

ABSTRACT

Title: DEVELOPING PATHWAYS TO SERVING TOGETHER: DUAL MILITARY COUPLES' LIFE COURSE AND DECISION-MAKING

David Glenn Smith, Ph.D., 2010

Directed By: Professor Mady W. Segal, Department of Sociology

The increase in the number and types of military families since the advent of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973 has increased the impact of the work-family interface for the military. For dual career couples, where both the husband and wife are in the military, both are subject to deployment for extended periods of time, high geographic mobility, probability of a foreign residence, the risk of injury or death, and they must manage two specialized and structured career paths (Segal 1986). The purpose of this study is to analyze the work careers and family life course of dual military couples and their decision-making processes, using a life course perspective. Using a grounded theory methodology, I interviewed and analyzed the transcripts of 23 dual military officer couples in the U.S. Navy. Results show that work and family decisions are influenced by the organizational constraints as well as institutional and cultural norms. The rhythm of life in the Navy is shaped by cyclic changing of job assignments and locations, rotation of sea and shore duty assignments, warfare

specialty career paths designed for promotion, and the cultural fast track. These couples' experiences in trying to live together with collocated job assignments shape their long-term decision-making for maintaining a career in the Navy. Their experiences show that the organization's demands and far-reaching control are infused into every aspect of their lives. Couples' discourse is focused on their human agency in an effort to maintain control of their life course while meeting the organizational demands of rigid and structured career paths, increased number of sea duty tours and deployments, and perceived low priority of collocation in the assignment process. Dual career couples in this organization use a long-term perspective of the life course to cope with their current situation with the knowledge that their life satisfaction will improve in the near future as they progress in their career. These couples adapt by employing work-family prioritization strategies for achieving their personal and professional goals. Learning how to successfully combine and separate roles through these prioritization strategies reduces stress and increases life satisfaction.

DEVELOPING PATHWAYS TO SERVING TOGETHER: MILITARY FAMILY
LIFE COURSE AND DECISION-MAKING OF DUAL MILITARY COUPLES.

By

David Glenn Smith

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Advisory Committee:
Professor Mady W. Segal, Chair
Professor William Falk
Associate Professor Jeffrey Lucas
Professor Melissa Milkie
Associate Professor Kevin Roy

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to three extraordinary people in my life.

To Jacob and Julia Smith, my wonderful, supportive children.

To Erica Smith, my loving, devoted wife.

Throughout this process, I have grown to appreciate even more the instrumental roles each of you has played in my life. Thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Dual earner families have increasingly become the family norm replacing the traditional breadwinner-homemaker family type in our society. With this social structural change in family types comes an associated change in work and family roles. Not only are more women in the labor force, but the roles women and men occupy in dual career couples can have different meanings from a work and family perspective as they are shaped by cultural and structural forces in our society. The life course perspective provides a means to analyze work and family roles in the social and historical contexts that influence decision-making through adults' lives (Giele and Elder 1998). For dual career couples, managing and coordinating two work careers and a family is a complex task with potential role conflicts. Examining the decision-making process as these couples navigate role transitions in their institutional structures can provide a better understanding of the adaptation strategies employed to attain personal, professional and family goals.

Military families, like their civilian counterparts, are subject to changes and trends in society. Until recently, military family policy and research has focused on the traditional family comprised of a male service member and a female civilian spouse, with or without children. Today's military families have a wider variety of family forms, including single-parent families, single service members in committed relationships, and dual career families.

Dual military families have been become more common and account for seven percent of married Navy officers. Married female officers are nearly seven

times more likely than married male officers to have a spouse in uniform. With the steady increase in women in the military from two percent in 1973 to more than 15 percent today, it is likely that the number of dual military couples will also continue to increase (Manning 2008).

Dual military couples are unique in that both husband and wife are in the military. They have uncommon work and family requirements and pose special challenges to the military organization that are still not adequately addressed (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2006). Both husband and wife are expected and required to work long hours and often nonstandard shift work. Extended time away from home and deployments for up to a year are common. Over the past decade, deployments in combat zones also have become typical (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2006).

Career paths for these military professionals are rigid and often conflict with the spouse's career path if they are not in the same career field. Every two to three years, these couples face their most daunting challenge, negotiating new duty station orders. This process can be very emotional since the result often means that one spouse leaves months earlier to set up home at a new location, including overseas locations, while the other spouse maintains a separate home at the old duty station. This assumes they are able to negotiate orders to the same location. Finally, the couple must contend with childcare concerns and changing school requirements.

Although dual military couples have become increasingly common in the past thirty years, there is little research on this type of military family and how their work and family roles are interrelated within career trajectories and associated work and

family outcomes. Examining the work and family decision-making of these couples situated in the institutional and occupational structure of the Navy provides an understanding of how role transitions and their timing and sequencing within a trajectory vary based on strategic adaptation to the structures which constrain and shape these decisions. These couples' awareness of structural constraints is implicit in their desire to find creative and innovative solutions to reach their personal, professional, and family goals. Maintaining a sense of control ultimately leads to the consideration of the duality of structure in the form of human agency (Sewell 1992).

Employing a life course perspective and life course concepts of timing, linked lives, agency, and historical context, help to understand trajectories and embedded role transitions, human agency and structure within couples' work and family decision-making processes. Previous research methodology on dual military couples has included both quantitative and qualitative methods, using the individual as the unit of analysis. Researchers employing surveys and interviews typically use comparisons of differences for men and women without the partner's responses; these studies have been useful for analyzing the demographics and identifying the challenges for these families. The results highlight the differences in retention, promotion, work and family commitment, satisfaction, spouse collocation, and level of spouse support for career (Farkas and Durning 1982; Lakhani and Gade 1992; Orthner 1980; Orthner and Bowen 1982; Teplitzky et al. 1988). Conspicuously absent in previous research is attention to what influences military women to marry military men; examining the relationships and role transitions of these couples provides possible explanations using the life course perspective. While assortative

mating is one explanation, timing, structure, and agency in women's pathways provide other possible explanations.

The effects of children and family size on military families have been widely studied with a focus on childcare, financial benefits, and retention (Farkas and Durning 1982; Lakhani and Gade 1992; Orthner 1980; Orthner and Bowen 1982; Teplitzky et al. 1988). However, the timing and sequencing of children and the associated role transitions for parents presents different challenges for dual military couples and this has not been addressed. With two professional, career-oriented parents, the decisions related to when and if they should have children - and routine and urgent childcare - become more salient in the decision-making of these couples. The influence of social, cultural, and institutional structures figure prominently in the decision-making related to when and if they should have children. Also, since deployments and extended time away from home are a reality for these couples, decision-making related to long-term childcare arrangements when one or both parents are deployed is important.

The role transition to retirement has gained attention in life course literature with the increase in life expectancy, changes in occupational structure and associated retirement pensions and medical benefits, and the structure of the Social Security system (Sweet and Moen 2006). Military retirement and the associated benefits have a different meaning since military retirement can occur after only 20 years of service. For officers, this typically equates to an age of 42 years. While the transition to military retirement is documented in military literature, the meaning of retirement as

a goal can have later stage life course implications related to family outcomes at early stages of a military officer's career and family development (Wolpert 2000).

Much has been written about the importance of time for dual career couples. However, time is often studied in the context of division of household labor or amount of time spent on work, family, and leisure. While these are important aspects of time as a commodity and as related to gendered schemas of work and family, dual military couples perceive time in the context of time together and time away within a broader scope of deployments and collocation. This broader perspective of time shapes the decision-making of couples across the life course in relation to the timing of role transitions.

This chapter provides an introduction to this study. First, I situate the experiences of dual military couples in a historical and cultural context. Following this section is specific background information on dual military couples and an overview of the life course perspective. The next section provides the purpose and significance of the study and a short summary of grounded theory methodology. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the entire study.

Situated in Context

In American society today, various work-family arrangements encompass the spectrum of personal, family, and professional perspectives and values. Social change over the past four decades has transformed our understanding of what it means to be in a traditional family and its associated work linkages. The labor force continues to encompass an increased number of women and specifically employed

mothers. The participation rate for employed mothers has increased from 48 percent in 1975 to over 71 percent in 2008 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009). As a result of the increased number of employed mothers, family types have changed from the traditional family model of the 1950s with an employed husband and a stay-at-home wife. In 2008, such families have decreased to 19 percent compared to 35 percent in 1975 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009). Married couples with both husband and wife in the labor force have increased from 33 percent in 1975 to 51 percent in 2008 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009).

While the labor force and family types have changed, the cultural and structural organization of paid work in our society has been slow to change. Moen and Roehling (2005) describe the “career mystique” as being a lockstep model of continuous employment, hard work, long hours, and total commitment to paid work in a work organization promising job security, a continuing upward progression on the career ladder, and benefits and pensions to facilitate eventual retirement. This lockstep model is predicated on the gender divide of a traditional breadwinner-homemaker family type where the unpaid work at home supports the total commitment to paid work by the breadwinner (Moen and Roehling 2005). The lockstep model is also based on the life course pathway of education, continuous employment, and retirement (Moen and Roehling 2005). Reinforcing the “career mystique” are the institutional and cultural constellations of rules, roles, and expectations which serve to reward success in following the prescribed occupational path and punishing those who challenge the system (Moen and Roehling 2005).

However, in today's work environment there are few jobs and businesses that guarantee a secure retirement, continuous employment, or the benefits once found in our society. Downsizing, mergers, layoffs, and reductions in force have become the norm in business and serve to increase work hours and demonstrate dedication to maintain a steady job. The meaning and timing of retirement in this work-related reality has a different perspective in the life course of 21st century families. In today's labor force with diverse family types, there is often adaptation to the "career mystique" by using strategies such as prioritizing one person's career - and it is usually the husband's career. This strategy assumes the family cannot financially afford to outsource unpaid family-care work and the burden of this unpaid work still falls on the wife. This is only one strategy, but is indicative of the structural lag between societal transformations and institutional and cultural structures which tend to constrain choices and options.

The military, which has historically been a gendered institution, still maintains a hyper-masculine culture based on a warrior ethos. While many of American society's work institutions have become more gender equal, the military is still 85 percent male (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2008). As a male-dominated institution, the military has emphasized the traditional breadwinner-homemaker family model by separating the spheres of work and family and requiring high commitment from its members and their families - while rewarding them with prestige, job security, social and medical benefits, a career, and, ultimately, retirement and pension benefits. Further reinforcement of the separation of the spheres of work and family are found in the gendered role of the military

spouse; informal support and unpaid spousal labor is still expected of wives in terms of public relations and ceremonial duties, entertaining and socializing, mentoring young spouses, and unit support (Harrell 2001). These spousal roles become more formal as an officer becomes more senior and is promoted to command positions.

Spousal support to service members has been an important part of ensuring the success of the officer's career. The hierarchical nature of the military demands that officers continue to be promoted or be forced out of the military in what is known as an "up or out" policy. Entrance and promotion in the military is based on an internal labor market where most people are brought in at the bottom and there is little opportunity for lateral entry (Rosen, 1992). Officer promotions are statutory in that they are prescribed by law, specifically known as the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) of 1980. This law prescribes the number of officers allowed at each rank and effectively established the military's "up or out" promotion system (Rostker, Thie, Lacy, Kawata, and Purnell 1993).

Officer career paths are specific to occupational specialties and determine the standard tour length, type and level of job, required rank, and relative timing to next promotion opportunity. These career paths are rigid, based on the timing of important career milestones being achieved prior to statutory promotion boards. For Navy officers, career paths also determine when officers are assigned to "sea duty" and "shore duty." Sea duty is defined as an assignment to a ship or aviation squadron that is deployable. During sea duty tours, officers can expect to spend up to 50 percent of their time away from home as part of their training or deployment. Shore

duty is defined as an assignment to a unit which is not normally deployable. During these tours, officers can expect to spend most of their time at their home duty station.

The Navy as a sea service historically has maintained a deployable fleet of ships and aircraft which executes the United States government's strategic mission of maintaining the freedom of the high seas (Department of the Navy 2010). The Navy maintains almost 300 deployable ships and over 3,700 operational aircraft, of which 50 percent are deployed or underway at any time (Department of the Navy 2010). The Navy is historically a deployment-intensive service, which is important in understanding how its people and their families experience their daily lives.

Dual Military Couples

Due to the propensity for men and women to develop relationships in the workplace, it has been inevitable that there would be dual military marriages with the increase of women in the military. While proportions of married personnel in dual military marriages are necessarily higher for women (48 percent of all women) than men (7.2 percent) based on overall higher proportions of service men, there are obviously equal numbers of men and women in dual military marriages (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2008). Overall, officer and enlisted dual military couples comprise 12.1 percent of all married personnel in the military and dual military couples account for 9.9 percent of married Navy personnel (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2008). The implications of increasing numbers of dual military couples are the challenges with deployment schedules, co-location assignments, child care arrangements, work

schedules, and maintaining a sufficiently high level of satisfaction with military life (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2006).

For this study, dual military couples are defined as two married military officers. To remain consistent with work and family literature, commissioned officers are characteristically associated with the dual career couple definition, although the term dual earner couple could also be applicable in some research. Most civilian careers are found in professional fields, and the officer corps in the military profession is a representative group based on traditional professional characteristics (i.e., group professional identity, sense of service to society, set of group norms and behavior, internal career management and promotion, higher education, advanced training and skill sets, and exclusivity) (Huntington 1957, Wilensky 1964).

Dual military couples are restricted in career choices based on skill specialization. Inherent in the military institutional structure, officers change jobs every two to three years which normally is accompanied by relocation and possibly to locations outside the U.S. The military's "up or out" promotion policy is also a factor in deciding what jobs are available, where the job is located, and the nature of the job. Work and family strategic options are reduced because of institutional policies which do not usually allow "sabbaticals" or lateral transfers. Military policies inherently force service members and their families to make work-family decisions on a regular basis.

There has been no research conducted that specifically considers the life course of dual military couples or the associated work and family decision-making which influences life course trajectories. However, a small number of studies have

analyzed some factors that provide some insight into where the life course perspective and decision-making could be a beneficial conceptualization. Lakhani and Gade (1992) found dual military couples more likely to have higher commitment to their military role if their spouse also had high commitment to the military role. This evidence would lead to the expectation that dual military couples with high job role commitment would be more likely to make the military a career which could be useful in analyzing career prioritization strategies. However Lakhani and Gade (1992) did not differentiate between couples with and without children, which detracts from the study's usefulness. The data also use individuals instead of couples as the unit of analysis.

A distinctly different method was used by Stander et al. (1998) in their interviews of dual military couples. This research reinforces the importance of interviews and how this method can analyze the meaning of roles and role transitions and life course concepts such as linked lives, timing of lives, and agency. The authors found evidence in the interviews that roles and family structure were understood in terms of the military organization. These couples saw how they organized and handled family time to be highly influenced by the military culture. Couples explained the interface between their military and family roles in a positive context, which suggests that role meaning is applicable to understanding effective family and career strategies. These dual military couples were also found to be committed to their work roles through their explanation of career goals. However, the authors found that wives were more likely to consider leaving their military role than husbands. Wives who were contemplating leaving the military were more likely

to be making the decision based on family concerns. Husbands leaving the military were more likely to be leaving the military based on promotion opportunities or financial concerns. Stander et al.'s (1998) research suggests that roles and role transitions are important aspects of career and family decisions for dual military couples across the life course.

Life Course Perspective

The life course paradigm emerged from the influences of several research foci directed at understanding social structure, individual action, and social change (Giele and Elder 1998). Key to this perspective is understanding how role and life course change can be seen as dialectic between individuals and societal institutions and their associated norms, values, and rules (Giele and Elder 1998). Life course scholars use four concepts to analyze the life course: location in time and place (historical and cultural context), linked lives (social integration), human agency, and timing of lives (strategic adaptation) (Giele and Elder 1998). Using these four concepts, researchers examine roles and their associated life events as they are performed over the life course. Important in this research are changes in roles, role transitions, and how they are affected by structures and the impact on the trajectory of the individual's life course. Alternatively, researchers look for the possibility of structural change by individuals trying to reform social institutions. Structural change allows for an examination of how the motivations for human agency can be enacted through attempts to improve one's situation in life, personal control, and being able to deal with uncertainty (Giele and Elder 1998).

Overview of Research Design and Methodology

In reviewing the existing literature on dual military couples and how the life course and decision-making could explain the trajectories of these couples, no particular theory explains how these couples life course trajectories are influenced and shaped. Using a grounded theory approach provides the ability to let the data tell the story for these couples. In the tradition of Glaser and Strauss (1967), researchers using grounded theory systematically collect and analyze data, and develop theory grounded in the data. In this way, there is a continuous process of collecting and analyzing data while developing theory that emerges from the data. The researcher analyzes the data to find emergent themes and categories which connect the experiences of the respondents. After carefully exploring all themes and categories, models and theory can be produced to explain what is happening in the data.

This methodology uses the researcher as the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews are used in the present study to collect life histories of the respondents. Using a constant comparative method, data are collected, analyzed, and coded for emergent themes. The interview protocol is tested in pilot interviews.

I analyze a sample of 23 Navy officer dual military couples, some with and some without children. It is crucial to study families with children because of the additional potential work and family conflicts for those who have children, as well as those without to understand the decisions for not having children. From a life course perspective, dual military couples' role transitions determine various trajectories and

work and family outcomes. For example, the timing and sequencing of children related to career decision points can affect later decisions related to work and family.

The sample is based on service members who entered the Navy in 1980 or later; this incorporates cohorts who entered military service both before and after the repeal of the Combat Exclusion Law. Previous research on women in the Navy has shown that women entering since 1994 have different experiences from members of earlier cohorts who had fewer opportunities to enter sea-going career fields (and those who did were volunteers, often pioneers in the service).

Based on earlier research (Segal and Segal 2004; Stander et al. 1998), I expect to find different work and family pathways across the life course to result in dual military families where: both husband and wife are active duty in sea-going career fields; both are active duty and one partner transitions to a restricted career field; one or both partners transitions to the Reserve; one spouse is active duty and the other separates from the military; both separate from the military; or they divorce.

Pathways refer to the development of careers in work and family based on sequencing, timing, and choices made by families which may be orderly or not and provide flexibility for differences in families (Pavalko and Smith 1999; Sweet and Moen 2006).

A purposive sample was created with the help of the Navy Personnel Command to achieve maximum variation within the stratified sample. Couples were recruited based on warfare specialty, when they entered military service, and the presence of children. I interviewed each husband and wife separately to allow for differences in experiences in how couples perceive the decision-making process

without the influence of their partner. After the 23 couples were interviewed, examination of emergent themes showed that theoretical saturation had been achieved and interviews were terminated.

Research Questions

One over-arching question guides this inquiry:

1. How do work and family decisions influence the life course trajectories of dual career couples in the U.S. military?

Related to this main question is:

2. Do military work demands uniquely affect work and family decisions of dual career military couples as they consider their long term implications over the life course?

Subsidiary questions include:

3. What are the work and family life course trajectories for dual military couples, (where a life course trajectory is a direction for developmental processes toward a life outcome)?
 - a. How has the timing of work and family decisions influenced life course trajectories?
 - b. How has the sequencing of work and family decisions influenced life course trajectories?
 - c. How do dual military couples perceive that the historical context (e.g. when law and policy changes occurred, periods of war) affect their life course trajectories?

4. How do role transitions for dual military couples influence life course trajectories (where role transitions are changes in social statuses such as marriage and parenthood)?
 - a. How do timing and sequencing of role transitions influence life course trajectories?
 - b. How is the meaning of a role transition influenced by a life course trajectory?
5. What are the processes that influence dual military couples' decision-making relating to role transitions and turning points and how do they affect decision-making?
 - a. How aware are dual military couples of structural constraints (institutional/organizational work policies) that shape their decision-making and life events?
 - b. What enables dual military couples to continue their military service?
6. How do men's and women's decision-making and associated outcomes about work and family decisions compare for dual military couples?

Purpose and Significance of Study

The goal of this study is to understand how work and family decisions influence the life course trajectories of dual career couples in the U.S. military. By studying the timing and sequencing of role transitions, I can understand how life course trajectories are created by these dual career couples. Through their life course

decision-making, I can also determine how aware dual military couples are of structural constraints (institutional/organizational work policies) that shape their decision-making and life events. Similarly, examining the meaning of roles and role transitions allow for understanding what enables dual military couples to continue their military service. Finally, by conducting individual interviews rather than couple interviews, I analyze how men's and women's decision-making and associated outcomes about work and family decisions are different within dual military couples.

Separate interviews with both members of the couple help to disentangle the choices and constraints that men and women may experience differently based on their own and partners' gender role attitudes, the workplace culture, and organizational constraints. Deployment schedules, sea duty and shore duty cycles, co-location for duty assignments, and inflexible career paths can affect family and work decisions.

Very little research beyond demographic statistics has been conducted on dual military couples. This study attempts to add an understanding of how these couples' work and family decisions influence the life course. Experiential comparisons of these couples examine common and unique themes to provide a rich, in-depth explanation of how these couples' work and family decisions influence their multiple roles, role transitions, and work and family outcomes based on their life course trajectory.

Research and analysis of the integration of women into the military and research on military families has been extensive over the past three decades. However, research on the changes to military families based on the integration of

women is a new focus and is integral to this study. Dual military couples by definition are affected by policies and changes to policies related to military women. As the demographics of military families change, marginalized populations such as dual military couples often are the impetus for more widespread social change within the military institution. Giving these couples an opportunity to tell their story is complicit with the purpose of using the couple as the unit of analysis. The interdependence of husband and wife, father and mother, his career and her career, can be understood best through the conversations about how they interact everyday and how and why they make family and work decisions across the life course.

Overview of the Study

This dissertation includes ten chapters. The first chapter is an overview of the entire study. The second chapter provides a review of all relevant literature. The third chapter discusses the methodology including an overview of grounded theory methods, the data collection plan and analysis, methodological considerations, interview protocol, and any limitations for this research. The fourth chapter is an overview and introduction of the participants and their work and family prioritization strategies. Chapters five through nine are analyses of the data and development of the grounded theory. The tenth and final chapter is a discussion of the findings and conclusions, theoretical implications, practical and policy implications, and strengths and limitations of this research.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

My qualitative research uses the life course perspective as insight and guidance to develop interview protocol questions and probes. Corbin and Strauss (2008) found that theoretical frameworks can provide initial concepts and alternative explanations for generating grounded theory or extending existing theory. However, they also point out the importance of remaining open to new concepts and ideas that emerge in data collection and analysis.

Theoretical sensitivity is the research process used to remain attentive to emerging concepts throughout the data collection and analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Strauss and Corbin (1998) expanded theoretical sensitivity to include the earliest stages of project development. Existing theory is an important part of the researcher's prior knowledge that influences the shape and direction of the research. Life course concepts, work and family roles, and decision-making are of interest in this research and have helped to guide the initial lines of inquiry. Role theory sensitizes this research to the meaning found in the socially-defined events in the life course; roles of husbands and wives and their decision-making process for work and family roles have been influential in developing my interview protocol. Also of theoretical interest is how social and cultural influences through institutional structures explain couples' life course trajectories and outcomes and the choices they make for work and family. Negotiations between husband and wife and between military service member and the Navy as an institution help couples influence decision-making related to roles and the timing and sequencing of role transitions. Finally, human capital theory provides a framework to explain how family and work

choices are made based on pragmatic and economic considerations, as well as their short-term and long-term implications.

The life course perspective, role theory, and human capital theory provide a starting point for this research and have helped to develop the initial interview protocol. Existing theoretical frameworks provide sensitizing concepts to guide the process of data collection and analysis (Blumer 1969). Data collection and analysis provided me the opportunity to let emerging concepts develop a theory grounded in the data.

Life Course Perspective

The complex, multi-dimensional study of work and family decisions of two career-oriented people requires a theoretical perspective that provides the ability to: temporally examine the interrelated nature of multiple roles, examine decisions on when and whether to enter and leave those roles, analyze how structures and schemas shape decisions, evaluate the level of human agency involved and any associated impact on structures, and contextually situate the experience within the historical and cultural period of time. The life course perspective provides a framework that enables the understanding of how work and family decisions influence career trajectories and associated work and family outcomes while situating these experiences within the context of military service. The life course perspective uses four key sensitizing concepts which I employ to frame the work and family decisions of dual military couples across time: historical and cultural location, linked lives, human agency, and timing of lives (Giele and Elder 1998).

Historical and Cultural Location

Because the life course perspective emphasizes the historical location during these couples lives, locating their experiences in historical and cultural time sensitizes this research to the changes in family types as the societal norm has transitioned from the traditional breadwinner-homemaker model to the dual earner couple. Where previously career priority was given to the male spouse, evidence suggests that we can no longer make this assumption (Pixley 2008; Pixley and Moen 2003). In addition to family types changing, there has been a downward trend in fertility and an increase in the median age at first childbirth which is of interest when considering the intersection of work and family roles (Altucher and Williams 2003). While women's work careers appear disorderly and interrupted as compared to men's work careers because of children and childcare, in today's society more women are returning to work after childbirth (Moen 2003). For dual career couples, the demands of maintaining two careers and a family may impact the work and family goals, leading to new career pathways (Moen and Sweet 2002). Further, as transformations in the labor force, economy, and the structure of work careers are encountered, new relational contexts for work careers can be expected (Moen and Han 2001).

The nature of the relationship between employee and employer has changed dramatically over the last 50 years due to globalization, the service industry economy, and technological advances (Moen and Roehling 2005). The old standard of continuous employment, job security, and an occupational career path has been replaced with restructuring, downsizing, mergers and layoffs (Moen and Roehling 2005). This change in the work relationship coupled with increased longevity and

decreased fertility has led to changes in the traditional lockstep career model: education-employment-retirement (Moen and Roehling 2005). Where Social Security and retirement pensions led workers to a long-awaited permanent retirement with little or no planning, today's workers are faced with doing much of their own retirement planning and timing retirement after completion of "second acts" and "midcourse careers" (Moen and Roehling 2005, Sweet and Moen 2006). Dual career couples are experiencing the decision-making process of how and when each person should retire, creating new strategies and pathways in the life course (Sweet and Moen 2006). Additionally, for those couples who decide to delay having children, retirement timing may also be based on the ability to pay for their children's college costs (Sweet and Moen 2006).

The military, as an employer, still maintains a traditional lockstep career model including retirement benefits and pensions. However, being retirement eligible in the military occurs as early as 20 years of service. To understand the meaning of retirement to military service members, it is helpful to review the evolution of today's military force and its military families and what influences them to stay in the military until becoming eligible for retirement.

The most influential factor affecting military families was the end of the military conscription system in 1973. Under the conscription system, the Cold War era mass military was a relatively young force with a low ratio of married personnel due to high turnover of first-term personnel. The all-volunteer force, combined with technological requirements to retain highly trained personnel, changed the demographics of the military. The military became a more professional, career-

oriented force (Segal and Segal 2003). Higher retention rates led to an increasing average age of the military force. More military service members were further along in their life course, which translates to an increase in married service members and parents. The effect of family satisfaction on retention moved leaders to focus more on military family policies and programs (Segal and Segal 2004).

An important change to the demographics of the military has been the increase in the percentage of women in the ranks since the inception of the all-volunteer force. The increase in percentages of women has implications for military family policies, including increases in dual military marriages and the need for child care. In 1994, a significant Department of Defense policy, the Combat Exclusion Policy, changed regarding women in combat. Career fields not “traditional” for women opened to them, especially in the Navy and Air Force. In the Navy, surface warfare and aviation opened to women. Since 1994, Navy policy requires personnel to enter only operational sea-going career fields, with few exceptions. Most recently, the Navy opened the submarine force to women in 2010 with the first women officers being assigned to submarines planned for 2011.

The percentage of married military women has changed significantly since 1973 when women constituted only two percent of the military, they were not expected to be married, retention directives encouraged married women to leave the military, and rules forced women to leave if pregnant (Segal and Segal 2003).

Women officers are less likely to be married than male officers. Among those who are married, women are considerably more likely to be in a dual military marriage. Substantially greater proportions of women than men are members of dual military

marriages: 48 percent of married women compared to 7 percent of married men (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2008). Dual military marriages pose unique challenges to assignment and deployment, in addition to affecting service members' satisfaction with military life.

Time away from home due to deployments and underway sea time is a part of the reality of these couples. However, many of these couples have experienced an increased number of deployments since September 11, 2001, sometimes in roles they never expected. To meet personnel demands on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Navy implemented an Individual Augmentee (IA) Program where service members are assigned to ground units for up to a year. Being assigned as an IA over the past decade has been based on emergent wartime requirements. The IA assignment process has created a stressful environment for military families as the uncertainty of being assigned an IA and leaving on short notice for possibly more than a year makes it difficult to plan for and accommodate in their already complex work and family lives.

Military service can influence life course trajectories based on the timing of role transitions and the demands placed on service members and their families (Gade 1991). Dual military couples provide a special case of dual career couples for this study, focusing on how these couples' roles, role transitions, and timing of roles are shaped by the institutional and cultural structure of the military organization. Analyzing critical military work transitions such as joining the military, warfare specialty assignment, job assignments, and location selection and how they are interrelated to family role transitions can provide insight into how these couples'

decision-making is shaped by surrounding institutional and cultural structures (Gade 1991).

Linked Lives

The relational context in life course research emphasizes the ties with spouses, children, extended family, co-workers, friends, and neighbors (Sweet and Moen 2006). While much of work and family research has focused on individuals, recent emphasis has been placed on couples as the unit of analysis (Becker and Moen 1999; Blossfeld and Drobic 2002; Han and Moen 1999; Huinink and Feldhaus 2009; Moen, Kim, and Hofmeister 2001; Pixley 2008). Dual career couples' decision-making related to their work and family roles demonstrates the multi-dimensional and interdependent aspects of coordinating two careers and a family. Determining if, when, and where to relocate, living arrangements, and childcare arrangements are a few of the many decisions these couples deal with on a regular basis (Bielby and Bielby 1992; Hertz 1991; Moen 2003).

Since dual career couples typically make decisions jointly, they have been found to develop couples' strategies to negotiate the demands of work and family (Moen and Wethington 1992). These couples' strategies take into consideration available options, cultural norms, and the effect each option would have on people in their support network (Sweet and Moen 2006). However, most couples in the early years of their careers without children follow the norm of the ideal worker - committing long hours to work while they have fewer obligations at home (Sweet and Moen 2006; Williams 2000). As family obligations and demands increase with the addition of children to the family, dual career couples begin to feel the conflict of the

multiple roles involved with work and family. These new and daunting challenges can lead to the perception that it is impossible to continue two careers under the same ideal worker construct - which leads to strategic selection or adaptation (Sweet and Moen 2006).

These strategies typically have a common theme of privileging the husband's career over the wife's career (Bielby and Bielby 1992; Moen and Han 2001; Pixley and Moen 2003; Zvonkovic et al. 1996). By privileging one job in the family, the economic success of the family is protected by maintaining the income, benefits, and career growth of the spouse following the typical long work hour career (Moen and Roehling 2005). While the breadwinner works long hours, the other spouse scales back his/her work hours and commitment to paid work while meeting the family demands at home. The strategy of "scaling back" is common among employed dual career couples; the husband maintains the traditional gendered breadwinner role and the wife gives priority to family needs (Becker and Moen 1999). Scaling back takes the form of placing limits or setting boundaries between work and family, having a job rather than a career, and trading off who has priority for a career (Becker and Moen 1999).

