be too large that it is difficult to undertake a deep, case-oriented analysis" (p. 282). These factors were considered when selecting a sample for this research, along with the aim of the research which was about the perceptions of RAAF staff following a job relocation.

#### 4.8.2 Sample Selection Process

Typically, between ten and twenty RAAF staff members arrive at WASP in the beginning of each calendar year. For this research, a group of RAAF staff who arrived in January of 2006, were invited to be respondents. The following factors were considered when selecting respondents in this research: if they held a range of military ranks, their work roles, and the places they were posted during their RAAF career. Essentially however, the respondents were chosen because they had just completed a job relocation.

Fifteen respondents volunteered and were accepted for this research. They were RAAF staff who arrived in the early part of a calendar year and were considered to be a representative sample of the RAAF staff employed at WASP. The group was deemed to be representative because: there were nine males and six females, they held a range of military ranks and work roles, they had a range of experience as RAAF staff members, and they came from six States and Territories in Australia.

Personal descriptive data that would add more depth to this initial information, was part of the semi-structured interview data collection instrument as discussed in Section 4.7. Table 4.4 summarises the respondents' descriptive details. The table is organised laterally where each row heading in

the left hand column has no relationship with the one below or above. For instance, it can be seen that most of the respondents are below thirty years old which has no relationship with their military rank. The table also does not cover all details of the respondents, for example the two commissioned officers were less than thirty years old.

**Table 4.4** Sample Descriptive Detail (N=15)

Military Rank	Commissioned Officers		Senior Non-Commissioned Officer		Non-Commissioned Officer		Other ranks	
	2		3		2		8	
Gender within military rank	M 1	F 1	M 3	F 0	M 0	F 2	M 5	F 3
ADF experience (years)	> 10		5 to 10		1 to 5		< 1	
	2		4		4		5	
Age (years)	> 40		40 to 30		30 to 20		<20 years	
	1		3		11		0	
Schooling level achieved	Bachelor degree		Post secondary		Year 12		< Year 12	
	3		1		10		1	
Home state	SA	QLD	NSW	ACT	VIC	TAS	NT	WA
	5	4	3	1	1	1	0	0

## 4.9 Data Collection

Table 4.5 outlines the timeline for data collection activity that was completed in the first four months of 2006. It can be seen from this table that the first set

of interviews was conducted during two weeks in January. A second set of data was collected during four weeks in April 2006. The conduct of interviews is elaborated upon in this section.

The conduct of the interviews was organised around the respondents' availability. In their first two weeks at WASP individual respondents were able to use paid work time to attend to work and personal needs associated with their job relocation. In the following four to six weeks the respondents were programmed to be involved with formal training courses that would consume all their working day as well as require further work outside of the usual hours of work. This restricted the researcher's access to the respondents for the first set of interviews to the first week after their arrival at WASP so that the training courses and associated learning would not be disrupted.

**Table 4.5** Data Collection Timeline

Date	Activity
13 Jan 2006	First respondents arrive; 3 interviews scheduled for the Monday of the following week
16-20 Jan 2006	Interviews organised for the remaining 12 respondents Interviews conducted each day for all 15 respondents
21 Jan-14 Feb 2006	Transcription of audio tapes of 15 interviews Check transcription against interview audio tapes
March 2006	Begin data analysis
April 2006	Conduct data collection for 13 respondents Interleave data transcription and checking against interview audio tapes

Three prospective respondents had arrived early and it was possible to schedule interviews for Monday 16th January 2006. Because of the short period of time, prospective respondents had to decide whether they wished to participate in the research, and it was considered possible that respondents might have felt pressured to participate. In this military context it was necessary to advise respondents that the CO had approved this activity. This raised further concern that this may have made prospective respondents feel obligated to participate. Revisiting the issue of informed consent at the preliminary stages of each interview alleviated this concern. The research information sheet included a form for respondents to indicate their consent without which the interview would not proceed (see Appendix C).

Each interview in the first data set took between thirty-five and fifty-five minutes to conduct. The researcher spent further time, immediately after each interview, to make handwritten notes to aid transcription. The number of interviews conducted in a short period of time meant that transcription of the interviews was completed after all interviews were collected over the three weeks following the conduct of the interviews. This was done to collect data and also to allow the researcher to begin the overview approach of Grounded Theory data analysis. The conduct of an overview approach to data analysis is elaborated upon in Section 4.10 of this chapter.

As can be seen from Table 4.5, the second set of interviews was conducted with respondents in April 2006 ten weeks after the first set of interviews. This was subsequent to the respondents completing initial training courses of two to six weeks duration and joining an operational crew. Two of the original respondents did not participate in the second set of interviews claiming that shift work, travel, and personal commitments restricted their availability. The second set of interviews was not as temporally confined and data transcription was interleaved with data analysis. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed as they were in the first set of interviews. In the Grounded Theory data analysis process, data is analysed, or coded, as data is collected (Straus & Corbin, 1990). When the second set of interviews was conducted some data analysis had already been completed.

#### **4.10 Data Analysis**

Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommend selective transcription of interviews and also suggest that in the case where there are relatively few interviews, or an inexperienced researcher, that it may be wiser to transcribe all the interviews. Therefore, tape recording and transcriptions of interviews were completed to overcome the researcher's inexperience and concern that taking detailed notes in the interview, as Schreiber (2001) contends, would be difficult and distracting. Transcription was considered worthwhile because

the transcriptions then became an enduring data resource that was revisited as a part of the Grounded Theory data analysis process.

Nvivo QSR NUD\*IST software application (Nvivo) was used to markup the electronic copy of transcripts and complete open coding. The transcripts were read line by line and marked up using the coding tools available in Nvivo. In this way Nvivo was used as a data management tool and provided a resource where it was easy to call up all references to particular codes and to facilitate the Grounded Theory data analysis process of constant comparison of incidents.

The interviews were coded and analysed in the sequence they were conducted. Interviews that were analysed early were revisited to allow categories to “emerge as well developed in terms of properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 215). This means that in the early course of data analysis many codes emerge, and these are refined and collected in broad categories that are then raised to a higher level of abstractness. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the data analysis. This figure also depicts the parallel processes of data collection and analysis with the researcher moving backward and forward between the data, data collection, and data analysis. In addition it shows the steps of data analysis identified by



Strauss and Corbin (1998) as, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding that are elaborated upon in the next sections.

#### 4.10.1 Open coding

Preconceived codes were not generated as a starting point and the aim was to generate initial codes from an “overview approach” (Glaser, 1978). The overview approach resulted in the fifty five codes as shown in Table 4.6. below.

**Table 4.6** Initial Codes: Overview Approach (N = 55)

<i>Self</i>	<i>Reaching</i>	<i>Returning home</i>	<i>Finance</i>	<i>Reaction</i>
<i>Social</i>	<i>Train</i>	<i>Preference</i>	<i>Confidence</i>	<i>Resolving</i>
<i>Process(School)</i>	<i>Trajectory (career)</i>	<i>Trajectory (resignation)</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Resolving impositions</i>
<i>School</i>	<i>Compart</i>	<i>Trouble</i>	<i>Stability</i>	<i>Coping</i>
<i>Family</i>	<i>Experience</i>	<i>Trust</i>	<i>Newbe</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Homecoming</i>	<i>Military rank</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Flexibility</i>
<i>DHA</i>	<i>Feedback</i>	<i>Favoured work</i>	<i>Rebellion</i>	<i>Compromise</i>
<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Settle in</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Multiple</i>	
<i>External Knowledge</i>	<i>How to</i>	<i>Rank separation</i>	<i>Collaboration</i>	
<i>Reaching back</i>	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Information overload</i>	
<i>Reaching forward</i>	<i>Favoured work</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Enable</i>	
<i>1RSU reaching</i>	<i>Touring</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Action</i>	

In this research this overview approach was one part of open coding that identified potential codes because as Glaser (1978) warns, such an approach is limited. Line by line coding of the data was required to complete the process of open coding. Line by line coding did not just seek out like terms and phrases but sought like instances and confirmed them as worthy of placing under a particular code.

The first level of analysis and the generation of initial codes, or open coding, was conducted as a part of the processes detailed in Section 4.9 of this chapter. This process involved: interviewing respondents, making notes immediately following the interview, transcribing the taped interview, and reviewing the transcription. For instance the code of *Defence Housing Authority (DHA)* emerged as the researcher heard, read, and wrote the acronym DHA. The respondents were talking about their difficulty of dealing with DHA, and their concerns over finding accommodation. This emerged because of the number of times it existed and that it was about how the respondents perceived how they settled in and got ready for work after they relocated jobs and moved to WASP.

Line by line coding became easier and quicker as codes were confirmed and better defined with the analysis of more interview data. This process also

involved moving backwards and forwards in the data to refine the definition of codes. If a definition of a code was changed, preceding interviews were revisited to determine if that definition was confirmed or if it held like, related, or opposite incidents.

For instance, a code of *Rebellion* existed in four places across five pages of one interview transcript as well as in another twelve places across six other interview transcripts. With the Nivo software application it is possible to browse this code and view all data coded as *Rebellion*. This allowed three things to happen in the coding. First, that the text could be coded in the format it was transcribed. Secondly, the researcher could develop an understanding of whether data was relevant and to which code it would fit. Thirdly, the researcher could expand each code and explore what each code meant. This process refined definitions of the initial codes, produced categories by rolling codes into another code, or divided codes among more than one category. Codes were gathered together under category headings, under one concept, and raised the level of abstractness.

Table 4.7 below is an example of an outcome of the open coding of the initial interviews and shows the category *Required* and its codes. While there are both codes and categories in this table, at this stage of the data analysis, the

codes were only loosely gathered under the category headings. Also the definition of codes was continuing to develop. For instance the code *Sexy work* did not fit the data because the term implied that the data reflected the respondent's perception that the work was special and much sought after. From the constant comparison of similar incidents in the data it emerged that the respondents only favoured some work and therefore the code was renamed *Favoured work*.

**Table 4.7** Initial category: *Required*

Category	Category Meaning	Codes	Code meaning
<i>Required</i>	The choice of an ADF career dictates certain things	<i>Rebellion</i>	Rebelling against the required work or working conditions and workplace culture.
		<i>Touring</i>	Instances where people indicate that that they interested in experiencing new things after job relocation.
		<i>Sexy work</i>	The individual has a positive view about work because there is a perception of a sexy workplace.
		<i>Homecoming</i>	Using the military requirement to move to come home or be nearer home or to family.
Note: These categories and codes are not mutually exclusive and some things fall under more than one category. An opposite instance may also be coded under the same code.			

#### 4.10.1.1 Open coding techniques

As well as line by line coding the following techniques were used in the process of open coding:

##### *Flip Flop*

In this technique a defining dimension of the RAAF workplace was used to look for a situation where the opposite was the case and then to make comparisons. For instance, a code and then a category of *Required* was generated based on the respondents' perceptions when they were required to come to WASP. This was compared to RAAF military reserve volunteers who this researcher had observed as choosing to work at WASP and therefore the geographical location they come to work. The comparison was between full time professionals and military reservists who work part time and do not have the same level of access to participation in the activity of work at WASP. Data was coded as *Required* when respondents made a reference to a need to earn a living and that their conditions of employment with the RAAF *required* them to be at this workplace. From this flip flop comparison it emerged that the data coded as *Required* was a part of the description of the research context because it exposed the intertwining of home and work life for respondents and the possibility that job relocation was accepted by the respondents as work.

### *Far Out Comparisons*

A *far out comparison* is a comparison between the study at hand and something as far as possible removed from the substantive area (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

An instance of a far out comparison in this research was the comparison of the regimented organisational structure of the RAAF workplace as compared to the loose organisational structure of an eclectic group of cruising sailors. This researcher was a member of the group of sailors and it was apparent that people brought very different skills and knowledge with them to the group. This was not immediately apparent with the respondents in this research because they did not indicate an understanding of their role at WASP. This notion is elaborated upon in chapter 5. This particular comparison assisted the development of the notion that the respondents were individuals with individual subjectivity and they brought different skills and knowledge with them to WASP. This provided “a little more insight into what is ‘really on the page,’ or should be there” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 91).

### *Waving Red Flags*

*Waving red flags* involves researcher sensitivity to particular phrases or words. Words like “always” and “never” are offered by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and in this case it was found that “obviously” was an indicator of things unsaid. Responses that included the word “obviously” usually pointed to a statement or story that aided data analysis. For instance, Arthur reported that:

*obviously learning the actual radar operations will be interesting too because it is something I am interested in learning (source: Interview set 1-5).*

In the first set of interviews respondents made few references to the processes and procedures of work. When data surrounding the above response was explored it was found that this respondent was not just saying that he was interested in learning about the radar operations, but that he trusted that the organisation would provide him with the training required to allow him to construct the procedural and propositional knowledge required to participate in his new job at WASP. This produced data coded as *Trust* and was a cue to explore earlier interviews for like, related or opposite responses.

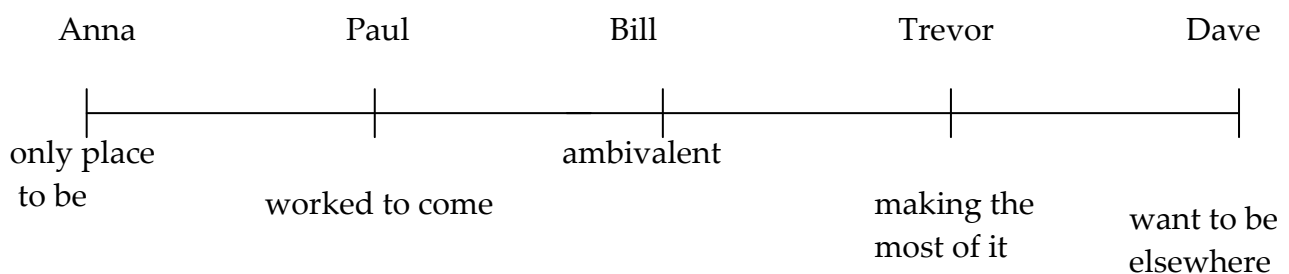
#### **4.10.2 Axial coding**

Open coding of data only applied to what could be “seen”. In open coding the basic units of raw data were collected under headings called codes and like codes were organised as the components of categories. In the process of axial coding the components within a category were examined and the focus changed to identify dimensions and properties that linked them and reduced the data into groups of like characteristics.

As a part of axial coding in this research the data that made up the category of *Preference* was placed on a continuum. This process showed that

respondents' preference for a job relocation had a range of meanings for respondents. It can be seen from Figure 4.2 that the continuum ranged from people who were required to come but did not want to be employed at WASP, through to those who were ambivalent, to those who had used agency and called on resources available to them to come to WASP.

**Figure 4.2** Preference for WASP



As the perspective changes with the move from left to right along the continuum the preference of the individual respondent changes. Data collected from five respondents are used here to illuminate this change. Anna offered the manning staff an ultimatum: She wanted to be posted here or she would resign from the RAAF. Paul said that he had worked to come. Paul refused a promotion because it meant he would be posted to another geographic location. He then bided his time until a posting to WASP was realised. Bill indicated that while he did not actively work to come to WASP he had thought that he would end up at WASP one day. Trevor did not



expect this posting and it was not a part of his RAAF career plan. Although it was a homecoming for him, it was not a preferred location and he indicated that he would make the most of it. In the first set of interviews Dave expressed his preference to be elsewhere. In the second set of interviews he indicated that he was going to resign from employment with the RAAF. He subsequently resigned from the RAAF. In this way the relationships among the codes collected under the category of *Preference* began to emerge. Furthermore, the notion of the respondents as individuals with individual subjectivity was reinforced.

Saturation was considered reached when no more new codes were generated and dimensions and relationships among categories were no longer developing. The data was revisited in the next step in data analysis of selective coding. This was not to generate new codes or categories but to confirm an emerging conceptual scheme.

#### **4.10.3 Theory generation and selective coding**

It can be seen from Table 4.2 that selective coding follows axial coding. Selective coding involves the validation of relationships against data to confirm the core category and facilitate a tight integration and dense development of the core category. Theory generation is the aim of the

selective coding process and in this research involved the integration of the categories into a conceptual scheme.

In this research, theory was built by identifying a central construct in the form of a core category and developing that core construct to formulate a conceptual scheme. For this research, the conceptual scheme was *MOVING WORK* as further elaborated upon in chapter 5. In developing this conceptual scheme it required this researcher to move back and forth between data, analysis, literature, and among differing levels of abstractness in the data to fill gaps. This was done to ensure that the conceptual scheme holds up to scrutiny, has conceptual density, and conceptual specificity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

#### 4.10.3.1 Memos and diagrams

Categories were considered as part of a memoing and diagramming process that sought to discover the relationship among and between the categories and the prime concerns for the respondents. Memos and diagrams were the dialogue the researcher had with himself that allowed him to step outside of the research environment and define and record what was found in data analysis (Charmaz, 2000). Memos and diagrams were used throughout data collection and analysis to maintain focus and control while moving between:

data collection, data, coding, and analysis. Thus, memos and diagrams were important in maintaining control of this research enterprise.