Another form of strategic selection and adaptation dual career couples use is career prioritization (Pixley 2008; Pixley and Moen 2003). To understand how couples prioritize one career over another, researchers have studied individual decisions where couples feel they made a major decision about their careers and found that in over half the couples, the husband's career had priority (Pixley and Moen 2003). Because men typically enter careers earlier and women also tend to

marry older men, it has been argued that these couples have prioritized the husband's career based on a relative resources perspective that he has higher earnings (Bhrolchain 1992; Mortimer et al. 2008; Pixley 2008). The effects of prioritizing the husband's career could result in a cumulative advantage across the life course (O'Rand 1996). Using a life course perspective to analyze dual career couples' career prioritizing decisions over time, Pixley (2008) found that income attainment is related to career-prioritizing decisions and typically favors husbands' careers.

In a study of dual career couples who worked for the same employer, Moen and Sweet (2002) found that these couples were likely to meet at their place of work, were located in the early stages of career development, and were less likely to have children. Career-prioritizing decisions for these couples were based on whose career was considered more important from an income perspective, as well as the ability to find a competitive and challenging job for the spouse (Moen and Sweet 2002). These couples also were more likely to state that neither partner's career took priority, or each career received the same consideration, which led to the finding that there was very little difference in their income (Moen and Sweet 2002). While most of these couples stated that neither career took priority, of the couples where one career did take priority, the husbands' career was more than twice as likely to have priority (Moen and Sweet 2002). This study emphasized the "coupled careers" perspective and showed that studying dual career couples required an "interlocked paths" model to analyze the work experiences which are shaped by institutional work structures, gender, and life stage (Han and Moen 1999; Moen and Sweet 2002).

Human Agency

Individuals and couples make decisions and arrange their lives in relation to their environment to meet their personal goals such as working at the same geographical location or both having meaningful and career-enhancing jobs (Giele and Elder 1998). Agency is based on people's ability to adapt their behavior to a given set of circumstances to achieve their needs or goals. Circumstances refer to the social and cultural structures that exist in the institutions where a person has chosen to occupy a set of roles. In Sewell's (1992) theory of structure, he portrays structure as a set of schemas which are culturally and socially organized and reproduced to control power and resources. In order for these structures to be reproduced, agents or individuals must have knowledge of the schemas and control of the resources in order to reproduce the structures in varying contexts (Sewell 1992). In this way, Sewell (1992) defines the duality of structure and agency as the individual's ability to control resources and power and reinterpret them to meet his/her individual needs, intentions, motivations, and goals.

By establishing institutionalized employment statuses, occupational activities, and work groups, institutions define and regulate careers in terms of occupational structure (Mayer 2004). The ability to enter or transition between occupational groups or business sectors is determined by the labor supply and the institutional opportunity structure (Mayer 2004). Established hierarchy and career paths are provided internally to create rules and regulations for advancement and moving laterally between organizations (Mayer 2004). The military has an internal labor market which is based on direct entry at the bottom of the career ladder with the

expectation that its members will strive to work their way to the top with no allowance for lateral transitions. In this way, commanders of military units must work their way up to command with the knowledge that the military will not hire someone from outside to step in as the commander. Additionally, the military institution defines social insurance and public welfare in terms of convalescent leave, maternity leave, and retirement eligibility.

Strategic selection and adaptation is an example of how dual career couples adjust to the social, cultural, and institutional structures of paid work in our society. Choosing whether to take on new roles and when to transition to these roles is important to the life course concept of agency. Another example of how couples adapt is by delaying or foregoing having children to accommodate the commitment demanded by professional careers. Altucher and Williams (2003) found that dual career couples plan on delaying having children, having fewer children, and attempting to have children precisely in certain periods of time. The impact of this adaptation can lead to infertility, with associated increases in fertility treatments and adoption (Altucher and Williams 2003).

Clausen (1991, 1993) sees people as being purposive and planful in the choices they make to construct their life course. As couples make decisions related to their roles in the domains of work and family, they are motivated by goals and expectations of the meaning of success. Their ability to meet these conceptions of success is influenced by their available resources (time, money, energy) and the demands of each domain. Personal control and levels of success vary across the life course based on cycles of control which vary by levels of resources available and

demands in each domain (Moen, Waisel-Manor, and Sweet 2003). When demands exceed available resources, personal control and successfulness decrease (Moen, Waisel-Manor, and Sweet 2003). Comparing the relationship between work and family domains for men and women in dual careers, men's success at work is negatively related to women's success at work, and women's success in the family is negatively related to men's success in the family (Moen, Waisel-Manor, and Sweet 2003).

Achieving success at home and work also has been tied to the balancing of work and family. Moen, Waisel-Manor, and Sweet (2003) found that work success and family success positively predicted balance success similarly for men and women. However, men's family success also related positively to women's balance success which may be viewed as women feeling they are able to balance more successfully if their husbands are successful at home. In today's service-related economy, the ability to outsource some of the family demands with a dual income resource may help in achieving more success at work, at home, and in balancing both.

As stated earlier, people are purposive and planful, which Giele (1998) applied to the need to adapt to changing social and cultural structures. To cope with uncertainty and planning for contingencies in today's volatile global economy, many families choose to have both partners work to maintain financial security. Women today are more likely to maintain a more continuous work career to ensure they can be self-sufficient in the event of their partner's loss of career. Maintaining multiple roles provides less specialization and greater flexibility, ensuring better chances of success during uncertain times (Giele 1998).

Planning for the future can also take the form of anticipated role transitions, which for dual career couples is often related to having children or retirement. Expected role transitions can affect present day decision-making and behavior in the form of shifting priorities or resources within domains (Huinink and Feldhaus 2009). The “shadow of the future” can also be seen when couples try to predict what the effects of future role transitions such as childbirth may bring (Huinink and Feldhaus 2009).

Innovation and creativity in the life course can lead to Sewell’s (1992) duality of structures concept, which emphasizes that not only do structures and schemas transform people, but also people can transform structures. Cultural, social, and institutional change occurs slowly, but examples of how institutions are beginning to adapt to the increase in dual career couples and their different needs are evident in ways work and family domains are being combined. For example, to help with childcare, some businesses are providing on-site childcare with more flexible hours to allow workers to work the demanding schedules required. Flex-work schedules and tele-commuting are becoming more common as well. Mayer (2004) shows how working mothers have been able to influence schools to increase their before and after school programs to provide a full day of childcare. While many of these changes are predicated on making it easier for couples to work harder and longer hours, it is still perceived to be change in the way work and family are viewed.

Timing of Lives

Timing of lives is a life course concept which considers the temporal continuity of roles enacted, timing of role transitions, sequencing and duration of

roles located within biographical time, social time, and historical time (Elder 1994; Giele and Elder 1998; Moen and Sweet 2004). Based on a person's motivations and goals, he/she will use resources available to react and adapt to external events based on the roles occupied (Elder 1994). Biographical time refers to the age-graded sequencing of experiences as people age. Social time is composed of the socially and culturally defined roles and events which shape the life course through schemas, rules, and availability of resources based on social position (Sweet and Moen 2004). Social time can also be the synchronization of multiple trajectories such as the work-family interface. Social timing of role transitions can provide opportunities, options, and constraints. Choices and decisions made early in the life course begin an experiential accumulation that makes each trajectory a personal and unique experience. When career prioritization begins early in a couples' relationship, a trajectory can be established that leads to cumulative advantage for the partner with the privileged career (O'Rand 1996). Sequencing and ordering of decisions is also important in the capacity to decrease or increase the effects of earlier decisions (Pavalko 1997).

The lockstep sequencing of careers as education – employment - retirement serves as a cultural and social structure that continues to influence career paths and how paid work is perceived (Moen and Roehling 2005). In their research on typical career pathways of dual career couples, Han and Moen (1999) found five pathways: “delayed-entry career”, “orderly career”, “fast-track career”, “steady part-time career”, and “intermittent career.” These pathways were identified using employment histories of transitions, work status, and retirement. Relationships between husband's

career and wife's career show a relational aspect to the marriage and family situation (Han and Moen 1999). Later research on career pathways provided a broader classification of careers as stable and unstable based on employment continuity (Williams and Han 2003). While stable career pathways provided higher wage outcomes, unstable career pathways were associated with better non-economic outcomes such as marital stability and quality of life (Williams and Han 2003).

Timing of children and parenthood comes at the nexus of work and family trajectories for dual career couples who feel that work may reduce family size and delay childbearing (Altucher and Williams 2003). Timing of children for two professionals is often a battle of calendars in trying to find the best time in each other's career as well as matching the right biological time. Additionally, men and women see children as being incompatible with work demands, time demands, and the perception of commitment to work being questioned by having a child (Altucher and Williams 2003). However, childlessness was not determined to be caused by unwanted delays in attempting to start a family in Altucher and Williams' (2003) research.

Specific to a military career pathway, analyzing the timing and sequencing of military career transitions in conjunction with the partner's career pathway and the family pathway is important to understanding the meaning or roles and their transitions in the military family life course of dual military couples.

Role Context in the Life Course

The life course perspective integrates several concepts using a role context. Roles are understood to be socially-defined positions within institutions that have associated meaning, expectations, behavior, and resources (Elder 1994; Macmillan and Copher 2005; Stryker 1968). In addition to the timing and sequencing of roles across the life course, I approach the examination of work and family decisions in determining life course trajectories from the perspective of the cultural and social meaning attached to social roles based on expectations. As men and women with careers marry, become parents, and make career decisions, new role expectations become activated and can affect not only the individual's behavior, but the couple's behavior in the form of new role meaning. However, perception by work peers and supervisors that a worker is reducing his/her work commitment can produce negative feedback.

Important to Stryker's (1968, 1980) commitment research is the linkage between role identity and relationships, which suggests the intensiveness of a role commitment to a specific identity is the emotional cost associated with giving up the relationships, when faced with the choice of selecting alternative relationships. As dual career couples prioritize their careers and families, choices to stay in the military profession are based on the cost of giving up the role as compared to a potential gain.

The iterative and adaptive nature of social roles allows for changes in context as the couple moves through the life course. New meaning is created between husband and wife based on roles and social structures encountered and in their

interaction with each other. Decisions related to changes in work and family social contexts objectify meaning through life role transitions.

Role configurations and trajectories focus on how roles are combined, which are present or absent in different life stages and provides for the analysis of patterns across the life course. Recently, role configuration research has emphasized the importance of multiple roles in combining women's roles of work and family which I expect to find evidence of in my research. However, it is less clear how the combination of multiple roles will affect the other spouse's roles through their interdependent work careers and family life cycle.

Research on multiple roles has led to the work-family conflict approach which assumes that work and family are inherently in conflict (Kanter 1977). This theoretical perspective assumes that role resources are finite and that increasing the number of roles also increases the demands based on expectations for those roles (Barnett, Marshall, Singer 1992). When resources are overcome by demands, conflict occurs, with associated outcomes of stress, role dissatisfaction, and potentially role exit (Barnett and Gareis 2006). However, this approach focuses on the individual and his/her associated roles and resources and not the combination of couple's resources under the assumption that the husband will always maintain the breadwinner role and the wife will default to the caregiver role.

Work-family conflict uses the separate spheres of work and family to reinforce the traditional breadwinner-homemaker model and the associated gender roles dominate the fixed amount of time that must be shared between roles in these spheres. To expend resources in one sphere takes away from the other in this zero-

sum game leading to reduced role quality and commitment (Marks and MacDermid 1996). Gender differences are often discussed as part of work-family conflict, but research on dual-earner couples shows no gender differences in work-family conflict (Kinnunen and Mauno 1998; Kmec 1999). In the military organization, work and family are subsumed into one sphere so that the military can control as much of their lives as possible. What is not obvious is the effects of having non-traditional families in the single sphere of the military.

The counter approach to work-family conflict is role enhancement or expansionist theory (Barnett and Hyde 2001; Thoits 1983). Fundamental to this approach is that role resources are not finite and can be expanded through multiple roles. Role enhancement researchers find positive outcomes in terms of mental and physical health, and life satisfaction (Barnett and Gareis 2006). Research shows that men and women who engage in multiple roles have lower stress-related health problems and increased well-being by adding the worker role for women and being involved in family for men (Barnett and Marshall 1993; Simon 1992; Thoits 1992). For dual career couples who share the importance of maintaining two careers and the interdependence of the timing of those careers, it is likely that there is an advantage in terms of meeting work and family goals as well as satisfaction for both spouses in having multiple roles.

For dual military couples who are combining multiple roles in the domains of work and family, among the many aspects of the couple that influence marriage roles and the meaning of marriage are gender role attitudes (Gerson 1987). Characteristics of workplace culture that affect marriage and roles include supervisor gender role

attitudes, prevalence of sexual harassment and discrimination, job opportunity, and performance expectations. Similarly, employer organizational policies provide options and choices which can confirm or disrupt role identities that influence decision-making and the meaning found in dual military couples' marriages.

Gendered Roles and Careers

Men and women in dual career couples in the military may have different perspectives on how they enact their roles as naval officer, spouse, and parent. Because the Navy does not differentiate between husband and wife for career needs, these couples are forced to create their own combinations of roles in forming their life course trajectory. While the military is a male-dominated institution, women and men in dual military couples are not able to follow the traditional breadwinner model and serve together. Similarly, dual career couples may prioritize work and family differently as they struggle to maintain two careers in a work domain structured to support only the male career in each family with the assumption that there is a full-time wife to provide support and help meet the work demands of the military.

Gender theory examines how gender differences are created and transmitted through society by the meaning individuals attach their own behavior as well as the behavior of others (Ferree 1990; West & Zimmerman 1987). Gender theorists contend that gender is reproduced in social institutions such as marriage and creates boundaries to define appropriate behavior for men and women in the context of role identities, values, beliefs, and expectations (Potucheck 1992). These behaviors are actively negotiated and renegotiated through role playing in marriage as well as work

(Potucheck 1992). Marriage research by Zvonkovic et al. (1996) found that gender roles within marriages could be understood within the meaning associated with work and family decisions and that these decisions tended to follow traditional norms and beliefs.

The military as a hyper-masculine institution produces and reproduces socially-defined gender roles and behavior in itself and its families. These gender roles help to create boundaries between work (military institution) and the family so that conflicts are resolved in favor of work. Kanter (1977) says that these “assumptions about the proper roles of breadwinner versus homemaker are based on an underlying belief in the fundamentally opposing natures of productive work and nurturing family bonds – what is termed ‘work-family dichotomy’.” Papanek (1973) further refines the work-family dichotomy in her description of the institutional blending of formal and informal requirements into the “two person single career” family. If work and family are structured by gender roles, how do dual military couples and other non-traditional families adapt their performance of roles in order to achieve their family’s and their personal goals and motivations to be successful? The choices related to becoming parents, the timing of children, and the priority of work careers and family may help to understand how gendered roles are influential, or not, in developing life course trajectories for dual military couples. Prior research on gender ideologies and socio-cultural constraints are helpful in understanding the context of gendered roles in the life course.

The traditional breadwinner and homemaker role division in the family is a cultural construct of gender roles that is a product of industrialization (Hunt and Hunt

1987). This gender ideology served to separate the economic activity of the man's "public sphere" and the woman's household work in the "private sphere." The devaluation of woman's work in the home is the premise of sex stratification theory (Hunt and Hunt 1987).

As more women entered the labor force in the twentieth century, new cultural models and ideologies emerged which focused on appropriate behavior for "ideal parents." Hays (1996) calls this gendered model for socially-appropriate caregiving for a mother, "intensive mothering." This ideology is based on norms of immense amounts of time, energy, and money and unselfish nurturing of children. The ideology confronts popular debates over family values, fatherhood roles, responsible day care, and ultimately women's participation in the labor force (Hays 1996). For dual military couples, the amount of time deployed and away from home places these parents in direct conflict with this gendered ideology. If the "intensive mothering" ideology is active, additional stress, conflict, or frustration should be evident in these couples and lead to more women leaving the Navy.

A similar ideological construct for market work and work in the home has been labeled "domesticity" by Williams (2000). This ideological construct is based on the "ideal worker" norm which requires a high level of commitment of time and energy to the employer's market work. In this ideology, overtime is expected and those who cannot devote themselves fully to their job are viewed as not committed. Often mentoring occurs after normal work hours or in separate venues which are labeled as "good old boys clubs" and provide social bonding in higher status jobs. Domesticity promotes cultural contradictions where women are seen as bad mothers

if they attempt to perform as ideal workers. When women have children, this is seen as a lack of commitment to work and career and that they have chosen family over career. Dual military couples are likely to confront this gendered ideology based on the total commitment demanded by the military and the extreme demands placed on time, availability for work, and the structured nature of every aspect of the work career. However, since mothers and fathers both deploy, there is opportunity for both men and women to experience the effects of domesticity and the norm of the ideal worker while their spouse is deployed. In this case, the gender ideology may pose different challenges for mothers and fathers in dual military couples.

Whereas ideologies are viewed as internal constructs, social and cultural constructs are external and constrain couples' decisions explicitly in most cases. Gerson (1987) discusses these external constraints based on broad categories of partner relationship and orientation, job opportunities, financial stability, and role congruity. Decisions are shaped by these social and cultural constraints when couples attempt to fit their everyday life into their external reality. Similarly, Hochschild (2003) uses the term "gender strategy" to explain how husbands and wives create a decision-making framework within their family which has its own unique meaning. The "second shift" is a gender strategy Hochschild (2003) found that operates in most working couples, which refers to the domestic work at home and childcare that usually falls on the wife to perform after a shift at work. Dual military couples may face different challenges based on their motivation to have two successful careers, each constrained by the same organizational demands and structures, where gender has less effect on the couples' work and family strategy. A couples' concerted focus

of effort and energy may be devoted to overcoming the organizational challenges and leaves little room for gender and power differences observed in other couples' gender strategies.

In response to what popular media began depicting as the “opt out revolution” by working women, work and family researchers studied working couples and found that most women were not leaving work for family reasons (pulled). Rather, working women were being forced away from paid market work by the workplace (pushed) (Stone 2007). In the current historical period when women's paid work is the norm, women are finding that as they enter the labor force and attempt to meet the social and cultural expectations of paid work based on the “ideal worker” norm, they are encountering a workplace and organizational culture that does not accept them. In what has been labeled the “double bind” by Hochschild (2003) or the “choice gap” by Stone (2007), women are expected to comply with the social norms of “intensive mothering” and “concerted cultivation” while performing as an “ideal worker” (Hays 1996; Lareau 2003). Additionally, women still contend that husband's jobs cross over and affect their own in terms of support for his job. The husbands' job is still privileged in most dual career marriages. In reality, it appears that women are making decisions about career and family within the constraints that exist today in society.

“Opting out” is a normal and expected decision point in the career of every military officer after the completion of their initial service obligation. All officers are faced with the decision to stay or leave the military no matter what their family status. However, there is evidence that women are leaving the Navy at higher rates than men,

which should also be evident in dual military couples since military women are more likely to marry military men. More importantly, the reasons women leave the Navy may shed light on the nature of their “choice” to leave and if it is different from the men in dual military couples. I expect that there will be little difference in the reasons men and women leave the Navy, but that “choice” may be more influenced by whether they want and are able to have children, as well as being able to serve and live together. Gender as an ideology may not be as much a constraint as gendered career paths created by the organization.

Sociologically, a micro-macro analysis is established to analyze the dialectical relationship between social institutions, personal experience, and overall social change. Specifically of interest in this study are the constraints that shape dual military couples’ decision-making in their careers and families and the mechanisms that shape the careers (Sweet and Moen, 2006). Career pathways followed by these couples that establish typical patterns of development and adjustment will be used to analyze the factors and themes that impact outcomes. Particular attention will be given to identifying sequencing, timing, and strategic selections based on reactive or proactive decision-making. Strategic selections are often reactions to conflict with cultural or social scripts related to ideals such as “ideal worker”, “good parent”, or “family time” (Sweet and Moen, 2006).

Social Exchange and Rational Choice Perspectives in the Life Course

Finally, life course concepts incorporate an element of power differential through the accumulation and distribution of resources through role transitions within

social and cultural structures. A social exchange perspective uses exchange theory or rational choice theory to explain how work and family decisions are made within marriage. Exchange theory as explained by Homans (1974) states that the more an activity is rewarded, the more valuable the activity becomes to the individual and the more likely the individual is to engage in that activity. Conversely, the more disadvantageous the activity, the less likely the individual is to engage in that activity (Homans, 1974). The exchange theory approach is useful in considering the investment in roles such as family and work (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). While the focus of exchange theory for families has been on the relationship of husband and wife in the marriage, the relationship between the couple and the organization may also be of interest for dual military couples who are traditionally rewarded by the military organization as officers with promotions, status, and pensions by committing to their careers.

Emerson (1962, 1972, 1976) expanded traditional exchange theory by adding the ability to consider the ratio of rewards in an exchange and how that changes over time. Emerson still assumes that human behavior is rational and seeks to maximize rewards and minimize costs, with rewards and costs being associated with how often social exchange takes place. Social rewards consist of personal attraction, acceptance, approval, services, respect, and compliance (Blau 1964). The resources involved in social exchange may be extrinsic or intrinsic and include: money, information, goods, services, status, and love (Foa and Foa 1980). In Emerson's exchange framework is the creation of power, dependence, and balance in relationships (Sabatelli and Sheehan, 1993). Certainly the principles of power and

dependence are produced and reproduced within marriages, but do these principles explain decision-making and meaning in a couple's marriage in the military? Again, the importance of the relationship over the life course with the couple and the military organization may be more influential in terms of becoming eligible for long-term benefits such as pensions and the GI Bill. Sacrifices and enduring hardship in maintaining two careers may be the costs associated with achieving the rewards the military offers.

Other principles of Emerson's exchange framework are reciprocity, trust, and commitment (Cook and Emerson 1978). These principles are based on power and dependence, where a social actor can exert influence based on his/her position in the social network. For Emerson, power in a relationship is related to the value of the rewards in an exchange and availability of alternative exchanges and sources of rewards. If there is a primary breadwinner within a marriage, that partner may have more power over the other, or the non-breadwinner may be perceived to be more dependent on the breadwinner. While the non-breadwinner may be dependent on the breadwinner for family income, he/she may have other resources to exchange within the marriage. Cook and Emerson (1978) also found large power imbalances lead to less commitment in a relationship whereas a more balanced relationship leads to more committed behavior in a relationship. Commitment to roles and relationships are particularly important to this study of dual military couples where there is likely to be a strong commitment to the military and the family.

In a more economic perspective, Becker's (1976) economic models using human and social capital suggests that there may be a difference in resource

accumulation based on education and skill differences. Decisions related to work and family such as when and if to relocate for jobs, whose career should take priority, when should one partner retire, and when they should have children can be influenced by perceptions of which partner has the most successful or promising career or the highest potential earnings. Pixley and Moen (2003) found in their research that these family and work decisions for dual career couples still tended to favor the husband's career. That men's careers take precedence over women's careers has led feminists and economists in the ongoing debate over the wage penalty of being a mother and have been able to quantify the wage gap between men and women (Budig and England 2001). The debate is centered on how to account for unpaid work in the home which is more often done by women.

For my study, accounting for paid and unpaid work in the division of labor in the household may not be as helpful to understanding the meaning associated with specific tasks and roles. Since there is no difference in pay for same military paygrades, only differences in rank will produce wage differences for the dual military couples in this study. However, opportunity cost associated with prioritizing a career or in starting a family can be subjectively accounted for in the decision-making of dual military couples. Particular attention will be given to differences in rank (pay) between husbands and wives in determining recurring themes. Other rational choice decisions related to work could revolve around individual performance. If one spouse is more successful, e.g. in promotion, does this affect work and family decisions for both spouses?

Dual Career/Dual Earner Couples

To understand dual military couples and their work and family experiences, it is helpful to review the considerable research that has been conducted on dual-earner and dual-career couples in civilian society. Distinction is often made between the dual-earner and dual-career couples based on commitment to the occupation. Becker and Moen (1999) report that when an interviewee was asked about the difference between a job and a career, she said “Nothing. I’m doing the same thing. It’s my attitude.” While this attitude might be representative, it is helpful to consider a job as being characterized by more flexibility and production of income whereas careers are seen as providing “intrinsic rewards” and stability (Becker and Moen 1999).

Moen and Wethington’s (1992) research suggests work-family strategies are adaptive to social structural constraints and uses rational choice and life course approaches. Follow-on research by Becker and Moen (1999) shows a “scaling back” set of strategies are being employed by dual-earner couples to deal with increased demands on time and energy. These scaling back strategies are predicated on Spain and Bianchi’s (1996) premise that the work-family problematic is constructed as the woman’s problem to ensure the proper balance between work and family. Focus on the “second shift” retains the traditional gender role for mothers and wives to accomplish housework and child-care in addition to their jobs outside the home (Hochschild 2003). The three scaling back strategies employed by dual-earner couples are: placing limits, job versus career, and trading off (Becker and Moen 1999). The “placing limits” strategy is employed to resist the greedy work institution’s time requirements (Segal 1986). Those using this strategy limit the

amount of time spent at work, limit additional job-related travel requirements, refuse overtime, and decline promotions that require relocation. This strategy can be used by both the husband and the wife, although Becker and Moen (1999) show that it is more common with the wife. Dual military couples could use this strategy to a lesser extent due to the inflexibility of military job requirements.

The “job versus career” strategy could be an effective strategy for dual military couples because it is based on one spouse focusing on the career trajectory and one spouse taking the job perspective. This strategy most often results in the wife taking the job track and the husband staying on the career track. Alternatively, the “trading off” strategy is a life course approach that uses elements of the placing limits and job versus career strategies. Couples adapt their career to where they are in their family life stage. Often the wife will take the job track and place limits during the period of time when children are young. As children become more self-sufficient, the husband and wife will trade career and job tracks to allow the wife to pursue her career. Another life course milestone is when one spouse reaches the end of a career and trades off to allow the other to pursue a career. This strategy is employed by dual military couples, but it is not effective in keeping both spouses on a career track. The military’s “up or out” policy is not compatible with this strategy for dual careers.

The other major perspective on work-family strategies is based on Hochschild’s (1997) description of home as the stressful location and the workplace as a retreat to “friendships and support.” Some couples find it easier to embrace the workplace with a higher commitment instead of resisting the time conflicts (Hochschild 1997). Research by Bird and Schnurman-Cook (2005) reinforces

Hochschild's (1997) concept of "speeding up" instead of the "scaling back" that Moen and Becker (1999) reported. High levels of commitment to careers which are found in most professions tend to reinforce expectations associated with professional identities. The ability to work faster, harder, and more efficiently was common among women in Bird and Schnurman-Cook's (2005) study.

Perceived benefits enjoyed by dual-earner and dual-career couples include "higher family income, more enjoyment and satisfaction from shared professional interests and more involvement in child-rearing for both partners" (Sobecks, Justice, Hinze, Chrayath, Lasek, Chren, Aucott, Juknialis, Fortinsky, Youngner and Landefeld 1999). Schwartz (1994) also found that the higher family income reduced stress on the men as the "sole breadwinner" and allowed them to enjoy their time with children and participate more in less traditional gender roles in the family. Haddock and Rattenborg (2003) observed similar results and benefits that included a more "egalitarian relationship, increased self-identity and well-being, increased financial resources, time away from children that led to better parenting, beneficial social networks through the workplace, and improved social and intellectual skills for their children."

A different perspective on dual-earner families has revealed that women occupy one of two primary groups defined by Blair-Loy (2003) as work-committed and family-committed. These two groups adhere to the work and family devotion schemas they have chosen based on personal values and beliefs, occupational norms, and societal expectations (Blair-Loy 2003). From a role identity perspective, work and family domains are seen as defining and prioritizing identity roles can be

understood through the meaning attached to the chosen career or family strategy. The purposeful decision to opt out of working to raise children, leave a competitive career track to start a home business, accept a lesser job or turn down a more competitive job can be explained through the meaning of choices or strategies for working couples. These choices can be viewed by the individual as prioritizing what is important to the self or as shaped by the institutional and cultural structures. This perspective is a plausible way to explain the choices dual military couples make in prioritizing work and family roles.

During interviews of career women, Blair-Loy (2003) found there were women who chose to prioritize one role and conveyed distress through statements such as: "...my calling is different...I've never hated a job a much as this" in reference to her role as a mother. Some mothers lamented their decision to prioritize their work identity and had to "manage their grief" and "insulate themselves from their hearts." Blair-Loy (2003) explains these outcomes as moral distress caused by the moral dilemmas of having to prioritize one identity over the other. From a self-concept perspective, Blair-Loy (2003) states that the "identity and integrity are under siege."

Another study by Stone and Lovejoy (2004:69) found similar instances with executive women where they felt "emotionally torn" or guilty about their choice to keep a career at work while having a family. The effects on the woman's identity are evident in one executive's comment, "I just felt like I would become a nobody if I quit. Well, I was sort of a nobody working too. Which nobody do you want to be?" (Stone and Lovejoy 2004:70). What is not mentioned by the authors is the privilege

these women have based on their social class and status to have a choice to make a career. Many women do not have that option and must contend with part-time work or occupations that are not on the career track. However, military women do not have a part-time option. It is all or nothing.

The Military Context

To provide insight about how dual military couples live their lives requires delineating the unique characteristics of Navy service members, how they are recruited, promoted, and organized. This section describes Navy career paths, organization of the active duty and reserve Navy, demographic changes for women in the Navy, motherhood policies, and research on dual military couples. The structural constraints placed on dual military couples are evident in the Navy's organizational policies.

Navy Organization and Mission

The United States Navy is comprised of over 332,000 men and women of whom 15 percent are officers and 85 percent are enlisted (Department of the Navy 2010). The Navy as a sea service historically has maintained a deployable fleet of ships and aircraft which executes the United States government's strategic missions. Necessarily, these missions include maintaining a worldwide presence, deterring and defeating aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas (Department of the Navy 2010). Although our nation has been at war against terrorism since September 11th, 2001, the Navy only increased and changed its location of deployment since it was already performing the normal peacetime deployed mission. The Navy maintains

almost 300 deployable ships and more than 3,700 operational aircraft, of which 30 to 40 percent are deployed at any time (Department of the Navy 2010). When the number of ships and aircraft that are underway for training or exercises are included, the number of underway ships often exceeds 50 percent. The Navy is a historically deployment-intensive service, which is important in understanding how its people and their families live their daily lives.

Officer Accessions

The Navy is a hierarchical military organization similar to the traditional military caste system. Officers and enlisted personnel are recruited based on different requirements and enter the Navy through separate processes. Officers enter through commissioning programs including the U.S. Naval Academy, Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) program, or Officer Candidate School. People may enter the Navy without a bachelor's degree and receive their degree through the U.S. Naval Academy or NROTC at a civilian institution. Entrance requirements to the U.S. Naval Academy are more stringent than NROTC and require entrants to be unmarried, not pregnant, not have dependent children, and be 17 to 23 years of age (U.S. Naval Academy 2010). However, all commissioning programs require candidates to be U.S. citizens and meet certain moral, mental, and physical standards.