### *Memoing*

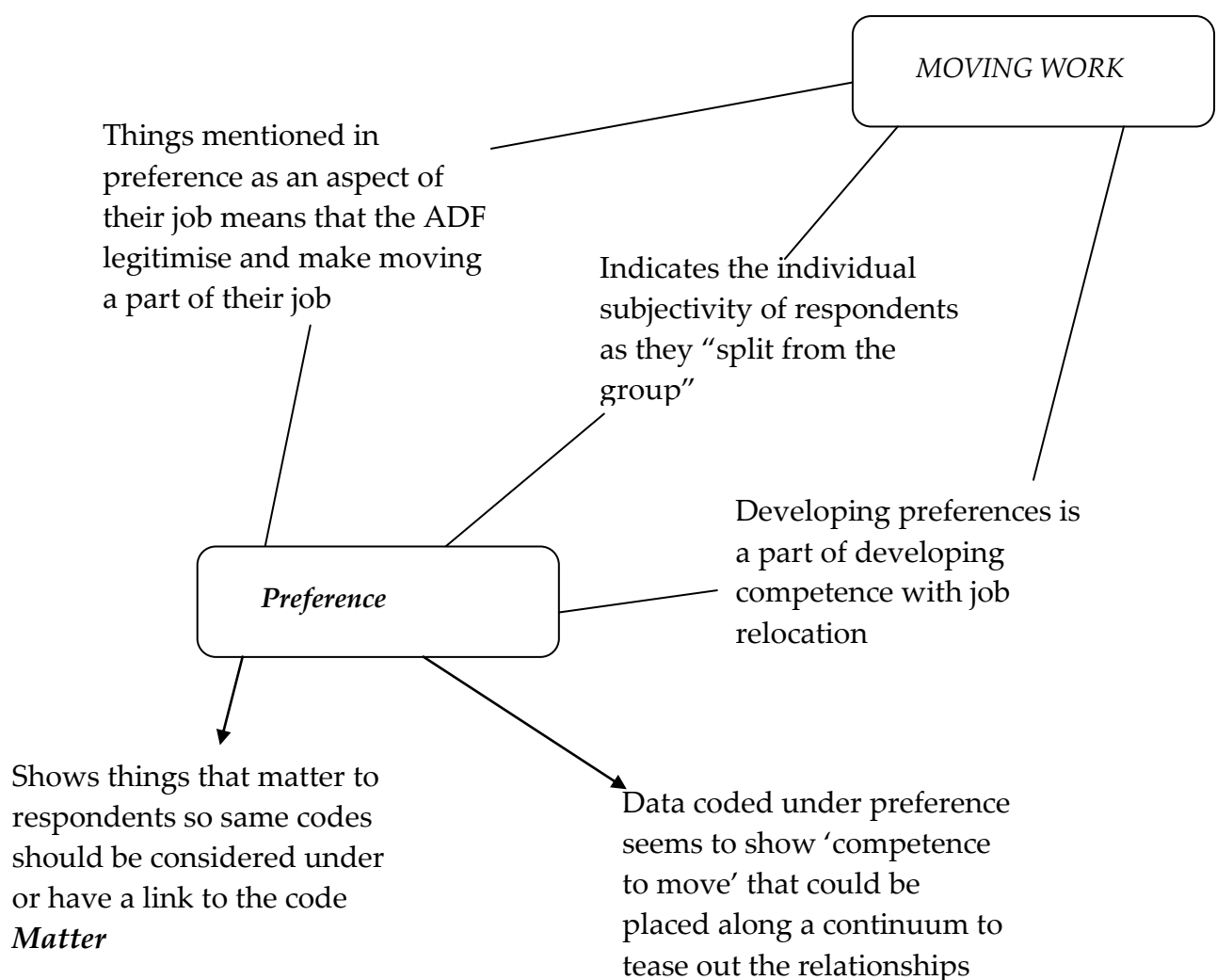
As things occurred to the researcher hand written notes were made. These memos were kept in Microsoft word documents. Also, research diaries providing a record of decisions as they were produced in the context, time, and place they were made. It was essential to make notes of things as they occurred otherwise they might have been lost. Memos were often short, not well-written but reflected the process of data analysis. For instance, the following memo was made about the category of *Preference* as it was developing as a part of the process of analysis of the data collected in the first set of interviews:

I seem to remember a study about nurses' staff turnover where a factor was identified as "touring" because they were using their employment as a nurse as a way to tour around the country. This appears to be what Craig is doing as he says he hasn't been here before and as he had to move he had a preference for WASP. Maybe Dave is reflecting the opposite, or the same ;- ) where he has a preference for WASP because he has already travelled around so much. Need to consider how these fit with each other and what sort of relationship exists with the category *Matter*.

### *Diagramming*

Following a memo, and to support the memo, diagramming was often used to explore the concept in the memo. Figure 4.3 is a redrawn portion of an originally hand drawn diagram about how the category of *Preference* fits under and relates to the developing conceptual scheme of *MOVING WORK*.

**Figure 4.3** Diagramming: Relationship Between Categories



Furthermore, diagrams were a way to explore relationships between and among concepts and categories, to identify what was missing, and what gaps existed in the data. Diagrams were a mixture of words, diagrams, and pictures. The diagrams were usually made on large sheets of paper and displayed on walls or flat spaces to provide a source of ongoing reflection until further analysis caused them to be developed further or lose relevance.

As Glaser (1978) asserts, memos and diagrams can achieve five things:

- raise the conceptual level of the initial codes
- develop properties of categories
- integrate categories
- develop hypothesis about categories
- locate emerging theory with other theories.

Memos and diagrams grew out of working with the data and aided in the identification of prime concerns for the respondents.

#### **4.11 Ethical Considerations and Limitations**

This section addresses the approval procedures and limitations of this research. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) assert that “two common ... [ethical] issues are informed consent and privacy” (p. 95). Accordingly, this

section details how informed consent and privacy were achieved in this research that was conducted in an ADF military workplace.

#### **4.11.1 ADF Approval Process**

An ADF staff member who holds the appropriate authority must approve the conduct of research concerning people in the ADF. The framework for approval and subsequent conduct of research in the ADF is detailed in the ADF's Psychology Research Policy (n.d.). This research is described under this policy as category "D" which encompasses a post-graduate student. Once the category of research is identified the appropriate approving authority can be determined. In this case the CO of WASP was the approving authority.

#### **4.11.2 Ethical Clearance**

After approval to conduct the research had been gained from the CO of WASP an ethical clearance application was prepared and submitted to the CQU Ethics Committee. Subsequently, ethical clearance was gained from the CQU Ethics Committee for this research. The application for ethical clearance was concerned with working in the field in a way that can be laid open in a dissertation that will stand up to scrutiny. The aim when designing the research was to develop a process that provided:

- protection of national security
- protection of the standing of the ADF

- protection of the respondents and the researcher
- the opportunity for respondents to withdraw at any time without penalty.

The approach to gaining informed consent and thereby voluntary participation in this research was informed by two issues peculiar to the context of the research. First, ten of the fifteen respondents were relatively junior in the RAAF organisational hierarchy. Therefore they may have felt obligated to participate because the research had been approved and endorsed by their CO. Secondly, the respondents were new in this RAAF workplace and may have felt obligated to participate because they perceived the research as a part of work at this workplace. To alleviate this concern, prospective respondents were provided with a research information sheet regarding the research on their arrival at this RAAF workplace. In the research information sheet it was stated that the approval of the CO in no way obligated the individual to participate and that the research process was separate from work responsibilities. This concern was further alleviated by revisiting the issue of informed consent at the preliminary stages of each interview. The semi-structured interview data collection instrument included a form for respondents to formally indicate their consent without which the interview would not proceed.

Descriptive information, including names, was collected from each respondent. This data was used to construct Table 4.4 that summarised this descriptive information that was then stored with the audiotapes and kept separate to transcripts. The actual responses recorded in verbatim transcripts could also identify respondents and were protected in electronic format on a password protected computer system and in hardcopy format in a locked filing cabinet. In both cases access was only afforded to the researcher.

#### **4.11.3 Consideration of Research Limitations**

This research focuses on peoples' perceptions and what they say about their perceptions of work following a job relocation. Furthermore, it was conducted in a military workplace and involved one substantive work area named WASP. The research does not investigate the respondents' workplace performance, job satisfaction, or how WASP, as a workplace, is different to other workplaces in the ADF.

While, in the experience of this researcher, WASP appears to be much like any other ADF workplace, it may not be representative of other ADF or military workplaces and the results may not apply to other military workplaces. In this research the fifteen respondents were selected because they had made a job relocation to WASP. The sample included only WASP staff that were



relocated to WASP and were newly arrived at WASP in January 2006. The period of data collection was limited to two sets of interviews with the fifteen respondents in a four month period following their job relocation to WASP. Nonetheless the sample was deemed to be representative of the RAAF staff employed at WASP. There were a range of military ranks, work roles, and they come from different States or Territories in Australia. There was a close to even gender mix, and respondents were at different places on their RAAF career.

Limitations of the research also arose out of issues surrounding the military context for the research. WASP is a military environment and the researcher was required to protect national security, the standing of the ADF, and the respondents. Limitations come from concerns surrounding national security and commercially sensitive material. It was a condition of approval to conduct this research that “commercial in confidence” and “security classified” material that appears in the data is protected. No writings or diagrams in this dissertation compromise classified or commercial in confidence material. This was facilitated by the researcher’s knowledge of the dividing line between commercial in confidence material and information that exists in the public domain. More complex issues that had an implication for national security required reference to the Security classification grading

document (Department of Defence: Technical security committee, 2001). The Security classification grading document identifies, in simple terms, what security classification is applied to information or material. Therefore, it identifies how data must be protected and provides a simple and effective tool to identify any sensitive data. A great motivator for protection of sensitive material is the penalty for contravening the Commonwealth Secrecy Act: imprisonment with hard labour for seven years.

The role of the researcher as a participant in the setting for the research may be viewed as a limitation of this research. In this respect the constructivist version of the Grounded Theory methodology used in this research recognises how the researcher shapes collection and analysis of data (Charmaz, 2000). Therefore the researcher brings his own biases to the interpretation of the data. While possibly seen as a limitation, it was also an advantage because the researcher was employed at WASP. The researcher held similar security access to the respondents and could access the respondents in an open and candid way. The researcher's twenty-one years of experience with the RAAF bring his subjective interpretations based on experience as a recognised limitation of this research. Researcher bias was addressed in preparation for this research by the researcher aware of the need to act in as neutral a fashion as possible. In addition, as a part of data

collection when asking open-ended questions, the researcher was mindful not to steer the respondents. Also this dissertation lays open to the reader the research methodology and research design that allows for an interpretation of the reality of those being researched by the researcher.

#### **4.12 Summary**

This chapter detailed the research methodology and the constructivist Grounded Theory research design that was tailored to suit the research context. Also provided were the interpretive/constructivist ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the decisions about the choice of a qualitative approach and a social constructivist research paradigm. The conduct of the research has been detailed with reference to the sample, data collection, and the data analysis processes with reference to results. The data analysis process used was described as a process that was interleaved with data collection and moved back and forth to the data. This process increasingly refined definitions of codes and the development of categories as the data was incrementally raised to a higher level of abstractness. The outcome of this process was to identify the respondents' prime concern and a conceptual scheme of *MOVING WORK* emerged. The next chapter discusses the analysis of the data collected in this research and elaborates upon the development of a conceptual scheme of *MOVING WORK*.

## Chapter 5: The WASP Experience

### 5.1 Introduction

In chapter 3 it was stated that the ADF organises work such that their staff members have a career path made up of a series of appointments (Jans & Frazer-Jans, 2004). It was also stated that the ADF staff move along this career path that takes them from job to job and makes for a scope of participation in work that is in constant change. In this research the respondents made a job relocation to WASP as a part of their employment with the RAAF. This chapter outlines, using the respondents' voices from the research data, their experiences of moving, settling in, and getting ready for work at WASP.

This chapter commences with a discussion of the respondents' perceptions of their new job situation following their job relocation to WASP. This discussion is then followed by a consideration of the changing scope of participation in the activity of work and how the respondents adjusted to the new job setting. This is followed by a presentation of a conceptual scheme named *MOVING WORK* which is used to explain the respondents' experience of workplace practice following a job relocation to WASP.

## 5.2 The New Job Setting

This section presents a discussion of the respondents' perceptions of their new job situation following a job relocation to WASP.

### 5.2.1 Preference for Job Relocation

It was stated in chapter 4 that all respondents were required to make a job relocation to WASP as a condition of their employment with the RAAF. How the respondents perceived their job relocation and their new job setting is presented next as a part of a discussion of the category of *Preference*.

*Preference* is made up of the data coded as *Homecoming*, *Touring*, and *Favoured work*.

#### 5.2.1.1 Homecoming

Data considered in chapter 4 was coded as *Homecoming* when the respondents perceived there was an advantage in their job relocation to WASP because it bought them closer to family members or enabled them to spend more time with them. For instance, one respondent, Anna, expressed her preference to be relocated to WASP when she offered the RAAF manning staff an ultimatum. Anna commented:

*[I rang] the Manner and said, look I know that you are going to post me because I am promoted,... I want to go home pretty much, ...[Anna indicated that her] career wasn't that important ... that I would sacrifice my kids and their happiness (source: Interview set 1-8).*

Similarly, another respondent, Bill, commented that he had indicated, on posting preference forms, his preference to leave Darwin. This was coded as *Homecoming* because Bill's preference to move was to relieve tension in his home life and allow him to spend more time with his immediate family. Bill expressed that he had been hoping to leave his previous job that took him away from home:

*six weeks at a time, .... with no family support. We didn't actually know anyone else up there [losing locality] apart from other [ADF member's spouses] and that sort of thing so it was just hard to do that. But here it is just four days on and then four days [off]. Just do my twelve hours then I can go home and don't worry too much about spending six weeks in the bush [as I did in my losing locality]... family wise it is definitely the work; the work environment is easier on my family life (source: Interview set 1-6).*

Data was also coded as *Homecoming* when it was interpreted that respondents expressed that there was a disadvantage in the job relocation to WASP because that would take them away from family and thereby limit their contact with family members. For instance, data was coded as *Homecoming* as a result of respondents lamenting the limited contact with family members who resided interstate and the expense of interstate travel involved when visiting. For, one respondent, Kylie, *Homecoming* indicated that she did not

have a preference for a job relocation to WASP but was making the most of it. Kylie, while not preferring to be separated from her immediate family expressed that she had the opportunity to get to know an estranged auntie who lived in Adelaide. Kylie commented that:

*it is a bonus that I am close to my Auntie... because I hadn't seen her for, like five years and ... when I came down the other week it was the first time I had seen her in five years so it was really good to see her again (source: Interview set 1-2).*

#### 5.2.1.2 Touring

Data was coded as *Touring* when it was interpreted that respondents indicated that they joined the military to experience new things or decided to make the most of moving to experience new things. Instances coded as *Touring* included one respondent who reported that he intended to visit local places of interest in the new geographic location. Also coded as *Touring* included instances when the respondent intended to explore other roles or jobs that could be found in the new geographic location.

An instance in the data coded as *Touring* was provided by one respondent, Dave, when he commented that although he had not expressed a wish to come to the new geographic location he was going to make the most of it.

Dave commented:

*[I] was ready for a move, I think the fact that I would come to Adelaide, it is not a bad thing ... it is time for a change and go on and see what else is available to me out in the wider world ... while I am here I would like to drive up the Centre and go to Ayers Rock and do that sort of thing and come back and then do all the peninsula area up around there ... just have a general look around (source: Interview set 1-3).*

Similarly, another respondent, Arthur, perceived that he was required to move and had a choice of two locales. His choice was dictated by his wife, he said:

*[my] wife liked Adelaide...not that we really had any choice (source: Interview set 1-5).*

Although Arthur was required to come to WASP and did not perceive that he had any choice in the matter he appeared to be intent on making the most of the posting when he said:

*[I] intended to do ... some additional work out at [the airport] maybe just... fulfill my navigation [requirement for my pilot's licence]... I am quite excited about the new location. This is the first time I have lived in Adelaide so my wife and I want to get out [and] explore ... and I will get my currency [requirement for pilot's licence] and get flying again (source: Interview set 1-5).*



On the other hand, one respondent, Craig, appeared to indicate that his reason for wanting to come to the new geographic location was interpreted as Touring. Craig commented that:

*I have been in the [interstat] for two years had a bit of fun up there and thought the change would be good ...when the opportunity came up to actually come here I thought it would be good fun, and to tell the truth at the time I think the problem was [that] I was stagnating a bit up [there] (source: Interview set 0-3).*

Further indication that Craig perceived of the move as Touring was found when Craig responded to a question about what factors influenced his preference for a posting to the new geographic location. Craig commented:

*I can't think of anything, other factors that really influenced it. Oh, just new experiences, new things in the military. Like that ... posting was... regarded as an "out of mustering" posting and it gives you the opportunity to sort of have a break from your normal job. To tell the truth the same thing is happening next year for me. I am getting an out of mustering posting to ... where I will be doing a job that is not regarded as an [usual one for my mustering] (source: Interview set 0-3).*

Craig's responses were interpreted as touring being one of his prime reasons for having a preference to move to WASP.

### 5.2.1.3 Favoured work

Data was coded as *Favoured work* when respondents considered WASP to be a preferred place to work. Reasons for certain work to be preferred included an interest in the technology of the electronic systems found at WASP, or that the work was valuable and directly contributed to the security of the Australian people. For instance one respondent, Dominic, was talking about *Favoured work* when he commented that:

*the job sounded interesting... [and my last work role] could get a bit monotonous... [but this new role] tends to be different every day because you never see the same thing and I had seen the product that this place produced ...[and] I wondered how that ... actually gets here and what the actual display looked like, and how somebody interpreted it (source: Interview set 1-1).*

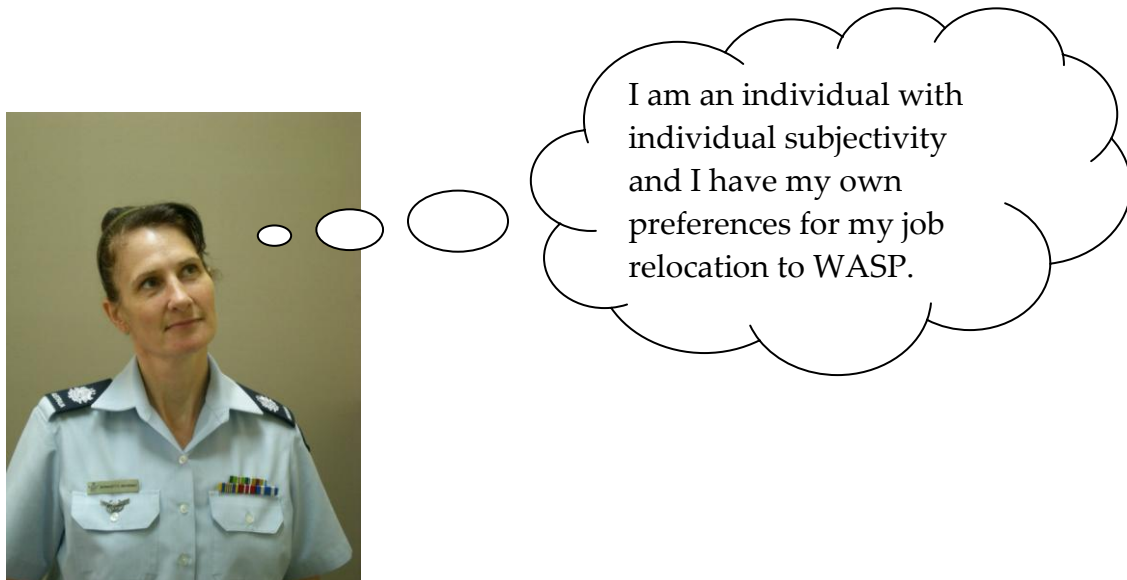
From a similar perspective and also coded as *Favoured work* was, another respondent's, Bill, comment that in his employment with:

*the ADF, this is the unit I wanted to come to... I find this unit probably the better of the units because you actually feel like you are doing something ... you feel like you are here actually contributing to the whole wider picture so... definitely something I looked forward to getting involved in (source: Interview set 1-6).*

#### 5.2.1.4 Summary

The foregoing discussion of the category of *Preference* provides a view of the respondents as individuals who had a range of preferences for their new job and the move to another geographical location. The data suggests that the respondents can be considered to be individuals with a multiplicity of differences, which make up their subjectivity (Hills, 1998). This conclusion is encapsulated in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1** I am an individual



In chapter 3 it was established that job relocation can be considered to be work because:

- it is mandated and administered by an RAAF organisational authority
- RAAF staff are provided with the necessary time, money, accommodation, travel, and administrative resources to effect their move to a new location

- RAAF staff are provided with the necessary time and training to get ready for their new job.