Entrance and promotion in the Navy is based on an internal labor market where most accessions are brought in at the bottom and there is little opportunity for lateral entry (Rosen, 1992). All officers enter the Navy at the pay grade of O-1, and all enlisted enter at E-1, with a few exceptions (described below). Officers and enlisted are promoted within their own unique promotion system and according to

their specific career requirements. This process produces two unique career systems. There is limited opportunity for enlisted personnel to transition to the officer corps¹. Generally, people remain within their own career system.

Officer Promotions and Career Paths

The Navy's officer corps is organized and structured by designators in the Manual of Navy Officer Manpower and Personnel Classifications which assigns officers' warfare specialty, career path, limitations on command, and promotion procedures and opportunities (Navy Personnel Command 2010). Designators are grouped into three major categories: unrestricted line, restricted line, and staff corps. Unrestricted line officers are eligible for command at sea of ships and aviation squadrons, and have no limitations on promotion to the highest rank within the Navy leadership. The unrestricted line warfare specialties make up the majority of the Navy officer corps and include: surface warfare, submarine warfare, aviation warfare, special warfare, and special operations (Navy Personnel Command 2010). Women are eligible for all unrestricted line warfare specialties except special warfare.

Restricted line officers are eligible for only those billets within their specialty area and are limited in promotion opportunity based on jobs requirements for their specialty area. While the restricted line still has jobs assigned to some deployable ships and aviation squadrons, there are fewer jobs at sea compared to unrestricted line specialties. The restricted line specialties include: aviation duty (not involving flying), engineering duty, aviation engineering duty, and special duty (human

¹ The Navy's Limited Duty Officer (LDO) and Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) programs provide a small number of trained technical experts to be commissioned as officers without a bachelor's degree. These officers have a unique career path and promotion system that is peculiar to the officers in their technical area.

resources, information professional, information warfare, intelligence, public affairs, and foreign affairs (Navy Personnel Command 2010a).

The Navy's professional specialties (Staff Corps) are an exception to the internal labor market system since there are additional professional requirements. These professional specialties include: Medical Corps, Dental Corps, Medical Service Corps, Judge Advocate General's Corps, Nurse Corps, Supply Corps, Chaplain Corps, and Civil Engineering Corps (Navy Personnel Command 2010). People entering the Navy in these fields, which have additional professional school requirements, may enter the Navy at the paygrades of O-2 or O-3.

Officers' minimum service requirement after commissioning is based on their warfare specialty training, but is usually five years. This can be extended to as much as seven to 10 years for aviators and submarine officers in the unrestricted line, and as much as 10 to 14 years for medical officers. Because officers receive a commission from the President of the United States, they serve until they resign their commission or reach retirement. An officer must serve at least 20 years to be eligible for retirement benefits.

Officer promotions are statutory in that they are prescribed by law, specifically known as the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) of 1980. This law prescribes the number of officers allowed at each rank and effectively established the military's "up or out" promotion system (Rostker, Thie, Lacy, Kawata, and Purnell 1993). This promotion system applies to all officers except those exempted in the Staff Corps, e.g., medical officers, dental officers, and

chaplains. These professionals were exempted based on the fixed nature of their promotion opportunities and experience in their fields.

Navy officers are considered for promotion at set time intervals based on years of service at a particular rank. These time intervals are fairly predictable, but can vary slightly based on DOPMA requirements. Promotion opportunities are fixed percentages based on available openings and number of eligible officers. The Navy adjusts the time interval for officers to consider only the number of eligible officers needed based on the promotion opportunity percentage. For example, if the Navy needed to promote 100 O-5s to O-6, they would consider the 200 O-5s based on a 50 percent promotion rate. Once officers enter the time interval for promotion eligibility, they receive four opportunities to be considered for promotion. If they have not been selected after the last opportunity, they are considered to be terminal in rank and have a mandatory retirement at a prescribed number of years of service (Table 1).

Paygrade	Rank	Promotion Opportunity	Statutory Retirement
O-1	Ensign	N/A	Not eligible
O-2	Lieutenant Junior Grade	100%	Not eligible
O-3	Lieutenant	95%	20 Years of Service (prior enlisted with 10 years of service as an officer)
O-4	Lieutenant Commander	80%	20 Years of Service
O-5	Commander	70%	28 Years of Service
O-6	Captain	50%	30 Years of Service

Source: Rostker et al. 1993

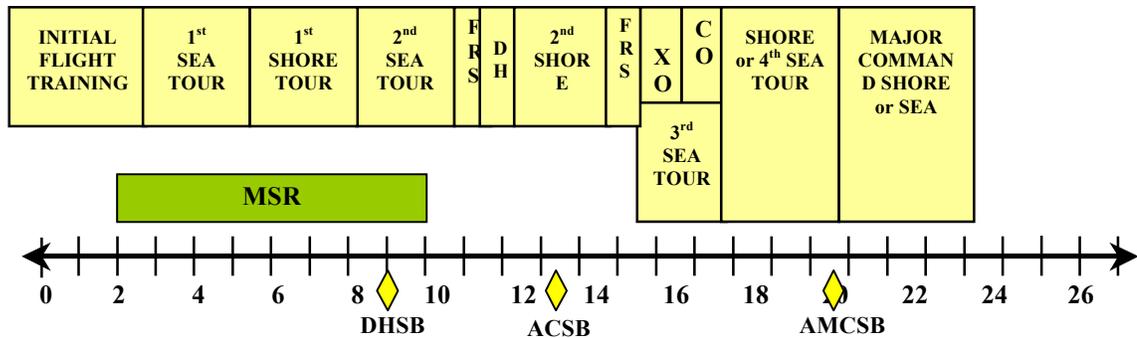
Officer career paths are specific to warfare specialties and determine the standard tour length, type and level of job, required rank, and relative timing to next promotion opportunity. For officers, career paths also determine when officers are assigned to “sea duty” and “shore duty.” Sea duty is defined as an assignment to a ship or aviation squadron that is deployable. During sea duty tours, officers can expect to spend up to fifty percent of their time away from home as part of their training or deployment. Shore duty is defined as an assignment to a unit which is not normally deployable. During these tours, officers can expect to spend most of their time at their home duty station.

Figure 1 is a sample career path for an aviation warfare specialty officer (Naval Aviator or Naval Flight Officer). The top row of the figure shows the alternating sea and shore tours normally followed by unrestricted line officers. Below the timeline are the administrative selection boards for department head (O-4), command (O-5), and major command (O-6).

These career paths are rigid, based on the timing of important career milestones being achieved prior to statutory promotion boards. For example, an aviator who does not successfully complete the department head tour prior to the O-5 promotion board will likely not be promoted. This has a systemic effect for the officer because promotion to O-5 is required before an officer can be considered for O-5 command. The military’s “up or out” promotion system begins to have a negative effect in this example.

Figure 1

Aviation Career Path



DH – Department Head
CO – Commanding Officer
DHSB – Department Head Screen Board
ACSB – Aviation Command Screen Board Board
XO – Executive Officer
MSR – Minimum Service Requirement
FRS – Fleet Replacement Squadron
AMCSB – Aviation Major Command Screen Board

Source: Navy Personnel Command (PERS-43)

Naval Reserve

Significant changes in the composition, training, and employment of Reserve Component forces have occurred over the past 25 years that have had an impact on their families and communities. Since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973 that ended conscription following the war in Vietnam, the Reserve Component has become an integral part of the United States' military. The integration of the Reserves was a conscious effort by Congress to ensure that if the U.S. went to war again, a mobilization of Reserves would be required to execute military operational plans. Congress would ultimately have to approve the President's request for

additional troops and maintain some control over the ability to wage war in limited conflicts.

By 1993, the “Total Force Policy” had been developed and a downsizing of the active duty component of the military began, with an associated relative increase in the Reserve Component. The Reserves have played an important and increasing role in every conflict since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force including Operation Desert Storm, Operation Allied Force (Balkans), Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Never in our nation’s history have the Reserve Components been as actively involved as they are today.

While the Navy Reserve draws some of its new accessions directly from outside the Navy, it relies heavily on active duty members who decide to separate from active duty and transfer to the Reserve. This is important for our Reserve Component to keep the experience and talent of the separating active duty members accessible in the event of deployment. The Reserve also provides benefits to separating active duty members by maintaining their status as members of the U.S. Navy and retirement benefits if they serve at least twenty years total active duty and Reserve. While Reserve retirement pay does not start until age 60, this is an incentive for many Reservists today when corporate pensions are hard to obtain. Reservists are also paid for their minimum weekend drill period each month and two weeks of active duty each year. Promotions are structured to mirror active duty, but administered separately for the Reserve category. Reserve unit assignments are more flexible to allow for the Reservists’ primary civilian responsibilities.

The Reserve Component (Ready Reserve) is comprised of Selected Reserves and Individual Ready Reserves. Individual Ready Reserves are inactive and generally not used except in extreme cases. The Selected Reserves are organized, trained and equipped to perform the same wartime missions as their active duty counterparts (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2008). Numbering 119,735 in 2009, the Navy Ready Reserve is less than half the size of the active duty force (Department of the Navy 2010). There are proportionally more women in the Navy Reserve than the Active Component, with an overall percentage of women in the Reserve Component of 20 percent compared to 15 percent in the Active Component (Manning 2008).

Women in the Military

Women accounted for about two percent of the active duty force in 1973 when the military transitioned from a conscription system to an all-volunteer force. Since then, women have increased in percentage of the force to more than eight percent in 1980 and 15 percent by 2002 (Segal & Segal 2003). Current data show the trend of increasing percentages of women has leveled off through 2008 (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2008). The Air Force has the highest percentage of women with 20 percent and the Marine Corps has the lowest percentage of women with six percent. The Army and Navy are roughly equal with about 15 percent of their force comprised of women (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2008).

The relative disparities between the services can be attributed to the number of career fields open to women. With the change to the “direct ground combat rule”, the

services have increased the number of career fields open to women to 92 percent (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2008). Since the Air Force has the highest number of career fields open to women and the Marine Corps has the lowest number of positions open to women due to higher percentage of direct combat positions, this helps explain the disparity in percentages of women within the Services (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2008). The Navy has 95 percent of their occupational fields open to women.

Four factors that affect the number of female enlisted service members are: lower tendency to enlist than males, combat exclusion rules, no lateral entry into the military personnel system, and females have a higher rate of separation from the military than men (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2008).

The increase in percentages of women has implications for military family policies in several areas including: pregnancy, single parents, dual-service marriages, family gender roles, and child care (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness 2006). Based on traditional military culture, changes in traditional family structure and gender roles, military personnel policy planners can expect a need for military family policy changes to maintain acceptable retention and satisfaction levels (Segal & Segal 2003).

Military Women as Mothers

In 1951, Executive Order 10240 provided the military with the ability to discharge pregnant women or women with dependent children (Manning 2008). This

policy was in effect until 1971 when the Air Force allowed women to request a waiver to remain on active duty (Manning 2008). The Air Force was also the first service to change their recruiting policy to allow women with children to be eligible (Manning 2008). With the end of the Selective Service Act in 1973, the All-Volunteer Force allowed increased numbers of women to join the military and thereby confront the pregnancy policy as their civilian counterparts were already doing. Similar court cases for civilian women fighting for their rights to have children and families while managing a career were leading the way for military women (Stiehm 1989). The period from 1971 to 1975 was not only important because of the law and policy changes for pregnant women, but also for identification of the dominant discourses for integration of women in the military that were intertwined with the issue of pregnancy.

Common arguments against pregnant military personnel during court cases are time loss, assignment restrictions, reduced readiness, increased turnover rate, inefficient employment of trained personnel, reduced team effectiveness, reduced cohesion, and reduced morale (Harvard Law Review 1973). Many of these arguments still exist today as resistance to change in policies which continue to subjugate women as less than equals with men in the military.

According to Goldman (1973), attitudes of married women serving in the early 1970s and prior to the policy change allowing pregnancies in the military, generally were focused on administrative policies which would allow them to serve and complete military careers. Central to this argument is the right to bear children and have a military career. Goldman states that women understood that having a

military career would necessarily impose certain limitations on family and childbearing, but women wanted the freedom to choose the way they managed their family and career. The freedom to choose and plan a family was made easier with the availability of effective birth control and this attitude is still reflected in today's military policies on pregnancy.

In 1975, the Department of Defense ended the policy of involuntary discharges due to pregnancy or parenthood whether married or not. Voluntary separations were granted on a case by case basis until 1982. In 1982, the policy was amended to grant voluntary separations unless it was in the best interest of the military to retain the service member. The voluntary separation waiver was further strengthened toward retaining the member by requiring the service member to show that staying on active duty would cause undue hardship. This was the last major change in policy regarding pregnancy in the military. However, there have been regular minor changes related to maternity leave, maternity care, family planning resources, clothing and uniform allowances, subsistence and housing allowances, assignments, deployments, physical fitness and well-being, and occupational hazards.

The Navy's policy entitled "Navy Guidelines Concerning Pregnancy and Parenthood (OPNAVINST 6000.1C)", published June 14, 2007, starts with a background discussion on pregnancy and the military that was not in previous versions of this instruction and is not in other Services' instructions. The background provides the statement that "pregnancy and parenthood are natural events...and can be compatible with a successful naval career." Based on historical issues with pregnancy and careers for women, this is a beneficial policy statement if it is put into

practice and clearly a cultural shift for the military. The Navy emphasizes that with parenthood come responsibilities which include “consideration and planning due to military commitments...and service members are expected to balance the demands of a naval career with their family plans...” In this statement, the military is asserting its ability to require personnel to give the military equal or more consideration when planning a family. Inherent in this statement is the military’s assumption that pregnancies are planned and controlled. While this is possible to some extent based on birth control and self-control, there is an element of chance and surprise that is possible even with the most responsible of adults. The next statement of interest says that the policy is developed to protect the mother and unborn child while protecting the military by “minimizing the impact pregnancy and parenthood have on operational readiness.” In this statement, the military is asserting its functional imperative to get the job done while taking care of its people. Again, it appears to be a balancing of rights and responsibilities between the family and the military.

From the perspective of maintaining a pregnant woman’s ability to compete with her male counterpart, the following statement is found in the Navy instruction: “...pregnancy status will not adversely affect the career patterns of naval servicewomen.” The policy not to discriminate or harass pregnant women is in place, but it is incumbent upon the commander to put the policy into practice as part of the command climate to make it effective. Finally, and as discussed earlier, “requests for separation due to pregnancy will not normally be approved” except with extenuating circumstances, according to the Navy instruction. This reflects the services’ value of training and experience of the pregnant service member.

The Navy recently added a policy that pregnant service members are allowed to defer transfer assignments for twelve months following delivery, are not to be assigned overseas, and are not to be assigned to deployable units after the 20th week of pregnancy until a year after delivery. This policy protects the pregnant service member as well as the military by ensuring qualified and deployable personnel are assigned. Convalescent leave for the mother is normally 42 days following delivery and can be extended based on the health care provider's assessment of the mother and child.

The instruction provides policy on fathers taking 21 days of paid leave for the birth of their child. This policy allows time for the new parents to adapt to their new family situation, update or create legal documents, and set up child care. This policy is in marked contrast to earlier discourse that focused on the woman as the primary provider for children. While the woman may still be socialized to be the primary provider of care, and there may still be an underlying social norm and expectation for the mother to have primary responsibility for the children, this is a step in the direction to include fathers in parenting considerations. In comparison, there are very few employers in the U.S. that provide paid paternal leave.

Retention of Military Women

Recent research on the retention of Navy junior officers provides some insight into the different experiences men and women have in their Navy careers. While the percentage of women compared to men in the unrestricted line communities of surface warfare and aviation have increased from less than five percent before 1994 to more than 25 percent in 2001, women were separating from the Navy or laterally

transferring to staff or restricted line communities at higher rates than men.

Crawford, Thomas, and Mehay (2006) found that 38 percent of men and 17 percent of women were being retained, while 10 percent of men and 20 percent of women laterally transferred from the surface warfare community. The inflexibility of the officer career path and the rigidity of daily and long-term schedules were cited as reasons for leaving the Navy. These reasons are intertwined with the desire to be married and have children which is apparent in the interviews of Crawford et al.'s (2006) study, but it is clear that these women feel that workplace culture and organizational policies are pushing them out of the Navy. When asked if more family-friendly policies would affect their decision to leave, these women agreed that flexible childcare, flexible career paths, and stable locations would be enticing. However, they added that there is a stigma associated with officers who use family-friendly policies.

In comparison, Stoker and Crawford (2008) used a survey methodology for surface warfare officers who had separated from the active duty Navy, and found that family reasons were the top reasons for leaving the Navy. Women officers were more likely than men to respond that the Navy and having a family were not compatible. Women and not men also made specific comments about not being able to maintain a dual military family and that it was difficult to balance two Navy careers. Comments from these surveys and Crawford et al.'s (2006) interviews both provide a sense that these Navy women enjoyed their work and their families, but did not find a way to fulfill both roles.

Dual Military Couples

Dual military couples are defined as two married military officers or enlisted persons. To remain consistent with work and family literature, the military can be viewed as two distinct groups consisting of enlisted personnel (85 percent of the active duty force) and commissioned officers. The enlisted personnel are more closely aligned to the concept of a dual-earner family in most cases, although this interpretation is open for debate. Commissioned officers provide a subset of dual-earners who are more characteristically associated with the dual-career couple definition. Most civilian careers are found in professional fields, and the military is a representative profession based on professional characteristics (i.e., group professional identity, sense of service to society, set of group norms and behavior, internal career management and promotion, higher education, advanced training and skill sets, and exclusivity) (Huntington 1957, Wilensky 1964).

Dual military couples are restricted in career choices based on skill specialization. Inherent in the military institutional structure, officers change jobs every two to three years which normally is accompanied by relocation and possibly to locations outside the U.S. The military's "up or out" promotion policy also is a factor in deciding what jobs are available, where the job is located, and the nature of the job. Work and family strategic options are reduced because of institutional policies which do not usually allow "sabbaticals" or lateral transfers. Military policies inherently force service members and their families to make work-family decisions on a regular basis.

There has been no research conducted which specifically considers the life course of dual military couples or the decision-making related to strategic selection and adaptation. However, minimal research has analyzed some factors which provide some insight into where life course perspective and role theory could be a beneficial conceptualization. In a 1992 study by Lakhani and Gade (1992), the authors found dual military couples more likely to have higher commitment to their military role if their spouse also had high commitment to the military role. This evidence would lead to the expectation that dual military couples with high job role commitment would be more likely to make the military a career which could be useful in analyzing career prioritization strategies and role identities. However, the sample used by Lakhani and Gade (1992) did not differentiate between couples with and without children which detracts from its usefulness. The data are also suspect since the authors did not methodologically consider the impact of some respondents being couples and in other cases only one spouse in the couple was interviewed.

A distinctly different method was used by Stander et al. (1998) in their interviews of dual military couples. This research reinforces the importance of interviews and how this method can measure the attribution of meaning to role identity and career decision-making. While the authors did not explicitly hypothesize the role identity relationship with meaning and career prioritization, it is implicit in the personal narratives. The authors found evidence in the interviews that identity and family structure was understood in terms of the military organization. These couples saw how they organized and handled family time to be highly influenced by the military culture. Couples explained the interface between their military and

family roles in a positive context which suggests that role meaning is applicable to understanding effective family and career strategies. These dual military couples were also found to be committed to their work roles through their explanation of career goals. However, the authors found that wives were more likely to consider leaving their military role than husbands. Wives who were contemplating leaving the military were more likely to be making the decision based on family concerns. Husbands leaving the military were more likely to be leaving the military based on promotion opportunities or financial concerns. Stander et al.'s (1998) research suggests that role commitment and role evaluation are important aspects of career and family decisions for dual military couples.

Measuring the importance of motherhood to the self-concept was one of the objectives of Kelley et al.'s (2001) study of enlisted Navy mothers. These mothers were not necessarily in dual military couples, but it is helpful to consider this research since over half of married military women are in dual military couples. The authors found that Navy mothers who were more personally invested in motherhood were more likely to find service in the military incompatible and seek separation from the military. Conversely, mothers who perceived separation from their children during deployments to be beneficial for their children were more likely to intend to stay in the military (Kelley et al. 2001). While these findings are not based on dual military couples, it does suggest there may be similarities and the life course perspective and role transitions may help understand career prioritization strategies and how the timing and sequencing of role transitions influence the development of pathways in the military context.

Kelley et al.'s (2001) research highlights the importance of the presence of children to the life course outcomes for dual military couples. In addition to the decisions these parents must make for childcare and caregiving, children also may make work and family role combinations more important. When dual military couples have children, they must also contend with workplace culture and dominant military culture.

In reviewing the literature, dual military couples' life course trajectories are understood using the concepts of human agency, historical and cultural location, linked lives, and timing of lives. The gendered role context in the life course provides a life course perspective to understand the timing and sequencing of roles in the life course trajectory. Understanding the work and family goals and motivations of these couples is sensitized by social exchange and rational choice perspectives of resources and power in the life course. The military context provides a sensitivity to the structural constraints and influence of the military organization on families as well as careers.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Dual military couples are understudied in military families research and the research which does exist relies heavily on surveys to provide demographic description. The focus of the research has been on officer families using individual responses which do not consider the couple's relational dynamics and the meaning of roles and structures across and the temporal and multi-dimensional nature of the life course. This study seeks to fill a gap in our knowledge about how trajectories are developed through the understanding of couples' decision-making, using grounded theory methods.

Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory methodology is a qualitative methodology that develops theory from the data. Through a constant comparative analysis while the data are being collected, theory is developed in an iterative and emergent process. Grounded theory allows for an open-ended and flexible research design, which is well-suited for research on areas of inquiry that have shifting and emergent realities such as families (Daly 2007).

This chapter explains the contributions and importance of qualitative methods for accomplishing this research; why grounded theory was selected and the analytic process to reach a conclusion; the participant recruitment and selection plan; data collection and analysis; methodological issues; and reflexivity and the role of the researcher.

Qualitative Methods

To understand the meaning-making processes involved in social interaction, qualitative methodology emphasizes the context of everyday life, the constraints of a socially-defined world, the temporal and multi-dimensional aspects of the life course, and the relationship between researcher and research participant in the understanding meaning (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). Epistemologically, the qualitative researcher is cognizant of how knowledge is being produced throughout the research process. It is important to recognize what and how we know something before the research begins; how knowledge is produced during the collection of data; and how knowledge is produced during the analysis, theory generation, and reporting of findings (Daly 2007). Qualitative research methods are naturalistic and inductive in that the phenomenon of interest is studied in everyday settings and the development of knowledge and theory is emergent rather than constrained and predetermined (Patton 2002). Through in-depth interviews of participants' and my own experiences in the military and family, I develop an understanding of the meaning of the social processes and role identities involved in couples' negotiations at multiple levels.

Qualitative research provides valid and insightful results to augment the existing body of knowledge on dual career couples and military families. In-depth interviews provide a wealth of data to facilitate a broad and detailed description of the phenomena of interest. Qualitative data collection and analytic principles provide for a rigorous study. While it is not the purpose of qualitative methodology to develop formal theory in the sense of generalizability, it does aim to develop substantive theory that is applicable to the specific area of inquiry (Daly 2007).

For this study, qualitative methods provide the ability to examine and develop an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of dual military couples. Each of these couples is unique in how they developed their multiple roles and transitions across the life course, prioritize work and family responsibilities, negotiate interpersonal relationships, interact in the workplace and its culture, and perceive the constraints of organizational policies to create a satisfying and meaningful life. Qualitative data and findings provide a unique perspective and insights into the social processes involved with these military families and have implications for military personnel and family policy planners.

Grounded Theory

The timing and sequencing of roles and role transitions, social interactions, and the associated meaning making involved in these social processes is inherently complex and changing. To analyze the meaning of social role processes and configurations, it is necessary to employ a flexible and emergent research design which allows the researcher to pursue the explanation of the phenomena of interest. The grounded theory approach is a product of symbolic interactionist and social constructivist foundations which emphasize the importance of the actor as a social product in a social reality we all participate in creating and re-creating (Blumer 1969).

Theoretical underpinnings of grounded theory lead the researcher to be sensitive to role taking, language, shared symbols, shared meaning in social interaction, changing social reality, and the emergent nature of social life (Daly 2007). Grounded theory provides the researcher with the flexibility to follow

emergent themes and to create a generative explanation of the phenomena of interest. Based on the mutable nature of families and their associated roles, grounded theory provides an integrative fit between theory, phenomenon of interest, and method (Daly 2007).

As a starting point, I use a theoretical sensitivity based on existing concepts and literature related to the life course perspective, military families, women in the military, dual working families, gender ideology, socio-cultural constraints, and “choice” rhetoric to guide and shape the analytical direction of my research. While these sensitizing concepts are used to direct initial areas of inquiry, the research yields to the emergence of themes and categories as data are collected to provide alternative explanations (Daly 2007).

Grounded theory uses the researcher as the primary instrument in the collection and analysis of data. As such, I am aware of the shared meaning between myself, as researcher, and the participants. Through this awareness of the understanding of meaning, familiarity through involvement provides an in-depth understanding of the social processes. To remain appropriately aware of my role as the researcher, I am explicit in my participation, values, beliefs, and personal meaning-making through the use of reflexivity throughout the data collection, analysis, and drawing of conclusions (Daly 2007).

Sample Selection

The primary method for recruiting participants was by mailings and e-mail solicitation with the help of the Navy Personnel Command. Through access to Navy

personnel records, all dual military officer couples were identified and then screened for eligibility. Potential participants were Navy officers married to another Navy officer. To create a heterogeneous sample, participants were sorted and sampled by rank; warfare designator; active duty, Reserve, or retired status; pending separation from the Navy; and presence of children. Particular attention was given to dual military couples where one or both service members had received approval of resignation requests. For the purposes of this study, these people are considered to have made their decision to leave the military. For ease of interviewing, participants were selected from geographical locations in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

I initially contacted potential participants with a letter in the mail and an e-mail reminder. If one member of the couple did not agree to the interview, the couple was not selected. Since interviews were conducted in person, there were two conflicts based on geographical separation and deployment. One of these interviews was conducted via telephone and the other was conducted via “Skype” and “iChat” video teleconference software through the internet.

In the event that unforeseen difficulties arose in recruiting participants through the help of the Navy Personnel Command in a timely manner and to provide other ways to recruit participants who would increase heterogeneity, I used professional contacts, professional networks, and snowballing techniques to develop a list of additional potential participants. This method was helpful in finding couples with specific characteristics to fill an explanatory or thematic gap during analysis and

necessarily provided an alternate means to conduct this research in a short time period.

Selection of qualified participants was initially based on work-family career pathways of dual military couples where both husband and wife are active duty, one spouse is in a less sea-intensive occupational category, one spouse is in the Reserves, one spouse has left the military, both spouses have left active duty, or the marriage ended in divorce. Initially, a total of ten officer couples were purposively selected to include each of these pathways with the exception of the divorce pathway. This sample selection was purposively and theoretically based on lines of inquiry and was an attempt to achieve maximum heterogeneity in the sample. Subsequently, 13 couples were selected based on emergence of themes, categories, and analytic gaps that needed further explanation. Specifically, I attempted to add retired officers, more officers who joined the Navy prior to 1994, and additional warfare designators. Maintaining flexibility for subsequent sample selection was critical to eventually achieving theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation is the point at which explanations of emerging themes and categories from the data are no longer providing new information (Daly 2007). In comparing field notes, themes, and categories from previous interviews, the information collected from interviews of couples 19 through 21 yielded similar themes and categories resulting in determination of theoretical saturation. Although theoretical saturation was achieved after 21 couples had participated, two more couples were already scheduled for interviews and these two couples were included in the research.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to provide a rich, thick description of the social processes involved with these dual military couples. A constant comparative analysis method was used during the data collection process and analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection. Consistent with the grounded theory approach, data were coded thematically and analyzed to determine emerging categories and themes which directed later interviews and sample selections until theoretical saturation was reached.

Pilot Testing

Prior to using the interview protocol, I pilot tested it on a dual military couple, not involved with the study. By testing the interview protocol, the organization and content of the questions were refined to increase the flow of the interview and validity of the data. Of course, this also provided me with the opportunity to refine my interview procedures.

Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured, with open-ended questions. Questions were grouped according to domains based on areas of inquiry. (See Appendix C for the interview protocol.) The purpose of the semi-structured interview based on categories is to maintain an organization to the interview and the ability to regain focus if needed (Daly 2007). This organization of the interview protocol allowed for comparison to follow-on interviews. Although there is some structure to the interview protocol, I added one question and modified existing questions based on the need to further explore responses to ensure proper meaning was understood.

Arrangements were made to interview couples where and when it was most convenient based on their work schedules and childcare arrangements, with two thirds of the couples interviewed at home and the other third interviewed at work. For the couples interviewed at home, in most cases their spouse was also at home for some part of the interview. These couples found isolated places at their home for the interview such as in a private office, outdoor patio, or separate dining room. When interviews were conducted in open rooms, the other spouse went to another part of the house and did not interfere or observe the interview. In only one case were both spouses in proximity to observe any of the interviews. Interviews in work settings were conducted in a private office or conference room, or in open public areas selected by the participant. For the two interviews conducted via telephone and Skype/iChat, the participant was in a private room. Each husband and wife was interviewed separately to understand individual perceptions, experiences, meanings, and the relational aspects of family dynamics. When possible, interviews with husbands and wives were scheduled consecutively. The separate interviews aided in determining individual responses without the need to present a unified set of perspectives for the family by both partners (Daly 2007). Separate interviews were also helpful in disentangling gender ideologies and perspectives on division of household labor and childcare.

Interviews began with the informed consent form and reiterating the purpose of the research. Conditions of anonymity were assured and explained in an effort to build trust with the participant. I briefly revealed to the interviewees my personal and professional experiences with the military and military families. I drew on my

personal experience growing up in a Navy family with dual-earner parents, marrying a woman in the Navy, living as part of a dual military couple (both on active duty), and reorienting our family as a dual military couple with my wife in the Navy Reserve and parenting two children. I discussed my orientation as a Navy pilot and experiencing multiple deployments, both in peacetime and war. By conveying my personal and professional experience in the military and family, I was able to establish a rapport with the participants and a sincere empathy with their experience. As expected, the interview was closer to a dialogue where we shared information and meaning making by becoming involved in the data to develop a detailed understanding of the phenomenon.

To aid in the analysis of the timing and sequencing of individual and couple's decisions related to work and family across the life course, I used a life history calendar (Shown in Appendix D) to have the participants recall these important decisions and events in their life (Axinn, Pearce and Ghimire 2001). The ability for participants to recall the timing of life events and decisions can be cognitively challenging and providing visual cues and references can place decisions and events in historical, life stage, biological age, and sequential context (Freedman, Thornton, Camburn, Alwin and Young-DeMarco 1988). As participants place major life events and decisions in temporal order in the life history calendar, lesser events or more obscure decisions are more easily recalled and placed in more accurate timing and sequencing. By organizing the life history calendar into work and family thematic events that typically occur in a couples' life course, it was easier for the participants to recall the timing of decisions, circumstances that led to that decision, influences on

the decision, and ultimately what that decision meant from an individual and couples' perspective (Belli, 1998).

Age was an important timing cue for many people and was used in conjunction with calendar years as the horizontal header on the life history calendar to orient the participants and provide a cognitive "landmark" (Belli 1998, Freedman et al. 1988). Based on the Navy's statutory limitation of 30 years of service for most officers below the rank of O-7, I created a life history calendar that included 1980 through 2009 for years of service so that I would encompass the full range of possible years for my sample. The earliest actual year of service for my sample was 1983.

The vertical list of thematic categories included expected work and family events for dual military couples. Codes were created to annotate potential variation within thematic categories and ease of recording the data. I recorded life history calendar data in writing as the participant discussed the events in his/her work and family life, while also recording the respondent's telling me about it for post-interview verification.

In addition to helping the participant recall life events and decisions, the life history calendar served in making the participant more comfortable with the interview by discussing factual events, priming the participants' memory in the process of recall, and providing a sense of ownership in the interview through providing an accurate description of their work and family careers. My reasoning for using a life history calendar was solely to create an accurate depiction of the important life events in the couples' life course for post-interview analysis. However, the life history calendar became almost as important during the interview as an "icebreaker" and

making the participants more comfortable with the interview process. The life history calendar was often referenced during the interview by participants (usually placed between us during the interview so we could both easily see) to ensure the accuracy of timing of events and in relation to their spouse's event timing.

Each interview lasted about an hour and 15 minutes (the shortest interview was 36 minutes and the longest was an hour and 53 minutes) and included creating the life history calendar and an in-depth discussion of the decision-making process starting when the husband and wife began their relationship. I explored the meanings of roles, priorities, and decisions related to work and family including marriage, childbirth, changes in employment, retirement, and career decisions across their life course. Emphasis was placed on the meaning, process, and context of decisions as well as the timing, sequencing and duration of role transitions. I asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview via telephone or in person to clarify anything from the interview and I subsequently followed up with most participants via e-mail to update specific decisions and outcomes as well as to confirm certain information.

All interviews were recorded with a digital recorder, resulting in over 53 hours of recorded interviews. Participants gave me permission to record the interview for the purpose of the research and ease of the interviewer. I took extensive field notes to record the setting, body language, gestures, facial expressions, situation of the interview, reflexive thoughts, attitude of the participant, perception of openness, and generally my thoughts on how the interview went. Following the interview, I transcribed the recorded conversation with the field notes to provide a

thorough and detailed description of the interview, producing over 700 pages of transcription and field notes.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory is an analytical process for simultaneously collecting data, analyzing data, and integrating data into theory. To accomplish data analysis, grounded theory uses a coding system that enables the researcher (1) to break data apart systematically into manageable pieces; (2) name the piece of data and assign meaning, properties, and dimensions; (3) and then reassemble and reorganize pieces of data to provide an explanation for the phenomenon of interest. The coding process uses three coding concepts called open, axial, and selective (Corbin and Strauss 2008). While these coding concepts are essentially sequential in nature, open and axial coding often occur simultaneously. The analytic process gives the researcher the tools to find meaning and process in the data while considering alternative explanations using comparison and questioning techniques (Corbin and Strauss 2008).

Computer-assisted Analysis of Qualitative Data

I chose to use a computer-assisted analysis of qualitative data (CAQDAS) software package, Atlas-ti, which was designed for grounded theory methodology. All 46 interview transcripts were uploaded to Atlas-ti and then coded according to grounded theory. Atlas-ti was helpful in organizing and categorizing the massive amount of data generated from the interview process. In addition to interview transcripts, field notes were converted into memos in Atlas-ti and used to help

analyze codes and categories through the grounded theory process. The ability to count occurrences of phenomena throughout all interviews as well as within subcategories provided a level of rigor that would otherwise not have been possible with the resources I had available. Also, the ability to attach segments of text to a code or category and then link together groups of codes and categories in Atlas-ti provided a powerful analytical tool that allowed for in-depth analysis and understanding coding relationships.

Open Coding

Data analysis began after the first interview with open coding which is the line by line microanalysis of the interview transcriptions. Names were assigned to blocks of data based on the participants' meaning which began to conceptualize and categorize the data within Atlas-ti (Corbin and Strauss 2008). During open coding, notes were made to assign properties and dimensions to the categories. Properties are characteristics that describe and define the categories or concepts. Dimensions are the variations within the properties which provide range and specificity for categories (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Open coding provided an analytic tool to break down data systematically, assign meaning, and made the coded data available for comparison to other codes. Open coding provided 24 pages of codes. As similar codes were grouped together based on properties and dimensions of a phenomenon, concepts began to take shape. Concepts were the early components that were used to build substantive theory. I created 40 main concepts or categories, with numerous subcategories in each.

Axial Coding

After the data were broken apart and coded, concepts were compared and related to form categories. The concepts included in a category created linkages based on properties and dimensions that are formed “axially” along the axis of the category (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Axial coding occurred simultaneously with open coding as I began to form conceptual linkages between open coding concepts. Categories began as a form of synthesis of concepts which helped me to begin thinking about higher level abstractions (Daly 2007). Categories were further refined based on characteristics which included processes, strategies, causes, contexts, contingencies, and consequences (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Categories were compared on the basis of their interrelatedness or whether they were unique and could stand on their own merit (Daly 2007). Overlapping categories were compared to see if they could be combined. As these abstract categories began to take shape, I continued to ask questions about the category which helped direct further theoretical sampling and guide interview questions which sought to explore the category’s properties and dimensions to an ultimate theoretical saturation (Daly 2007). Four main themes or categories emerged in this process.

Selective Coding

The final phase of the analysis was creating the core category, which integrated all other categories and provided an explanation for the substantive theory. The core category was critical to the final theory because it provided a context to orient and integrate all categories (Daly 2007). All salient processes, experiences, and relationships were incorporated into the core category. Selective coding refers to

the process of deciding which categories to include and which to exclude from the final theoretical explanation (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1998). Ultimately, selective coding helped me decide how to tell the explanatory story through an integrated and coherent use of categories.

Methodological Issues

Access Issues

As dual military couples, my participants were contending with military duties, training, and deployments. Coordinating their military roles with their family roles inherently makes these very busy people. Being flexible in the scheduling of dates and locations for these interviews was critical to being able to collect the data needed for this study. Data collection occurred from the end of October 2009 through the middle of December 2009 to accommodate military schedules. As a military insider, I had access to military bases that was needed for the purpose of interviews and other pertinent data including childcare facilities.

Professional Military Issues

I feel it was important to be aware of my status as an active duty naval officer and my current rank and experience. Having served for 22 years in the Navy and as the Commanding Officer of an aviation squadron, I was senior in rank to most of the study participants. However, I conducted interviews as a graduate student and dressed in civilian clothes. I was not attempting to hide my status, only to reinforce my role as a researcher and not as a naval officer. Participants were aware of my

experiences and status through the discussion we had at the beginning of the interview as part of the trust and rapport building.

Similarly, the participants needed to feel they had the ability to talk about any work-family issue that is related to this research without repercussion from the military. While their attitudes and feelings about their experiences were not always aligned with the Navy, they were reassured that their opinions and experiences were important to the research and telling their story. No sensitive issues arose, such as where I would be obligated to report instances of child abuse through the proper authorities with the University of Maryland and the Navy. However, several sensitive issues did arise related to misconduct, violation of Navy policy and regulations, sexual harassment, and misapplication of Navy policies and regulations (which will be discussed later).

Gender Issues

As a man conducting interviews with women, I knew that it has been documented by Reinharz and Chase (2002) that women are less likely to volunteer information about their personal experiences. Being cognizant of this issue, I attempted to downplay gender and desexualize the interview through the wording of my questions, phrases, and probes. Being married to a military woman, and having served with women in aviation squadrons and ships for most of my career, I felt comfortable conducting the interviews and have the women open up and tell their story. Interestingly, I interviewed several men where it took a significant portion of the interview to get them to feel comfortable and to discuss their feelings. However,

after adjusting questions and prompts, a dialogue was created and these men were able to open up and discuss what was most important to them.

Ethical Issues

The main ethical issue for me was maintaining the privacy of my participants. I used pseudonyms to protect their names and disguise unique military identifications with units, warfare specialties, and locations to ensure the anonymity of the participants. All data collected are for my use as part of my dissertation requirements at the University of Maryland. The Navy or any other government agency does not have access to collected data without the consent of all participants.

Reflexivity and the Role of the Researcher

In grounded theory and interviews, I remained cognizant of my role as the researcher in creating meaning with the participants. Being aware of my personal experience of growing up in a Navy family with dual-earner parents, marrying a Navy woman officer and being an active duty dual military couple, and being in a dual military couple family with my wife who left active duty and transferred to the reserves provided insight, meaning, and biases toward many topics which were discussed in the interviews. By talking openly about my experiences when needed to help draw out responses from participants, co-creating meaning during the interview occurred. I account for this reflexive process through field notes, memos, and journaling to create an audit trail for the study (Daly 2007). Maintaining awareness and recording researcher identities used and presented during the interviews enabled a more complete analysis. My ability to understand the participants' meaning-making was an interpretive process which includes my own biography and social location

(Daly 2007). By incorporating my own notes on how I was involved in the meaning and interpretation process, I can explicitly include my voice as the researcher in how I present the explanation and the overall story for dual military couples.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Following Corbin and Strauss' (2008) perspective on the quality of data, I use the terms credibility and trustworthiness to evaluate quality instead of validity and reliability. The search for truth in qualitative data rests on the credibility and trustworthiness of the methodological process by which the grounded theory was generated more than the positivist attributes of validity and reliability. Silverman and Marvasti (2008) provide five ways to assist researchers in establishing trustworthiness and credibility: refuting assumptions, using a constant comparative method, treating data comprehensively, identifying deviant cases, and use employing suitable tabulations. Refuting assumptions ensures that the researcher does not only consider the most plausible explanations for a phenomenon, but rather considers competing explanations in an attempt to prove wrong the selected explanation. By employing a constant comparative method of analyzing each fragment of data, other explanations and meanings are considered, and an in-depth level of rigor is applied to the data. Including all cases in the analysis provides a comprehensive treatment of the data to ensure findings are representative and not anecdotal. By incorporating all cases, deviant cases can be identified and used to adjust the findings to account for anomalous cases. Finally, a comprehensive treatment of the data in all cases using a constant comparative method is useful in CAQDAS for making tabulations based on

categories which emerge from the data instead of being based on assumptions and pre-conceived ideas of what the data should look like.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) provide additional guidance for the credibility of qualitative research and say that it should be detailed and descriptive to provide the reader with a sense of what the researcher experienced in collecting the data. Using verbatim quotations that are sufficiently long so that the reader can make their own judgment of the data adds credibility to the research (Glaser & Strauss 1967). The researcher should also provide detailed methodological information so that the reader can understand how the data was collected and analyzed to provide transparency in how the researcher arrived at the findings and conclusions (Glaser & Strauss 1967). It is also important to establish applicability for the theory in how it fits the research area from which it emerged, making the theory logical and clear, and how the theory is generalizable to other populations (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Chapter 4: Participant Profiles and Prioritization Strategies

The next seven chapters summarize and analyze the descriptive data. After analyzing the coded transcripts of the 46 interviews with the wives and husbands in the 23 dual military couples, a comprehensive theory emerged explaining how these couples developed life pathways that enabled them to maintain control of their life through the life course trajectory they created while serving their country. One core category and four key categories emerged from the conversations with these couples. This chapter describes the demographics and work-family strategies of the 23 couples as a group, and as couples.

Participant Profiles

The sample includes 23 dual military couples who have been married from one to 15 years (Table 2), with an average of 6.2 years. Individuals range in age at the time of the interview from 26 to 48 years, with an average of 34.9 years. The average age at marriage was 28 years for women and 29.5 years for men, with an overall average of 28.7 years. For 15 couples the husband was older than the wife, five couples had the wife older than the husband, and three couples were the same age, with an average age difference of 3.6 years (Table 3). Nine people (six men and three women) had been divorced from previous spouses. Couples typically (17 couples) met after they entered the Navy. Of the other six couples, five met in college (including USNA) and one met while he was in the Navy and she was in college.

Table 2: Years Married

	# of Couples
1-5	12
6-10	7
11-15	4

Table 3: Husband and Wife Age Difference

	# of Couples
Husband older 7 - 9 years	3
Husband older 4 - 6 years	5
Husband older 1 - 3 years	6
Same age	3
Wife older 1 - 3 years	3
Wife older 4 - 6 years	1
Wife older 7 - 9 years	2

There are 14 couples with children; the oldest child is 12 years old and several children are less than a year old (Table 4). Nine couples have no children, eight couples have one child, five couples have two children and one couple has four children (Table 5). Among the children, three were adopted, including twins for one couple. The average age for having their first child was 32 years for the women and 33.5 years for the men (with an average of 32.75 years for men and women combined).

Table 4: School Ages of Children

	# of Couples
Pre-School	11
Elementary School	3
Middle School	1
High School	0

Table 5: Number of Children

	# of Couples
0	9
1	8
2	5
3	0
4	1

Regarding their military careers, 38 of the participants are on active duty, two are in the Reserves, two have retired, and four have separated from the Navy (Table 6). Their military pay grades are as junior as O-2 and as senior as O-5 (one officer has been selected for O-6) (Table 7).

Table 6: Military Status of Officers

	# of Officers
Active	38
Separated	4
Retired	2
Reserve	2

Table 7: Military Paygrades

	# of Officers
O-2	1
O-3	15
O-4	18
O-5	12

All but 2 couples are within one pay grade of each other. The difference in years these officers have been commissioned is on average 2.2 years between partners, although there are five couples who are more than five years apart. Of those officers eligible, eight have either been in command, are in command, or are going to command. The commissioning sources for these officers are: 18 through USNA, 14 through ROTC, 13 through OCS, and one through the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) (Table 8).

Table 8: Commissioning Sources

	# of Officers
OCS	13
ROTC	14
USAFA	1
USNA	18

Prior to commissioning, nine of the men have previously served as enlisted service members, eight in the Navy and one in the Army National Guard. The warfare specialties of these officers include (Table 9): 15 in aviation communities, 13 in surface warfare (including surface nuclear), one in submarine warfare, five in the intelligence community, three in Aviation Engineering Duty, two in the Civil Engineering Corps (CEC), two in Human Resources, one in the Supply Corps, one in the Medical Service Corps, one in Public Affairs, one in the Information Professional

community, and one in Engineering Duty. Eight officers (three men and five women) made a lateral transition during their careers from their initial warfare specialty including one inter-service transfer from the Air Force. In categorizing these warfare specialties, there are 28 (16 men and 12 women) Unrestricted Line officers (shaded in Table 9) and 18 (7 men and 11 women) Restricted Line/Staff Corps/Special Duty/Limited Duty officers.

Table 9: Warfare Specialties

	# of Officers	Women	Men
Aviation	15	5	10
Submarines	1	0	1
Surface	7	4	3
Surface Nuclear	5	3	2
Aviation Engineering Duty	3	1	2
Civil Engineering	2	2	0
Engineering Duty	1	1	0
Human Resources	2	1	1
Information Professional	1	0	1
Intelligence	5	3	2
Limited Duty Officer Surface	1	0	1
Medical Service	1	1	0
Public Affairs	1	1	0
Supply	1	1	0

Couples' Work-Family Prioritization Strategies

To understand the work-family decision-making and life course trajectories of the 23 couples in this study, I have organized and summarized the work-family characteristics based on their work-family prioritization strategies. Categorizing the couples according to how they perceive work-family decisions are made for their family gives insight into the experiences, role transitions, and outcomes that define

the pathway each couple creates. The 23 couples are broadly categorized into four groups: family priority, career priority, lead and follow, and shifting priority. Each of these groups is summarized to provide an overview of these military families' pathways, a description of the couples, and a representative case study.

To protect the participants' anonymity, they have been assigned pseudonyms using a different letter of the alphabet for each couple. All children and Navy personnel discussed in the interviews also have been assigned pseudonyms. Any other command, school, or warfare-specific information which may identify a participant has been altered.

Family Priority

Couples who prioritize their family first describe the relationship between work and family as antagonistic and feel like they are challenging expectations in the Navy workplace. Interestingly, this group of families has the most negative work career outcomes compared to the other three groups. Examining the characteristics of the family priority group helps describe the pathways they create and the associated outcomes.

There is a distinct age difference between this group and the other three groups (Table 10). The family priority group is on average three to four years younger than the other three groups. Their average age is 31.9 years as compared to the sample average of 34.9 years. Looking back to the beginning of their time as couples, the average age at marriage is 27.1 years and is two to three years younger than the other groups. The trend of reaching expected role transitions at a younger

age continues as the couples in this group had their first child three to seven years earlier compared to the other groups. They are also less likely to have children and four of the couples have not had children. Because these couples are younger, they are also more junior in pay grade and years of service than the other groups. Being younger and more junior, these couples are more likely to be making their first work career decision to stay in the Navy or separate.

Table 10: Work-Family Prioritization Summary

	Sample	Family Priority	Career Priority	Lead-Follow	Shifting Priority
Couples					
Number of couples	23	8	5	7	3
Mean Years married	6.2	4.8	7.2	7.7	4.7
Couples w/o children	9	4	2	1	2
Couples w/ children	14	4	3	6	1
Mean number of children	0.96	0.50	0.60	1.86	0.67
Individual Officers					
URL warfare specialty	28	14	6	5	3
Non-URL warfare specialty	18	2	4	9	3
Separations from Navy	6	6	0	0	0
Mean Age @ marriage (years)	28.7	27.1	29.7	28.9	30.8
Mean Age @ first child (years)	32.8	29.5	36.8	32.8	34.0
Mean Age @ interview (years)	34.9	31.9	36.9	36.6	35.2
Mean Spouse age difference (years)	3.6	2.0	5.8	3.6	4.3

Another influential characteristic of this group is that 14 of the 16 officers are in unrestricted line warfare specialties. As such, this group is more likely to experience time away for deployments and other scheduled travel requirements, as well as contending with more structured career paths. While it is not possible to determine causality, the higher number of unrestricted line officers is in this group and this group also has all six of the sample's separations from the Navy. Two of the couples had both partners separate from the Navy and two couples had one partner

leave the Navy (one husband and one wife). In all four couples, both officers were in an unrestricted line warfare specialty.

To complete the summary of their experiences, there are two sub-groups within this group: couples who are young and newly married, and couples who are established in their careers and families. The newly married sub-group does not have children and has been married for less than three years. These younger couples are also making the career decision to separate. The older couples have been married for more than four years and all have children as well as being established in their careers. The younger couples are not able to reconcile their desire and expectations for a family life with the demands of a Navy lifestyle. The older couples have decided to find solutions within the Navy organization, such as lateral transition or sacrificing their career opportunities, to keep their family as their first priority.

Strategically selecting to place family before work career creates a life course trajectory that privileges family roles and transitions. In their attempt to link together their work and family roles within the organization, these couples often find the organization's policies and practices to be incompatible with family roles. A couple's long-term perspective compares their current social location and timing in their life to where they expect to be later in the life course based on goals and motivations to influence decision-making that prioritizes family. The family priority strategy is most likely to conflict with the lockstep model and fast track culture of the Navy. By placing family needs as a higher priority than work career needs, these officers may place themselves in conflict with structured career paths, guidance from supervisors and Navy leadership, and in a position to make career sacrifices and decisions that are

detrimental to their career. Family needs for these couples focus heavily on collocation, and alternating sea tours to have a parent not deployed for those with children. Because family needs are not subjugated to military work demands, couples who are not able to reconcile differences between work and family often decide to leave the Navy. To provide a more detailed understanding of this prioritization strategy, an exemplar case is summarized below.

Family Priority Case Study: Scott and Stephanie

The case of Scott and Stephanie provides insight into how decisions are made across the life course for a couple who uses a family priority strategy. Scott and Stephanie met in college and married after Scott's graduation, one year later than Stephanie. Stephanie had already completed her initial training for her warfare specialty and was assigned to her first command. Scott began his initial warfare specialty training at various other locations and they spent the first two years of their marriage living apart. However, Stephanie became pregnant in the last year of her first sea tour and was subsequently reassigned to shore duty until she gave birth. She was later reassigned to sea duty and finished her initial sea tour and all of the associated career milestones. After finishing his initial training, Scott was reassigned to a command at the same location as Stephanie. Following both of their initial sea tours, both Scott and Stephanie decided that it would be helpful to stay in their current location based on childcare needs and support networks they had established in their neighborhood. The early life stage role transition to parenthood influenced this couple's decision-making related to career choices that helped create stability and certainty in their life course trajectory.

Both Scott and Stephanie acknowledge that they have not pursued, and in some cases turned down, highly sought after jobs which would have made them more competitive in their warfare specialty career paths. They felt it was more important to keep their family together and stable with established personal support structures and childcare than to accept the most competitive orders which would relocate them. They helped their parents move to their location so they could have extended family support when needed during periods when both were on sea duty.

The social timing of this couple's life with their work career path placed work and family demands for resources in conflict. At one point Stephanie was contemplating leaving the Navy to focus more on her child and spend more time as an involved mother. Scott talked her out of leaving the Navy and used arguments based on their dual income lifestyle as well as the importance of Stephanie as a role model to her child. Scott felt that Stephanie would be wasting her professional talent and skill that he said was obvious to him through her relationships and interaction with Navy leadership, but was not as obvious to Stephanie.

The only time in their career, after initial warfare specialty training, that either Scott or Stephanie were stationed away from each other was when Scott accepted a one year assignment to the Navy War College. This was a mutual decision they made based on the options being offered by Scott's assignment offer. Scott and Stephanie saw the one year apart as a positive aspect since they were able to keep their child enrolled in the same school and maintain their support network and childcare.

Showing how a dual career couple can adapt and succeed despite making career decisions that were not the organizational norm, Scott and Stephanie were both

recently selected for promotion to O-5. Stephanie was also selected for command. Scott is frustrated by not being selected for command and looks back on his career decisions and how they may have negatively affected his chances for being selected for command. He recently sought out and was assigned to sea duty in a demanding job that he is hoping will help his chances for his next opportunity to be selected for command.

Stephanie continues to be rewarded for her high performance although she is very humble when discussing her successes in the Navy. However, as a role model and mentor forging new life course trajectories in the organization, she is quick to point out that her life course trajectory is only one of many. She emphasizes the importance for women to have the choice and opportunity to have children and not feel like they have to make the choice between career and family, but that they can have both and be successful at both. Stephanie also emphasizes to junior women officers that she has one child not because they were not able to fit more children into their career paths, but because they have not been successful at having more children to date. Again, reiterating the importance that women officers should feel like they have the choice to have as many children as they want in combining work and family. Short descriptions of each of the other couples using this strategy follow.

Doug and Dana

Doug and Dana have each served for eight years, have been married for three years after meeting in college, and have no children. They do not explicitly discuss a prioritization strategy, but their experiences have led them to prioritize family in terms of themselves as a couple in their decision-making since they have been

married. Negotiating their first set of orders together after their first sea tour facilitated the decision to create flexibility in their career options for family choices after their initial service obligation was completed. Dana is in the process of leaving the Navy because she wants to pursue a career in business and be able to spend time with Doug and not be deployed. She also relates her expectation to have several children and raise them in a specific environment that is not compatible with a Navy career. Doug is similarly considering the option of leaving the Navy, but is waiting to make that decision until Dana finishes graduate school. Both Doug and Dana have considered the option of one of them staying in the Navy and maintaining their career but felt that as long as one of them was still in the Navy, they were still affected by separations and Navy work demands.

Gary and Gloria

Gary and Gloria have been married for a year after meeting in the Navy and have no children, although they plan to have children in the near future. Both have served for six years. They are in the process of creating a prioritization strategy and currently intend to prioritize family first. This strategy was used to collocate their first set of shore duty orders after getting married. Gloria is leaning toward separating from the Navy because she wants to have children and sees that as incompatible with two Navy careers.

Mark and Melissa

Mark and Melissa met in the Navy, have been married for one year, and have no children. Both decided to separate from the Navy this year based on a family priority strategy. Melissa is pursuing a professional degree and career. Mark is

pursuing several different options in civilian industry to find a job that will pay the bills while Melissa is in a professional school. They plan to have children but want to wait until Melissa is near the end of school. They both found the Navy to be rewarding, but ultimately did not see how it would work for their expectations to have children and while both are on sea duty. They each stated they would stay in their respective warfare communities if they stayed in the Navy because they loved the mission, the job, and the people.

Alan and Amy

Using a family priority prioritization strategy, Alan and Amy were both career-oriented officers who after marrying approximately six years into their work careers, came to the realization that they would not be able to reconcile having a career on active duty in the Navy and having a family with children. Both Alan and Amy discuss the importance of having children as a goal and their expectations as parents to be present to help each other raise their children and to experience important family events and holidays. Alan decided to separate from the Navy in the same timeframe as Amy. Of note, both Alan and Amy have joined the Navy Reserves and continue serving.

Harry and Helen

Harry and Helen met in college, have been married for six years, and have one child. Both love to fly which keeps them focused on staying in the Navy. Their prioritization strategy evolved over their first four years of marriage. Their strategy has been influenced by the amount of separation they experienced during their first sea tours, their satisfaction with their work, and the birth of their first child. Harry

has recently completed a transition to a new warfare specialty that is less sea-duty intensive and more flexible for collocation. Helen wants to do the same but expects to be delayed because of personnel requirements. She has considered the possibility of separating from the Navy if she is unable to make a lateral transition because she does not see collocation to be as feasible with her and Harry being in different warfare communities.

Lance and Laura

Lance and Laura met in the Navy, have been married for four years, and have one child. Laura has been on active duty for seven years and Lance has served for 12 years. They recently employed the family priority strategy based on Laura's decision to make a lateral transition from an unrestricted line warfare specialty to increase stability for their child and not to have both parents deployed or underway at the same time. She plans to consider how this next tour in her new warfare specialty works for her family situation and then make a decision on whether to stay in the Navy. Lance has applied once for a lateral transition to the restricted line but was not accepted and plans to apply again. Lance plans on staying in the Navy until he reaches 20 years of service and retirement.

Vince and Vanessa

Vince and Vanessa met in the Navy, have been married for two years, and have no children. Vince decided to separate from the Navy after eight years of service because of collocation difficulty. Because of Vanessa's seniority with 14 years of service and success in her career as an O-5 selected for command, he opted to separate from the Navy and follow Vanessa's career while he works in a civilian

agency, using a lead and follow prioritization strategy. They have spent the past five years trying to collocate so that they could be together to take advantage of Vanessa's shore duty time to have children. Unfortunately they were unable to collocate for part of that time and then when they did get collocated, they had fertility problems. Now they are out of time as Vanessa has to head back to sea as a CO and they are contemplating adoption at a later date. Vanessa plans to continue her Navy career as long as she is competitive.

Career Priority

There are five couples who prioritize their work careers ahead of their family (Table 10). The experiences of these families are varied based on how they choose their pathway for both spouses serving in the Navy. However, the work career outcomes are positive and five officers already have been promoted to O-5 and three have been selected for command. All ten officers have decided to stay in the Navy and work toward at least a 20 year career and retirement. Of the five couples, four have decided at some point in their career to accept assignments which result in not being collocated for all or part of an assignment. These four couples have had negative experiences being a dual military couple because they felt the Navy institution did not reward their commitment and sacrifices.

The age at which these couples married is influential in the development of their pathways. The couples are on average older than the other couples in the sample and this is influenced by preceding factors such as prior marriages and prior enlisted service. This is the second marriage for three of these couples which translates to

starting their current family later. Prior enlisted service for two couples means they are delayed in marrying their spouse until later in their life course. Because these couples who prioritize career first are older and established in their careers when they marry, they are beyond earlier career decision points where it would have been more likely to separate from the Navy. Commitment to work careers before marriage does not change and leads to their work prioritization as a dual military couple. The result of the career commitment and Navy structural impediments result in not being able to stay collocated for all assignments. One of the career priority couples is different because they are younger, still establishing their careers, and not willing to sacrifice their careers for family. This couple is in the process of moving to their next job assignments, they will not be collocated by choice because collocation would have meant accepting less career-enhancing assignments.

A common characteristic of these couples is they are less likely to have children and if they do have children, to have fewer than two of the other three strategy groups. There are three couples who each have one child and two couples who have no children. The couples without children have decided to postpone having children until later in their work careers.

The career priority group of families has the largest age difference between spouses of all the groups. Most of this difference is attributed to the three couples with prior marriages. In all three cases, the divorced men were looking for spouses in their second marriage who were career-oriented and could accommodate a Navy lifestyle. In two of the three couples, the men are Navy peers, although they are older because of prior enlisted service.

By privileging the organization's work demands, couples who prioritize work career create life course trajectories that delay or avoid typical social timing of family roles. By avoiding the typical timing of family roles, these couples focus on their work careers and goals while postponing family goals. The long-term perspective of these couples provides the positive outlook that later stages in the life course will provide opportunity to attain family goals. By viewing the organizational work career as a finite stage of their lives, these couples choose to maintain a work focus in their life course trajectories. The career priority strategy is most conducive to accommodating the lockstep model and fast track culture of the Navy. Conflicts with organizational constraints in the social timing of typical family roles are minimized by officers following the prescribed career path using this strategy. Postponing children or reducing the number of children in a family, which is common for couples who use this strategy, allows officers the ability to commit more time and energy to the work demands of the organization. Ultimately, family processes and goals become subjugated to the demands of the organization so that both spouses can serve, but not always together. The case of Charles and Claire is representative of the experiences of those couples employing the career priority strategy.

Career Priority Case Study: Charles and Claire

Charles and Claire met in college and married after Claire graduated (one year after Charles graduated). While completing their initial warfare specialty training they were separated periodically but eventually collocated for their first sea tours. Their first three years of sea duty included four deployments between them and two years separated. As one spouse returned from deployment, the other was leaving to

go on deployment and often passed without seeing each other. This amount of sea duty and deployments was typical for couples who were both in unrestricted line warfare specialties.

Their first opportunity to discuss and develop a prioritization strategy came as they began to consider their options for their first shore duty tour. As Charles is a year senior to Claire, he negotiated orders first and took the most competitive orders possible. The next year Claire was assigned to the same competitive command as Charles. Professionally, they decided that it was important to maintain their own identities at work and the fact that Claire maintained her maiden name helped. The life course concept of linked lives was not as applicable to couples using a career priority strategy since they made decisions which followed the organizational career norms and were not as likely to combine work and family roles.

Discussions about having children arose during this tour and Claire realized that having children was probably more important to Charles than it was to her at this point in her life. However, Charles understood and respected Claire's decision to wait to have children when she was not in a flying status and not on sea duty.

During their first shore duty tour, both Claire and Charles had their first opportunity to think about leaving the Navy once their initial service obligation was complete. Both officers seriously considered leaving the Navy and explored their options. However, both also realized that they were good at their jobs in the Navy, they enjoyed what they were doing immensely, and they had the support of their leadership to help them continue to both stay competitive. The professional support

and rewards provided by the organization for their career and family choices reinforced the career priority strategy and life course trajectory.

Deciding to stay in the Navy, they both accepted assignments to their next career milestones on sea duty and some periods of time not being collocated. To reward and support the sacrifices these officers were making in maintaining their career-focused trajectory, Navy leadership informally helped them in continuing their careers by helping them increase the amount of time they were collocated and adjusting tour lengths to help in their career timing. In this way, superior performance and sacrifices of time away while maintaining a career-focused trajectory were compensated by providing what they valued most – collocation and competitive jobs doing what they love to do.