Thereby, the respondents' actions as reflected in the data are legitimised by their RAAF employer. Also it can be concluded from the respondent's responses earlier, that they perceived that personal matters and the context of work are intertwined aspects. The notion that respondents are individuals is investigated further in the next section in a discussion of the category of *Matter*.

## 5.2.2 Impacts and Tensions of Job Relocation

Six codes were generated from the data that identified the range of impacts and tensions that emerged from the experience of a job relocation to WASP and what mattered to respondents. The six codes are the elements of the category of *Matter* and were named; *Family*, *Stability*, *School*, *Social*, *Finance*, and *Housing* and are considered in this section.

### 5.2.2.1 *Family*

Data was coded as *Family* when family life mattered to respondents and they were interested in improving their family life. For instance, one respondent, Paul, commented:

*[I] wasn't particularly interested in going anywhere but [this city] because [my] family and partner and everyone else is here (source: Interview set 1-4).*

Similarly, another respondent, Anna indicated that a shift to a part-time RAAF reserve role might be more suitable for her as she commented:

*[I would only be working] school hours yeah, like I said it is all about my kids now, it is not about me (source: Interview set 1-8).*

Often the data coded as *Family* and *Stability* overlapped and that data was coded as both.

#### 5.2.2.2 Stability

Data coded as *Stability* was interpreted as indicating that the respondent was working to provide stability for their family. One instance coded as *Stability* was when one respondent indicated that he relied upon RAAF policy about postings to facilitate the co-location of him and his wife, who were both serving RAAF staff members. Another instance that was coded as *Stability* was when one respondent, Jack, commented that he was improving the family home because he had decided that they would not move from this city whatever happens. Similarly, Jack indicated that it was important for him to have his family moved, and settled in early to allow for his family to celebrate Christmas. Jack had bought his posting date forward by taking leave and commented that:

*yeah we moved in before Christmas to get settled for the kids and Santa coming and all that sort of stuff (source: Interview set 1-11).*

#### 5.2.2.3 School

Data was coded as *School* when respondents thought it was necessary to have stability in schooling and related learning experiences. Data coded as *School* indicated that the respondent was working to maximise the efficacy of educational experiences for themselves or family members. Data coded as *School* included instances about respondents moving early to ensure an easy school transition for children and conducting research about what they consider would be a “good” school. Also there were some instances of respondents staying in on base accommodation to provide a better foundation for the initial period of formal training at WASP. One respondent, Cathy, indicated that she was living in accommodation located on the RAAF base temporarily although her preference was to move into accommodation off the RAAF base. Cathy commented about her intention to move off the RAAF base:

*after we do this course, but while we are here it is go to work pretty much every day and study, and we are just going to live on base because it is a lot easier. Rather than have to drive in and out every day and go home to study*  
(source: Interview set 1-10).

#### 5.2.2.4 Social

Data coded as *Social* indicated that the respondent was working to seek, or to escape from, social interaction with other RAAF staff members. There are two aspects to this code, one where respondents actively work to not be part of the

workgroup, gossip, and work organised social occasions and another where respondents seek out social contact with other RAAF staff members. For example, one respondent, Kylie, was not interested in gossip and social contact outside of work and commented that:

*I like to stay out of that [gossip and socialising] ... I learned that a long time ago (source: Interview set 1-2).*

Likewise, another respondent, Bill, indicated that he avoided social interaction with his peers because their lifestyle choices were not consistent with his when he commented that:

*once I have left here I am just a family man. I like to sit at home, have footie training two nights a week, play my footie, cook dinner, do nothing, sit around with two kids and not worry about those sort of things (source: Interview set 1-6).*

There may have been other factors in Bill's choice to escape social contact not the least being financial and the cost of socialising that, in this researcher's experience, may have been a significant expense for an RAAF staff member with a young family.

#### 5.2.2.5 Finance

Data was coded as *Finance* when a respondent held concerns over the impact of making a job relocation on their financial position. It was noted that there were no instances found in the data where respondents indicated that moving had a positive impact on their financial position. The data coded as *Finance*

was almost all with regard to respondents who were in a long term relationship and their comments were about their partner's experience with finding paid work in the new geographic location. Two of the respondents' partners were nurses and they found work quickly. Two respondents' partners transferred location with the same employer while another two experienced difficulty finding work.

One respondent, Dominic, provided an instance of significant financial disadvantage when he commented that he and his partner might need to sell a block of land they owned if his partner could not find work. He indicated that they would not be able to continue to service the loan attached to the land when he commented that:

*my partner had a very good job...[that] she was really enjoying. She just got promoted, I was getting paid more in [the last location] so I took a pay cut and my partner lost her job to come here so in terms of money we have kind of lucked out of about ... fifty five thousand dollars to come here... if she doesn't have a job after the...[end of this month] then we will be in a bit of trouble*  
(source: Interview set 1-1).

This was of particular concern for Dominic because the land he might have had to sell was to become the site for his home in retirement.



#### 5.2.2.6 Housing

Data was coded as *Housing* when:

- the respondent was working to find accommodation
- it was associated with a respondent who was moving in/out of on base accommodation
- when a respondent, with a family, commented on moving into ADF provided, rented, or their own housing.

One respondent, Kylie indicated that she perceived that she had several difficulties to overcome with the first being that no Defence Housing Authority (DHA) houses were available. Kylie, commented that:

*we finally got hold of DHA and they gave us the Home Find website with no houses on it. Yes it would have been November... no houses on it whatsoever so we were like, okay, start looking up the Internet for houses so we could rent. We found one and put an application in for it and when we got down here we put in an offer in for it so we could [accommodate our pets]. We have got heaps of animals so we had to like bribe 'em a bit (source: Interview set 1-2).*

Data was also coded as *Housing* when respondents referred to instances where they sought out ways to learn about the suitability of prospective places to live. Strategies that respondents used to find suitable accommodation included: advice from locally resident family or friends, Internet searches, talking to others who may have been to the geographic location in the past, and newspapers. Kylie indicated that she searched on the

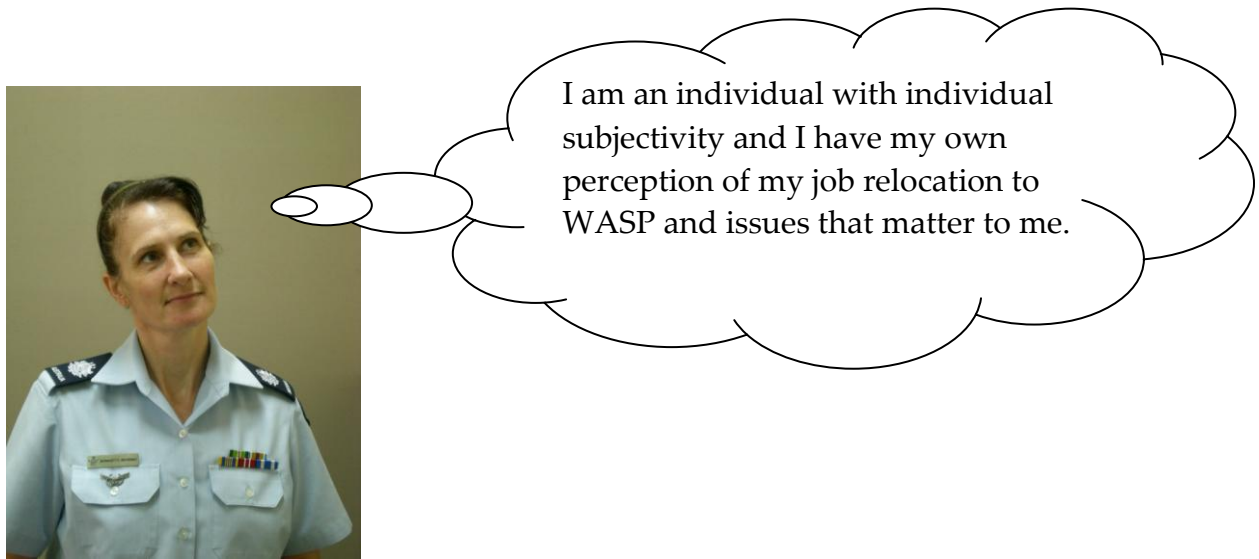
Internet and then relied on her aunt for first-hand experience when she commented that:

*We sorta had a look on the net and my Auntie lives down here so okay [I asked my Auntie to] go and look at this property and tell me what you think and she would go and have a look and [give me a] no or yeah, have a look at that one, or you know and this was sort of the pick of the bunch. Yeah we went, had a look at the outside of it the day after we got here and we went yeah okay we will try a bit harder for this house (source: Interview set 1-2).*

### 5.2.3 Summary

The discussion concerning the categories *Preference* and *Matter* has shown these aspects influenced the respondents' job relocation to WASP. It can be concluded from the foregoing discussion that respondents perceived job relocation as work. RAAF workplace practices support this conclusion when RAAF staff are formally posted to a particular RAAF unit, at a particular rank, into a particular position, on a particular date. Then, as discussed in chapter 3, RAAF policy and practices afford RAAF staff the time and resources to undertake job relocation as work. The foregoing discussion also reinforces the notion that the respondents are individuals with individual subjectivity and that they perceived job relocation as work. Respondents behaved as individuals and they had different preferences for their job relocation and issues that mattered to them. Figure 5.2 encapsulates this conclusion.

**Figure 5.2** Issues that matter to respondents



It emerged from a consideration of the category of *Matter* that the nature of work function changed as the respondents shifted from moving to settling in and getting ready for the formal training course they would undergo. The respondents supplanted some of the issues that mattered to them, as they got ready for their training course. For instance, as indicated in the discussion of the data coded as *School* and *Housing* some of the respondents chose to live in less preferred accommodation on the RAAF base to provide stability while they completed a training course. This indicated the beginning of a shift from focus on issues that mattered to them in getting ready for their new job. This implies a changing scope of participation for the respondents as they transitioned from moving to settling in and getting ready for work at WASP.

## 5.3 Engagement

This section discusses the category *Engagement* which concerns the respondents' engagement with their new job at WASP. *Engagement* is made up of data coded as *Beliefs*, *Reactions*, and *Plans*.

### 5.3.1 Beliefs

Data coded as *Beliefs* is made up of data that reflects beliefs the respondents held. This data was collected under the codes *Confidence*, *Trust*, and *Positive*, identified in chapter 4. *Beliefs*, as a code, emerged in part because of what was *not* in the data from the first round of interviews. The code of beliefs emerged because the respondents demonstrated that they lacked understanding of their new work role but appeared to believe that all would turn out well. This was reflected by the fact that thirteen out of the fifteen respondents did not indicate an appreciation of what their new job at WASP involved. Of the two respondents who did indicate that they had some idea of what their new job would be at WASP both had previous experience with work at WASP. One respondent, Jack, had been employed at WASP before and another respondent, Dominic, had day to day contact with WASP in his previous role where he was required to liaise with RAAF staff employed at WASP. The lack of understanding for the other thirteen respondents of their new work role at WASP was articulated in the data by comments that showed respondents knew the name of their new work role but not what it entailed. For instance,

one respondent, Julie, upon being asked if she knew what she would be doing at WASP, commented hesitantly, that:

*um I know that I will be...um a [job title] that is all I know (source: Interview set 1-10).*

Respondents appeared to *Trust* that they would be provided the necessary training and had the *Confidence* that they would be capable of completing such training. They also appeared to *Trust* that they would be afforded learning experiences as a part of participation in the activity of work at WASP in collaboration with their colleagues. It emerged from the data that respondents perceived that their completion of a training course and collaboration with colleagues would provide the knowledge and skills they would need to complete their new work role. As concluded in chapter 3, the respondents were RAAF staff, and as well as learning as a part of participation in a training course, it is likely that they would be learning from one another, supervisors, peers, and subordinates as a part of the participation in the activity of work.

### **5.3.2 Reactions**

Data was coded as *Reactions* when the respondents reacted to issues and problems associated with their job relocation. The notion is that the respondents could only react as they had not foreseen that such issues or problems might occur. This data was further collected under the codes of

*Coping, Compromise Flexibility, and Reacting.* Respondents reported reacting and taking action to allow them to cope with the competing concerns they experienced as they settled into and got ready for work at WASP.

Respondents reported that they compromised and gave up something associated with issues that mattered to them to get ready for work at WASP.

Data coded as *Flexibility* were instances when respondents had the *Flexibility* to be able to manage competing concerns. When conflict arose between issues that mattered to the respondents and getting ready for work at WASP, respondents reported that they were *Coping* by finding a way to manage the conflict.

As an illustration of data coded at *Coping*, one respondent, Cathy, reacted to being separated from her family. Cathy commented that:

*I don't think I have yet come to the terms with the fact that I still don't live at home. I have just booked a flight today to go home in May. I just figured I should go home and see Mum and Dad and see Nanna (source: Interview set 1-10).*

Data coded as *Coping* and *Compromise* have two-sided, opposing characteristics. An opposing incident to the one above was when one respondent, Jane, commented that she was not compromising or coping with the impact of the demands of work on her daughter's schooling. Jane indicated that she was not going to allow work requirements to stop her

helping her daughter to prepare for a new school. An instance in the data coded as *Compromise* was when Jane commented that:

*I am knocking off at lunch time to go and sort that out [school requirements for my daughter]. I pretty much just told them I can't be here this afternoon (source: Interview set 1-7).*

Another instance coded as *Reacting* was when one respondent, Cathy, indicated that her RAAF uniforms had been included in her removal and as a consequence of her removal being delayed she did not have a uniform to wear to work. Cathy found this to be an embarrassment and reacted to the situation by borrowing parts of uniform from other RAAF staff members and buying new pieces to make it possible to arrive at work appropriately dressed.

### **5.3.3 Plan**

In contrast to data coded as *Reactions* data was coded as *Plan* when respondents made plans to be prepared for the potential issues and problems that they might experience as they made a job relocation to WASP.

Respondents reported that they had conceived a plan prior to moving, identified potential issues and problems, and that they took action that mitigated the possibility of the realisation of those problems and issues. For instance, one respondent, Jack, indicated that he took control to facilitate

family stability over the Christmas period and that he had travelled to WASP early. Jack commented :

*[I] organised leave at Williamtown and basically took as much leave as I possibly could and then just had a casual drive down. We drove down, took four days... stopped every night, and stuff like that and ...got here on a Sunday and got things organised with... the removal's [staff]. We did our removal on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December so it gave us a good week or so before Christmas to get settled in (source: Interview set 1-11).*

Another instance in the data that was coded as *Plan* was when another respondent, George, decided to remain living in on base accommodation. George chose this course of action to facilitate the successful completion of the training course that would prepare him for his new job. George commented:

*[I] am going to stay on base for the course just because it is easier to focus and that there is less distraction and... once I have passed the course I will ... move out [of accommodation on the RAAF base] (source: Interview set 1-12).*

The respondents engaged in job relocation in different ways and used different strategies in planning for and moving to WASP. The next section summarises this discussion of data coded as *Engagement* by organising the data with respect to the respondents' tenure of employment with the RAAF.



#### 5.3.4 Adjustment to Job Relocation

As a part of axial coding, detailed in chapter 4, the data coded as *Engagement* was organised against the respondents' tenure of employment with the RAAF. The data was placed along a continuum. At one end of the continuum of the respondents' tenure of employment were the junior respondents. These junior personnel, in the main, "allowed" their job relocation to happen because they did little planning and made mistakes that impacted on them. At the other end of the continuum there were the more senior respondents who had planned their job relocation to mitigate potential problems and to make the most of the journey. The interpretation of the results concluded that as they experience more job relocations, the respondents adjust by constructing wiser ways to move, settle in, and get ready for their new jobs. For instance, one respondent, Cathy, who was a junior RAAF staff member had difficulties with job relocation. This was demonstrated because, as stated earlier, she arrived without uniforms and had to borrow pieces of uniform and buy new pieces of her uniform to be ready for work. This is in contrast to more experienced RAAF staff who ensure they have uniforms available. This is a part of the military role of their work where they might be recalled to work at short notice. Cathy also indicated that she had difficulties with her job relocation and that she was not emotionally prepared for the move and missed her family, so she organised a trip home to visit with family soon after

her arrival at WASP. Conversely, another respondent, Jack, who was a more senior RAAF staff member, confirmed he had developed wiser ways of making a job relocation because he had planned the move and taken into account the issues and problems he might face. Jack took leave and moved earlier than his posting required. This allowed him to identify permanent accommodation in the new location, get his family and himself settled, and make contact with RAAF staff at WASP before he started work. There were two respondents, Arthur and Julie, whose tenure of employment with the RAAF initially appeared to be out of place along the continuum. They had developed wiser ways of making a job relocation but only had a short tenure of employment. Data revealed however that Arthur had prior service of eight years with the RAAF and had experienced a number of job relocations. With respect to Julie, data revealed that she grew up with a father who was an RAAF staff member and had experienced a number of job relocations throughout her childhood.