This cycle of sacrifice and support continued until both were selected for command. At this point they could no longer be collocated based on available options. This is where they currently are in their careers with Charles in his command tour at one location, and Claire preparing to depart for another location for her command tour.

Common in career priority couples, family roles that would affect their life course trajectory postponed until a later in the social timing of their lives. They still have discussions about when and if they are going to have children, but Claire still finds herself in operational tours where she cannot be pregnant and do her job. However, neither she nor Charles sees not having children at this point as a sacrifice. They value their decisions to have competitive careers and feel that their choice not to

have children at this point in their lives helped them to achieve all that they have accomplished.

Following the normal organizational career path leads to creating a life course trajectory that leads to both officers achieving their individual career goals. Charles talks about the sense of satisfaction and pride they feel in being able to have two successful careers in the Navy. They look back at the sacrifices and hardships they faced and feel that they were motivated to overcome the obstacles by their goal of both being able to serve and have successful careers. Short descriptions of each of the other couples using this strategy follow.

Brad and Beth

Brad and Beth have been married for four years after meeting in the Navy, and have one child. Employing a career prioritization strategy initially, this couple has made family sacrifices in terms of not living together in order to maintain competitive work careers. Most of their married life has been spent trying to get collocated jobs since they have never lived together in the same house. They have lived the last four years in separate houses approximately 50 miles apart and spending time together on the weekends while Beth has primary responsibility for childcare during the week. While Brad and Beth do not explicitly talk about a career prioritization strategy, their career decisions are consistent with other couples employing this strategy. Beth and Brad have recently started to shift to a family priority strategy after Brad did not get selected for his next career milestone and Beth had their first child. This shift is based on their decisions to attempt to get lateral

transfers for both of them. Beth and Brad intend to stay in at least until they are retirement eligible.

Fred and Faith

Fred and Faith have been married for 11 years after having met in the Navy, and have one child. Fred has served for over 30 years (including prior enlisted service) and Faith has served for 16 years. While they have not explicitly used a particular prioritization strategy, their decision-making has been based on a career priority for both of them. They continued after marriage to make decisions on what was best for their careers. Fred says it is difficult to find challenging and competitive jobs where they can be collocated because there are very few jobs available at his seniority level and his warfare specialty. They attribute this difficulty to Fred's assignment officer not coordinating effectively with Faith's assignment officer. Faith feels that she has spent more than her fair share of time as the primary childcare provider, which, in combination with several periods of time apart due to deployments and not being collocated, has been stressful to their marriage. Faith plans on retiring when she has served 20 years. Faith is on her way to a seven month deployment to Afghanistan, during which Fred will be the primary childcare provider. Fred plans to retire about the same time as Faith.

Owen and Olivia

Owen and Olivia met in the Navy, have been married for four years, and have one child. Being established in their respective unrestricted line careers for over eight years before marrying, they continue to focus on their careers while starting a family using a career priority strategy. Owen has coordinated with the Navy to start his

command tour earlier than normal to prevent him and Olivia from being on sea duty at the same time. Olivia will start her XO tour and possibly a CO tour after Owen has completed his command tour which will alternate their sea tours and deployments. They have parents who have relocated nearby to help with childcare when needed. Owen is already retirement eligible and will likely retire after being promoted to O-6. Olivia plans to stay in until retirement.

Jack and Jessica

Jack and Jessica met in the Navy, have been married for two years, and have no children. Jack has served for eight years and Jessica has served for five years. Both of these officers are career-oriented and have planned to accept not being collocated for their next duty assignments so they can both do what is best for their careers. They have recently adopted the career priority strategy and this decision was forced by their consideration of options for their next career milestones. Jessica is accepting orders to an important sea duty milestone for her career that made collocation impossible without Jack accepting orders that would essentially end his career. Jack is accepting orders to an important milestone for his warfare specialty that did not allow for collocation. While Jack admits he was initially resentful of Jessica's decision to accept orders that precluded collocation, he has since learned to understand the importance of Jessica's next tour for her career. They are both learning how they will cope with being separated.

Lead and Follow

The lead and follow group of families use a strategy where one spouse has job assignment priority over the other, and decisions based on work and family needs are negotiated between husband and wife at each decision point in their careers. These couples have the best overall experiences, as well as work and family outcomes, compared to the other three groups. Their high family satisfaction is largely based on their ability to accomplish work and family goals while staying collocated throughout their work careers. Their work and family successes are due to their ability to adapt strategically to the Navy's structured career paths, assignment process, and sea duty demands. Many of these couples see a lead and follow prioritization as the only way a dual military couple can successfully have two careers and children.

Several defining characteristics (summarized in Table 10) come to the forefront in this group. Most notably, the lead and follow group has the highest number of children, an average of 1.85 children per couple, of all the groups. Having almost twice the average number of children compared to the sample average of 0.95 children per couple, this group accounts for 60 percent of all the children in the sample. In addition to the most children, this group includes five of the six couples in the sample who had multiple children and both couples who adopted children. It appears that the lead and follow group is the most "family friendly" of all the sample groups, but to describe why this group has more children, their work careers need to be examined.

The lead and follow group is the only group that has fewer officers who are in unrestricted line warfare specialties compared to the other warfare specialties. These

families talk about having flexibility in their job assignments, timing of career milestones, and timing of sea duty. They also have fewer deployments and time away from home than the other groups. Flexibility is also used to describe the ability to choose jobs that are collocated. Many of these officers also talk about having a positive experience with their warfare specialty's leaders and assignment officers in trying to accommodate work and family needs.

Lateral transitions from unrestricted line warfare specialties to more flexible warfare specialties in this group account for five of the eight couples in the sample who decided to make such transitions. In one case, a wife transferred from another armed service to the Navy while maintaining her warfare specialty that enabled their family to stay collocated in their job assignments. Transitions are selected by three of the women and two of the men, so the decision to lateral transition is not based solely on gender. Lateral transitions are a method for these couples to continue both to serve and to have children.

From a work career perspective, almost 50 percent of these officers have been promoted to O-5 and three have been selected to command, making this group as successful as the career priority group, but with a more positive overall experience and much more successful from a family perspective. The couples in this group have been married longer on average than the other groups at an average of 7.7 years. There are four couples in this group (of the five in the total sample) where the wife is older and senior in the Navy to the husband. A possible explanation for this phenomenon could be that women who are older than their husbands may have a more egalitarian relationship and are more likely to use a lead and follow relationship

where compromises are made between the spouses throughout a work and family career.

While the first two prioritization strategies focused on selecting either work or family as a priority, the lead and follow strategy is a strategic adaptation that creates a life course trajectory combining work and family roles that emphasizes the importance of work and family goals. Couples using this strategy are examples of how the organization can encompass all aspects of the life course trajectory by controlling family roles, and timing and sequencing of family roles. Conflicts with organizational constraints and work demands are minimized by having one spouse follow the prescribed and normative career path and the other accepting the most career-enhancing job available at the same location. However, some conflict is still experienced by the following spouse during the negotiation of orders with the assignment officer. Explaining what they are trying to accomplish to their assignment officers and supervisors with their prioritization strategy helps in reducing conflict with the organization.

Life course trajectories using the lead and follow strategy appear to be better suited to couples with children (and more children) compared to other strategies. This is likely a result of their decisions to integrate having a career and children in their life course trajectory within the organization, whereas other strategies which focus on either career or family more often result in not having children, fewer children, or leaving the organization due to irreconcilable differences.

With couples who alternate the lead career based on career milestones and needs, both spouses' careers are more competitive. Alternating lead and follow

couples are rewarded by the organization for adapting their life course trajectory to meet the organizational demands and needs. In other couples, one spouse sacrifices their career to some extent in order to keep the family together, have children, and have at least one competitive career. This most often occurs with couples where one spouse is always the lead career. The case of Ike and Isabel is representative of the experiences of those couples employing the lead and follow prioritization strategy with one spouse always the lead career.

Lead and Follow Case Study: Ike and Isabel

Ike and Isabel met in the Navy after Isabel had served for seven years and Ike had served for 13 years including his prior enlisted service. After meeting in one location and then subsequently each receiving orders to different locations, they decided to marry and spent the remainder of their tour, over a year, not collocated. Both Isabel and Ike were in restricted line warfare specialties which provided more flexibility in their career paths and less sea duty than unrestricted line warfare specialties. They were both previously married and this influenced their work and family decision-making and the prioritization strategy they adopted.

Because they both experienced failed marriages, they were focused on making life course decisions with a long-term perspective that would make their marriage successful. Collocation became their first priority and necessitated from their perspective designating one spouse's career the lead career. The first set of orders they negotiated as a couple was based on Isabel negotiating first with her assignment officer and then Ike finding the best available job at the same location. Isabel felt that Ike's job was competitive, whereas Ike did not and that he was accepting the job so

that they could be collocated. Ike said that they started the lead and follow strategy at this point while Isabel felt that it did not start until two tours later based on the competitiveness of Ike's jobs. Ike was comfortable with following Isabel because he felt she had a more viable career path and she was more excited about her work and competing in her community.

In the negotiation of their follow-on orders, Ike turned down a very competitive and important job opportunity because Isabel could not be collocated with him. Ike eventually accepted orders which placed him in a good job and collocated with Isabel, and Ike feels that turning down the competitive job sent a negative signal to his warfare community. Consistent with their commitment to work and family goals, they adopted their first child after having difficulty getting pregnant during this tour. Two years later they were surprised to have their second child biologically and the timing of this birth concerned them because of Isabel's next set of orders. Combining work and family roles in their life course trajectory was influential in the decision-making that privileged Isabel's career as the lead career. The social timing of their lives and having children required a parent to be the primary childcare provider while maintaining a work career. Having already privileged Isabel's career, Ike became the primary childcare provider after work hours.

Following this tour, Isabel was offered a very important career milestone tour that would send her to sea duty only seven weeks after giving birth to their second child. But the career milestone was very important and after discussing with Ike, they agreed to continue with the assignment. This sea duty tour would be the first time Ike

was left as a single parent to care for their two year-old and the newborn. Fortunately they had extended family in the area to help Ike cope with the demands of his job and caring for two young children while Isabel was deployed or at sea. Adapting family roles and combinations in the life course trajectory is a common characteristic of the lead and follow strategy.

Ike's job assignment during this tour was another compromise since the assignment officer placed him in a job that was not competitive so they could be collocated and near extended family during Isabel's sea tour. The linked lives life course concept shows how this couple affected each other within the organization through promotion opportunity. During this tour, Ike failed to be promoted to O-5 while Isabel was promoted to O-5. While Ike accepted the non-promotion as a result of being able to be collocated and help Isabel remain competitive in her career, it still caused additional stress during this demanding time of being a single parent while Isabel was at sea. Like most dual career couples in this study, the long-term perspective helps to see that the current demanding and difficult work and family situation will change for the better in the near future. Ike and Isabel make sense of their situation by looking forward to the time when they can both retire and live a "normal" lifestyle. Short descriptions of each of the other couples using this strategy follow.

Evan and Elise

Evan and Elise have been married for six years having met during their time in the Navy, and have two children. They have used a lead and follow prioritization strategy since marrying. Maintaining two competitive careers and a family with

children has been their goal. Their variation of lead and follow has been to alternate which spouse's career had priority (lead) based on career milestones. Since they are a year apart in their years of service, they have been very successful with this strategy until recently. Elise has decided to turn down operational command in favor of a shore duty command where she will not deploy. With the addition of two children to their family, having both Evan and Elise on sea duty and in command was too many competing demands according to Elise.

Kirk and Kate

Kirk and Kate met while they were stationed overseas together in the military, have been married for five years, and have no children. Using a lead and follow prioritization strategy, they prioritized Kirk's career as lead because of the rigid unrestricted line career path, but have managed to find ways to stay collocated and maintain a competitive career for Kate in her restricted line career path. The lead and follow strategy evolved after Kate transitioned from another Service to the Navy which occurred a year after they were married and four years into her career. After serving two tours in the Air Force and marrying Kirk, she decided that it would be beneficial to consider an inter-service transfer to the Navy to help them stay collocated in their job assignments. Collocation is very important to this couple and the impetus for adopting a lead and follow strategy. Both of these officers plan to stay in the Navy until at least 20 years of service for retirement.

Nick and Nora

Nick and Nora met in the Navy, have been married for three years, and have two children. After unexpectedly becoming pregnant while waiting to start her initial

warfare specialty training, Nora was influenced by the Navy and her husband to lateral transition to the restricted line. The restricted line community provided her with a more flexible career path and less sea duty time to facilitate both her career and her husband's career while being the primary childcare provider for their child. However, using a lead and follow strategy for the first time this year, they have decided to prioritize Nora's career for job assignments because they feel she has the best chance for a successful career. Nick sees the low promotion opportunity for his warfare specialty as a detractor, but is looking at other options in the Navy to be able to continue to serve if he is not able to continue to have a successful career in his present unrestricted line community. They feel the Navy provides job and financial security for their family and are focused on both becoming eligible for retirement.

Patrick and Peggy

Patrick and Peggy met in the Navy, have been married for 14 years, and have one child. Peggy served for 20 years on active duty before reaching mandatory retirement. She was commissioned in 1983 and chose to an unrestricted line warfare specialty prior to the repeal of the Combat Exclusion Law which limited her to commands that did not perform combat-related missions. Peggy is one of the "pioneers" and has many "firsts" in her career. She completed three sea tours on non-combatant ships and a variety of other shore tours during her 20 year career. Peggy stated that there really was no standardized career path for women at the time, but that she nominally followed a sea-shore rotation and career milestone requirements that were patterned after the men's unrestricted line career path. While they were in the Navy together, Patrick's career was given priority for job assignments because he had

the rigid unrestricted line career path and Peggy's career path was not as structured. The lead and follow prioritization strategy was formulated soon after they were married. While Peggy is proud of her Navy career, she wishes she had promoted to O-5. Patrick plans on retiring after another tour.

Will and Wendy

Will and Wendy met in the Navy, have been married for nine years, and have four children. They have used an alternating lead and follow prioritization strategy to alternate sea and shore tours so they are not both on sea duty at the same time after they had children, which was one year after they married. Both being in the same restricted line warfare specialty aided in managing their lead and follow strategy. Wendy has declined to be considered for her next sea duty career milestone because she intends to retire before being eligible for promotion to O-6. Will intends to continue serving as long as he is competitive, but is starting to look at other options outside the military for a second career after his retirement from the Navy.

Zach and Zoe

Zach and Zoe met in the Navy, have been married for nine years, and have two adopted children. They decided to adopt after having difficulty getting pregnant and had no success after fertility treatments. They have used an alternating lead and follow prioritization strategy since they have been married. The lead career has been mutually decided based on who had the more important career milestone or career path flexibility. Because both of them are in restricted line warfare specialties, they have more flexibility in their career paths than unrestricted line couples. Zach has been six months ahead of Zoe in their assignment timing and has negotiated his

assignment first. Zoe's assignment was negotiated to meet her career milestones at the location Zach was going. They had negotiated the location prior to discussing with the assignment officer. They continue to use this strategy and expect to follow Zach to graduate school next while they wait to see if Zoe will select for O-6 major command.

Shifting Priority

The smallest group in the sample is the shifting priority group that consists of three couples. These couples prioritize one spouse's career until retirement and then shift priority to the other spouse's career. The three couples in this group have all given priority to the husband's career first and then shifted or plan to shift to the wife's career. They give the husbands' career priority because all three husbands are prior enlisted (more years served) and are eligible for retirement before their wives.

These couples are older than the sample average but have been married for fewer years than any of the other groups (Table 10). Marrying later is associated with two of the couples having prior marriages and the prior enlisted service of the men. Because they have not been married as long, they have fewer children and two couples are still waiting to have children.

One couple in this group is unique compared to the sample in that the wife waited to join the Navy until after they were married for several years. She decided to join the Navy after relocating with her husband and was unable to find a job related to her professional career in the surrounding area. She researched her options in the Navy and found a warfare specialty that was a good fit for her specialized training

and skills. This warfare specialty is not in the unrestricted line and has career path flexibility so she can prioritize her husband's career until he approaches retirement. Their prioritization strategy has been successful to date and both officers have been able to stay collocated and have successful careers.

The shifting priority strategy emphasizes the overlap of social and age timing in the life course trajectory. The shifting priority strategy is predicated on a particular age, year of service, or seniority difference between spouses. As the name implies, one spouse's career has precedence for a period of time in the life course trajectory and then priority is shifted to the other spouse creating what appears to be a type of turning point in the life course. The long-term perspective and planning these couples use to create this strategy highlights their human agency to adapt to organizational demands. The ability to shift priority for these couples is based on one spouse being significantly closer to retirement than the other spouse. The senior spouse's career is prioritized at a time when the career is less flexible in the senior ranks of the organizational career path. The junior spouse has more flexibility being earlier in their career and makes concessions to prioritize their spouse's career. Conflicts with organizational constraints are minimized by senior officers following the prescribed career path and the junior officer making career compromises where necessary.

The presence or desire to have children does not seem to influence couples using this strategy. However, the men in this study were more senior and the women felt they had control of when they could have children being earlier in their careers. Family processes and goals were more easily integrated with the demands of the organization so that both spouses could serve together because they were effectively

focused on one career. The case of Rick and Rachel is representative of the experiences of those couples using the shifting priority strategy.

Shifting Priority Case Study: Rick and Rachel

Rick and Rachel met while Rick was in the Navy and Rachel was still in college. After Rachel graduated from college, they married and Rachel relocated to Rick's location. Rachel was employed in her chosen civilian profession based on her graduate education. At the end of Rick's tour, they were relocated to a more rural area and Rachel was unable to find a job in her profession. Rachel wanted to support Rick's career in his unrestricted line warfare specialty, but realized that relocating every two to three years was going to be difficult for her to maintain a career in her civilian profession. Of her own accord, Rachel researched career options as a Navy officer that would be commensurate with her education and expertise, and found a good fit in one of the Navy's restricted line warfare specialties. Rachel decided to join the Navy with the plan to be collocated with Rick and follow his career until he retired, and then Rachel's career would take priority. Because the organization controlled their family lives and demanded Rick's career as priority while she was a civilian, it was easier to combine both careers in a life course trajectory within the organization to achieve both work and family goals.

Their plan worked well for their first set of orders negotiated together with Rachel receiving a competitive job assignment at Rick's next command location. The subsequent set of orders kept Rick in the same location and Rachel was also able to negotiate orders to stay in the same location and complete a sea duty assignment. Because they are both on sea duty at the same time, they have decided to delay

having children until after their current tour. They also stated that they are still enjoying time together as a couple without children which is important because of the amount of time away from home for Rick's deployments and underway time at sea.

Rick is looking forward to finishing up his career in the Navy so that he can support Rachel in her career and help care for their future children. Rachel has had a positive experience to date with the Navy and her warfare specialty leadership, and is looking forward to a successful career and staying in the Navy until she is retirement eligible. By planning across the life course from a long-term perspective influenced by the organizations demands, couples using a shifting priority strategy adapt their life course trajectory within the organization to achieve work and family goals. Short descriptions of each of the other couples using this strategy follow.

Troy and Tina

Troy and Tina met in the Navy, have been married for one year, and have no children. They use a shifting priority strategy. Troy's decision to retire after 20 years of service was based in part on having Tina's 11 year career in the Navy, his retirement benefits, and his Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits to go back to graduate school and pursue a second career in education. They plan to prioritize Tina's career until Tina reaches retirement. They plan to have children in the near future while Tina is on shore duty but have had difficulty getting pregnant. Shore duty has been helpful in scheduling fertility treatments.

Yancey and Yvonne

Yancey and Yvonne met in the Navy, have been married for nine years, and have two children. They use a shifting priority strategy to manage their Navy careers

with Yancey's career taking priority first and now they are transitioning to Yvonne's career taking priority. Yvonne does not agree with Yancey on how it was determined whose career would take priority first. Yvonne feels Yancey made the decision for his career to take priority in coordination with their assignment officer while Yancey feels that they mutually agreed on this priority. Yancey has five more years of service than Yvonne and will be eligible for retirement after his next tour when he plans to retire and shift to Yvonne's career taking priority. Yvonne's current sea duty tour is the first time that Yancey has had to be the primary childcare provider while she is deployed. Yvonne plans to stay in the Navy until she is retirement eligible. When they are both retired, they plan on starting a small business to provide career and family flexibility.

Chapter 5: Developing the Grounded Theory

The voices of the 23 couples described previously serve as the primary data source for this qualitative inquiry into how work and family decisions influence the life course trajectories of dual career couples in the Navy, and how the work demands of the Navy uniquely affect these couples as they consider their long term implications over the life course.

Throughout the open coding process, data fragments and codes were constantly compared and categorized by meaning and concept. Open coding within Atlas-ti was accomplished through line-by-line analysis of each interview transcript. Since I personally transcribed all of the interviews, the open coding process was my second opportunity to become familiar with the data and incorporate notes that were made during transcription.

The open coding process consisted of my examination of each line or block of text that represented an idea, event, thought, or act and assigning a name that represented the meaning based on context. In some cases, codes were named based on the wording used by the participants and this is called “in vivo” coding (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The assignment of codes was influenced by my research questions and the life course perspective. Atlas-ti provides the analysis capability to manage codes by sorting based on search criteria, counting occurrences, exporting codes in specific formats, and attaching quotes to codes.

As codes for blocks of text were created, they were compared by reviewing codes within the current transcript as well as previous transcripts through the code management tool in Atlas-ti. Text with similar meaning to previous codes was

assigned the same code which aided in determining recurring concepts and themes while still in the open coding process. Similarly, if text had a similar meaning but varied by a particular property, a note was attached to the code that referenced the different property and the specific quote for later analysis.

In addition to notes attached to codes, Atlas-ti provides the ability to create memos which were useful in writing and organizing concepts as I was going through the open coding process. Memos were organized by title and were attached to specific transcripts and blocks of text when desired.

Once all the transcripts had been coded, I used the axial coding process to organize codes into conceptual or thematic categories based on the research questions (listed below) using the life course perspective.

- What are the life course trajectories for dual military couples?
- How has the timing of work and family decisions influenced trajectories?
- How has the sequencing of work and family decisions influenced trajectories?
- How do couples perceive effects of historical context affects on their trajectories?
- How do role transitions for couples influence life course trajectories?
- How do timing and sequencing of role transitions influence trajectories?
- How is the meaning of a role transition influenced by a trajectory?
- What are the processes that influence couples' decision-making relating to role transitions and turning points?
- How aware are couples of structural constraints?

- What enables dual military couples to continue their military service?
- How do men's and women's decision-making and associated outcomes about work and family decisions compare for dual military couples?

To accomplish axial coding within Atlas-ti, as themes or concepts emerged from the codes, they were appropriately labeled and codes were assigned to these concepts based on their relationship to other codes within the concept category. As codes were encountered which did not have an existing concept, new concepts were created. This process of assigning codes to concept categories continued until all codes were assigned.

Each of the conceptual categories was then analyzed using the attached notes and quotations to identify the properties which provided meaning to the concept. Close attention was given to the properties of other categories to determine interrelationships between categories that provided the early stages of underlying explanation of the grounded theory. Dimensions of each property were identified through analysis of attached quotations to provide variation and depth of understanding of the category and its relationship to other categories. Axial coding developed 40 categories and sub-categories that were related to each other. These 40 categories were then organized and related to create four key categories.

The selective coding process compares concepts and relationships of the key categories and orients the key categories to explain all cases in the sample through an over-arching central category. Two key categories were based on the domains of work and family: organizational constraints and supports, and family processes and goals. These two key categories overlap to form the third key category of challenges

and motivations. A product of the challenges and motivations key category, the fourth key category is adapting strategically. The key category of adapting strategically influences family processes and goals and organizational constraints and supports. The relationships among the four key categories explain the core category of developing pathways to serving together. The explanation for the core category and the overall grounded theory for how work and family decisions influence the life course for dual military couples is: dual military couples adapt their intertwined work and family careers through their role configurations and based on the military demands and challenges they must overcome so that they can both serve a full career as a family being together.

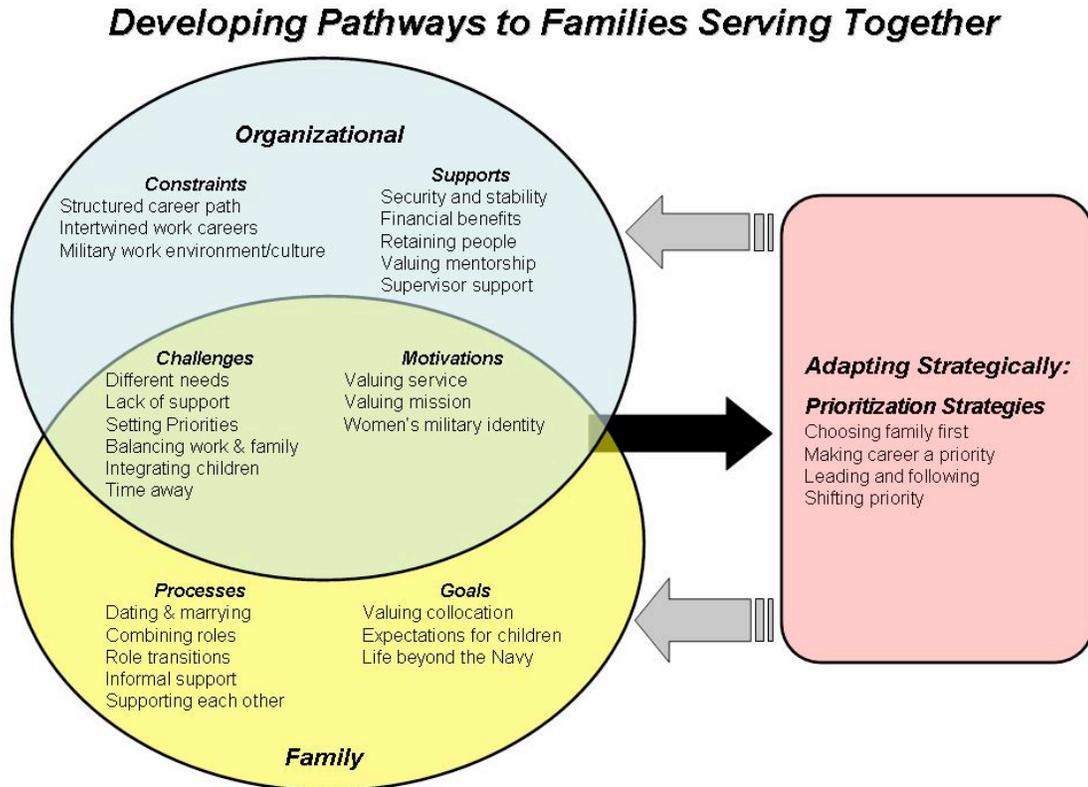
One core category and four key categories have been the foundation for developing the grounded theory model for how work and family decisions influence the life course for dual military couples. The four key categories are interdependent and the intersecting relationships form the core category – developing pathways to families serving together. The relationships among the four key categories which form the core category and the grounded theory model are illustrated in Figure 2.

Core Category: Developing Pathways to Families Serving Together

The core category was developed by relating common concepts and relationships among the key categories to explain how work and family decisions of dual career couples influence their life course trajectories. In an expression of human agency, these couples show how they exert control of their work career and family needs to balance the institutional and cultural patterns of the Navy and present

different challenges from traditional military families, e.g., twice the number of deployments and managing two interdependent work careers.

Figure 2: Grounded Theory Model



Human agency is apparent in these couples' continual efforts to maintain control of every aspect of their lives in a work and family environment dominated by the organization. They thereby attempt to reduce uncertainty through their long-term and intricate planning of both spouses' work careers. Based on their historical and cultural location of working women with careers and diverse family types, these dual military families' career and family needs differ from traditional families' and the couples want the institution to recognize their needs as they would any other military family without the appearance of special treatment.

Overcoming these challenges is important to dual career families so that they can attain their goals based on the value and meaning they assign to the Navy's mission and serving their country. The core category, developing pathways to families serving together, explains how the work and family decisions of dual career military couples influence their life course trajectories as they navigate through military demands.

The desired outcome for these couples is to be able to serve as a family with consideration given to their family needs because both spouses are in the Navy. To be able to perform their work and family roles, these couples strategically adapt to the institution and indirectly create structural change. Recognition of their family type's needs, as one of many different family types, is the underlying motivation to change the institution based on today's Navy personnel and their families.

Overlapping the family domain, organizational constraints and supports place dual military families in a military context and provide the contextual meaning for work and family decisions. The military organization attempts to control every aspect of each officer's work and family life by delineating the demanding expectations required of serving in the military. While other professions structurally separate the domains of work and family, these couples experience an unintentional but overwhelming integration of work and family because of two interdependent career paths. Living within the organization's structural constraints creates the challenges for how couples integrate family processes across the life course through adapting their work and family careers, and how they are able to serve in the Navy. The historical location of these couples is during a period of time when the military is

well-compensated, one of very few organizations that still has a guaranteed pension after 20 years in the organization, and provides educational benefits to their members and their families. These organizational supports provide resources that facilitate maintaining a career in the military as well as supporting a family.

Family processes include the life course timing and sequencing of family roles and transitions based on dual military family pathways. Dual military family goals influence decision-making based on what is important to these couples such as collocation, which is a common theme among all couples. Collocation will be discussed in depth in the family goals section, but is defined here since it is discussed in earlier sections because of its importance to these couples. Collocation is considered to be job assignments in the same geographical location, e.g. Annapolis, Maryland and the Pentagon (Arlington, Virginia) are in the same geographical location. These family goals are a result of the couples' agentic behavior in response to the structured nature of the Navy lifestyle and serves to identify some of their unique characteristics and needs compared to traditional families.

The challenges to serving together as a family are explained by the interaction of family processes and goals, and organizational constraints and supports. Much of the challenge is a product of the historical and cultural location of these family types and the timing of their family's different needs in their life course not being supported by the organization because of its structural lag in policy. However, the interaction between organization and family also produces the motivations for these families to overcome the challenges they face in developing a pathway to serving together such as the importance of a professional identity and status in a work career for women

today. The value of service and mission is also historically important based on today's military being an all-volunteer force.

The motivation to achieve their personal and professional goals influences these couples to adapt strategically to the structural constraints and create career prioritization strategies. These strategies are defined by the work and family decision-making in the life course of these dual military couples. Ultimately these adaptive strategies influence social change in the form of structural changes in the organization as well as reproducing successful pathways for other military families to follow. The following sections describe the characteristics and dimensions of each key category using quotes from the interviews to illustrate each.

Chapter 6: Organizational Constraints and Supports

Organizational Constraints

In the context of the military institution, organizational constraints and supports influence every aspect of a family's work and family career. First, organizational constraints in the form of a structured career path set the prescribed career ladder with timing and sequencing required to achieve the highest ranks in the organization. The military officer career path, while designed to meet promotion timelines and accommodate the military's "up or out" promotion policy, is also designed for the traditional family. Attempts to exert agency in terms of not following the prescribed career path are met with organizational resistance. The structured career path also produces and reproduces a fast track culture within the organization that does not serve every officer's needs equally. Family formation and role transitions are unique to each couple's life course trajectory based on timing and sequencing and that may not always be a good fit with a fast track culture and highly structured career path. Specifically, managing two intertwined officers' careers within the structure of the prescribed career path and following a fast track culture can be restrictive in options and choices. Finally, as a traditionally male-dominated institution, the Navy work environment and military culture normatively influences the performance of gender roles in the organization.