The foregoing discussion intimates that job relocation in the RAAF is perceived by the respondents as an aspect of work. The skills and knowledge required for respondents to develop wiser ways of making a job relocation that involve a change of geographic location were constructed as a part of their participation in the work of job relocation with the RAAF. When job relocation was done well the respondents took control and planned all aspects

that mattered to them. This reduced the impact and tensions that were a consequence of their job relocation. When job relocation was not done well the respondents reacted to things that mattered to them and could only mitigate impacts and tensions.

### 5.3.5 Summary

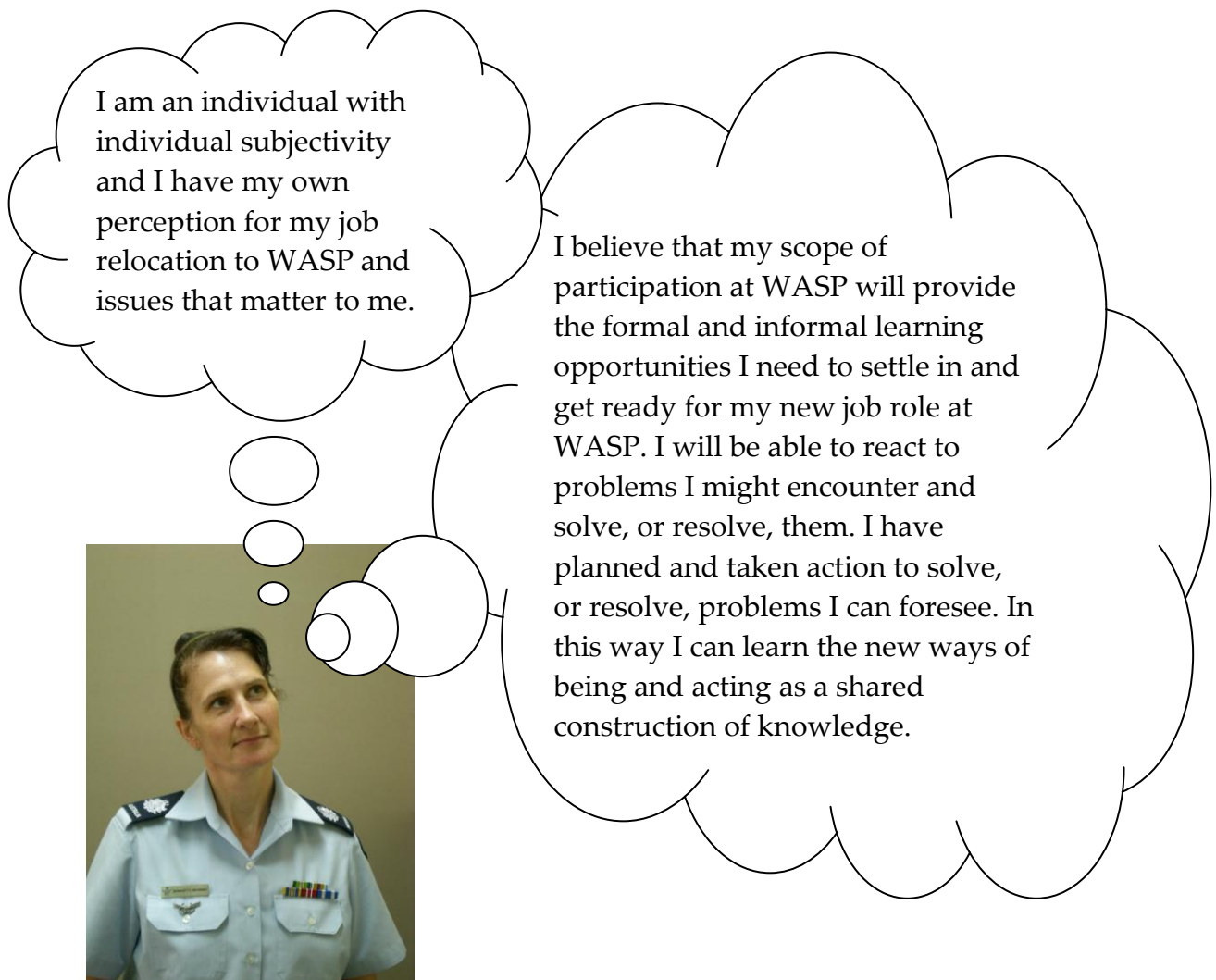
The category *Engagement* provides an insight as to how the respondents plan, react, and behave in different ways. The respondents used RAAF resources, particularly paid working hours, to attend to issues and problems they encountered, both work related and within their personal lives. This reinforces the notion of the respondents acting as individuals with individual subjectivity.

*Engagement* extends the notion introduced in the category of *Matter* that there is a changing scope of participation in the activity of the work of job relocation as respondents become more familiar with what the new posting entails. Instances in the data coded as *Engagement* show that respondents, in the time between the two interviews, have moved from being concerned with actually moving, to settling in, and then getting ready for the training courses that will prepare them for their new job. What emerged from the discussion of the category of *Engagement* is the reinforcement of the notion that the respondents perceive job relocation as work. This was indicated because the respondents' developed wiser ways of making a job relocation as their scope

of participation was expanded and they started to understand the issues, problems and expectations of their new job. The foregoing discussion indicated that the more experienced respondents used what they had learned from past experience such that they were able to plan their move. In contrast junior respondents did not indicate that they had made any plans and only reacted and coped with issues and problems as they arose. Therefore, it is suggested that when job relocation is done well the respondents had more resources available to them and were better able to get ready for work and transition to competence in participation at WASP. It follows from the foregoing discussion that the category of *Engagement* has introduced the notion that the respondents developed wiser ways of making a job relocation.

Figure 5.3 below represents three aspects of job relocation that can be identified as changing for the respondents as a part of job relocation. These are: a change of geographic location and job, a changing scope of participation as they gained a better understanding of the issues, problems and expectations of their new job, and changing ways to adjust to a new job as their experience of job relocations increased.

**Figure 5.3** Respondents' engagement in work



## **5.4 Nature and Organisation of Work at WASP**

This section provides a discussion of the category of *Military Rites and Routines* to explore how the nature and organisation of work with the RAAF, and at WASP, affected the respondents' experience of job relocation. This is intended to provide an insight into the way respondents manage the competing concerns that are setup by RAAF workplace practices as a part of their job relocation to WASP. As considered in chapter 3, a distinctive

characteristic of an ADF workplace is the military role for ADF staff.

Essentially the ADF has explicit rules and ways of acting as well as invisible conventions, agreed ways of working, military culture, and traditions. The nature and organisation of work in the ADF provides a recognisable and legitimised scope of participation and articulates a personal development pathway in the form of an ADF career.

In chapter 2 it was identified that the way work is organised and managed has an impact on workplace practices. The category of *Military Rites and Routines* arose because of the effect of the distinctive characteristics of an ADF workplace on workplace practice. It also provided a way to view the changing scope of participation of job relocation in an ADF military context.

Furthermore, as shown in chapter 3, military rank was identified as the central organising concept for work in an ADF workplace.

It is a pervasive aspect of the nature and organisation of work as is the military dress worn by RAAF staff at WASP. Rank was reported by respondents as something that is “worn”, referring to not only the donning of badges of rank but also a way of behaving. There was an ongoing construction about learning how to behave at WASP that was a part of the respondents’ changing scope of participation and readiness for their new job at WASP.

The following two incidents are representative of how junior ranks perceive the behaviour at WASP, of people who hold senior ranks. One respondent, George, indicated that he thought the senior ranking staff at WASP behaved in a way that meant that:

*the younger guys get looked after pretty well...like by our corporals and sergeants and supervisors (source: Interview set 2-10).*

Conversely, another respondent, Arthur, appeared exasperated by the way that RAAF staff members of senior ranks behaved when he commented that:

*there are certain things about the ADF that you have got to abide to, like dress standards and haircuts, ... discipline and those sort of things, but I don't understand why people [of senior rank] look to cause trouble for other people. Like they go out of their way purposefully to make sure that people are doing something ... I don't understand that whole mentality, why people do it that way (source: Interview set 2-2).*

In certain instances military rank is considered irrelevant and that the behaviour associated with military rank is placed to one side. One instance observed by this researcher was when RAAF staff members at WASP participated in a sporting competition. An individual's ability defines what level of decision making s/he is allowed and where s/he fit in the sporting team. The behaviour imposed by military rank is set aside as RAAF staff participate in such sporting events. This is not laid down in an RAAF order or

instruction and is something that is just known by respondents to be part of acting out the behaviour of a particular military rank.

In a different situation one respondent, Anna, reported an instance of the behaviour of military rank being placed to one side. Anna was a person of junior rank who sought an interview with the XO to plead leniency for a transgression of local orders. It was not usual for junior ranks to seek an interview with the XO and Anna was surprised to find the XO was:

*okay, [the XO] is a parent too and understands (source: Interview set 2-11).*

Anna indicated that she was able to talk to the XO as an equal and empathise with her about problems that surround family life. This was an instance where the XO momentarily placed military rank to one side to provide Anna with access to the individual that exists under the performance of the senior position of XO and the senior RAAF military rank of Squadron Leader.

As a part of the social interaction and participation in the activity of work at WASP, respondents were, in the main, “positioned” and constructed the behaviour associated with their military rank. This includes when it was appropriate to place the behaviour of military rank to one side. Harre (2004) defines “positioning” as how people negotiate and come to know the ways of behaving in a particular context as a part of their daily experiences. The ways of behaving at WASP are based on the foundation of the culture, customs, and



ceremonies of the workplace. The following sections provide actual instances in the data when the respondents were exposed to behaviour associated with military rank at WASP.

One instance of this was when one respondent, Anna, was asked by two junior RAAF staff to provide advice and guidance. Anna's reflection of the instance was that:

*[when I arrived to the unit] with rank as little as it is. But it is still [rank], you have got... [subordinates] sitting there who think they need to call you "corporal". They don't know whether they can just talk to you because they are used to having corporals barking at them and not speaking with them. So for me I am just one step up really so ... don't look to me for answers I don't know anything I am in the same boat as you people (source: Interview set 1-8).*

Despite reflecting on her lack of knowledge and experience of acting the rank of corporal Anna spoke with the two junior RAAF staff and provided the requested advice about a ground combat course planned for later in the year and aspects of work for which they should prepare. Anna and the two junior RAAF staff members, in the context of WASP, worked to construct a shared understanding of what constitutes the behaviour associated with the military rank of corporal. Anna had to consider her obligations and responsibilities and the behaviour of a corporal at WASP through the interaction with two junior RAAF staff based on her own past experience. Also mutually

constructed in this instance is the way a person of junior rank should behave at WASP and how a person of the rank of corporal should treat RAAF staff members of those junior ranks.

Similarly, another respondent, Dave came to know what was expected of his behaviour at WASP:

[I was] working in [my previous posting so I knew] what to expect [of the rank of sergeant] before I came here. What ... [my subordinates] should be able to expect of me and what my officers expect me to do. From what I have been told I have to do here ...it seems that in [my previous posting] a lot more was expected of me (source: Interview set 2-2).

Dave reported that:

*[I was] trying to fit in and still do what I believe [and was looking for] the right balance so I am not going to get dragged into someone's office everyday and being told that you have over stepped your bounds here or you haven't done this. I wouldn't say that [I have over stepped the bounds of my rank], from what I believe to be my role and responsibilities. No I don't and if I had have been in [the other situation] ...that would have been the norm (source: Interview set 2-2).*

Dave claimed that he knew the behaviour of his particular military rank from past experiences in another ADF workplace. Dave was reprimanded by the XO for overstepping the boundaries of his rank. The difference between how

people of the rank of sergeant behave in the two workplaces in the ADF caused some concern for Dave and led to him changing his behaviour.

#### 5.4.1 Summary

The foregoing discussion intimates that the respondents constructed ways of acting and being as a part of their participation in the activity of work at WASP. The nature and organisation of work and workplace practices at WASP provided a focus for action at WASP.

*Figure 5.4* Scope of participation

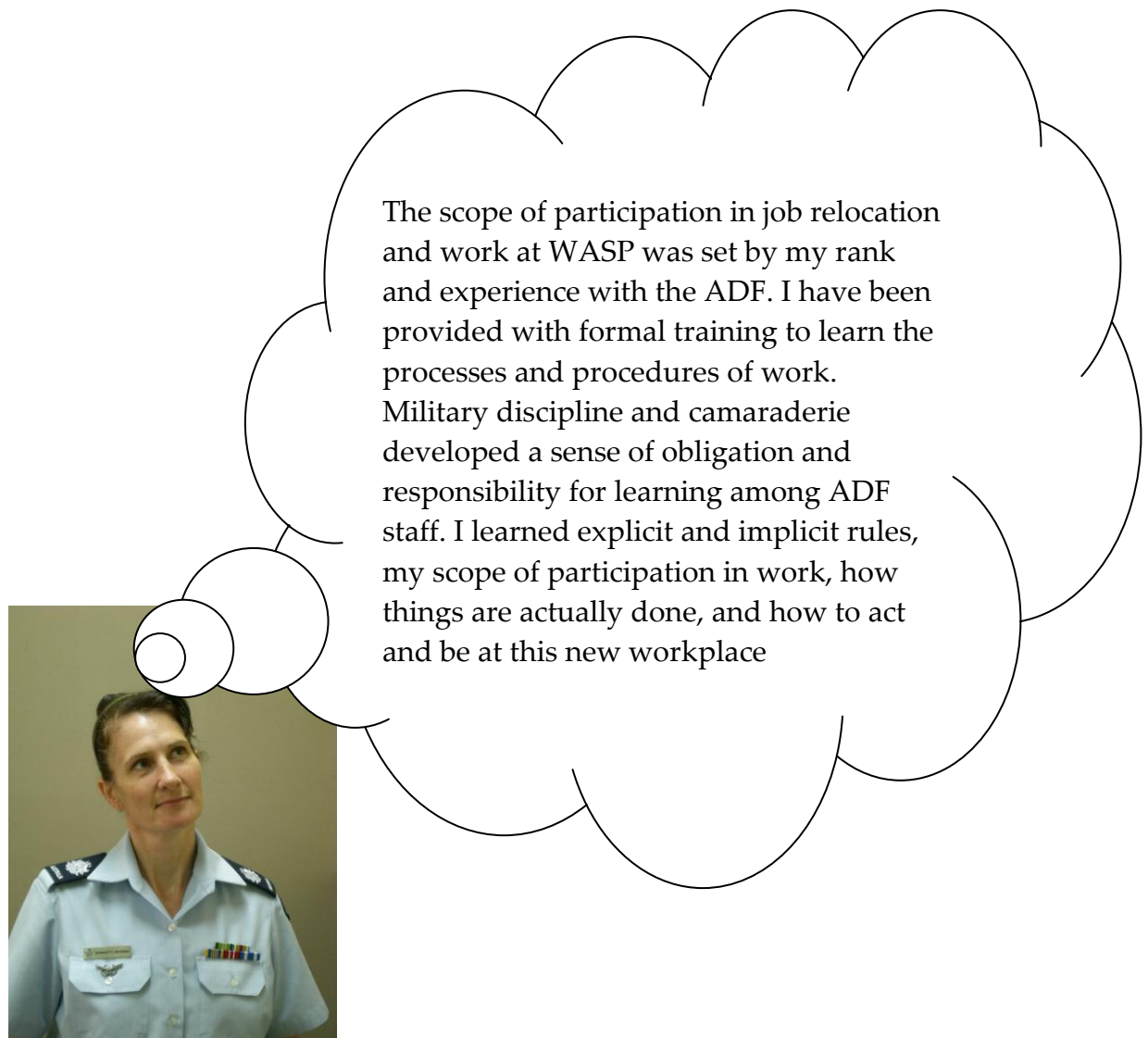


Figure 5.4 encapsulates the way RAAF staff actions are influenced by explicit and implicit rules and their scope of participation that is organisationally mandated. Also, that ways of behaving at WASP are influenced by the way the RAAF is organised specifically by the customs, rites, and rituals that permeate work and workplace activity. The results from this research show that the respondents act as individuals with individual subjectivity whose ways of behaving are influenced by the customs, rituals and the practices of the RAAF workplace. Also the respondents were identified as following the personal developmental pathway of their RAAF career and the shared domain of the workplace practice of job relocation.

The results show that the respondents' scope of participation in work was predicated by their military rank and mediated by the nature and organisation of work.

## **5.5 Towards Conceptualising Job Relocation**

This section brings together the foregoing discussions concerning the respondents' perceptions of their experience of work following a job relocation to WASP. The respondents were identified as following the personal developmental pathway of their RAAF career. Specifically, the respondents participated in the shared domain of the workplace practice of job relocation.

A conceptual scheme of *MOVING WORK* was developed from the data analysis that was described in chapter 4. The conceptual scheme of *MOVING WORK* is founded in the foregoing discussion of data in this chapter and is set in the context of the RAAF workplace. In this way it provides a way to examine the data and explain the results. Therefore *MOVING WORK*, as a conceptual scheme, indicates the way job relocation happens in the RAAF in the terms of the perceptions of the respondents. In this way it explains real issues and concerns of the respondents and encapsulates concerns the respondents confront regularly. The conceptual scheme of *MOVING WORK* is further articulated in the following sections.