In return for organizational loyalty and sacrifices, the organization provides support to officers in the form of resources such as job security, financial benefits, and programs to help retain people. In today's all-volunteer force and the decade's emphasis on combat operations, the historical location of these couples gives them

access to more resources than previous generations of military personnel. One of the most significant formal and informal efforts to retain people is through effective mentoring in the Navy. In addition to mentoring, the Navy provides its leaders and supervisors with the autonomy to provide work flexibility in terms of work hour scheduling and time off, as long as goals and deadlines are met. Work flexibility in the structure of organizational support is designed to help the traditional family live within the structure of the organization and meet its needs. The influence of structural constraints and supports on dual military couples' pathways emerged from the interviews as the participants talked about their careers and families, with themes of: navigating a structured career path, managing two intertwined work careers, coping with the military work environment and culture, providing security and stability, valuing financial benefits, retaining people, valuing mentorship, and supervisor support.

Navigating a structured career path

The cultural and institutional structures with which all Navy officers contend become a frustration and challenge to exert control of their lives to some degree for the couples in this study. For dual military couples who are coordinating two officer careers with a family, maintaining flexibility and options is vital to achieving their work and family goals. The overarching cultural constraint that these officers talked about was the Navy's institutional career fast track which essentially sets a prescribed life course trajectory for women in particular since there are only certain times in their career when it is acceptable to have children. However, some men also found the fast track culture to be inconsistent with their life course trajectory in supporting

their wife's career. In some professions the fast track is limited and shown to only a select few people. In the Navy, these officers felt like everyone was expected to follow the career path that presented the best opportunity to being promoted to the highest levels within the Navy organization. The culture to push people toward the most competitive career path was limiting for dual military couples who are balancing two careers and the needs of each while being in collocated job assignments. In Ike and Isabel's family, Ike was following Isabel and giving her career priority so he was willing to accept the best job he could find that kept them collocated while supporting his wife's career. Ike recounts his experience:

...it was always well you need to do this in order to get your career back on track. It's that constant really having to stress to people, I'm not trying to be an Admiral. I'm trying to go to my next job and do well and enjoy what I'm doing. I'm not trying to be detailed as a Flag Officer. So the shock and awe that came when I said I don't want to go to [Naval Postgraduate School] because I want to be with my spouse, I think if people understand there are people who have other life priorities and not everybody wants to be an Admiral, if I make it great, but if not I'm OK with that. I think that's kind of a bad practice as far as family and quality of life is concerned. It led to my wife I think, thinking OK he's doing this, this, this and this and kind of getting that feeling of he's giving up all these things when actually I was fine with it. And so I think if we shift the culture to where she understands OK, yeah you can take a job over here and enjoy your quality of life but it's not going to get you promoted and it's not the end of the world, I think that's a cultural thing that we've got to shift out of.

Kirk relates a similar experience and emphasizes the constraints of the fast track culture in relation to the life course trajectory he and his wife have chosen:

...this notion that in [my] community that every single person...should aspire to be a CO and I think that's...it's damaging in the realm we're talking about because if you hold that assumption to be true, it limits your choices on what you can do. Without getting too much into that, that mindset is not a policy per se, but it's a culture you have to work against particularly in my situation...

Institutional structures and career flexibility vary based on the warfare community to which an officer is assigned. Each warfare community has a career path which is based on a sea and shore duty rotation with career milestones that are timed and sequenced to ensure an officer is competitive for the next promotion level. However, the unrestricted line communities (aviation, surface, submarine) generally have more sea duty tours and the timing of the tours is very stringent. Additionally, for shore duty tours there are jobs that are considered more competitive than others as well as certain milestones such as joint duty tours (serving with a command that is comprised of another Service) and joint education tours which are requirements for being promoted to Admiral. The other communities (Restricted Line, Special Duty, Staff Corps) have more flexible career paths and generally fewer sea duty tours. Zoe reflects on the structure of the career path after 23 years of service, trying to stay collocated, and maintain a stable family life for her children:

So I guess the Navy's policies of kind of detailing each career path, saying this is what you should do, this, this, and this. Give you a course to chart and you know that's what you gotta do and I guess at this point that's again what I'm beginning to struggle with, back and forth between the next wicket is major command. Again, it's cool because it's like you've hit every wicket then, but then on the other hand, yeah at what sacrifice?

Kirk is at a point in his career where the next tour will be critical to his next promotion and selection to command, but he knows that the choices he will be expected to make for his career are not aligned with his family plans and is struggling with how to deviate from the norm:

I am supposed to as a milestone for my next job do one of a series of jobs...So I sense I'm going to be herded that way, I haven't felt any pressure yet, but I just know that's what I'm supposed to do, you

know, having been educated through my career that I'm expected now to be at milestone X and do a joint job or major staff or whatever...But I know it's not going to be the path of least resistance. And again, if I had access, if my Mom was out here or there were joint jobs out there, it would be no issue for me to do the normal path, but that's not what's going to work best for a dual military career. So I feel like I have to make a different decision.

Couples where at least one officer was not unrestricted line generally had better experiences with staying collocated and meeting both spouses' career milestones. Less structure in a career path translates to having more control of decisions related to work and family and timing or role transitions. These couples attribute their positive experiences to the flexibility of their warfare community's career path compared to the unrestricted line warfare communities' career paths.

Kate is in the Medical Service Corps and she offers a perspective on the flexibility her community provides:

You know how in the [unrestricted] line they just value moving around in the pipeline and all this, in medical it's not. They value doing whatever you do well. And then part of it's of course the politics that play into it of course. But it's definitely way more flexible than I would say the [unrestricted] line is. And that's been a feather in our hat. And then I think that my flexibility with the jobs...And I am flexible about what job they put me in. And for some people they're not. But medical has so many chances, especially as an O-3 and O-4.

The unrestricted line communities which have more sea tours are more demanding for dual military couples. Some couples lateral transition from unrestricted line to other communities to reduce their sea duty, others separate from the Navy because they do not see the sea duty being compatible with their family and they do not like the mission of the other communities, and other couples are able to find a way to refresh themselves on shore duty and then continue back to sea duty.

Stephanie illustrates how she felt after her first two sea tours with her husband also deployed:

So at the end of my minimum service obligation it wasn't something I had wanted to do and it wasn't a career that I wanted and I was burnt out and I had been a single mom for three years and I was like you can take this and...I don't care if I ever see a ship again as long as I live.

Laura explains why she chose to transition from being in an unrestricted line community to a restricted line community:

Shore-based, that was one of the big things and I still like the Navy. My parents were both in the Navy and I really like being with Navy people. But I didn't want to go back to sea. I'm done with shift work and that kind of work. I just am not good with irregular sleep. It's just like a daily kind of life.

Will demonstrates why being in the Intelligence community is perceived to be more flexible and easier to coordinate two Navy careers with a family:

The [Intelligence] community, it just doesn't have a lot of sea time, it's got basically three tours over, between O-1 and O-5, and really O-1 to O-6. So I think that's made it a little bit easier for us to make this [dual military marriage] work. Than maybe if we've got one aviator and one Intel type or a SWO and an Intel type, a lot of those folks on the women's side have just said alright, it's too hard at this point. So those things probably have been pretty big factors.

The institutional structures of Navy officer career paths are designed to support the traditional breadwinner-homemaker family where the stay at home spouse is available to provide full-time support to the service member and the service member can devote complete energy and time to the Navy and developing a career. However, the most difficult aspect of the structured career path is related to coordinating two intertwined work careers.

Managing two intertwined work careers

From a linked lives perspective, coordinating the relational careers of a dual career couple can be so all-encompassing and time consuming that couples have little time to focus on anything else. One of the most influential properties for dual military families' different needs and directly related to their work and family decision-making, is described as managing two intertwined work careers.

The intricate and long-term planning required to meet career and family goals as they negotiate the job assignment process necessarily leads to developing strategies to achieve collocation. There were several characteristics described by the participants to portray a diversity of experiences in how they managed their work careers in the Navy's assignment system. The characteristics of this property which explain the challenges, methods and means they employed to navigate the Navy's structured process include: having twice as many factors to manage, dealing with change and uncertainty, using a long planning time horizon, negotiating through the assignment process, creating assignment strategies, and using informal business rules.

Because these couples have twice as many factors to coordinate in the same organizational system, they plan well in advance to reduce uncertainty, maintain control of their lives, and provide flexibility for assignments changes. The assignment process is the mechanism in which they manage their careers and allow for negotiation with the assignment officer as a representative of the organization. In their negotiations, they employ strategies and informal business rules to their advantage which help them achieve their work and family goals and control of their lives. Harry describes the general work-family management problem:

The more you get frustrated with the system, the more you get...because now you're dealing with not one, but two systems, two squadrons, two frustrations, two [supervisors], I mean it's dually cumbersome. Two sets of squadron functions, which I think was probably the most annoying thing, going from one to the other on Friday and Saturday nights.

Having twice as many factors to manage, these couples view the planning of their careers and the associated decision-making from several perspectives. From a responsibility perspective, just as many women as men are involved in the career planning for both careers. These couples expend tremendous amounts of time and energy to plan their careers to achieve their personal, professional, and family goals. Being able to have collocated job assignments is an assumed goal for most of the couples. The potential not to be collocated or not to be available to support a spouse is stressful for many people. Kate illustrates her frustration with managing two careers:

That's what [couples who are not dual military] do, they're not managing, oh my God, when I deploy, when I get out of school I'm going to be eligible to deploy, so I really don't want to be eligible to deploy, so maybe I'll defer it. I mean, these are the things I manage as a female officer with a husband who also deploys. So no one else is dealing with that. So those are the challenges I think that we face.

In addition to twice as much long-term planning for careers, the daily schedule has twice as many commitments that Kirk says:

...when you have duty, she has duty too, it's twice as much duty. It's twice as much I'm deployed now you're deployed. It's twice as much phone call in the middle of the night. It's twice as much of all the downside too. So don't just, don't just look at it through this grass is greener lens, it's the whole package times two. You know it's the mandatory fun at the cocktail party when you're forcing a smile after a long day at work and you don't want to be there times two.

As planning for children enters the decision-making, the complication of two careers adds a third dimension from a life course timing perspective. Children are an additional responsibility and planning consideration that is related to the timing in the career and the marriage as Wendy depicts:

I mean just because it's a different level of responsibility. The decisions you make, it's not all about you anymore. It's about another child and you can't just do whatever you want, you have to consider, like when you get married, you have to consider your husband and now with your children you have to consider what's good for them.

Knowing that the Navy lifestyle includes planned relocations, timing of children in the family life course and work career path has overlapping implications when the children move along their social life course and become school age. Zoe includes school and childcare considerations in the work and family planning process that seems never to end as they change job assignments every two to three years. She conveys her concern for her children in this process when she says:

So then that motherhood thing is always, you're always thinking about it, hoping what you do doesn't negatively impact them. And like their schools, even coming here and deciding where to live, make sure it's near a good school or something like that. When I was single, I didn't have to worry about any of that, even married.

With the amount of planning that is involved with charting career paths for two professionals, there is an element of chance that brings additional uncertainty and change that these couples learn to cope with. From one extreme, Doug relates how he had a last minute change in assignment even as he was driving cross-country with his wife:

Well, as we're driving across country, we're in Kentucky about to cross the border into Indiana and my phone rings and it's a 757 number which is in Norfolk. I pick it up and I'm like hello? And I didn't recognize the number, and the guy on the other end of the line is

like, is this Doug? And I was like, yes. And he goes; hey this is a no-[kidder]. He's like this is CAPT Paulson, Commanding Officer of [the Fleet Replacement Squadron]. He's like; I need you to turn around.

Faith recounts how after negotiating her assignment based on what they thought Fred's assignment was going to be, how it affected their feelings toward the assignment process and the stress and frustration it added to their situation:

...they took that job away from my husband though he didn't have hard copy orders or anything. It was just [an] e-mails kind of thing, so technically did he have it? Probably not I guess. But what ended up happening is he gets a call from the detailer and he says well you can either go to DC or San Diego. Whereas I'm now under orders to go to Norfolk and I could have easily gotten orders to go to DC and we could have been together. So for a year, we were apart. He obviously chose DC and yes he drove and I know many people do it or whatever, but I didn't like it. Because going from sea duty, which I was there for two years, but I was away for a year.

To reduce uncertainty and change while managing two intertwined work careers, these couples found it necessary to use a long planning time horizon. Being able to plan well in advance of normal timelines, these couples allow for twice as much negotiation and coordination to occur. Finding ways to control any aspect of their career and family life course is important to the satisfaction of these couples.

Nora explains in terms of balance:

I think you can completely achieve your work-life balance very easily as long as you kind of think ahead about what needs to be happening or what you need to be doing for the Navy, as well as what you need to be doing for your family. Because I think if you kind of plan that, it's very easy for you to work out those details.

Using all their available resources to be insert some agency into a structured process, dual military couples often feel they need to use their informal support networks to help find jobs to stay collocated. Ike feels that a longer planning timeline facilitated this process:

It generally takes a lot of lead time. Where the normal process they tell you to start calling a year to six months [ahead], we generally try to start maybe a year and a half, two years out to at least get feelers of OK, where are they going to send her, what's her next tour so I can start scrubbing the database or making phone calls to friends. You sometimes have to go outside of the Navy detailing system to say OK, you're in Norfolk, do you know of any jobs that are going to be open in this timeframe?

Kirk expands this notion of a longer planning timeline when he describes planning a career as a continual process to stay in control of their choices:

The whole being dual military is an ongoing thing. In my mind, I'll probably never again, the day I execute any future orders, I'm going to be looking for the next set of orders, that's just the nature of, you know, the nature of being dual military. You gotta plan ahead more so than anybody else I think.

While the long planning horizon is demanded by dual military couples, the mechanism to obtain new assignments is negotiated through the organization's assignment process with the assignment officer. There are numerous accounts by these couples of positive and negative experiences in the negotiating process and it is clear that the assignment process is a negotiation with the assignment officer's inherent power over the officer that is handled in a spectrum of ways. Collocation is the most common aspect that concerns these couples and they have distinct feelings and perceptions about how this is handled in the assignment process. A common theme among couples who are in larger warfare communities is the feeling that the assignment officer is not concerned about their work-family situation. Rick rationalizes this perspective:

Because aviation detailers in my experience, every single one of them has jobs they need to fill, and they have a certain career path that they want you on. And they're just putting pegs in holes. They're saying hey, this guy, he's a department head so he's gotta go here; this guy's gotta go there. We're not going to send all the dirt bags here and

we're not going to send all the great guys here. So I mean they're not nearly as flexible.

However, most of the couples explain that the single part of their life that the Navy has the most effect and could similarly improve the most is the assignment process. Zoe expresses her desire for improvement:

To me the biggest deal about dual military couples is the detailing. Whether your detailer is sensitive or even cares about trying to keep you collocated. That's where I think it shows up the most. Because if you can't be near each other, that's going to make that whole tour that much harder. So I think that's, to me, that's the biggest thing. That's the biggest way the Navy can show that they're supportive.

Officers in smaller warfare communities, and typically not unrestricted line, felt their communities were more interested in keeping them happy from both a personal and professional perspective and worked closely with each officer to assign jobs that would develop the officer and provide a professionally-rewarding experience. Some warfare communities have started to include children and spouses in their career path planning which allows officers to plan a life course trajectory with their assignment officer although it is not likely to be coordinated with the spouse's assignment officer. Laura demonstrates how her community is able to help provide flexibility and overcome the conflict caused by her husband's warfare community:

I think they can do that partly because it's shore-based and then also because it's a small community. And the [restricted line] community is a lot more flexible in terms of tour lengths too. And they actually have on their career path or their career planner, they have children in there, when they start high school, when they start grade school. That's one of the reasons that they're very focused on family.

Given the importance of collocation to these dual military couples, they create strategies for the assignment process to exert agency and control. The most common strategy was bargaining with capital. In some cases the capital was staying in the

Navy if their spouse was able to be collocated. Mark discusses how Melissa used this strategy:

And the orders were a little slow in coming but I think Melissa had something to do with it where she told the detailer that she would really, that she would think about staying in if I got some [collocated] orders. So I think that definitely helped the process.

Another common strategy used in the assignment process is to negotiate an assignment for the spouse who can get the location desired and then use the collocation policy to attempt to force the spouse's assignment to the same location. Laura recounts how she used this strategy to have Lance reassigned to her location and says, "...since I was six months ahead of Lance in this whole pipeline, I did get my orders before he did and so he had to be collocated, but collocated with Annapolis is still considered Washington DC."

As the negotiation process is based on power differential, dual military couples use known power differentials between assignment officers in different communities to negotiate for the spouse. For example, Isabel states that, "...we would tend to negotiate with my detailer first because we knew that they would eventually get his detailer in line."

Having expert or detailed knowledge of the assignment process allowed couples to take advantage of the informal business rules often employed by assignment officers. In working with her warfare community, Stephanie reports, "...well we talked informally about the detailers and I know that they have a lot of business rules which aren't written down anywhere." An example explained by Isabel is based on the timeline assignment officers use to manage the volume of officers they are working with at any one time. Her assignment officer has a smaller

number of officers to work with than her husband's assignment officer which created a situation where she says:

...they're more forceful detailers, they have been pretty demanding. We are sending her to a ship; she will live with her husband. Now what are you going to do about it? Because they will even work a year and a half out or something, well that was the issue. For one of our tours, a year, a year and a half out, [my] detailer saying we want to send you here next. So I tell my husband they want to send me here next, can you start asking your detailer about it? His detailer's like, you're not in the window, I don't want to talk with you. So I said his detailer won't talk to him. [My detailer said] ah, we'll take care of this.

In this case, although Ike's assignment officer did not operate with the same informal business rules as Isabel's assignment officer, Isabel's assignment officer convinced Ike's assignment officer to find him a job on their timeline making this a successful strategy.

Managing two interdependent work careers combined with family is a complex task which can be stressful and emotional for dual military couples. To ease the stress of coordinating two interdependent careers and a family, these couples use all their resources to exercise as much human agency as possible in an attempt to regain control of their lives from the organization wherever possible. These officers have to increase the amount of planning and lengthen the planning time horizon to cope with the regular frustration of negotiating collocated assignments in order to remain competitive in their careers. Additionally, they develop strategies to negotiate assignments that keep them together as a family, while working toward achieving their personal and professional goals. Instead of internal couples' negotiation for work and family decisions, much of these couples' time and energy is focused on the negotiation with the organization.

Coping with the military work environment and culture

For the women in this study, being married to a military husband generally helped women to have a more positive experience in the military and to have a stable work career trajectory across their life course despite negative aspects of the military work environment and culture. While gendered differences in the experiences of these couples are few, the women in this study were the only spouses to talk about learning to cope with the military work environment and culture as a structural constraint to a certain extent. Providing their perspective and how their experiences affect their work and family lives, most women feel that Navy culture has changed to create a more positive work environment. The Navy is a male-dominated institution with a hyper-masculine culture which influences the experiences of female officers and their relationships with their military husbands. The stigma of military women and that they have to be either a “bitch or a slut” in the Navy still persists in some of these women’s experiences. Nora perceives that her outgoing personality is interpreted by the men in her command as something other than being outgoing:

But if you have an outgoing personality and you don’t choose to be the “bitch”, you’re going to end up with that talk because you happen to be friendly. So if you’re friendly and you’re female, that equals “whore.” I’ve found that’s a common trend in the military.

Some of the women find that being married helps to dispel these perceptions.

Gloria gives her perspective on being a woman in one command:

And I think being married almost helps you because I’ve had people tell me this before, when you’re a woman in the military you have to decide early on if, and excuse my language, if you’re going to be a bitch or if you’re going to be a slut. And it’s about perception; it’s not really about how you behave. It’s just that the perception is different. And when you’re married you don’t really have to make that decision, because you are married. So I don’t have to be either anymore if I’m

married, so I don't have to respond to you that way or that way, it's kind of a catch-all.

Many of the women state that working in the Navy work environment means they have to change their behavior at work and in social settings so that they will not have to contend with misperceptions and rumors within their command. Elise relates her experience as the first woman to be assigned to her command:

That was an interesting experience and I would say that probably shaped a lot of how I am in the military professionally because I had no choice but to be the utmost professional otherwise people were going to judge me for being a ditz, a slut, you know flirty whatever.

Zach sees both sides of his wife's behavior and recognizes that in the Navy work environment she is not as personable or compassionate as the person he knows at home with their children, "My wife is very serious at work and people sometimes don't see that she really is a person. She probably comes across as pretty cold, very disciplined, just stern with people."

The women in this study are also aware of the possibility of rumors and perceptions based on their social behavior at work. Jessica depicts her perspective on which people she is friends with at work:

You can go to lunch with one [junior officer] in your squadron or by yourself once, you can't do it more than once and you sure can't do it everyday. You can go to lunch with a lot of different people or you can go to lunch with a group, but you can't have that one consistent relationship as a woman with a man...because people will talk whether it's true or not.

When the women are deployed and their ship or squadron makes a port call, it is common for the officers to spend time ashore enjoying the exotic locations they are fortunate to visit. However, some of the women are very careful about with whom

they socialize and the situations in which they socialize during these port visits.

Claire discusses how she looked at these events:

...but it affected how I acted on deployment. I'd say the perception, the wardroom perception of, hey we're all going out type of... there would probably be more times than not that I would, I shouldn't say that, there are definitely times where I'd say hey, I'm going to sit this one out. Just the way I would choose to socialize on deployment would be different.

Similarly, when their husbands are deployed, these women tend to modify their behavior to minimize any perceptions, as Gloria reveals:

I behave like I think he would want me to while he's gone. Just because, you go on deployment with men and you see them go through things where their wife's hanging out with other men or going to do this or that and it puts extra stress on them I think to a certain degree. I probably don't, I don't really know if it's a product of the fact that I wanted to be above reproach while he was gone or the fact that I just reached the point where I don't go out and go drinking anymore. But the combination of the two when he is gone, my social life is pretty tame.

Most of the women have positive experiences with being accepted into the Navy work environment and treated as an equal co-worker, leading them to believe that Navy culture is positively changing. Laura explains her perspective:

But I think we're pretty much beyond the days of women feeling at risk in the military environment. I think that's long gone. I'm sure there [are] exceptions here and there but I've never experienced anything like that.

However, there are several reported incidents of sexual harassment and gender harassment. Tina gives one account of the Commanding Officer of her first ship who was later relieved of his command for other problems:

Every lunch time [the CO] would just sit and talk to us about how women should be pregnant in the kitchen and we shouldn't be onboard the ships. Basically he would say the only reason women were even allowed in the military is because they couldn't find enough men to fill

the spots so they had to find women to go in those spots. And he even asked me once, why don't you like it here, why don't you like me? I told him the truth, you're kind of insulting. He's like; well you're taking it too seriously. And by the way, you know your husband's cheating on you when you're away from home right? I'm like, what?

The women are sensitive to the behavior of other women in the Navy and how their behavior reflects on the entire population of women in the Navy. They are quick to police themselves and enforce what they consider is proper behavior. Laura discloses one experience which made her uncomfortable:

...we had an XO movie night on the carrier and before they showed the movie they would do these little skits and some of them were a little "off-color" just because they were trying to be funny and they were shown to the entire crew. And there was one where they were showing, they were trying, they were talking about conserving water, so they were talking about, you know there were two girls in a shower. They weren't really in the shower, they had clothes on from the chest down, but the picture is only on the chest up and they're in the shower together. And these are two officers and this is being shown to the entire ship. And I said what are you doing? And at first I was like, to the girls I felt like, what were you thinking? You want to portray yourselves as some...do you want to objectify yourselves?

The timing of these women's lives in the military is during a period of time when the focus is on accomplishing the mission in a wartime environment. It has also been more than 16 years since the Combat Exclusion Law was changed allowing women to serve in almost every job in the Navy, making them more in the mainstream of the organization and more accepted. Similarly, their peers and often supervisors have had more experience working with women as part of the norm of military life. While there is still room for improvement in the work environment and culture, the positive experiences of these women serving in the Navy may be due in part to their historical and cultural location.

Organizational Supports

While structural constraints emphasize the negative aspects of the organization and its demands, the organization also provides support structures to help officers and their families meet the organization's needs that are designed to maintain a stable work career. In exchange for an officer's loyalty and sacrifices, the Navy provides job security and stability. Dual military couples give their perspective on the value of support and stability in their discussions which have different meanings and impact on life course trajectories in some families.

Providing security and stability

Stability has several nuanced meanings which include staying in the same location for multiple tours, being collocated, not being deployed, and having extended family nearby. The commonality and interrelated aspects of stability are based on the stress of the frequent adjusting and readjusting for moves and deployments. Yvonne sums up how important the Navy is as a career for her family, "But I think the best thing after all of this, the sacrifices and all are worth it for, I keep going back to the security and the stability." Stability, related to not moving, means these families are able to maintain support networks and keep childcare and school situations the same for longer periods of time. Reducing uncertainty and maintaining control of their lives is important to these couples because of the amount of overlap between work and family in the military organization. Will explains how back to back tours in the same location are helpful:

...we were able to kind of stay in the same location which was important. In hindsight, just having three kids there...[was the] first time we'd had two tours back to back in one place. And then [our

location] was pretty good for that kind of thing, pretty family-oriented, just the right place.

Collocation is critical to developing a pathway of serving together. Many of the couples understand they will have to accept some short periods of time when they will not be collocated, but most are not willing to accept more than that because of the stress it puts on the family. Doug describes the importance of being collocated for their next shore duty tour after a demanding three years of sea duty where they did not spend much time together because of deployment schedules, “So it’s the stability of the particular shore orders that we picked that I think has given Dana and I lots of time together and it’s been awesome so far since we’ve been back here.”

Stability also means both people in the couple not deployed which helps maintain two careers and meet family goals for a dual military couple. Time away from each other and their families is accepted as part of the Navy lifestyle, but these couples expect to be compensated with time together to readjust. Nick gives his perspective on not being deployed during a shore duty tour:

I’ll be definitely gaining a lot more with the family, a little bit more stable, you know, the nine to five job, not deploying, not leaving as often. Having shore duties that are true shore duties where you’re not deploying, not deploying but you’re not going on [detachments away from home] for flying and stuff like that.

The social timing of their lives places most of these couples in the launching phase for their family when children are young. Having extended family close enough to help with children or provide other support is also integral to the meaning of stability for some couples. Decisions about job location are often made with consideration for extended family being available to provide support when needed. Isabel discusses multiple times how important it is to have her Mother available to

provide support, “So when we settle, we still, the day in and day out, there’s a benefit to have a grandma who can visit two to three times a week. She provides stability. So, do you really want to take that away?”

Security has several meanings related to job security, economic security, family security, and having control. As Patrick states, “I made a career decision when I was 18 and joined Navy ROTC. That was the last time I really looked for a job.” These dual military couples are certainly aware of the job security the Navy provides in their careers, especially situated in the historical context of the last few years of economic turmoil and unemployment affecting many of their extended families. Rachel expresses her appreciation, “To have the benefits and the security of the Navy, I feel very fortunate to have all that. Through all this economic crisis, we both have very good jobs, secure jobs.” The social timing of being in the phase of their lives when children are born makes job security important to some couples as they relate job security to the future of their children and being able to fulfill the obligations of a financial provider. Yvonne reports what her career means in terms of her children, “The funny thing is once I got pregnant with our daughter, that’s when I felt, surprisingly to me that I needed to stay in the Navy for stability and security for her, which is completely opposite of how I thought I would feel.” Career decisions to stay in the Navy and continue to serve are shaped by the presence of children and being able to provide for their needs.

Finally, Yancey discusses his change in perspective on staying in the Navy and decides to retire because he does not feel he has enough control of their choices in the Navy as a dual military couple. He rationalizes that by having one parent in the

Navy and one retired, they can have more control of their lives, “We wanted to have security for the family, wanted to have control of our lives.”

Valuing financial benefits

The interdependent goals of dual military couples emphasize their linked lives. Being financially compensated for their work and sacrifices is influential in keeping these couples serving together. Every couple in this study understands the financial benefits they share as a dual military couple. Housing allowances, medical benefits, and professional pay are considered to be a positive in their military lifestyle. However, most of the couples do not consider the financial benefits an overriding factor in their decision to continue to serve. They talk about how the extra money is needed to pay for household chores and childcare which facilitates having two Navy careers and a family. Isabel describes how the extra money facilitates their family’s pathway:

And the jobs aren’t getting any easier on the time thing. The money that we make goes to make things easier in the sense of housekeeping and someone to come in and cook, the daycare, things that normally if I were home and could pay more attention to, that’s where the extra money goes. And so they say oh it’s a pay raise. It’s not really a pay raise because now if I don’t pay someone to cook, then by the time I get home from work, you know, the kids go to bed at 7:30.

Several of the warfare communities pay bonuses to their officers in exchange for years of service after the initial minimum service obligation. Two officers in this study who were eligible for a professional bonus took the bonus and said that it was an incentive for keeping them in the Navy. The rest of the officers in this study either took the bonus because they were staying in regardless, or they did not take the bonus because it reduced their work and family options in the future based on the timing and

sequencing of their careers. Maintaining control of their lives is important enough that it cannot be bought. Doug gives his perspective on signing for a bonus:

I'm not on the bonus yet. I think putting the decision off as late as you can realizing when you're, you have to make a decision point in time is, but waiting as long as you can to let all of the factors and all of the other things mature and set up in whatever course they're going to take, helps you make a better decision.

Another benefit that changed in 2009 for military personnel was the new Post-9/11 GI Bill. This new benefit is for people who have served since September 11th, 2001 and provides money to go to college for four years with essentially all expenses paid. Additionally, the GI Bill benefits can be transferred to dependents (spouse and children) for their college costs. The historical location of these couples makes them available to take advantage of this unique benefit. Many people talk about the importance of being able to have the new GI Bill pay for their own advanced degrees as well as linking this benefit to paying for their children's college costs. Owen provides his sense of what the new GI Bill accomplishes for his family:

...especially with this new GI Bill, which I think is driving some of our decision-making. So [our daughter's] education is essentially paid for, it's nice to know that. It's potentially over \$100,000 of, maybe more depending on what school you go to. So it could potentially be worth several hundred thousand dollars.

Finally, most couples discuss the importance of reaching retirement as a motivator for staying in the Navy. Retirement is an important life course milestone because of the benefits available to military service members as part of the traditional lockstep model which provides twice the benefits for dual military couples. For many couples, the value of the retirement benefits is what helps them to decide to make the Navy a career. Having both service members reach retirement is a goal for other

couples and shapes their decision-making. Troy explains how retirement was viewed for his family:

I mean the reward is obviously that you're in a much better financial position than if you weren't together. So for me the huge reward is being able to retire and not really have to worry about money and be able to do something different. And not have to worry about if I leave or she leaves that we're leaving some stuff undone. That's a huge reward for me.

Being able to have two officers with retirement benefits is viewed as a stepping stone into a second career that often is based on long-term goals and dreams. In this way, retirement is a planned role transition. Isabel gives her perspective on what two retirements mean to her family:

Both of us getting a retirement we think is going to be freeing, because it gives him, if he does follow me one more tour and I do another tour after he retires, it gives him a little more flexibility in what he wants to do career-wise. It will allow, I do want to go back to school for culinary arts and that will allow me some time to do that during the day.