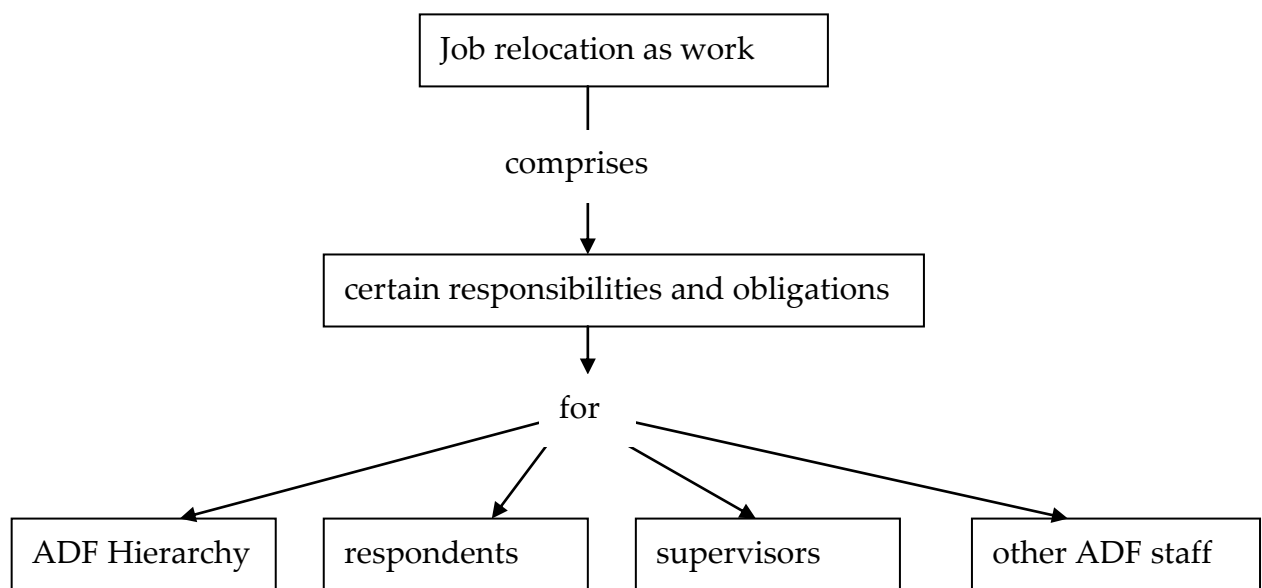
#### **5.5.1 Defining *MOVING WORK***

In this chapter the respondents were identified as individuals with individual subjectivity who had things that mattered to them. In Section 5.5.3 it was concluded that job relocation into a new geographical location and getting ready for work at WASP has three aspects: a change of geographic location and job, a changing scope of participation, and changing ways to adjust to a new job. The schema *MOVING WORK* was used to encapsulate the three aspects of job relocation experienced by respondents. In summary, *MOVING WORK* is a schema that allows for the examination of the respondents' participation in the work of job relocation to WASP.

### 5.5.2 Legitimising Job Relocation

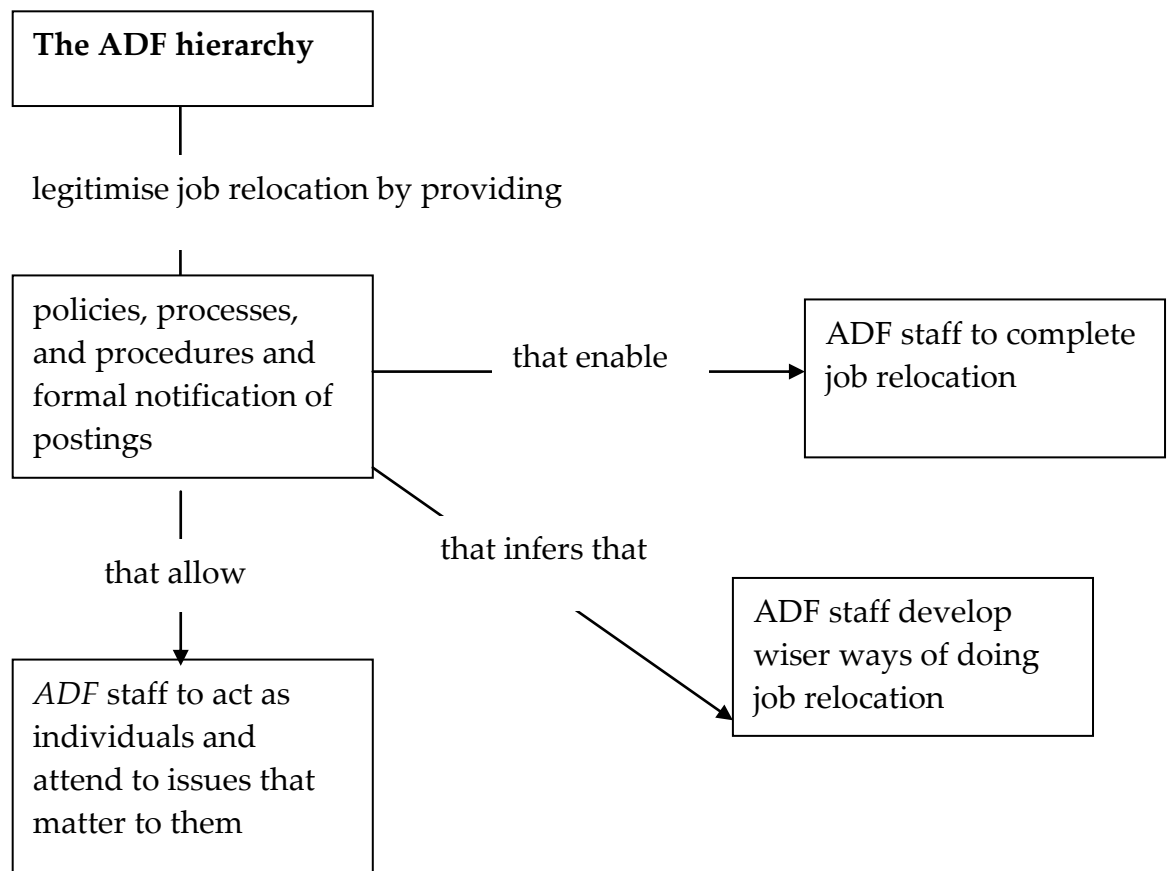
It is shown in Figure 5.5 that the notion of job relocation as work captures aspects of the work role for the RAAF hierarchy, the respondents, their supervisors, and other RAAF staff.

*Figure 5.5* Job relocation as work



The RAAF hierarchy legitimised the respondents' job relocation by providing processes, procedures, and rules, and formally notifying them of their requirement to make a job relocation. Figure 5.6 below is a representation of the consequences of the responsibilities and obligations placed upon the RAAF hierarchy. The processes, procedures, and rules enabled the respondents to participate in a job relocation such that they could move to a new geographic location and attend to issues that mattered to them.

*Figure 5.6* Concept map of RAAF job relocation



The influence of the distinctive characteristics of military discipline and the culture and customs of the RAAF is such that the respondents' supervisors and other staff had an obligation to support them in job relocation. The respondents had a responsibility to participate in the activity of job relocation and to move, settle in, and get ready for their new job. The policies, processes, and procedures and formal notification for job relocation provided direction to RAAF staff, at all levels. The direction included what resources could be called upon by those making a job relocation to allow them to attend to personal issues. It also provided direction to RAAF staff about the

responsibilities for those making the job relocation and their supervisors and details of where, what position, and when they needed to start work at the new geographic location.

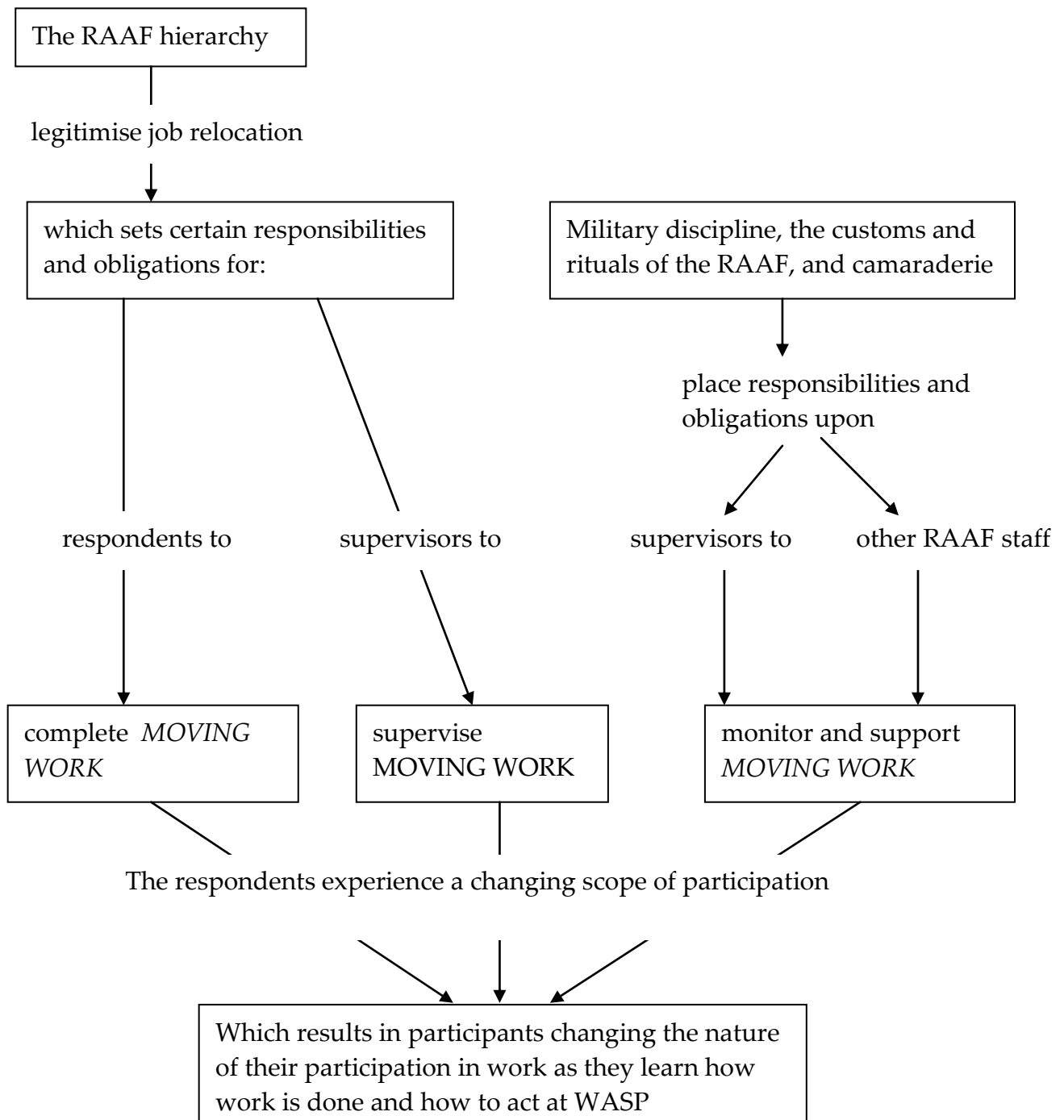
The RAAF legitimises and formally notifies RAAF staff of the requirement for a job relocation and thereby sets certain responsibilities and obligations for those completing job relocation, their supervisors and peers. In this way the respondents in this research became responsible for completing a job relocation based on the formal notification of job relocation. Supervisors became responsible to supervise the performance of respondents who were completing a job relocation.

The distinctive characteristics of military discipline and the culture and customs of the RAAF, that includes camaraderie, placed responsibilities and obligations upon supervisors and other RAAF staff to monitor and support the respondents' completion of job relocation. In this research, part of this support was to assist the respondents in the development of wiser ways of doing job relocation. The respondents experienced a changing scope of participation as a part of their participation in *MOVING WORK*. The consequence of this is that the respondents changed the nature of their participation in work as they learn how work is done and how to act at WASP. Figure 5.7 is a representation of the consequences of the



responsibilities and obligations produced by the notion of job relocation as work after it has been legitimised and formally notified by the RAAF hierarchy.

**Figure 5.7** Responsibilities and obligations during job relocation



### 5.5.3 Summary

The foregoing discussion indicates that the conceptual scheme of *MOVING WORK* has identifiable features as shown in Table 5.1 below. It can be seen from this table that the features are embedded in the context of RAAF workplace practices.

**Table 5.1** Features of the schema of *MOVING WORK*

Feature	Example
It is supported by RAAF policies and rules	Dave was able to make a job relocation with his wife as collocation of couples is consistent with RAAF policy
It involves entitlements to use resources	Jack was able to take four days to travel with accommodation and travel costs paid
It is legitimised and formally notified by the RAAF	All respondents had been notified of the requirement for a job relocation
There is a level of scrutiny of the respondents' performance	Anna was able to talk to her supervisor and gain approval for time to attend to her daughter's schooling needs
There are tangible aspects that were mandated by the RAAF	The respondents were notified of the new geographic location, military unit, and their position at that unit
There are recognised milestones and target dates for these aspects	Start dates are notified and training course and assessments are scheduled
It is supported by RAAF staff members as a part of the influences of the distinctive characteristics of the RAAF	Cathy was able to borrow uniforms when hers were in transit with her personal effects
As a consequence of participation in <i>MOVING WORK</i> the respondents change the nature of their participation	Dave Changed his behaviour to what he had learned was the norm at WASP

From Table 5.1 it can be seen that there are many tangible features of the schema of *MOVING WORK*. These include policies and procedures that

enable RAAF staff to access resources, notify them of the requirement to move as well as direct supervisors to scrutinise the respondents' performance of job relocation against milestones and target dates. Table 5.1 also shows a less tangible feature of *MOVING WORK* where RAAF staff accept the responsibility and obligation to support other RAAF staff at the workplace. This table confirms that job relocation is accepted as work and is influenced by the distinctive characteristics of the context of an RAAF workplace.

The nature of work, organised around military rank, and the responsibilities placed on the respondents' supervisors by the affect of military discipline meant that the supervisors were responsible to both scrutinise and support the respondent's participation in job relocation. This also meant that respondents were able to make individual representation for consideration for allocation of resources so they might attend to issues that matter to them. An instance of this was provided in Section 5.3 when one respondent, Jane, was able to assert that she was going to use work time to attend to the schooling needs of her children without the expectation that there would be negative connotations.

The processes, procedures, and rules enabled respondents to remain individuals because they legitimised the respondents' actions such that they could attend to issues that mattered to them. An instance of this was provided

in Section 5.2 when one respondent, Jack, commented that he left early so that he might have his family settled into the new geographic location before Christmas. Furthermore, the processes, procedures, and rules made the respondents eligible to access the resources of time and money that enabled them to attend to issues that mattered to them.

The foregoing discussion intimates that the conceptual scheme of *MOVING WORK* rests on the notion that job relocation is work and therefore brings the context of the respondents' ADF work into all aspects of job relocation. This also brings into consideration the influences of military rank, military discipline and the ways of behaving that develop from the culture and customs of the ADF to influence the respondents' experience of a job relocation. Therefore the conceptual scheme of *MOVING WORK* has a foundation in the distinctive characteristics of work in the ADF.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has considered the analysis of the data collected in this research that concerns the experience of a job relocation for a particular group of RAAF staff members. It was found that when the respondents arrived at their new workplace they acted as individuals with individual subjectivity. The respondents reported a range of preferences for coming to the new workplace and had different issues that mattered to them.

It was concluded from the analysis of the data that the nature of work function changed as the respondents shifted from moving, to settling in, and to getting ready for the formal training course they would undergo. It was also concluded from the analysis of the data and RAAF workplace practices that the respondents accepted job relocation as work. This was concluded, in part, because the respondents' actions were legitimised by their RAAF employer and they were able to expend time and other resources on issues that mattered to them. It was also found that the respondent's individual subjectivity, personal matters, and the context of work are intertwined aspects.

In Section 5.4 it was found that the respondents' experienced a change in their scope of participation in work. This change was predicated by their place along their RAAF career and mediated by the nature and organisation of work. As a part of this the respondents changed the nature of their participation in work as they learned how work is done and how to act at WASP. Also the respondents were identified as following the personal developmental pathway of their RAAF career and the shared domain of the workplace practice of job relocation. From the discussion of data concerning how the respondents engaged in the work of job relocation in Section 5.3 it could be concluded that the respondents developed "wiser" ways of making a job relocation along the length of their tenure with the RAAF. It was

suggested that when job relocation was done well respondents had more resources available and were better able to make a transition to participating competently in work at WASP. In the discussion of the data in Section 5.3 it was confirmed that the respondents constructed new knowledge and skills as they participated in a job relocation as they moved along an RAAF career. The data presented in this chapter support the conclusion that the respondents perceived of job relocation as work and acted accordingly. The data also supports the conclusion that job relocation is legitimised formally by RAAF workplace policies and guidelines and less formally by the RAAF culture, rituals, camaraderie, and other influences of the distinctive characteristics of the ADF workplace.

## **Chapter 6: Framing WASP as a Community of Practice**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The previous chapters have established that job relocation is accepted by respondents as a part of work in the RAAF. In order to further conceptualise job relocation as work it was suggested in chapter 2 that the concept of Communities of Practice (CoPs), as an aspect of the theory of Situated Learning, could be used as a theoretical framework and serve as a basis to examine and explain the RAAF workplace.

This chapter, based on analysis of the data as presented in chapter 4, is concerned with three issues. Firstly, can WASP be viewed as a CoP? Secondly, what are the features of this CoP? Thirdly, how can the actions of members of this CoP be considered to be legitimate and peripheral? The chapter concludes by using the foregoing discussion to determine, to what extent, the theory of Situated Learning can be used as a theoretical framework and serve as a basis to examine and explain the RAAF workplace.

### **6.2 Establishing WASP as a CoP**

In chapter 2 it was outlined that a CoP is formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour. In this chapter Wenger's (1998) three characteristics of a CoP, that were outlined in

chapter 2, are used to establish to what extent the respondents can be viewed as members of a CoP. These are presented in the next three sections under the headings of:

- Mutual engagement
- Joint enterprise
- Shared repertoire.

### **6.2.1 Mutual engagement**

In this section, Wenger's (1998) characteristic of a CoP of mutual engagement is considered to establish whether the respondents perceived that they were mutually engaged in work at WASP following a job relocation. This is considered under the following headings and sub-questions:

- Enabling engagement
  - What makes mutual engagement work?
- Diversity and partiality
  - What makes the mutual engagement special?
- Mutual relationships
  - Did a range of relationships develop?

#### **6.2.1.1 Enabling engagement**

Enabling engagement makes mutual engagement possible. Wenger (1998) considers that it takes something to enable engagement. At WASP this is evident in the respondents' explanation for their job relocation to WASP as a



part of their RAAF career. For instance, one respondent, Dave, who was married to an RAAF staff member, perceived that he was required to move and said that WASP:

*was pretty much the only spot available... I was due out of Williamstown I had been there six and a half years... I had to go somewhere (source: Interview set 1-3).*

Similarly, another respondent, Paul, also perceived that he was required to move and that:

*[I] had to have a posting on promotion (source: Interview set 1-4).*

Respondents accepted that three to five years later they would be required to make another job relocation. An aspect of coming to accept this was that on arrival at WASP the respondents were required to complete posting preference forms in preparation for their next job relocation. The completion of posting preference forms does not guarantee a job relocation to a preferred location. For instance, one respondent, Jack, had not made a job relocation to WASP a preference and commented that:

*I didn't actually really plan to come back ... but I had heard that they had posted a lot of people out of... so there wasn't going to be too many people coming in so I wasn't sort of expecting to come back (source: Interview set 1-11).*

Another indicator of the respondents' perception of dissatisfaction with the requirement to make a job relocation as a part of an RAAF career was resignation from the RAAF. This was a matter referred to by a number of the respondents. For instance, one respondent, Anna, stated:

*I am out (source: Interview set 1-7).*

This was an indication that she was about to resign from the RAAF because she was having difficulty resolving forces and tensions set up by caring for her children and being required to move to WASP. Anna highlighted her dilemma by asserting that:

*I have other responsibilities too (source: Interview set 1-7).*

The way respondents talked about the requirement to move and the things that mattered to them was outlined in chapter 5. The analysis in this chapter indicated that the respondents could be viewed as individuals with individual subjectivity but they all had to move as a part of an RAAF career. This requirement was something shared among respondents, something that brought them together and enabled mutual engagement with a common issue (Wenger, 1998).