Their historical location in the current economic crisis also plays an influential role in these officers considering their options to stay in the Navy for a career to be eligible for retirement benefits. Kate provides her thoughts on the current economic situation and her goal of retirement:

...once I committed to the Navy, then I said, I really, really, really want to have like a pension and health care and stuff like that. Because I've just seen with the economy, it's really made me take a second look at so many people are out of a job that are highly educated or whatever, or they don't have the ability to ride out a jobless period because of the pension.

Being able to retire with a pension and benefits for two officers motivates many of these couples to continue serving, but is one of many factors in their

decision-making. By their continued service, these dual military couples help the organization to achieve its goal of officer retention.

Retaining people

Several officers talk about the decision-making process for deciding to stay in the Navy or get out. As these officers approach decision points in their career where they can consider leaving the Navy, they often research their options in the civilian job sector to see what might be interesting. Charles thought this is an important process for officers to experience since it often reaffirms or reinforces the value of the Navy as a work career. Charles describes this process as, “The short of going through that process is kind of like trying on a jacket and realizing it didn’t quite fit.” Lance discusses his experience in evaluating options outside the Navy,

Actually, I was debating for the longest time whether to get out. I had my resume written, this was before I took my bonuses. So right around the time I was trying to qualify for Engineer in, I guess that would be June...I was debating getting out. I had a professional resume writer write my resume. I was really considering it because the [Surface Nuclear] world is pretty arduous.

For a large number of the officers, the decision to stay in the Navy is a continual process across the life course, experienced prior to each new job assignment. Claire illustrates how she has approached the decision to stay in the Navy across her 15 years of service, “I’ve considered getting out after every single tour; have had people, work ready to go type of thing. So, I guess I haven’t been as set on the Navy as a career.” Many officers also base staying in the Navy on how much they enjoy the tour they are completing. Laura gives her account of the decision process to stay in the Navy, “I’m kind of playing it by ear. It’s the same

kind of thing like, I kind of feel like, I'll go on this path and we'll see what happens at the end of that time and then go on from there.”

The relational career aspect of these couples linked lives is highlighted by some couples' decisions to stay in the Navy being dependent on their spouses' decisions. Will reveals how he and Wendy made their first decision to stay in the Navy as a couple:

Monterey was probably the first big decisions where Wendy and I kind of made it jointly because of the back end commitment of that and Wendy certainly was more hesitant about...with pressing with active duty. At that point I was having a good time and felt it was worth doing. So I think it was probably more questions in her head at that point about going to Monterey than I had...

Scott extends this concept of making joint decisions by stating he planned that his spouse would also want to have a professional career with him:

I knew that Stephanie and whoever I wanted to be with, I knew that they would have, they would be more of a professional equal and the same things that made me happy as a person, having a career and being able to do something meaningful. I wanted that person to be able to share those.

In another example of how these couples are different from traditional families, some couples feel that there is an expectation that the Navy should do more to facilitate both service members in a couple staying in to continue careers. Gloria conveys her perspective on the Navy's responsibility:

Greg and I are both assets to the Navy, so they should...make the time when we have to do things kind of not that difficult because we don't both have to stay in. So I would think when you have two people you want to keep, you would want to make their lives easier as opposed to more difficult.

Based on the timing of their lives in being right out of college in most cases, the Navy is often the first paid job that many of these couples had held since

graduating from college. Most of the experiences and knowledge they have attained are related to working in a military environment and is where they are most comfortable. Because of this comfort level with the Navy and their early adult stage in the life course, many officers perceive staying in the Navy as the easy and safe decision. Melissa gives her perspective on the ease of her recent decision to separate from the Navy:

...but I'm kind of somebody who likes to play it safe. And making the decision to get out of the Navy I think is kind of a leap of faith. To me staying in is safe. I know, it's a known quantity, I know I have a job and so it's kind of a daring leap to take. And I think having each other makes it a little bit easier.

Nick has a similar perception of what skills he has to convert into a career in the civilian job sector:

It's really, honestly, I don't know anything but the Navy. I don't know how to do the civilian world unless I got some kind of [government service] job. But I just don't know what I'd do in the civilian world. So it's kind of like, I want to stay in the Navy because this is where I was born, bred, and raised.

Vanessa puts her decision to stay in the Navy in terms of what the right decision is based on her circumstances despite the influences she has that could have altered her decision:

It was hard to make the decision for the right reason. Which I know that I made the right decision, but it wasn't an easy decision. Because I'm, I had an idea that I'd be giving this up, but I still made the decision.

Most officers convey their perspective of what it means to be satisfied with their job, family, and life as a part of their decision-making process for continuing their career. While there are aspects of the Navy lifestyle that are demanding and arduous, all of the officers really enjoy their chosen profession and warfare specialty

which ultimately leads to most of them continuing to serve. Ike explains how he changes his decision-making process for job assignments which helps him decide to continue serving:

I think when I hit the [O-3] phase right around Hawaii, where I stopped liking my job, the money didn't mean as much. And I think one of the big things for me at that time was, my boss... basically called me in and said hey look, you have to start making decisions that are going to be for you, not for money, not for whatever. And that kind of made me look at what I'm doing, where I was, how I was enjoying myself and at that point I stopped taking jobs thinking this is going to get me promoted, this is going to get me more money etcetera, and started looking at jobs where OK I'm going to have a good quality of life, enjoy myself, and have fun.

Finally, Elise shows how her overall satisfaction with the Navy lifestyle is important to her staying in the Navy:

It's been fun. I mean I wake up the next day, alright if I'm still having fun in the Navy and I'm still smiling and looking forward to going to work, why change? I've had a good time... the lifestyle of the Navy's been fantastic... the people you meet, the camaraderie, I mean I would do things for my Navy friends that I wouldn't necessarily do for... other folks. When you go to sea with somebody that means that you would you give your life for them really. You're part of a team, that bonding you don't get anywhere else. The places I've gotten to live. The things I've gotten to do and see, the people... I mean it's just the combination. The esprit de corps that I don't think you can get in a lot of other places. I absolutely love it.

Valuing mentorship

One of the aspects these couples value that helps them to continue serving is mentorship. Having mentors is not unique or particular to dual military couples, but having a mentor to provide guidance, give advice, or just to have someone who can listen professionally is a key influence for the people in this study. Since most of these couples are young and inexperienced when it comes to the Navy at the

beginning of their careers, having a mentor can be very influential in the trajectory of their life course. Not having a mentor typically leads to less successful Navy careers and certainly less positive experiences while in the Navy. Stephanie explains what having mentors means to her:

I was fortunate that everywhere where I had been, I had at least one person who had, I'll say mentor, that wasn't necessarily a long term relationship, but it was somebody who said you know what, you've got talent, you do things well, and there's a home for you here in the Navy if you want one. And here's some things that we're going to do together to make sure that you have a home in the Navy. So even though I fought it every step of the way, there was always at least one adult who was smarter than me and said you know what, some day you might want to stay because you actually have, you have a future in this organization kind of thing.

Yancey describes how mentors help keep him and his wife competitive and able to achieve their family's goals:

And there have been a few people that have consistently been there throughout our careers, who have seemed to have an interest in taking care of us to some extent. Keeping us competitive more than finding interesting jobs for us. Most...of them have actually been dual military. One of our prior detailers, let's see when she was a detailer we were O-3s I think, she constantly kept in touch and she's provided advice, maybe places to go, jobs to look at.

From a gendered role perspective, many of the women find that it is helpful to have a female mentor who can relate to some of the specific wife and mom role experiences they are having in the Navy. In talking about her female mentors, Kate describes why she thinks it is important to have female mentors:

...she was one of these...of course you can do it. Like she's one of these cheerleaders, which I found is really, really important as a female officer. I think it's really important to have female mentors. Not because you can't have male mentors, but there's a different perspective, in the same way I think you have different races or different genders, like that's just how you want to be.

Mentors are helpful in maintaining a stable work career as well as marriage. Kate continues to explain how her “Sea Mommies”, female mentors, are critical to giving her professional advice as well as personal guidance to make her career a positive experience and help her to continue to serve with her husband, “I have these three ‘Sea Mommies’ and they like place me and do these things, and they’re very powerful ‘Sea Mommies’ and for some reason they have taken an interest in me and all three of whom are [dual military couples].”

Another aspect of mentorship that is important is peer mentoring. Much like having someone senior to listen, these officers often go to their peers and close friends in the same life stage or career stage to seek advice or discuss options. Wendy recounts a recent career decision to turn down her next significant career milestone in order to retire after consulting her peers:

We’ve always talked...to each other about the challenges of maintaining a career. I would say they’ve been supportive but certainly everybody understood when I made the decision to turn down sea duty and a lot of them struggled with making the same decision and some of them have made the same decision. So we’ve all supported each other in what we wanted to do. I’m supporting my friends who want to continue to have a career and that’s fine because it’s all a matter of how much you’re willing to sacrifice, it’s not whether it’s doable, it’s all doable.

Finally, because of the importance of women officers having mentors, many of the women in this study mentor junior women and other dual military couples. The women in this study are very humble when talking about their accomplishments as pioneers and “trailblazers” forging new life course pathways, but many are role models for women and dual military couples in earlier life and career stages. Vanessa portrays her experience with being a role model:

...I could see the potential that I could have a big impact. And being one of the first women at [a significant professional school], I had enlisted women coming up to me; you're the only officer I've seen, female officer. So I kind of felt like I had this responsibility, I mean I always have. I mean they repealed the Combat Exclusion Law in late 93, and my year group we were the first women to go on cruisers. So I was the first female to go on cruisers so I've kind of always had that. And I knew that would be important when I went back as a department head, looking at the demographic as it grew, because now about a third of the accessions for [officers in my warfare specialty] are females. They wouldn't really have any leadership and there are a lot of idiots out there, you know? So I knew that if I didn't do something that there would be a lot of people, I mean I just felt like I had a lot of responsibility and that I could make a difference.

Supervisor support

As an example of structural lag in the life course, these couples confront organizational challenges in the form of policies, but are supported informally in their everyday life by their supervisors who understand and accept the importance of dual military couples serving together. Being aware of the challenges these couples face trying to be collocated, find time together as a family when they are not deployed, and to stay competitive in two work careers is important to pathways and outcomes of these couples. Rachel explains this when she states:

...my military bosses, commanders, [are] very sensitive. They know what it's like to be away from their wives. So they know when he's home, they're very conscientious about if I want to take leave, or he has a special event and I need to go to it. They're very supportive of that. Supportive of knowing when he's gone, ensuring that I'm taken care of, if I need help around the house or something I'm sure someone if I asked would be more than willing to come help. So they're very supportive and understand that he's not always around to be supportive at home.

In a display of understanding and support, several couples have positive experiences that they feel are beyond their expectations to give these couples some

time together when they otherwise would be separated by deployments, as Charles recounts:

...I think earlier I spoke of some of our department heads facilitating the first off deployment or the last one on deployment or adding one of us onto a mid-deployment trip site visit kind of thing to give us a chance to see each other during a back to back, 12 month stretch of otherwise not being together.

Other couples had positive experiences with their supervisors understanding that their spouse was military and the routine childcare requirements needed to be shared by these professionals. Evan shows great appreciation for his supervisor when he says:

Certainly anytime I needed to do something with [my son], there was never any issue finding somebody to help out work-wise. A lot of that was CAPT Harris who was technically my boss but we did a lot of the same stuff. And when I was not going to be in the office, his job certainly became tougher. And so there were definitely times where he understood that Elise couldn't be the one who took the kids to the doctor every single time because guess what, she has a job and she has responsibilities and everything too. So there was not once in my entire time working with him that I ever said hey sir, Elise has got to work and I need to do this with the kids and he said well, could you pick a different day. It was always, absolutely, don't worry about it, we got it. It's been peers, supervisors, everybody has been pretty supportive.

Nick has a similar experience being provided work schedule flexibility support from his supervisor when his wife is deployed and he is the primary childcare provider and explains:

...the command's very supportive as far as, hey my wife's gone; she's in Cuba for a month, so I can't fly. They've never given me flack, they've always supported me. And usually when I say, hey XO, I can't do this. The XO's like, I don't know how the hell you do it with two kids, your wife deployed. I can't do it. They're pretty good with that. So yeah, they've been pretty supportive.

Vince talks about how important it was for his command to support his family by adapting his work schedule while they were going through fertility treatments when he says:

I can tell you at this command they've been great with everything. Any time I needed off for the fertility stuff or just taking her everyday. Normally we go into work and we start the work day at 5:30AM and that's if you're a regular day worker and you're not on the rotating shifts. Most of our appointments are at 7:00AM. I just went, whenever I needed off, not needed off, whenever I needed to delay when I came into work, they were fine with that. I could do, I could take any of that time I needed. They're really supportive of us being dual military and they like Vanessa which is helpful too.

These couples have a range of experiences in how well their supervisors understand and support their work-family situation in practice. Formal policy in the form of structured career paths, collocation policy, and pregnancy policy continue to lag behind the reality of society's diverse family pathways. These positive experiences shaped their decisions and pathways in their work and family careers by supporting their different family needs and helping them to serve and develop their pathways as dual military couples so they could serve the way they wanted.

Chapter 7: Family Processes and Goals

Family Processes

The life course of dual military families is not only shaped by the military context, but could be described as controlling family processes as well. Meeting, dating, and marrying as a dual military couple, is heavily influenced by the timing and sequencing of work careers and the mobile nature of the Navy lifestyle. As these officers marry and become dual military couples, they perceive work career decisions to be made in the context of their family life course and then adapted to the family's life stage and situation because the military promotion system demands that the career be given primacy. These dual military couples also perceive combining work and family roles in a particular way based on the demands of the Navy, their expectations of their anticipated roles, and how they view the Navy in fitting into their overall life course. Through combining and separating roles, husbands and wives emphasize the importance of a particular role and domain in their decision-making. Role transitions are influenced by their own and others' role expectations and most importantly for how children should be raised.

Emotional and behavioral support provides mediating mechanisms that influence decision-making, pathway formation, and outcomes. Support for these families is critical to meeting their personal and professional needs and adapting to the demands of having two officers in the military, especially with children. Conversations about supporting the family focus on using informal support networks and finding emotional support with each other.

Dating and marrying Navy officers

The timing of the women's lives shapes their potential pool of marriage partners. Because women who join the Navy immediately after college are thrust into a military work environment, they are likely to make partner choices from among men in the Navy who understand military women's roles and the nature of the Navy lifestyle. Dual Navy couples interviewed have usually met in the Navy work environment and not usually in the same command. Being in the military, these couples explain the meaning of having a relationship in a mobile career. Because Navy officers move every two to three years, it can be difficult to establish relationships for long enough to reach a point where marriage is considered. These couples are challenged by this situation and the outcome is long distance dating, sometimes halfway around the world, and marrying someone after a perceived shorter period of time.

Kirk and Kate had dated for more than a year in Guam when they had to move and start making decisions on how they wanted their relationship to proceed. Kirk says, "...because she was there six months after I was, so it wasn't perfectly synced. And I think we realized that we didn't want to part company when I left." They were able to be collocated by individually negotiating job assignments to nearby locations, although they were not married yet.

Lance and Laura were in a similar situation but decided instead to end their relationship only to renew it when they were in training later in their careers. Laura describes their situation:

[We started dating] about 3 weeks before I left the ship. It was just kind of, it seemed more like a fling kind of thing. So I actually left the

ship with us not really establishing any kind of serious relationship. And then I went to Charleston and I dated somebody else there. And then when he came, I was finishing up my first part of [Nuclear Power] School, and then he was coming in to start the first part. So it was not that much longer after he got there that we got engaged actually. It was kind of...it was a very quick meeting to engagement.

The timing of marriage and weddings is often at the convenience of the Navy and tied to the deployment schedules of their ships and squadrons. Some couples choose to have quick courthouse weddings so they can get all their legal affairs in order before a deployment and then have their formal wedding with family and friends at a later and more convenient date. Weddings are often squeezed into time periods around underway or deployed schedules which make for flexible and careful planning. Vince relates his story of how they prepared for their wedding:

She came back from deployment and we had the wedding real soon afterwards. I can't remember when she got back; it was in March, sometime in March. But we got married in April, so it was probably like three weeks after she got back. I made all the arrangements which was interesting. It was a learning experience for me. I actually had her wedding dress mailed to her, mailed to the ship so she could try it on.

In this study, there was little evidence of marital instability. The reasons these couples state that they have a strong marriage include understanding their work experiences in the military, having a common knowledge and language, sharing common experiences, and trusting the relationship. Zach encapsulates many of these dimensions when he explains why he married his wife:

I definitely chose to marry my wife because, a lot of why I married my wife had to do with the fact that she was in the Navy. It's just, she could relate to certain things. I had dated other women who weren't in the Navy, but I did date a lot of women who were in the Navy just because I could come home and I could say something like, let's go to the commissary or like well why do you want to shop at the commissary? To someone in the Navy they know and understand kind

of the military culture. When I say I've got duty, to a civilian spouse I'm not sure what that translates to, but to a military spouse that's...there's less hassle, oh yeah I've gotta deploy. They kind of understand what comes with the package. While with some of the civilians I dated, sometimes they were, I couldn't explain it. They couldn't understand certain things that my wife understands. They say one of the things that makes successful couples is they both have similar interests and that's probably helpful. My wife's in the same line of work.

The almost total integration of work and family domains so that every aspect is controlled by the military was evident in how some couples describe their relationships with family and friends. Some of the couples talk about understanding each other in terms of what it means to be part of a larger Navy family where the domains of family and work are integrated. Wendy portrays how she perceives their marriage:

You know I love the fact that my husband and I are both in the military. We understand what we do. We're in the same career field which helps and that's helped with our collocation actually. The good friends that we have are for the most part in our community or the Navy and they're definitely our closest friends and it's kind of been a family where we've had a family of people we've met since our days in Hawaii back in 1992 that we are still very close to now. So I think that is the reward is just the fact that we're both in this Navy family together and we understand and we know how it works and we know what it means and what the challenges are and I think that's strengthened our relationship and strengthened our family too because we've figured out how to make things work.

However, sometimes being intimately familiar with the other person's work and career can be a negative. These couples work to make life easier for each other and try to be understanding and empathetic partners, which often includes trying to help the other when they came home with work experiences. It was difficult to just listen and not try to intervene occasionally, as Scott says:

Career-wise, it's actually kind of nice, sometimes it's nice and sometimes it's not, that we have the knowledge that we do to be able to have conversations about careers. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's not good. Some days, again, not to harp on a command discussion, some days I just want her to listen to me complain about the fact that hey...I'm not going to screen [for command]. I don't want to hear her say, oh just wait...I just want you to listen. And the same for her. Some days she just wants to come and vent to me and she doesn't want to hear me and my helping. And so, sometimes the fact that we are both Navy creates a little tension like that too in the sense of we're on an equal leadership plane. We've seen a lot of the same things and a lot of the same places. So when one of us comes home [complaining] about something, the other one always has input to help. And sometimes both of us, we don't want to hear that. We just want to come home and [complain].

The other aspect to understanding each other is having a common language.

With the Navy acronyms, terminology, and slang, it is much easier to have a conversation with someone who is also familiar with the language and meaning of particular phrases. Patrick explains how this works for him and Peggy:

And I think being married to a military spouse, one of the things that was attractive and it probably is in most cases, is you have a common communication language. Being able to talk the lingo helps communication understanding between us. You know I could describe something at work and even use Navy lingo and I'm pretty sure she picks up on it. But basically in aviation, we've found that for the most part there's enough similarities between the helicopter community and the fighter community that we can find common ground and discuss things...But I think that is a benefit to maintaining and making the communication easier.

Communication and understanding are very important to the success of these couples based on the time spent apart. Trust and commitment are also mentioned just as often in talking about the strength of dual military couples' relationships. Because of the amount of separation and the fact that the wives work in a male-dominated environment, trust between the partners is important and assumed in the couples in this study. Jack explains what trust in their relationship means:

And really, like trust is key, obviously. Not trust like while I'm away my partner's going to cheat on me, trust in like, I know this person and I know this person is the person I want to be with forever. It's going to be tough because we're going to be apart for nine months out of the next 12. But I know this person and they know me.

The wives express how much they value having a husband who understands the environment they work in and their comfort with that situation. Dana conveys her feelings for Doug:

I know one thing I admire most about Doug among many things, is that he has so much strength and self-confidence to be with a woman who works with 94 percent of America's best and brightest, and he's OK with it. Because I don't know if I would have that confidence if the tables were turned. But it gives me this strength that I know he's always there for me. You know, I just think that's going to serve us for the rest of our lives.

It is clear from the interviews that these couples are adapting to the structured nature of their career paths and deployments from the perspective of starting, maintaining and formalizing their relationships with each other. Their life course in the Navy begins by coordinating being together and staying together which is a central theme for all of these couples.

Combining and separating roles

The meaning attached to specific roles in the context of gendered roles and role expectations influences how husbands and wives combine worker and spouse roles, perform and adapt gender roles, and separate worker and spouse roles. Both men and women in this study encounter challenges performing traditional gender roles for parent and spouse and find that giving a different meaning to a gender role has experiences that range from adding stress to adding value. Isabel describes the

difficulty she has being what she perceives as a good mother while also being in the Navy:

I remember the four-year old once when he was upset at me, just yelling, well just go to your ship...because at the time he associated if there was a bag at the door it was going to the ship. So I started sneaking out of the house at night before the next underway and stuff like that.

Later in the interview, Isabel suggests that being in the Navy and being a good mother are not compatible:

...how much would my kids remember if we've already got two years of interruptions in our lives and then you're going to follow that up with a year on the ground, then it's even worse. The Mommy guilt thing. I said what I really wanted out of this life is, on my tombstone to say I was a great Mother...at what point does that start, because it's not now? That's a challenge.

The fathers have similar experiences with performing their roles as good fathers while being on active duty in the Navy. Some men make lateral transitions to warfare communities where they feel they can be the type of involved fathers they want to be and some separate from the Navy to be able to combine the role of father with work. Helen recounts the conversation she has with Harry when he is making the decision to lateral transition, "So on the five years apart and realizing it would be four before we lived together, he was suddenly being like, no that's, I don't want to be the weekend Dad to my daughter."

The other perspective that is talked about in combining roles as spouse and naval officer is an appreciation of what it means to be the spouse at home when the other spouse is deployed. Both men and women report how much more appreciation they have for military spouses who are civilians at home with children while their

service member is deployed. Zoe explains her experience with her husband being deployed:

...being married and having children has made me much more aware of what military spouses go through. I remember when I was single and young I was always like, these spouses, whatever. They're always complaining about this or that, just get real. And it definitely helped me understand better, OK, when your spouse goes away for six, seven months at a time, or however long, that's a lot of work at home.

Ike gives the husbands' perspective of learning what it feels like to have your spouse deployed:

But I definitely have a lot better empathy for those spouses who watch their husbands deploy and have to take care of everything at home because it is no picnic. It's no fun being the one on the other end when the Sailor goes away.

Combining worker, parent, and spouse roles is accomplished through performing and adapting gender roles. Dana describes how her husband embraces the military spouse role after one of her deployment homecomings:

...so one of our best friend couples that were classmates [at USNA], she was a SWO on [the aircraft carrier] with me and her husband is one of Doug's best friends ever, so they met us at the pier which was kind of funny. The boys waiting at the pier for us for Thanksgiving.

Helen emphasized the change in gender roles when she describes one of her husband's deployment homecomings, "[another female spouse] and I jokingly dressed up as 1950s housewives when our husbands came home just because we thought it would be funny to go to the plane as 1950s housewives."

Many of the couples talk about the husbands' roles in the Navy's spouses' clubs. Most of the men are not interested or comfortable participating in the spouses' clubs as a gender minority since the vast majority of the spouses are wives. However, some of the husbands' wives are going to be in command in the near future which has

the associated expectation that their spouse will have a leadership role in the spouses' club. The men are concerned about their ability to perform that role and how they will be perceived and accepted in the spouses' club. Vince explains how he thinks he might be able to contribute in his roles as the XO and CO's spouse:

But I don't know, the good thing for that is I definitely have the experience of being deployed and I know what is available for support through the Navy network. So I can certainly help with that stuff, but I don't think we're going to have Sunday tea or anything.

From another gendered role perspective, the men in this study acknowledge they are more involved in the household management than men in other family types. They feel they need to be involved in the daily routine out of necessity when their wives are deployed. While they understand they perform their roles as father and husband differently than other men, they do so knowing that this enables their wives to have successful careers, which are important to their family goals. Will describes his perspective of enacting the father and husband roles:

The one thing that I kind of found interesting is certainly relative to kind of the peers where we live and just kind of the standard middle class family roles and responsibilities. I get more kind of, you do all the grocery shopping? Really? You cook 80 percent of the time?...the traditional roles of husband and wife kind of go out the window to some respect. You gotta be able to suck it up and go to the store and do stuff in the past maybe your mom did at home, maybe your mom did all the cooking, but you can't assume it's going to work the same way, you can't put that responsibility on your wife who's also working and in my case she's two years senior to me so probably technically she's making more money than I am. So questions that revolve around how do you balance kind of the roles, or do you balance them differently than the traditional family and does that have an impact on how you do business.

While combining and adapting roles is important to these couples, separating worker and spouse roles is also integral to their work and family decision-making.

Because so much of their life is integrated, there is a blurring of boundaries between work and family roles that leads many couples to create boundaries and separate roles. In some cases, couples maintain separate work and family roles and are successful. Charles illustrates how during one shore tour, he and Claire are assigned to the same command and work briefly in the same office, "...a lot of people didn't know we were married while we were there. Didn't know we worked in the same office at one point." Dana and her husband are also together in the same training squadron and Dana describes their experience during a training simulator:

You know Doug was my copilot and he was trying to be a really proactive copilot and he started doing things I didn't want him to do and I was like, no, that is not how we're going to do it and I was very directive with him. And when I finished, and our [simulator] instructor looked at us and he was like, you know you guys work really well together. You have really good communications; you're very clear with each other.

From another perspective, these couples often want to get involved and help their spouse with work-related issues. But they understand that it is not appropriate for them to use their military role to influence a situation at work for their spouse.

Evan conveys his thoughts on one occasion he wanted to get involved at his spouse's command:

So you want to do something about it, but you really can't because you know, it's not my place as LCDR Brown to get involved in other O-4, LCDR Brown's stuff. You know you just kind of got to let her deal with it and work through it.

In becoming skilled at separating roles and behavior, many of the couples talk about their separate work and home personalities. In their Navy work role they have one set of behavior, and when they are at home as a spouse or parent, they have another set of behavior. Melissa presents an example of the behavioral differences

when talking about Mark's behavior at home, "I saw where it was coming from and I all the time would say, stop talking to me like I'm your shipmate, talk to me like I'm your wife." Rachel talks about separating her spouse and work roles in terms of social events where she can be expected to perform either or both roles, but chooses the spouse role:

And I'm also proud to be just his wife also. I like showing up to his events and when I go to his Hornet Ball and those types of things, I don't wear my uniform because I just like being his wife too, sometimes. You know, representing that. And so I think it's a nice balance. It gives me that sense of having something that focuses on him too.

Role transitions

Performing roles focuses on the timing and sequencing of role transitions typically experienced for these couples including: marriage, becoming a parent, and retirement. Adding the role of spouse does not impact career paths for these couples other than to coordinate collocation where that is a priority. Several people discuss the need to wait to get married until they have acquired their own life experiences and established their own career. Because these couples join the Navy work force right after college in most cases, they have little life experience living on their own. Laura states that she needs to have time on her own before getting married:

Personally I think people should get married after they've been on their own for a little while, just so they can figure out who they are...I think for a lot of people it's better to be established in your own career, your own life, before you can decide to embark on a shared life with somebody else. But like I said, that's not an absolute, that's the way, especially for me that had to happen. Because if I think back on how I was in grad school right after I graduated undergrad and I can't, there's no way that I would have been a very good spouse back then. But after figuring out my own, or what I should bring to a relationship and what I should take out from a relationship after having a few, and after living on my own, it seemed like the right time to get married.

Like I felt, it was a very funny, because it was, driving home and I just had this very clear, distinct, moment of thinking, I think now I can get married. I think now I can share these experiences with somebody else. I've gone to Japan, I've gone and seen the world, I've been to Hong Kong and I've been to all these great places, I've lived my life and it's time to share that with somebody else and build it together.

Other couples talk about the need to spend time apart being deployed before getting married to make sure they are ready to be married and in the Navy. Knowing they will be spending significant amounts of time separated due to deployments, they feel they need to test their relationship. Yancey relates his perspective on waiting to get married until after a deployment:

One of my kind of big milestones was can we survive deployment? So pretty much until we were getting back from deployment or until we had been separated enough of a time that I could say I feel comfortable on that, I really didn't feel comfortable proposing. And once I did get to that point, which took about three years, I finally felt comfortable enough where I'm like OK if she stuck it out with me for this much time being on opposite coasts, it probably can work. We probably can handle the separation. At that time, that's what I thought was going to be kind of the biggest challenge we were going to face.

Many couples want to spend time married and on shore duty before trying to have children. They anticipate their life will change with added responsibility and possibly stress. Rick states, "I'm glad I didn't have a kid right away. After we got married I got to spend some time with Rachel, just as husband and wife."

Becoming a parent was the next role transition which many couples have already accomplished, some couples are not ready to become parents, and some are unsuccessful at becoming parents. From a life course perspective, having children sometimes changes the trajectory of one or both parents related to their work career. Because of the age of most officers when they join the Navy out of college, they are usually in the late 20's when they are having children which also coincides with the

timing of the first decision point of whether to stay in the Navy or not. Having children and becoming parents as a role transition changes career perspective, changes the meaning of deployment, and increases empathy for others with children.

Changing a career perspective most often results in becoming less committed to the Navy, but there is one officer who says becoming a parent makes her more committed to her role as a naval officer. Yvonne describes her change in commitment as, “As I mentioned earlier, it was my daughter who was kind of my inspiration to let go and accept being in the Navy and continuing and wanting to continue to be in the Navy.” Other officers change their career perspective to be less committed to their Navy career after having children. This is more common for the wives than the husbands. Olivia gives her thoughts on how her perspective changes after becoming a parent, “Really, the command thing is not that important to me as it was, you know what I mean, before I had a kid and before I was married and all that other stuff.” After having children, both women and men in this study are more likely to make lateral transitions to other warfare communities, but none of the couples in this study separated from the Navy after having children, which emphasizes their motivation to continue to serve as a family. This result could also be affected by sample selection. Further, some dual military couples also leave service before they have children.

Reducing time away from home and on deployments is a common theme for couples in their parent role. Many couples expect it to be emotionally difficult to leave their children for deployments but find it to be more stressful than expected. Isabel relates her experience with being deployed away from her children:

And you're watching your kids play on a little...DVD that took forever to arrive to the ship and you're like am I crying because he's so cute or am I crying because I wasn't there. I don't know and it would be different if you knew you were going to be there the next time, but you don't. And also if your kid thought you could be counted on, but and they still ask the questions are you going to be here for this or... We now have a practice that when I go on travel, I Skype every night now that I'm back in the States. And that's so that they can, because the first time we did it, the first question was, are you on the ship? And I said no honey, this is not the ship and once you said you weren't on the ship, which meant we have no idea when you're coming home, they were like OK, and they went off to play.