#### 6.2.1.2 Diversity and partiality

The mutual engagement of respondents at WASP was special because they came together despite the fact that they were individuals with individual subjectivity and this was seen in the diverse ways they dealt and thought

about the move. In chapter 4 the respondents were described as coming from different backgrounds and different States in Australia, had completed different levels of schooling, were different ages, held different ranks, had different interests, and different aspirations, and there were many more differences that made their mutual engagement special. The only two things that the respondents identified as having in common are that they all were in the RAAF and they all had been posted to WASP.

One respondent, Cathy, made reference to this diversity when she commented that it was:

*good [to] come into contact with a lot of people that you would not necessarily come into contact with... people from different States, different backgrounds... you get different people from different rank levels ( source: Interview set 2-4).*

At WASP, the respondents' diversity was borne out in their participation in the daily activity of work as people gained a reputation for particular things. As outlined in chapter 3, relating workplace stories and gossip is a part of work at WASP. One respondent, Cathy, indicated it was not just coming in contact with people but also that:

*you get to learn more about people ( source: Interview set1-15).*

In this way the workplace gossip allowed respondents to construct perceptions of the reputation of other RAAF staff members. Workplace

gossip shared impressions and perceptions of others based on reputations as people. It exhibited their clumsiness or skill with certain tasks and how they contravened rules, excelled at sport, or showed interest in a leisure pursuit. The foregoing discussion suggests that through diversity and partiality the respondents were able to construct mutual relationships with the members of the WASP workplace while retaining their individual subjectivity.

#### 6.2.1.3 Mutual relationships

As outlined in chapter 2, not all mutual relationships are positive and mutual engagement does not lead to an idealised view of happiness, and harmony is therefore not a necessary property of a CoP (Wenger, 1998). In the data collected in this research there were instances in the data that characterised the range of human relationships such as rebellion, gossip, a range of emotions and power play. For instance, one respondent, Bill indicated that he had rebelled in his previous posting because of what he perceived as unnecessary and difficult working conditions. Bill indicated that he had withdrawn his labour to the minimum possible to stay out of trouble when he commented:

*[I] had done two and a half years in [another location] and sat on my bum pretty much and [had] done nothing, probably worked ten weeks. ( source: Interview set 1-6).*

Another respondent, Anna, demonstrated another less positive aspect of human relationships within a community when she commented:

*I am not looking forward to being back ... [at another] unit... I don't like the infighting... I call it incestual behaviour ( source: Interview set1-8).*

A similar comment was provided by another respondent, Julie, who indicated a range of human relationships when she identified people as individuals with different perceptions of their experience at WASP. Julie commented that:

*I mean you can have five people say they like it but five people who say they don't like it and you can't bank that on anything because you are a totally different person. So if you can say that, ohh I am going to like it because he likes it, that is ridiculous. ( source: Interview set1-10).*

From the foregoing discussion it can be concluded that mutual relationships developed among this diverse group of people and the respondents perceived that they were mutually engaged in work at WASP following a job relocation

### **6.2.2 Joint Enterprise**

In chapter 2 joint enterprise was outlined as something the members of a CoP negotiate as they mutually engage in the practice of a CoP. Also that joint enterprise, as a dimension of a community of practice, is a source of coherence for the community. The RAAF organisational hierarchy bring the RAAF staff together at WASP as a part of their employment with the RAAF, as outlined in chapter 3. Their joint enterprise was concluded to be moving along their RAAF career. As outlined in chapter 2 the respondents were a diverse and

partial and their joint enterprise was defined by their mutual engagement with the job relocation and associated factors. The respondents were identified to be individuals with individual subjectivity and a cross section of staff at WASP. Therefore the respondents were at different places along an RAAF career and had a range of perceptions of their joint enterprise. For instance, one respondent, Pamela, was concerned about her RAAF career and was adopting a wait and see approach. Pamela commented:

*I am not sure if I am going to stay in [the ADF] I have got two years left on my contract so I will serve that out...[being posted to WASP] is not career ending and I have got just as much chance as getting... wherever I want afterwards ( source: Interview set 2-4).*

Other respondents considered the pathway of their RAAF career and where it might culminate. For instance, one respondent, Jack, commented that:

*He would end up in Canberra one day ( source: Interview set 1-11).*

In this research two of the fifteen respondents resigned and separated from the RAAF within the first twelve months of their arrival at WASP. Perhaps resignation appears to challenge the idea of joint enterprise, but it is a part of the respondents' RAAF career. Whilst resignation is at the end of a respondent's RAAF career and it means that they leave the CoP, it remains a part of their joint enterprise because it is something that the respondents contemplated. Moreover, the requirement for the respondents to participate

in the regular job relocation of the RAAF posting cycle provides a recognisable career pathway.

The remainder of this section considers the notion of joint enterprise, outlined in chapter 2, as moving along an RAAF career. This is presented in the next two sections under the headings of:

- Negotiated enterprise
- Indigenous enterprise.

#### 6.2.2.1 Negotiated enterprise

In chapter 2 joint enterprise was defined as negotiated by the process of pursuing it and thereby belonging to the respondents (Wenger, 1998). Once respondents were able to participate in work at WASP they were able to learn how things were done at WASP. Each ADF workplace has nuances and each person has individual subjectivity and a slightly different approach, or emphasis. Importantly the respondents have a shared goal (joint enterprise), while they were employed at WASP, and while they were endeavouring to “fit in” to their new job. In a CoP the members’ “understanding of their [joint] enterprise and its effects in their lives need not be uniform for it to be a collective product” (Wenger, 1998, p. 79). For instance, some respondents were promoted in military rank as a part of their job relocation or came from other ADF workplaces where work was done in different ways, or decided to resign once they started work at WASP. One respondent, Jack, perceived that

he had been required to make a job relocation because he was promoted. He commented:

*I got promoted so I had to come to a position that was a SGTS position so it was one of the factors of coming here ( source: Interview set 1-11).*

All the respondents negotiated a shared understanding of the reality of the way things are done at WASP. The respondents were trying to fit in and negotiated joint enterprise at a workplace level within the context of their RAAF career while they were adapting to their job relocation at WASP. This is evident in the references by the respondents to learning provided earlier in this chapter and as one respondent, Arthur, indicated:

*[I will] embrace whatever the learning [is needed] here and do the best I can (source: Interview set1-5).*

#### 6.2.2.2. Indigenous enterprise

In chapter 2 it was outlined that a CoP is not self-contained and develops within the wider community context. Historical, social, cultural, and institutional aspects afford specific resources and constraints. The resources and constraints can be both explicit and implicit and are profoundly shaped by the wider community context (Wenger, 1998). This was certainly the case at WASP. As outlined in chapter 3, the first step after completing the process of employment with the ADF is a program of entry that inducts new ADF staff. This is a rite of passage and prepares ADF staff members so that they can become part of the ADF community. In this community the respondents



then know how to behave in the ADF. The indigenous enterprise at WASP was produced by interaction with others at the workplace and participation in the activity of work. Indigenous enterprise is about individuals being able to be themselves, within bigger constraints. As shown in chapter 5 they acted as individuals that were able to follow their own concerns, and during the job relocation they allowed personal considerations to take precedence over work priorities, as they were given permission to do so as job relocation is mandated as work.

In other circumstances in their role in the RAAF they cannot let personal concerns interfere in their job, and during job relocation this can happen. Participation was predicated on the nature of work that was organised around the respondents' military rank and work role. While the wider ADF context had an impact, it was the respondents' negotiated joint enterprise when they participated in work at WASP.

#### 6.2.2.3 Regime of mutual accountability

Wenger (1998, p. 81) asserts, "negotiating a joint enterprise gives rise to mutual accountability among those involved." In this research, mutual accountability concerned knowing how to act out the performance of military rank, work role, and to conform to the rules, conventions, and identity norms. The RAAF has explicit rules that are laid down in RAAF organisational policies and standard procedures. There are also implicit rules, conventions,

and identity norms that are constructed as a part of participation in work.

One respondent, Pamela, articulated this when she commented that:

*it is just sort of general knowledge I guess and talking to other people about it you know what they have done before in the same situation (source: Interview set 2-6).*

In this researcher's experience, workplace gossip was one way respondents constructed perceptions of other RAAF staff members and their identity.

Gossip shares among members of WASP instances of violations of explicit and implicit rules, conventions, and identity norms and thereby reinforced their existence. The joint enterprise for respondents was conforming to ways of being and acting at WASP and moving along an RAAF career, which is what gives rise to their mutual accountability.

### **6.2.3 Shared Repertoire**

As detailed in chapter 2, Wenger (1998) asserts that the shared repertoire is a heterogeneous medley of resources for negotiating meaning. With reference to Wenger's (1998) notion of history and ambiguity, outlined in chapter 2, the respondents followed ways of being and acting at WASP based on RAAF traditions. These traditions, or history of ways of doing things, are well established and serve as a place around which meaning may be constructed and shared. At WASP this includes aspects such as, storytelling, dress, noticeboards, workspace decorations, routines, tools, gestures, and symbols.

The WASP workplace has all these aspects, which are also typically found in other ADF workplaces.

In the resources of a shared repertoire there is widespread use of metaphors, jargon, and three letter acronyms. These are examples of resources around which meaning can be constructed and negotiated. For example the Middle East theatre of operations is known as the “sand pit”, “greenies” are electronic technicians in the RAN, and “straighties” are a reference to RAAF aircraft operated in a cargo role that have a straight leading edge on their wing. The widespread use of three letter acronyms is recognised by the respondents who refer to them as TLAs. These aspects have an inherent ambiguity which is considered by Wenger (1998) as a resource that works for individuals to manage their perception of reality as it is renegotiated in a CoP. In other words, it is the case that if all knowledge was known and shared, without ambiguity there would be no need for respondents to construct new knowledge and skills. As stated earlier in this chapter, the respondents were a diverse group of RAAF staff members who came from a number of States in Australia, had experiences within an ADF context of how the ADF treats its people, and other life experiences outside of the ADF. As a consequence, construction of a shared view of reality within the ADF and the limits of the individual subjectivity will continue to emerge as a part of the respondents’ participation in the activity of work following a job relocation to WASP.

#### **6.2.4 Summary**

The foregoing discussion has established, using Wenger's (1998) three characteristics of a CoP, that the respondents can be viewed as members of a CoP at WASP. The respondents engaged in their new job and as a part of this activity they exhibited behaviour consistent with Wenger's (1998) three characteristics of a CoP of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. This is one condition that shows that the action of the respondents can be explained using the theory of Situated Learning. The theory of Situated Learning also concerns legitimate peripheral participation in a CoP. It remains to be shown that the respondents participated legitimately and at the periphery in a CoP at WASP.

### **6.3 Legitimate Peripheral Participation at WASP**

This section considers to what extent the respondents participated legitimately and at the periphery in a CoP at WASP. Before proceeding it needs to be acknowledged that Lave and Wenger (1991) admitted that the terms legitimacy and peripherality are not well developed. Furthermore, in chapter 2, it was concluded that legitimacy and peripherality have not been adequately defined or explored in the research literature. Peripherality and legitimacy are considered in this section in terms of tangible things that apply to the group then consideration is given to individual respondent's behaviour as an indication of legitimacy and peripherality.

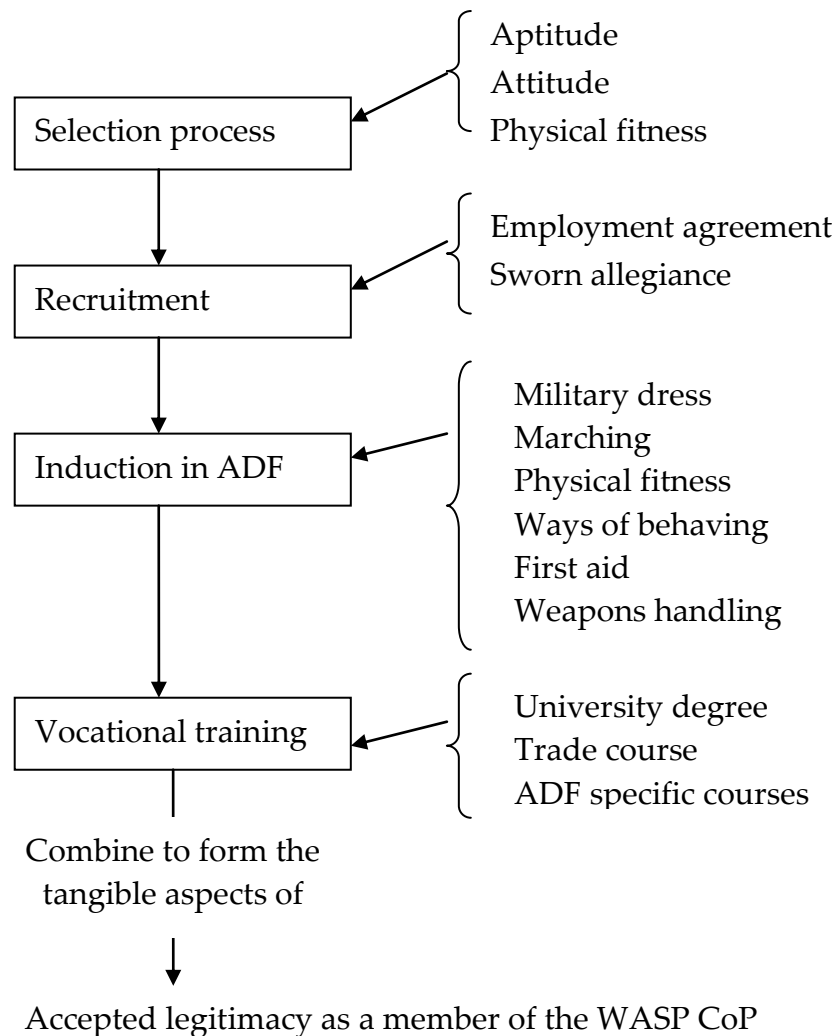
Peripherality implies that there is some sort developmental pathway and that may be at points along that developmental pathway. They may be on the periphery, at a central point, or somewhere in between. The findings reported in chapter 5 support the notion that peripherality for members in a CoP does not necessarily imply they move linearly from novice to master and that it is possible to move backwards and forwards and possibly in other dimensions as well. An example of this is Anna who as a newly promoted corporal has advanced along her RAAF career and at the same time slipped from mastery in her previous role to a novice in her new one. Legitimacy implies that there is some way to enable an individual to participate at the periphery and move along a developmental pathway.

### **6.3.1 Legitimacy as Tangible Action**

In Lave and Wenger (1991), legitimacy for apprentice tailors appears to come from being recognised as an apprentice tailor. At WASP the respondents became legitimate members of a CoP at WASP through employment with the RAAF. Respondents became members by undergoing a selection process, subsequent recruitment into the ADF, and a formal induction program. Figure 6.1 below portrays the ADF process of recruitment induction and training. As a part of the selection process and recruitment the respondents entered into an employment agreement and swore allegiance to the Queen of

Australia. This was their first step toward becoming a legitimate member of a CoP at WASP.

**Figure 6.1** The ADF process of recruitment, induction, and training



It can be seen from the Figure 6.1 that the next step in becoming a member of the ADF was a formal induction program where, among other things, military dress was provided, marching was learned, physical fitness training was undertaken, as was weapons handling, and the respondents were indoctrinated in ways of behaving. This required them to conduct themselves

as ADF staff members, which included showing respect for rank, adhering to security practices, and following the explicit and tacit rules that surround military dress and bearing.

It can be seen from the Figure 6.1 that this was followed by the vocational training for their work role in the ADF. Once selection, recruitment, induction and training for their work role were completed the RAAF manning staff formally posted the respondents. For five of the respondents their first posting, after vocational training, was to WASP. The remainder had at least one other posting before their posting to WASP. The foregoing discussion is summarised in Figure 6.1 and can be viewed as a tangible developmental process leading to legitimate participation in a CoP in the ADF.

### **6.3.2 Peripherality as Tangible Action**

As considered in chapter 2, Lave and Wenger's (1991) apprentices' peripheral participation can be identified as their movement along a developmental pathway from low risk and simple tasks to higher risk and more complex tasks toward mastery as a tailor. In this research, the respondents, after induction and initial training, were able to participate in work at an ADF workplace but they were unable to legitimately participate in work at WASP until they were formally posted. As stated earlier in this chapter, a job relocation to WASP was a part of the respondents' posting cycle. As

suggested in chapter 3, the posting cycle is a part of work and, potentially, provides a way for ADF staff to move along a developmental pathway. The respondents were ADF staff who came to WASP because of conditions of employment, and were accepted at WASP via standard administration processes. This process would be repeated at the end of their posting to WASP when the respondents are again formally posted to another ADF workplace.

In this research the respondents were able to legitimately participate because they were ADF staff members, they had undergone induction and training, and had been posted to WASP. The respondents were able to participate at the periphery and follow a developmental pathway along an ADF career that was signposted by military rank and a series of postings. In chapter 5 it was noted that the respondents experienced a change in the scope of their participation in work at WASP. This is a tangible demonstration of how the respondents move from participation at the periphery toward a more centralized, less marginalized, participation at WASP. Peripherality and legitimacy defined in these tangible terms is only a part of exploring these ideas because it does not reflect the behaviour of the individual members of a CoP. The next section will discuss the individual behavior of members of the CoP.



### **6.3.3 Legitimacy and Peripherality as Ways of Behaving**

As indicated by Lave and Wenger (1991) legitimacy and peripherality as ways of behaving imply that there are certain responsibilities and obligations for members of a CoP. For instance Lave and Wenger's (1991) apprentices and master tailors could not be considered to be members of a CoP unless they behaved consistently with these responsibilities and obligations. To act legitimately and at the periphery the apprentices needed to participate within the scope of participation they were provided with and to construct new skills and knowledge. As Lave and Wenger (1991) elaborated, master tailors were responsible for providing the affordances such that apprentices could access a changing range of experiences along a developmental pathway. As well, the master tailors were responsible for providing apprentices with the necessary guidance to construct new skills and knowledge. In other words, the behaviour of apprentices and master tailors needed to be such that the apprentices were able to participate legitimately at the periphery and experience learning in the joint enterprise of the work of tailors. In this research the respondents were able to participate legitimately at the periphery during their move and induction into WASP.

It was stated in chapter 3 that ADF staff members accept responsibilities as a part of their employment. In chapter 5, and earlier in this chapter, it was

demonstrated that the respondents engaged in workplace practices predicated by the ADF and could be considered members of a CoP. As a part of this, respondents demonstrated a willingness to support others at the ADF workplace. In this way individual respondents were firstly, able to participate legitimately at the periphery and then move toward a central and less marginal participation in work at WASP.

#### 6.3.3.1 Examples: Legitimacy and peripherality

In order to further illuminate the presence of the concept of legitimate peripheral participation at WASP two mini case studies are considered below.

The first example is from the researcher's experience and is about an ADF staff member who did not participate legitimately at the periphery. The second is an instance from the data collected in this research where a respondent, in a similar situation, acted legitimately at the periphery.

##### Example 1

In a conversation with this researcher, a senior ADF staff member, Gary, who was joining a new operational crew at WASP, commented that he had not met any of the crew members. He stated that he was in charge, he knew all the operational roles and the crew members would behave as he directed. In this way Gary was indicating that he did not intend to act legitimately or at the periphery. Gary was enabled to act legitimately; he wore a uniform, was posted to WASP, had completed induction training and was well advanced along his ADF career. Gary's way of acting was such that he did not recognise

the members of the group as individuals and was not prepared to follow negotiated ways of behaving. While Gary could be considered to have all the tangible aspects that legitimised his peripheral participation in a CoP he did not exhibit that he had accepted a responsibility to learn and an obligation to aid the learning of others.

## Example 2

One respondent in this research, Jack, also a senior ADF member had previous experience in most of the roles in the operations room but did not portray himself as an expert in all roles. Jack considered that there were new knowledge and skills he could construct when he commented that he intended to learn:

*how the new procedures are done and the new ways of doing business (source: Interview set2-6).*

He was about to join an operational crew and his intended approach was different from Gary's when he commented:

*I suppose for the first couple of rotations [it] is basically me learning everyone's names and... people's character and what sort of things you can and can't do. Like... on this crew I know you can muck around with people and joke around a bit and then you know okay I shouldn't go above that level (source: Interview set 2-6).*

Jack's legitimate peripheral participation was possible because of his employment with the ADF and his posting to WASP. He demonstrated his

legitimate peripheral participation by behaving in a way that recognised the members of the group as individuals and that there were certain ways of behaving at WASP. Also that he had a responsibility to support other ADF staff at the workplace.

## **6.4 Conclusions**

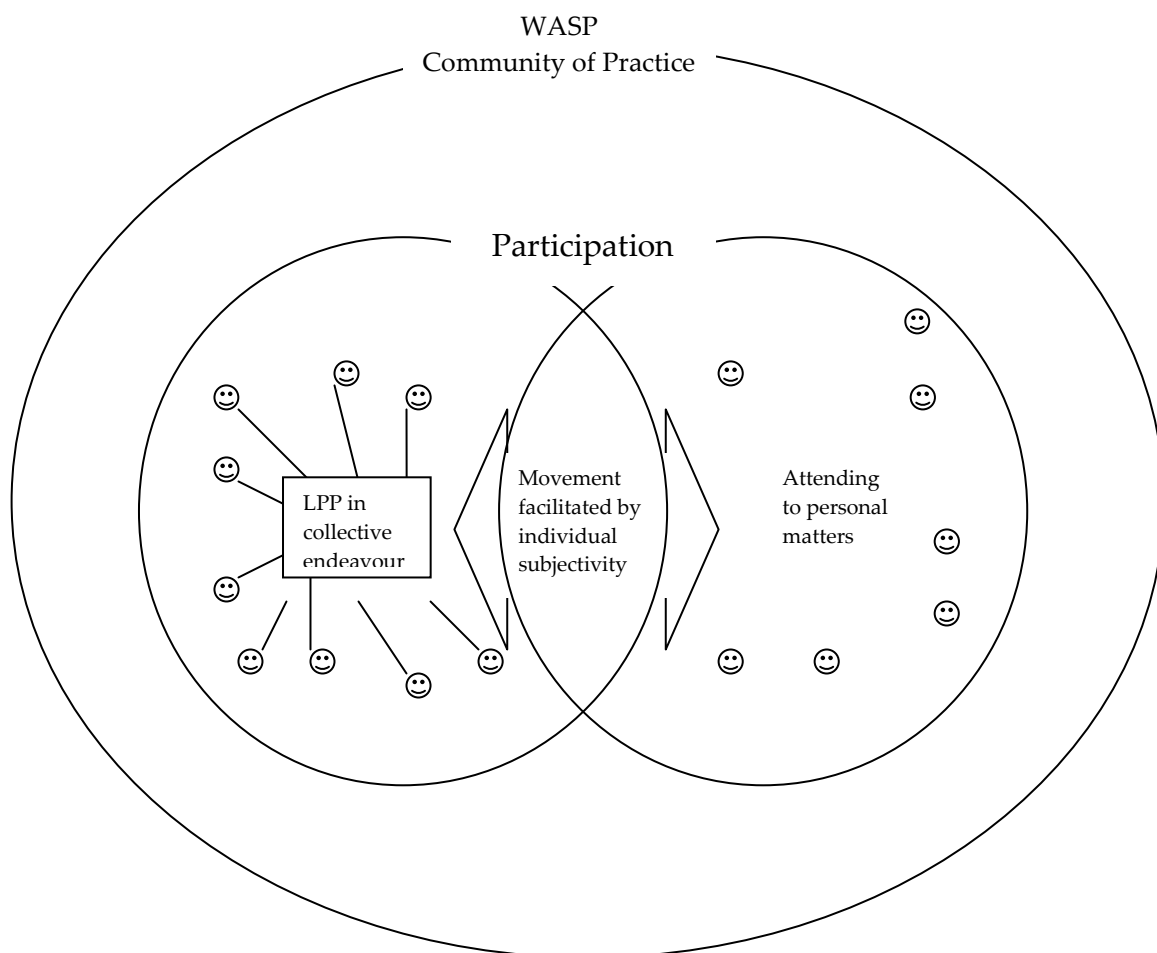
The foregoing discussion has established that the respondents at WASP constitute a CoP. This was done by confirming that Wenger's (1998) three characteristics of a CoP are evident. It was demonstrated that respondents mutually engage in the joint enterprise of an ADF career and have a joint repertoire. The foregoing discussion also provides a view of legitimacy and peripherality as consisting of two aspects. One aspect is the tangible enabling factors that allow the respondents to participate as a member of a CoP because of the ability of individual respondents to participate in the activities of the workplace. The other aspect is the respondent's behaviour when they accept the responsibilities of being a member of the CoP and relating to other members of the CoP and this enables mutual relationships to develop. Once tangible factors are considered, legitimacy is about having the position and attitude towards the joint enterprise that enables negotiating ways of behaving with other members of the CoP.

The movement from participating in the joint enterprise of the CoP to attending to personal matters has been described using the term “migration”. It is named a migratory CoP. As such the theoretical framework of Situated Learning can be used to examine and explain the actions of respondents when migration is taken into account. It is on this basis that this particular CoP is described differently to how CoPs are described in the literature. Members of this migratory CoP move among ADF workplaces as a part of a series of job relocations that is legitimised and formalised by postings.

Migration also happens as ADF staff move in and out of legitimate peripheral participation in work at an ADF workplace when they attend to personal matters. The respondents in this research are individuals with individual subjectivity and have particular issues that matter to them. For instance, as detailed in chapter 5, one respondent, Anna, was not participating legitimately at the periphery when she was attending to her children’s schooling needs. In a separate instance, Anna was acting legitimately at the periphery when she provided advice and guidance to two junior ADF staff. Another respondent, Dave, as detailed in chapter 5, was not participating legitimately at the periphery when he visited the local attractions at the new geographical location following his job relocation to WASP. Also Dave’s comments indicated his participation at the periphery when he commented that he was changing his behaviour to suit how things are done at WASP. In

this way the respondents move in and out of legitimate peripheral participation in a migratory CoP as they make job relocations and as they attend to personal matters. Figure 6.2 encapsulates this and shows that respondents do not, as such, move out of the CoP but, because of their individual subjectivity, migrate from their participation in a joint enterprise to personal matters.

**Figure 6.2** Migration in a CoP



The notion of a migratory CoP acknowledges the complexity of the respondents' actions and, as found from the data in chapter 5, that the

respondents are individuals. Situated Learning is a theory of learning that is concerned with the individual's participation in activity within the context and culture of a community of practice. It has been established that the respondents form a migratory CoP and the theoretical framework of Situated Learning can be used to examine an individual respondent's actions in the social and cultural context of a migratory CoP. Chapter 7 considers further the implications for the concepts of legitimate peripheral participation in a migratory CoP in the context of the work and workplace practices of the ADF.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion and Implications**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This research investigated the perceptions of a group of RAAF staff members concerning how they cope with of a job relocation to WASP. As detailed in chapter 1, an ADF staff member's career is made up of a series of appointments as a consequence of job relocations (Jans & Frazer-Jans, 2004). In chapter 1 it was identified that people find job relocation difficult and need to cope with the changes associated with a new job and adapt to personal matters within and outside the workplace.

Following a recapitulation of the scope and limitations of the research, this chapter considers the appropriateness of the methodology. This is followed by the conclusions, a reflection on job relocation, and an outline of the contribution of this research to knowledge and practice. Areas for further research are identified prior to concluding remarks which detail the implications and importance of this research.

### **7.2 Scope and Limitations**

The limitations of this research were outlined in chapter 4 and are reconsidered here along with the scope of the research. This is necessary for a



reader's consideration of the findings and conclusions presented in this chapter.

This research was undertaken at only one ADF workplace, which while representative of the ADF was limited to one service, the RAAF, of the ADF. The data that was collected concerned the perceptions of fifteen respondents following their job relocation to this workplace. On this basis it is only possible to make tentative conclusions about the notion of migratory CoPs and the schema of *MOVING WORK* in the wider ADF community. This is the scope of this research and the major findings and results need to be considered in this context.

While the sample was limited to fifteen of the one hundred and ten RAAF staff at WASP it was established in chapter 4 that this sample was deemed to be a representative subset of the RAAF staff at WASP and to be typical of ADF staff.

The period of data collection was limited to two sets of interviews with the fifteen respondents in the four month period of January to April in 2006. This is a limitation of this research as data collection was limited to the perceptions of respondents regarding their experience of a job relocation at these two instances.

A final limitation arose out of issues surrounding the military context of the research. WASP is a military workplace and the researcher was required to protect national security, the standing of the ADF, and the respondents. This limited the type of data that could be presented in this dissertation.

### **7.3 Appropriateness of the Methodology**

A Grounded Theory methodology was chosen for this research because it is known as an appropriate methodology to use when little is known about the topic (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). This was the case in this research where, as noted in chapter 2, there is limited knowledge concerning issues and problems that ADF staff confront as a consequence of regular job relocation. In chapter 2 it was noted that when such research is undertaken in the ADF it is usually based on surveys rather than seeking out people's perspectives of the experience of job relocation. Also, that there is no comprehensive explanation, or theory, to explain people's experiences of coping with change at the workplace.

As outlined in chapter 4, Glaser and Strauss (1967) consider that *fit*, *work*, *relevance*, and *modifiability* are areas that can be used to evaluate a Grounded Theory. In this research Grounded Theory was an appropriate methodology because:

- it was developed using the process of constant comparison and therefore *fits* with the instances in the data it represents
- the conceptual schema *MOVING WORK* *works* because it explains real issues and concerns of the respondents
- the conceptual schema *MOVING WORK* is *relevant* because it encapsulates concerns the respondents confront regularly as a part of workplace practice
- the conceptual schema *MOVING WORK* is *modifiable* by the nature of the process of constant comparison.

## 7.4 Conclusions

### 7.4.1 Major Findings

There are three major findings in this research. Based on the discussion of data in chapter 5 and 6 it was found that:

- the action of WASP staff and workplace practices are influenced by the nature and organisation of work and the customs and rituals of an ADF workplace
- job relocation can be conceptualised through the schema *MOVING WORK*
- the action of WASP staff at their workplace can be explained using the theoretical framework of Situated Learning.

These findings are further reviewed and considered in terms of the Research Questions in section 7.4.2.

As outlined in chapter 3, the ADF workplace has a cyclic characteristic of regular postings where ADF staff accept a series of job relocations as a part of employment in the ADF. Their movement along an ADF career is marked by their promotion in rank and relocation in jobs. These are formalised by postings that detail a particular role, when they are required to be at a particular location, and the military rank they will hold when fulfilling the role. This research has conceptualised job relocation using the schema of *MOVING WORK*. The schema *MOVING WORK* summarises insights into how job relocation within the ADF (specifically WASP) works.

This research showed that the action of ADF staff at WASP represented legitimate peripheral participation in a migratory CoP. It was concluded in chapter 6 that the respondents did not leave the migratory CoP but migrated in and out of legitimate peripheral participation. It was found in this research that context is important in the application of Situated Learning and that the participation of ADF staff at the ADF workplace is influenced by the nature and organisation of work and the customs and rituals of the ADF.

Specifically, the ADF workplace is organised on military rank and work role. The results suggest that this situation limits the scope of participation in work.

### 7.4.2 Consideration of the Research Questions

The major aim of this research was to explore the respondents' perception of work in the ADF following job relocation. This aim was addressed using two research questions:

*Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of ADF staff of how they settle in and get ready for work after they relocate from a previous job at a new ADF workplace to be referred to as WASP?*

The subordinate research questions are:

*Research question 1.1: What is the influence of military customs and culture on work at WASP?*

*Research question 1.2: What is the nature of work and workplace practice at WASP?*

*Research question 1.3: What is the influence of job relocation on an ADF staff member's career path?*

*Research question 1.4: What is the influence of the social activity and personal matters on work at WASP following job relocation?*

*Research Question 2: To what extent can WASP be examined and explained using the theoretical basis of Situated Learning?*

#### 7.4.2.1 Research Question 1

*What are the perceptions of ADF staff of how they settle in and get ready for work after they relocate from a previous job at a new ADF workplace to be referred to as WASP?*

It was shown in chapter 5 that the respondents accepted that job relocation was work and as such the context of their work pervades this activity. It was established that ADF staff are aided through workplace practices and customs and rituals to cope with workplace change. These ADF workplace practices and customs and rituals focus action and encourage ADF staff to support each other to cope with the change they experienced as the consequence of a job relocation. The research indicates that ADF workplace practices effectively assisted the respondents to assimilate into the new workplace and were able to continue on their path of personal/career development within the ADF.

##### *Research Question 1.1*

*What is the influence of military customs and culture on work at WASP?*

It was demonstrated in chapter 5, as a part of the development of the conceptual schema of *MOVING WORK*, that ADF staff accept certain responsibilities and obligations as a part of the influence of the military customs and rituals of an ADF workplace. For instance, as discussed in chapter 5, one respondent, Arthur, commented that:

*There are certain things about the ADF that you have got to abide to (source: Interview set 2-2).*

This includes the responsibility and obligation to support other ADF staff at the workplace. For instance, in chapter 5 one respondent, George, indicated that he perceived that junior people were well supported by their superiors at the workplace when he commented that:

*the younger guys get looked after pretty well... like by our corporals and sergeants and supervisors (source: Interview set 2-10).*

Therefore, from analysis of the data, it was indicated that the respondents' supervisors and other ADF staff monitored and supported them to cope with the change they experienced as a consequence of a job relocation to WASP.

#### 7.4.2.2 Research Question 1.2

*What is the nature of work and workplace practice at WASP?*

The nature and organisation of work at the WASP workplace accommodate ADF staff as individuals even when they function as a team. The term "a team of individuals", coined for use in an RAAF recruiting program, in the context of an ADF workplace, describes how ADF staff work in a team and also retain their individual subjectivity. In chapter 3 it was outlined that ADF staff members accept responsibility and obligations with regard to supporting other ADF staff at the workplace. As outlined in chapter 6, the respondents supported each other at the workplace. For instance, in chapter 6, one respondent, Pamela, who was confident of the support of her supervisors, commented that:

*I can always say... can you teach me that. So the more things that they teach you the better it is (source: Interview set 2-6).*

Work organised by military rank and the respondents' work role provided them with a prescribed scope of participation. The conceptual schema of MOVING WORK illustrates that the respondents' supervisors and subordinates focused actions and assisted the respondents to cope with the change they experienced as a consequence of a job relocation.

#### 7.4.2.3 Research Question 1.3

*What is the influence of job relocation on an ADF staff member's career path?*

In chapter 3 it was outlined that an ADF staff member's career is made up of a series of job relocations. It was concluded in chapter 5 that job relocation can be considered to be work. Also in chapter 5 it was concluded that ADF staff develop ways of doing the work of job relocation. This means that job relocation is not, as such, an influence on an ADF staff member's career because job relocations are integral parts of their career. Nonetheless job relocations are markers of an ADF staff member's career and may be a way that the ADF promotes the professional development of ADF staff.

#### *Research Question 1.4*

*What is the influence of the social activity and personal matters on work at WASP following job relocation?*



It was outlined in chapter 3 that a characteristic of an ADF workplace is that ADF staff accept responsibilities and obligations to support other ADF staff at the workplace. The social activity of work is a way that supervisors and other ADF staff assist respondents to come to know how to behave at the new workplace and therefore settle in and get ready for work. As discussed in chapter 6, Jack articulated how he would learn how to behave in his new job when he commented:

*I suppose for the first couple of rotations [it] is basically me learning everyone's names and... people's character and what sort of things you can and can't do. Like... on this crew I know you can muck around with people and joke around a bit and then you know okay I shouldn't go above that level*  
(source: Interview set 2-6).

The results from this research suggest that social activity can be a factor in the respondents coming to know the scope of their participation at work, focusing action, and thereby coping with the change they experience as a consequence of job relocation.

#### 7.4.2.4 Research Question 2

*To what extent can WASP be examined and explained using the theoretical basis of Situated Learning?*

In chapter 1 it was suggested that the ADF workplace may be considered a CoP because it appears that ADF staff learn collectively as a part of a joint enterprise. Based on the results of chapter 6 it was concluded that the ADF

staff at WASP can be viewed as members of a migratory CoP. The term migratory has been adopted to describe the CoP because, as outlined in chapter 6, the respondents' behaviour showed they migrated in and out of legitimate peripheral participation in a CoP. In chapter 6 legitimacy and peripherality were identified as having two aspects. One aspect is the tangible factors that make the respondents recognisable as a member of a migratory CoP and another aspect is less tangible aspect is the respondents' ways of behaving. This means it is possible to consider the respondents to be members of a CoP while recognising that they are individuals with individual subjectivity. Also how individual members behave can be used to determine when the respondents are participating legitimately at the periphery of their ADF career developmental pathway. In chapter 6 it was concluded that the respondents could be viewed as members of a migratory CoP who are legitimately participating in work. Also that the nature of the respondents' participate is initially at the periphery and moves, along with a changing scope of participation toward a more central, less marginalised nature. As such the respondents, as a group, demonstrated the characteristics of a group in the context of the theoretical framework of Situated Learning.

## **7.5 Reflection on Job Relocation**

As shown in chapter 2, continual change in work, workplace practices, and the pressure of economic factors characterise the contemporary workplace in

the first decade of the twenty first century. These characteristics also exist in the contemporary ADF workplace and may include changes such as the nature and organisation of work in the ADF, workplace practice, and the customs and rituals of the ADF. In chapter 5 it was concluded that the respondents perceived job relocation to be work and in chapter 6 that they could be considered to be members of a migratory CoP. As the respondents in this research were deemed to be representatives of WASP staff and typical of RAAF and ADF staff it is suggested that the wider ADF may also be viewed as migratory CoP. That is, the Figure 6.2, Migration in a CoP, could be surrounded by two further circles indicating that the WASP CoP may exist with a wider RAAF migratory CoP and that then exists within a wider ADF migratory CoP. This would then be an appropriate area for future research as considered in Section 7.7.

Jans and Frazer-Jans (2004) assert that the ADF continues the workplace practice of job relocation at about the same level it was fifteen years ago. Job relocation predicates a cyclic nature in an ADF staff member's work that subjects them to constant change. The conceptual schema of *MOVING WORK* brings together the context of the workplace with the personal matters associated with the respondents coping with the change that is a consequence

of job relocation. Table 7.1 summarises the features of the conceptual schema *MOVING WORK* that was developed in chapter 5.

**Table 7.1** Summary of the features of the schema of *MOVING WORK*

Feature
It is supported by ADF policies and rules
It involves entitlements to use resources
It is legitimised and formally notified by the ADF
There is a level of scrutiny of the respondents' performance
There are tangible aspects that were mandated by the ADF
There are recognised milestones and target dates for these aspects
It is supported by ADF staff members as a part of the influences of the distinctive characteristics of the ADF
As a consequence of participation in <i>MOVING WORK</i> ADF staff change the nature of their participation

It can be seen from Table 7.1 that the features of *MOVING WORK* indicate that the ADF enables respondents to complete a job relocation by formalising and providing resources. Table 7.1 also shows that ADF staff support each other to complete job relocation. Inherent in the conceptual schema of *MOVING WORK* is that ADF staff can be confident that they will be able to access formal training courses, on the job training, and be supported by other ADF staff at the workplace. Moreover, that a consequence of such participation is for ADF staff to move, settle in and get ready for work and negotiate a changing nature of participation.

## **7.6 Contribution to Knowledge and Practice**

This section outlines the contribution to knowledge and practice made by this research. This is done under the three headings of “Understanding of job relocation”, “Extending the understanding of Situated Learning”, and “Implications for ADF managers and staff”.

### **7.6.1 Understanding of Job Relocation**

As noted in chapter 2, there is relatively limited literature concerning the effects of job relocation on people. This research has developed a conceptual schema *MOVING WORK*, outlined in chapter 5, from an analysis of the respondents’ experience of job relocation in the context of a migratory CoP. The findings of this research have a direct relevance in this examination because the conceptual schema of *MOVING WORK*, in the context of a migratory CoP, was developed from the analysis of how ADF staff cope with the change they experience as a consequence of job relocation.

As demonstrated in chapter 6 the findings have the potential to be applied to formal learning situations. In chapter 6 it was outlined how these findings and the conceptual schema of *MOVING WORK* have been used by this researcher in the design of a two week training course. The training course design was a shift from the typical classroom environment of formal training courses in the ADF where a teacher imparted knowledge to students. The

design of this training course relied upon the responsibilities and obligations accepted by ADF staff as a part of their employment. This training course was designed such that course participants were encouraged to mutually engage in a joint enterprise and develop a shared repertoire. This was done by providing an opportunity for participants to observe and interact with ADF staff:

- at work
- in question and answer sessions with ADF staff away from work
- as a part of scripted work scenarios.

In this way the participants were provided:

- legitimate access to the experience of work
- legitimate access to participate with other ADF staff
- forums to reflect upon their experience in collaboration with others.

The participants were provided with background information and a range of cues to focus their action when provided with access to ADF staff through participation in work and participation with other people. The participants were challenged to demonstrate their developing knowledge in group settings by working through scripted scenarios. A scenario required the participants to work as a group to respond to a particular work situation in a given workplace context. The scenarios were designed to mirror the theoretical framework of Situated Learning and take the participants from simple and focused situations to more complex situations that encompassed

all aspects of their role. Furthermore, opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation were embedded in the training and the *MOVING WORK* schema was used to support the design of the training course.

Feedback from participants suggests that they perceived they had a developmental pathway, that they accepted responsibility for their learning and had an obligation to support others at the workplace. Moreover, the feedback suggested that this approach to training might be a way to further enhance learning and development practice at WASP and more widely across the ADF.

### **7.6.2 Extending the Understanding of Situated Learning**

The development of the notion of a migratory CoP can be used to extend the theory of Situated Learning and how to view an individual's action in the group setting of a CoP. This has been established in this research by considering the concept of legitimate peripheral participation as it relates to ways of behaving in a CoP. In chapter 6 this research has:

- further clarified the concept of legitimacy and peripherality as the behaviour of an individual in a CoP
- identified legitimacy and peripherality as a way to promote and explain an individual's action at work

- established the importance of the concept of legitimate peripheral participation into academic discourse in relation to CoPs.

As stated in chapter 2, Fuller et al. (2005) consider that the concept of legitimate peripheral participation is useful when explaining how people learn. Previous descriptions of CoPs, such as Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), are largely a group perspective and do not provide a well-developed view of the individual participating in a CoP. As detailed in chapter 2, the literature indicates that the terms legitimacy and peripherality are not well developed (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Fuller et al., 2005). This research has defined legitimacy and peripherality as the behaviour of an individual in a CoP which contributes to knowledge by providing a way to examine the actions of individuals in a group situation. Furthermore, it contributes to practice by providing a theoretical foundation for practitioners to focus the actions of people in a group setting.

### **7.6.3 Implications for ADF managers and staff**

The Schema of *MOVING WORK*, the theoretical framework of Situated Learning, and the notion that ADF workplaces can be considered to be migratory CoPs can be used by managers in the ADF and their staff.

It may be helpful for Managers to recognise that *MOVING WORK* can be done well or poorly. That how well an individual performs when participating in



*MOVING WORK* will have an impact on their transition to competence and organisational performance. Then by ensuring staff are better prepared to perform *MOVING WORK* well, that they are planning trips, and not just setting themselves up to react to impacts and tension they might experience. This could be via a review of their preparations across a range of issues contained in an operational checklist. The category of *Matter* gives some insight into what needs to be considered as a part of *MOVING WORK* but *MOVING WORK* has been going on for quite some time and ADF managers should be capable of producing an effective operational checklist suitable for their context.

The notion of the ADF workplace as a CoP provides managers justification for action. It allows them to rely upon staff experienced with *MOVING WORK* as a resource to assist less experienced staff and to improve their performance. Experienced staff may also assist other experienced staff to review their plans and make for an improved performance with *MOVING WORK* and transition to competence. When managers recognise that ADF staff experience a changing scope of participation in work and that the nature of participation in work also changes they have a basis to plan transition to competence. More importantly managers and individuals have a way to measure how well they perform when participating in *MOVING WORK* and therefore have a way to review and improve their performance. Thereby improving the effectiveness

and efficiency for an individual to move geographical location and transition to competence in a new role. This is important. It is not just about settling in to a new job it goes to the heart of the capability of the ADF.

## **7.7 Areas of Further Research**

A number of possible areas for future research have a foundation in the scope and limitations that were presented in Section 7.2 of this chapter and the findings as discussed in Section 7.4.

### **7.7.1 Research in the ADF**

The WASP job relocation is an RAAF workplace context and can be deemed as typical of other ADF workplaces. In order to be able to generalise these findings and to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the ADF workplace experience further research needs to be done in other ADF workplaces and across the three services of the ADF. Such research would examine the ADF workplace through the lens of the theoretical framework of Situated Learning to explore the differences and similarities and confirm if all ADF workplaces can be viewed as CoPs.

This research only explored specific aspects of job relocation and can be extended to include the effect of the influences of the characteristics of the ADF workplace on the careers of staff. This should be done by investigating a range of variables such as tenure in the ADF, tenure at a particular workplace,

job roles, and the extent of experience with deployments. This research has only concerned one RAAF workplace and it is deemed appropriate to undertake similar research in both Army and Navy workplaces. Such research would use the lens of the theoretical framework of Situated Learning, the notion of migration in a CoP, and legitimate peripheral participation as it relates to ways of behaving. This would enable examination of the different cultures and possible workplace practice of these services of the ADF. This could also be extended to movement between the 3 services of the ADF, which while not a usual career pathway is an accepted practice. Such research would illuminate how ADF staff move along their career and provide a deeper understanding of the professional development of ADF staff and potentially contribute to the capability of the ADF.

Training programs could be the subject of further research and thereby initiate new methods of training, specifically within job relocation. Once an ADF workplace has been established as an operating CoP with the other characteristics that align it to the theory of Situated Learning approaches to training could be redesigned. This should bring the context of work into training by simulating behaviours as they relate to legitimate peripheral participation in a migratory CoP. The goal of such research would be to improve the transition into work for ADF staff at a new workplace.

It is possible that the ADF relies on regular job relocation for ADF staff to advance along their career and to be ready to conduct operations as the need arises. This may also indicate that the cyclic nature of work in the ADF could be impacted by changes to workplace practices and customs and rituals and have an impact on workplace performance. Therefore, it would be prudent to undertake a closer examination of regular job relocation as a workplace practice and the impact upon ADF performance. This is because it reduces the time ADF staff are effective at work and potentially reduces the capability of the ADF, all at significant expense to the Australian people.

#### **7.7.2 Research Concerning the Contemporary Workplace**

The findings from this research concluded that the WASP workplace can be viewed as a migratory CoP and that ADF staff move in and out of legitimate peripheral participation. Further research into the contemporary workplace is needed to extend understanding of the notion of legitimate and peripheral participation. Such research would use the theoretical framework of Situated Learning together with the definition of legitimate peripheral participation as behaviour as a lens to examine the data. Data collection would focus on behaviours that show people moving in and out of legitimate peripheral participation thereby determining whether the notion of a migration in a CoP is a characteristic of other CoPs. This would enhance our understanding of

how professional development of people works and potentially contributes to the capability of workers and their employer organisations.

Establishing the importance and role of the concept of legitimate peripheral participation provides a focus for future research about an individual's action in shared activity. This is important because, as detailed in chapter 2 and discussed in chapter 6, this term has been almost discarded in the literature and the implications of legitimacy and peripherality have been lost. In chapter 2 it was asserted that legitimacy and peripherality are complex concepts about ways of belonging that are affected by the power relationships found in the workplace (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This research has identified a migratory CoP which allowed for legitimate peripheral participation to be defined in terms of ways of behaving. In further research legitimate peripheral participation in a CoP, when defined in terms of ways of behaving, will allow aspects such as power and identity to be examined.

## **7.8 Concluding Remarks**

As has been documented in this dissertation there has been limited research concerning how the nature and organisation of work and the customs and culture of the ADF workplace influence the widespread workplace practice of job relocation. The impact of the continual change, characteristic of the ADF

workplace, on the nature and organisation of work and the customs and culture of the ADF workplace is also not well understood.

This research has shown that the ADF workplace practice of job relocation appears to be accepted by ADF staff as work. The nature and organisation of work and the customs and culture at the ADF workplace influence and aid ADF staff to cope with this workplace practice. This research has highlighted the efficacy of the influences of the nature and organisation of work and the culture and customs at an ADF workplace. It means that these influences can affect the scope of participation available to workers and the level of support other workers are responsible, or obligated, to provide. This suggests that to realise the efficacy found in the learning from everyday experience ADF staff need to be able to focus their action such that they participate legitimately at the periphery of a migratory CoP. To do this it is not sufficient to just name a group of workers as a CoP. To be confident of the efficacy of workers supporting each other as members of a CoP, managers need to be able to recognise ways of behaving that are characteristic of legitimate peripheral participation in a CoP. Workers need to be able to behave such that they legitimately participate at the periphery in a CoP. Managers and workers need to understand the role of legitimate peripheral participation in a CoP.

Finally whilst this research has contributed to our further understanding of job relocation, the overall effect of regular job relocation on the capability of the ADF is not well understood. It follows that the effort and resources that are expended in continuing to support the regular job relocation for 50,000 Australian Government employees should be justifiable to the Australian people. It is hoped that this research will stimulate further research in this area as it is needed as the contemporary ADF workplace continues to evolve. Moreover, this is necessary to aid the management of change and the influence on ADF staff members and the performance of the ADF workplace.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A – ADF Badges of Rank

### AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE BADGES OF RANK AND SPECIAL INSIGNIA

#### NAVY



#### ARMY



#### AIR FORCE



#### NAVY



#### ARMY



#### AIR FORCE



## **Appendix B – Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

Each interview set included an introduction where respondents were welcomed and the conduct of the interview was explained. This was followed by an explanation of informed consent. On the formal indication of consent the following questions were asked. Two sets of interview questions were used. This was to take into account the changing context of work for the respondents.

### **Interview Set One**

The following series of questions were asked as a part of the semi-structured interview data collection instrument used for the first set of interviews.

- How did you come to be at WASP?
- What do you know about WASP?
- What will you be doing at WASP?
- Have you met any of the people you are going to be working before coming here?
- Is there anything that you are looking forward to in this posting?

## **Interview Set Two**

The following series of questions were asked as a part of the semi-structured interview data collection instrument used for the second set of interviews.

- What have you had to do to get where you are now?
- What are you doing now?
- What will you be doing?
- What is it like working with people at WASP?
- Is there anything you wish to mention that might be significant?

## **Appendix C – Information Sheet and Consent Form**

### **Information sheet:**

#### **The nature and role of informal learning at the workplace**

Informal learning is learning that happens as a part of day to day activity and includes experiences that range from learning how to find the lunchroom to learning how to improve complex work processes and procedures. The aim of this research is to examine how, why, when, where, why informal learning takes place at the workplace. This research project forms part of the requirements of a PhD program. The benefit of this research project is to help people to understand the informal learning that they experience at the workplace.

Your opinions and views about informal learning are valuable to this study and will be sought through interviews. Interviews will take approximately 50 minutes and you may be asked to take part in one or two interviews. You may choose whether or not to participate in interviews.

I will safeguard all the information you provide, maintain your privacy, and will not compromise Australian Defence Force security. Pseudonyms will be used to aid confidentiality and no one will be directly identified during the research project, data collection or subsequent publication of findings. If you wish to participate you may contact the researcher by mail, email, or phone, details at the end of the next page, and you will be asked to complete a consent form to confirm your participation in this study. If you agree to participate you have the right to withdraw at anytime without detriment or reason.

On completion, a condensed and plain English version of the research findings will be made available to you if you request it. The research findings will be published in relevant journals, newsletters and bulletins. Emerging results will be presented at relevant conferences. A bound copy of my thesis will be presented to the Commanding Officer of One Radar surveillance Unit.

The Commanding Officer of One Radar surveillance Unit has given his approval for this research to be conducted at One Radar surveillance Unit and requires the research to be conducted in accordance with Australian Defence Force policies and guidelines.

If you would like more information about the research project you can write, telephone or email the researcher or the Principal Supervisor of the research project.

If you wish to participate please write, telephone or email the researcher.

**Researcher**

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*Please contact Central Queensland University's Office of Research (Tel. (07) 49232607) should there be any concerns about the nature and/or conduct of this research.*

## **Consent form**

**Research project:** *The nature and role of informal learning at the workplace.*

Your rights:

1. The researcher will answer all participant's questions about this research.
2. The researcher will safeguard the data generated during the research, pseudonyms will be used to aid confidentiality and no-one will be directly identified during the research, data collection or publication of findings.
3. The researcher will adhere to Australian Defence Force security requirements.
4. Participation in this project is voluntary and you may refuse to answer specific questions or withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.
5. On request you may receive a copy of the summary of the outcomes of the research.

## **Agreement**

### **Participant:**

1. I agree to participate in the research as described in the Information Sheet and the explanation of participant's rights as detailed above.
2. I understand the information, have received satisfactory answers to all questions I have raised and agree to the conditions as described.
3. I understand I will receive no remuneration for participating in this research.
4. I understand that I may refuse to answer specific questions and withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.
5. I understand I will receive a signed copy of this form.

Name: .....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Please provide contact details if you wish to receive a copy of the summary outcomes of the research:

Postal: .....

Email: .....

### **Researcher:**

I certify that I will maintain the confidentiality of all data you provide and that that I have answered all questions fully.

Name: R.D.Westlake

Signature: ..... Date: .....

*Please contact Central Queensland University's Office of Research (Tel. (07) 49232607) should there be any concerns about the nature and/or conduct of this research.*