From the husbands' perspective, Evan relates how he feels having to deploy after becoming a parent:

Now I know that when I deploy I'm going to leave the boys which is going to be very tough for me and then I also know that raising them is hard work. I'm not only leaving them and not getting to see them, and leaving Elise and not getting to see Elise, I'm also leaving her with a huge responsibility that she now has to take on alone while also working.

A few of the parents talk about how becoming a parent makes them better officers because they have empathy for the people they work with who are also parents. Zoe presents her perspective on how becoming a parent affects her role at work:

So it's made me much more aware and understanding of other people and what they go through. So as a CO, I was able to understand, well my child is sick, I need to go home. Or if it happened to a spouse, we had a lot of people who were actually at the command, not a lot, but a number of people the reason they were there was because one of their family members had to be near a medical treatment facility. I mean I had to learn all the rules too and what are the entitlements for the dependents and all that. So it made me much more aware and I think probably relate-able to more people.

Finally, retirement is a role transition discussed among most couples and is based on the timing of their lives related to marriage, children, and number of years

served. Critical decision junctures that occur between eight and 12 years of service determine if an officer is going to stay on a pathway that leads to serving long enough to earn a military retirement. Couples view serving for more than 10 years as a commitment to stay in the Navy until at least 20 years to reach retirement. Many couples are focused on a family goal to have both spouses reach retirement. Other couples are content to get at least one person to retirement, depending on their family situation. Kirk presents their family's goal for retirement:

I think right now if I were to put a mission statement for me on the wall that everyone saw as you came in to work, I think my mission statement right now would be to say, the goal of the Randolph family is to get to 20 years for both of us and to go as far as we can with respect to rank and positional authority.

Jessica states that at least one person in their family needs to reach retirement, "So I don't know, we go back and forth on, one of us is doing 20, that's the only thing we've said. Somebody's gotta do it; somebody's gotta suck it up and do 20." Mark states that there is a point in the number of years served that people decide to stay until retirement:

I'd be at around 12 years if I did a sea tour and that's the point that...you really start looking at the economic argument of staying in. I could walk away with 11; I couldn't walk away with 13, so something happens at 12 that's pretty interesting.

Using informal support networks

Because of their historical location in relation to military family policy being focused on traditional families, dual military couples use their available resources to find the support they need since they are forging new work-family pathways. Informal support networks are most often related to talking with other dual military

couples, being supported by neighbors, and using professional networks for support. Many of the couples discuss the context of finding emotional support in relation to whether they are on sea duty or shore duty tours in the timing of their work careers. In most cases, they find the need for emotional support to be greater and most useful on sea duty tours where one spouse is often deployed. On shore duty, the couples focus more on emotionally supporting each other because the Navy's support structure for shore commands is not organized to provide as extensive support as sea-based commands. Yancey presents his view on shore duty support, "For the most part, for most of our careers when we have been on shore duty, is shore duty is a 9 to 5 job. They go to work, they see each other there and they go home. They don't interact outside of work." Beth also finds that support is not as expected on shore duty, "I don't feel like there's much support [on] either end, really for anything like that. I think it's just the nature of the [shore] commands we're in."

Some of the couples find emotional support in different ways from other dual military couples. They seek out other couples who are in similar family situations to help them understand and cope better with the challenges they are enduring. Isabel explains being supported by her dual military friends:

But informal, like in [my warfare community], I know which ones are dual military and I know which ones have done the carrier tours and the baby at seven weeks [before deploying] and there's quite a few of us, which helps you not feel alone but they also understand what it's like. So we keep a close knit group of those who everyone once in awhile you can send a note to say, today I feel like a horrible mom and here's what happened. And they can say, OK, let us help you put it in perspective.

Melissa's perspective explains how their common experience as dual military couples provides a mechanism to support each other:

Well I'll say that probably our best friends and the couples we spend the most time with are, or at least were, dual military. There are two couples now that I served with the women in the Navy and the men have all worked in Mark's office in the Pentagon and those are our best friends. And so whether you stay in or get out, I think that common experience really bonds people together.

Will describes having senior dual military couples to use as examples and to gain a better understanding of what they should consider in their decision-making in different role transition and life stages:

...[our warfare community's] pretty small, but there's another couple, dual O-6s, so they were kind of the first people I saw that were both [in our community] and both married, no kids. I guess they made that decision earlier on not to do it. But just kind of seeing that you can actually do this, was for me, I guess it kind of made me think about it a little bit more. And we had a friend, at the time she was an O-4...a little bit different setup and there's some things we've done differently kind of looking at how they did like, I'm not sure that being 180 miles apart for 3 years, let's not go that route. But just having seen them do that and manage it, that at least provided a kind of a vision of sorts.

Neighborhoods and communities where these couples live also become an important source of personal support. Some couples find these ties easier to establish and use because they are located in one community for several tours and have the opportunity to build extensive networks. Other families are adept at quickly seeking out neighbors and creating new networks when they relocate. Scott illustrates how his family connects with their neighbors in terms of exchanging behavioral support in the form of household chores and childcare:

For example, Stephanie [met] with our neighbors next door as soon as we moved in here because we moved in and I was gone. So Stephanie was figuring it out on her own. She [connected] with the neighbor next door and slowly as neighbors have come and gone, other Navy folks, they've kind of grown into, they've woven into our support network. Which is why whenever other Navy folks or military folks need a hand, our hand goes through the door as far as it can go to help folks out because we know what they're going through. We know

what people have done for us and so we always try to make sure that I give back more than I've gotten.

Couples also find that support networks are more extensive at overseas locations than at U.S. shore duty commands. Yvonne recounts her experience in Italy:

...we were basically integrated right into the Italian community there. When I moved over, I was pretty much adopted by our landlord. They're like oh, single Sailor, we'll take care of her until her husband can come and then they just adopted him too. And we just, they're just such warm people. We really bonded with the Italians there and once our daughter was born we had an Italian nanny. Everybody in the community, we couldn't walk down the street without people coming by on bikes or motorcycles or whatever and they'd say, hi Elaine, basically, and everybody knew Elaine. And we were Elaine's parents so we were welcomed in with open arms and I think it's the first time we really felt home.

The other type of support network these couples use is professional support networks. These are most often used by women and are networks designed to support military women. Rachel talks about the support she receives from these networks:

As far as, the Civil Engineering Corps has the Women's Professional Network. That's a, I guess a social or network within the Navy and that's a neat organization. I try to go to it sometimes, more just to, it's nice to be around other people who go through the same, or have some of the same problems or goals or whatever and talk with them. And it's nice to see other women...see other women in positions of leadership and see how they've done it.

Finding support with each other

Dual military couples support each other personally and professionally in their life course decision-making which conveys marital, work, and life satisfaction in the interviews with couples in this study. While there is some marital conflict within some couples, it was a rare occurrence for this to be presented during interviews. The couples in this sample are unified in their focus to work together and overcome

conflict and frustration with the organization. Considering the amount of stress experienced related to collocated job assignments, dual deployment cycles, and managing two work careers with a family career, there is little evidence of life dissatisfaction. Dana expresses her feeling about the personal support from Doug:

But it gives me this, this strength that I know he's always there for me. You know, I just think that's going to serve us for the rest of our lives...It's hard and you do it and you come home and I think it makes you that much more appreciative of every single moment you have.

Scott shows what the personal support from Stephanie means to him, "Stephanie has always been supportive, even when I'm down. Nowadays when I have this discussion I just had with you about not screening [for command], I'll get the why don't you just wait discussion from her. Never anything negative."

From a career perspective, these couples provide professional support for career decisions which promote pathways based on staying in the Navy and taking competitive job assignments. Claire presents her view of how they support each other's career decisions as a couple and their possible outcomes, "So it's just basically been, if one of us will make a decision and the other one supports it, we'll find a way to adjust and it's worked out well so far." Jack explains how giving his wife the freedom to take a competitive job and achieve her career goals is rewarding and difficult:

She's really good at what she does and she's definitely going places. I just think that you've got to afford her the opportunity to kind of pursue what she really wants to do even though it's hard because of course you're married and you love the person and you want to see them everyday.

In his deliberations on whether to stay in the Navy or get out, Lance finds that it is helpful to have the support of his wife in making the decision that works for him

personally, “Laura’s been supportive about wanting to get out or stay in, she’s always been good to talk to. So again all positive with my career choices and family choices.” Rachel also explains how the support of her husband enables her to make the choices which are important to her when she is contemplating entering the Navy:

He’s very good, he knows I have a lot of goals myself and he wants me to achieve my own goals. And so he was supportive, like I said, in whatever I wanted to do. And so I don’t think I would have went in without his support and belief in me, just because it was hard to tell people and if I didn’t have his support, then it would be a big leap on my own.

Another aspect of personal support is found when most couples display an admiration for their spouse, who they are in terms of their multiple roles, their professional accomplishments, or their future professional opportunities. Jack illustrates his pride in Jessica’s work:

Jessica just has too much talent in her job to not pursue what she wants to be. I mean she’s, if you talk to anyone, any senior officer that she’s ever worked for, they’re like wow, she’s awesome. And I could just tell because her work ethic is so awesome and I just want her to be able to kind of do whatever she wants to do.

Fred admires the way Faith takes on her many responsibilities and is doing so much for their family and her career that it makes him feel he needs to provide the support to help her achieve her goals:

...she’s doing everything she needs, and she’s working on her second Masters. So she is absolutely just turning and burning and she’s doing that stuff voluntarily. So not only do you have to respect that, but you have to sort of try and do what you can to take the time to make it easier.

Some husbands point out how their wives are better professionally than themselves, as Mark says, “And I think Melissa would do, she’d be a great CO. I think she’s a better naval officer in many ways than I am.”

Some couples talk about the pride they have in being able to successfully combine two military careers and a family. They find that living the pathway they have chosen is not always easy, but they feel it is a reward to be able to have two successful Navy careers while being married and having children in some cases.

Charles illustrates what it means to his family to have two successful careers:

...besides being happily married, I'm proud of what we've achieved in terms of both the balance and having a strong marriage, and having reasonably successful careers...the satisfaction of kind of working through all this, I think there's something to that. And as we've faced challenges later on in our careers, the fact that we've gotten this far and made it all work is, it's been a source of momentum for lack of a better term, or strength or something like that...but I can tell you for me there's a certain satisfaction or pride or whatever that comes with whenever you do something that's not easy or make it work, there's something to that.

Family Goals

Family goals are the personal motivations manifested in their agentic actions that shape the decision-making in developing the pathways for these dual military families. Because of the military demands of deployments and frequent periods of time away, these couples place a high priority on being collocated for their job assignments and thereby linking their careers and lives together. Collocation is a recurring theme throughout the conversations with these couples and is an integral concept in their work and family decision-making as they consider the timing of family role transitions such as becoming parents and retirement. Their goals and expectations for how their children are raised similarly drive work and family decisions related to the timing and sequencing of career milestones as they are intertwined with the timing and sequencing of children.

The final role transition in their pathway is retirement, which shapes their long-term perspective of how the Navy is perceived as a life stage and in many cases as a stepping stone to mid-career transitions. However, they often meet resistance to this perspective because of institutional demands that influence many officers to view the Navy as a life commitment.

Valuing collocation

Related to dealing with time away, dual military couples place a high value on job assignment collocation. The conversations related to collocation emphasize how much time, energy, and effort these couples expend to be able to live together. Some couples find getting collocated assignments to be fairly easy whereas other couples experience many difficulties and are ultimately unsuccessful. Couples consider many options when making career decisions related to collocation including lateral transition, separating or retiring from the Navy, or accepting not being collocated for a period of time. Most of the couples acknowledge that they need to be realistic in their expectations and requests for assignments to be successful in collocation. The effectiveness of the Navy's collocation policy is considered negligible by some couples, while other couples find the policy to be helpful. Most interpret their differences in perception to be based on how the assignment officers for their warfare community put the collocation policy into practice since the policy could be open to interpretation. Many of these couples have the same overall attitude about being collocated that Kate portrays when she says, "And so I feel like there's always a way and I've found that way here."

The couples in this study feel they work very hard to stay collocated. As part of the dual military couple's planning process, finding collocated job assignments for their individual career paths can be challenging and often is perceived to require more time and effort than an officer who is not in a dual military couple. Kate emphasizes the stress of negotiating collocation:

...I mean there's always a stressor on whether you're going to get a [collocation]. We're always like what's next, what's next? Are we gonna do it, are we gonna do it? We're always calling the detailer and we're always "gaming" the system."

Doug discusses what he thinks it took for him and Dana to be collocated:

And that's why even when we negotiated orders to come out here, we were very aggressive... We came here, we walked straight into the Personnel Officer's office at the Academy and said, we want to come here, what's it going to take? We want to both come here, we both want to be stationed here, what's it going to take?

Fred emphasizes the amount of time and energy spent on talking with the assignment officers to coordinate a collocation, "...she's on the [phone] probably 50 times with her detailer and I'm on the [phone] 50 times with my detailer already, and still we're not settled up on what we're doing."

An outcome of the difficulty and challenge to being collocated leads many dual military couples to consider options for making collocation easier. One of the most common decisions these couples make is selecting a job location that will meet their career objectives and keep them collocated. These locations are most often Fleet Concentration Areas where most of the Navy is located in the U.S. Choosing the Fleet Concentration Areas works well for many couples, but some couples find this to be challenging since there might only be one of these locations where they can both have a competitive job in their respective warfare communities. Wendy talks about

their recent decision to choose a location, “And then after that the decisions to move like up here, it was a collocation decision. We both knew it was a place where there were a lot of good jobs that we could both go to together.” Some couples choose for one of the partners to separate from the Navy because it is too hard to stay collocated and they are not willing to live apart. Still other couples choose to have one partner transition to a warfare community that is more flexible in collocation options. Finally, some couples choose not to collocate for periods of time to keep their careers as competitive as possible.

For the couples who choose not to collocate, they justify the separation based on their career and family priorities and where they are in their life course. Some of the younger couples without children consider not collocating as Jessica explains, “So when I got offered exactly what I wanted, we had a long conversation about it, because I’m going to DC and Jack’s not coming.” There is a perception among many couples that as they become more senior, it will be more difficult to find competitive jobs and stay collocated. However, most of the senior couples in this study did not have this experience which is most likely due to exercising options to retire or transition before collocation became a problem.

Expectations for raising children

Beyond the timing and sequencing of role transitions, role expectations are specifically influential for the couples with children and those planning to have children because they have definitive opinions on the environment in which they want their children to live and the timing and sequencing of children in their work and family lives. The most common concern for these parents is ensuring that both

parents are not deployed or away from home at the same time which becomes a career timing issue. While the Navy does not have an official policy for deploying both parents, most commands have informal practices to arrange for parents not to be deployed at the same time. Beyond not being deployed at the same time, the next concern for these parents is to provide a stable home environment for children where parents are not constantly coming and going which again is a career timing issue. Parents feel it will be emotionally and mentally difficult for the children to adapt to having parents continuously leaving and returning from deployment. To prevent this from occurring, parents pursue job assignments and timing of sea duty so that only one parent is on sea duty at a time. In the policy for assignment of dual military couples, the Navy formally discusses alternating sea and shore assignments for dual military parents to ease the burden of childcare, but only at the convenience of the Navy. Wendy illustrates how her family approaches being away from children:

But at the same time I knew that it was going to cost a lot to my family and now I've got four kids. It's not just one kid or two kids, its four kids that I don't want to subject them to having one or the other parent being gone. And in the environment we're in today, especially the time I made the decision to go, to decline sea duty, [individual augmentees] were a hot topic. Pretty much you were gonna go. You were gonna go for six months or a year. So on top of sea duty requirements, you were looking at [individual augmentee] requirements and I looked at my future and I thought, I don't want my kids having one parent gone and then the other parent gone, and then the first parent being gone, and there's no stability for them. I knew that I wanted to be there for them at least, kind of give them something.

Some couples looking ahead to the role transition of becoming a parent start to shape their career decision-making and timing based on their expectations of how and when to raise their children. One couple is convinced they want to have children

in the next few years and decide that they want to have a stay at home parent, which means they are looking at one of them separating from the Navy. The expectation that their children should be raised with a stay at home parent is based on how they are socialized in their families having stay at home mothers. Gloria recounts her expectations as she considers having children while being on active duty:

I think it's possible, but I don't think it's what I'm comfortable with in terms of how I want to raise my children. I was brought up in a two parent family and so was Greg. And for both of us, our moms were the primary caregivers.

Several parents discuss their guilt for having to put their children in daycare while they are at work and not being able to spend time with their children. Some parents with younger children explain that their children's best hours of the day are while they are at work and they are only able to spend quality time with their children on the weekends. Laura presents her feelings on daycare and the time she is able to spend with her daughter on shore duty:

Because when Linda was first in daycare when she was about three months old...it was kind of hard and I think it is still hard from time to time because so much of her active time, growing time, she's so young, is during the day. When she gets home, she wants to sleep, she's tired and she's cranky. And so I don't always get all the good times with her. So that is still hard. Like usually by Friday, come Friday, I'm ready to not be away from her.

Seeing life beyond the Navy

Most of these couples have a long-term outlook on life that includes viewing their Navy careers as a stage in their life course that is finite and will have an associated role transition to a second career, retirement, or new meanings for family roles (such as parents focusing more on their children). Some of the couples encounter people in leadership positions who do not view the Navy as a life stage and

perceive the Navy as their whole life course, which often conflicts with their decision-making. Brad references a conversation he had with a supervisor concerning an upcoming job assignment:

Because everybody leaves the Navy. I think there's a lot of people that don't think that way, it's like Navy for life. I hope I don't die while I'm in the Navy. But you're gonna leave. It's either in a pine box or you walk out the door. So you gotta think about it. And if you're not gonna let me think about it, then...you're being myopic in my opinion.

Along the continuum of perceptions about what life will be like after they leave the Navy, Patrick expresses his concern over the uncertainty of transitioning to a new career and how his skills and experience in the Navy will help:

...but I think that realization certainly was getting me thinking, what do I want to do in the future? I had recognized it at Test Pilot School, but it had always been a thought, what do you do after 20 [years], or 25 [years], or whatever? You get out as a warfighter, and you're a warfighter. Yes, you've had responsibility, but nothing else.

Flexibility with one spouse retiring from the Navy is perceived to provide options for different careers and family situations based on retirement benefits available and increased time at home. Will looks at Wendy's upcoming retirement as providing options and flexibility:

And the next piece, Wendy's already made that commitment that the next tour is it. She's probably putting in a few more [years] than maybe even more than she would have liked. And that'll be kind of the decision point of alright, what do we do now that only one of us is in? It kind of gives us a little more flexibility to do different things. So in about a year and a half here we'll probably have to think a little bit harder about that. Start to maybe close some options, open some options, that kind of thing.

Finally, some couples see the possibility of becoming so focused on their Navy careers that they may make choices they will regret after the Navy. These

decisions often relate to sacrifices made at the expense of the family to keep a career competitive or achieve a career goal. Stephanie explains how she avoids this situation:

But I don't feel that we have pared back on our personal life just for the sake of the Navy. Something that we talk about a lot is, the Navy is not forever...Family is forever and so we can't make...and even the term "the Navy", it's just a collection of very well-meaning, patriotic people who are trying to do the best that they can for the country everyday. That doesn't mean that what you give in on one side, you're going to get out on the other. I think some people leave the service kind of feeling bitter, betrayed or that their loyalty wasn't repaid by the Navy, because it doesn't work that way. I put in my time, I put in my hours, I gave everything, I sacrificed my marriage, my kids, my this and I didn't get what I thought I was going to get on the other end. So I've personally been very careful to avoid that paradigm because I've seen other people fall into that trap and I feel sorry for them.

While many of the couples who talk about life after the Navy are more senior in rank and age, there are still several younger couples in the early stages of their careers that are already looking at what a second career or retirement might look like after the Navy. This perspective that military service is a life stage is not shared by everyone in this study. Some couples held the more traditional career perspective that the Navy is a lifetime commitment and planning for life after the Navy is not something they talk about or plan for because the structured career path feels like it will always take them to the next milestone.

Chapter 8: Challenges and Motivations

Challenges

The interaction of organizational constraints and supports with family processes and goals produces the life course challenges and motivations for dual military couples. Having different work and family needs because they are managing two careers, these couples confront the structural constraints posed by policies and practices that are designed for traditional families' needs and careers.

The support network provided by the organization for most Navy commands is traditionally the officers' spouses' club, formerly the officers' wives' club in the Navy. Dual military couples, as with other "non-traditional" family types, generally do not find this formal support useful for their families because they are designed to support traditional families with stay at home wives.

By having a Navy career and a family, these couples learn to prioritize the demands of each domain and this becomes a key concept in strategically adapting to develop their pathways. Combining work and family as dual military couples is based on wanting to do it all. These couples want to be able to have both; they do not feel like they have to choose between having a family with children and both serving in the Navy. For those couples who choose to have children, integrating children into the timing and sequencing of their work careers is particularly challenging and occasionally unsuccessful due to infertility. Having a family with children for these couples is made more difficult by the inherent nature of the Navy's mission being deployed and underway at sea. Dealing with time away from family is common to all military families and many civilian families. But as a dual military couple, they

spend twice as much time separated from each other which shapes their work and family decision-making and life course trajectories.

Being different from traditional families

The participants recognize their work and family needs as a dual military family are different from traditional military families, but they are also aware that traditional military families are no longer the norm in the military based on their historical location. They feel the Navy should support and value the service of all types of families that encompass the Navy organization and not have any type of family feel that they are different or receiving special attention. The dimensions of being different from traditional families display a breadth of experiences and include being treated and handled negatively by peers and supervisors, others not knowing they are dual military or aware of their challenges, as compared to others who are understanding and supportive of their work-family situation. There are several characteristics explained by the participants that provide a full range of dimensionality in their experiences. The characteristics of this property include: seeing themselves as different, how they are treated, awareness of work-family situation, and understanding the work-family situation. These characteristics provide an overview of the work-family interactions that take place in their lives and shape their decision-making for their work and family careers.

During Isabel's interview, she talks about her perception of what a traditional family means to her and how her family pathway is different. Her description is similar to other participants' perceptions of how their families are different from

traditional families and other families in the Navy. Isabel focuses on the gender roles in her description of her family compared to a traditional family:

I mean we both at one point had thought about being a more traditional, us being Southern roots, traditional family, me being at home, being able to focus on the kids, being more involved in their schooling, or being involved at all, doing those things and he following what course he wanted to have in his life and we had not turned out that way and it doesn't even look like we're going to be headed that way for quite awhile.

Gary describes being different from the perspective of the work relationship when your spouse is in the same command:

So I thought about [being in the same command] and then I thought about how it was going to be difficult for me the guy with the wife in the squadron. What's that going to be like? How are people going to look at us that way? And it's definitely a factor. We're like the token couple at the squadron.

Many of the participants feel that although their families are different from traditional Navy families, the Navy puts them in the work setting which facilitates dual military families as Helen states, "I think that as people just accept the fact that it's going to be normal, that who else do they expect us to marry?" Other women take this thought process one step further demanding that the Navy should change its culture so they would not be different from other families as Kate explains:

And the Navy can't force people to spend time apart like that with the OPTEMPO [being] what it is. I mean they just have to change their mentality. Either they're gonna say we're not gonna have moms and women in the Navy or we're gonna change our mentality about prioritizing [collocation] and prioritizing the things that there's two naval officers' careers.

The relationships and roles associated with traditional families and the structural lag in policy extends beyond work and the immediate family to the support

networks found in most Navy commands which exist to support the command's families. With both partners being on active duty in the Navy, there is not a traditional spouse at home supporting the service member. There are different interactions with these support networks, as Gary relates, "We don't get all the inclusiveness that some other normal couples would get. So that's another challenge that we've kind of faced... We don't necessarily get included in the married groups as much because we are different."

The perceptions these couples have about their family type being different are based on the behavior of the significant others in their work careers, namely their peers and their supervisors in the Navy. Behavior that displays an awareness of their family type but does not address their needs is a source of frustration for these couples. Some participants feel like they are such a minority that the Navy could overlook their family's needs, as Brad says:

...there are such a small percentage of us that it's easier to ignore us than try and make sure that we can fall into the same kind of wickets. So instead of making a decision, they don't make a decision. Just, well, it's better not to answer it, than put an answer out there that I can be nailed down to, good or bad.

Some couples feel that as a growing group of families in a new pathway in the Navy, it is their responsibility to change the way the institution views their needs so that all families are accounted for. Stephanie explains it as:

But I mean [dual military couples are] such a minority. There's nothing that recognizes them and out of all the time, energy, and money that people have in those positions to devote to developing something, it's not worth their effort, because it's such a small group. He'd be totally on his own. It's a growing group and I have to kind of fight this.

Many couples express how much they want to be treated and viewed the same as any other service member or family and to be accepted as normal and accommodated by the Navy. They explicitly talk about not wanting preferential treatment because they are different. Charles states:

...we generally didn't like to think of ourselves as being a special case and being of a separate breed or of a different color or anything else. It just happens to be the way our family is put together career-wise. And so the idea of there being something unique and special to military couples, it sounds very foreign at least to me. In some ways I don't know if I would want that because it would almost tend to distinguish us more as a subset. I'm almost interested in more this becoming just one more of the many different versions of the normal couples that are out there.

Some participants conveyed that they are treated the same as everyone else and that is expected in the Navy even though there might be extenuating circumstances. Vanessa explains this when she says:

I sometimes, maybe have a better reason to ask for leave in their opinion because my husband was deployed and now I'm trying to see him or whatever, but usually everyone, they don't take any special consideration. But it doesn't really hurt me, it doesn't really bother me, because it's what I expect and they set that expectation.

Still other couples see any help they get from the Navy in their careers as being deserved and not preferential treatment, as Kate explains in talking about being collocated for their job assignments:

And a lot of his peers think that's unfair, that we get to sort of, I don't know if it's we get to choose to stay in Norfolk, but we're choosing to be collocated and it happens to be in Norfolk. But a lot of times people think its favoritism. But really it's not, it's two careers. And I think the reason that sometimes his peers think that is because they walk in here, and we'll have people over, we're very social, and they don't see what I do everyday.

A common discourse among Navy officers is their personal responsibility for the choices and decisions they make related to their work careers and families in establishing a life course trajectory. This discourse is also found in dual military couples in the form of personal choice to marry another service member. This discourse rationalizes any hardships encountered as the personal responsibility of the service members as planful and purposive people. Navy culture reproduces this behavior to hold the individual accountable and not the institution. Troy provides his perspective when he states:

If you both know that you're rolling to sea duty at the same time and you decide to get married, then that's a personal choice. So the Navy shouldn't have to rearrange their rules in order to accommodate you so one person stays on shore and one person goes to sea.

In being different from traditional families, these couples feel there is also not a sufficient level of awareness of the work-family situation by their peers, supervisors, and the Navy. One dimension of awareness is from an institutional perspective in the assignment process. To be able to meet the needs of dual military families, the assignment officers ("detailers") need to know they are a dual military couple and be willing to help them. While most assignment officers are interested in professionally and personally helping their constituents, there is room for personality and individual differences in the assignment process. Beth says, "Because I don't have the opinion that [my husband's] detailer...has any care in the world that there's a dual military couple there." Zoe has a similar experience, when she has to explain to the assignment officer that she wants to be collocated:

And then the next tour, that was where we had the detailing nightmare where our detailers, my detailer specifically, didn't acknowledge that I was [in] a dual military [couple]... [I said] New York City sounds fun

[as a job location for me] but I don't think there are any jobs there for my husband. And [the detailer] said, what do you mean, why do you care? Well, he's in the Navy too. We'd like to be collocated, is there a way we can do this? Nope you just gotta make choices. Sorry, whose career is more important? Decide.

At the supervisor level, there were several instances related by couples where the COs did not know they had dual military couples in their command, and in some cases did not want to know. Navy culture reinforces its masculinity by discouraging relationships with women and this may be another example. Doug explains this dimension when his CO was being told about his relationship with his future wife:

And the Skipper of the [Fleet Replacement Squadron] was like, wait, he's like Doug and Dana, he's like there's students in my squadron that are dating? And the [Operations Officer] and the Student Control Officer were like well, yes sir and while we're at it, Brown and Brown are married, Williams and Marsh are married, and then they started to name a third couple that was dating and apparently the Skipper was like, OK stop, enough, I don't want to know anymore.

In more likely situations where the two service members are in different commands, it is even more difficult for supervisors to be aware of dual military couples, but it can be detrimental to the couple when IA assignments are determined on short notice and the command does not realize the other partner is already deployed, as Beth relates, "There was no visibility. There was nothing formal that I noticed. Yeah, I mean, in some ways that to me was very disappointing because nobody paid attention. And up at [large shore command], I don't think they knew me other than general conversation too." However, these experiences are not as common as the positive experiences noted by most couples who feel they were understood and supported by significant others.

Being treated differently from traditional families also has a positive aspect when dual military couples feel their work-family situations are understood and supported by peers, supervisors and the Navy. One of the reasons the participants feel that they have positive experiences with how they are supported is that dual military couples are becoming more common and accepted within the Navy. Rick describes his experience on this and says, "...and the fact that there are more and more and more of us dual military [couples] around than there were even when I joined in '98. We've got in my last squadron, probably 4 [junior officers], four or five that were dual military."

Some officers see an increase in dual military couples as a positive aspect also for the Navy, but the Navy leadership is not aware and does not value these family types, as Zach states, "I think it's becoming more commonplace and I think it actually benefits the military to have dual military couples. I think that's a huge benefit because I think you'll find your readiness levels, personal readiness [increase and] number of problems you have with dual military people [decrease]."

These couples have a breadth of experience in how they are seen as different, how they are treated, and the awareness of their work-family situation. The positive and the negative experiences shape their decisions and pathways in their work careers and family life stages by enabling them to serve or giving them the impetus to change the institution so they can serve they way they want.

Lack of support from the spouses' clubs

When considering formal support provided through the Navy, dual military couples have varied experiences related to spouses' clubs, which are an integral part

of ships and squadrons. Many of the couples say they do not feel they need to participate in spouses' clubs because the support offered does not meet their family's needs in another example of structural lag and the historical location. These couples perceive spouses' clubs provide emotional and logistical support to civilian wives who are not as accustomed to the Navy lifestyle as dual military couples are. Zach gives his perspective on why he and Zoe did not need support from the spouses' club:

...she probably did need the support occasionally, but I don't think she was comfortable with, it was just a different...it's very strange. It's probably particular to us. We kind of shunned that, the spouses' club. Hey, it's kind of, we're dual military, we don't need the spouses club because we're military and we understand what, I understand what my husband's thinking and why he doesn't call me. I don't need to be told all this stuff. I'm a competent naval officer; I can rough this by myself. Some of our personal attitude more so than the availability of help and how they would have treated us had we reached out to them.

Mark states that he understands the purpose of the spouses' club, but that it is not structured or organized to support his family:

Yeah, it's a strange subculture. I think they could help each other. If the balance of the wives club was a little different, they could all help each other do more interesting things, but it's more it seems a coping club. And that's important too. It's hard. The job isn't easy by any means. So it's clearly out of social need. It serves a function. But I guess it didn't really help me much, but it wasn't designed for me.

There is a range of experiences in feeling welcome or included in the spouses' club for dual military couples. Many of these couples' perceptions are based on the highly gendered nature of spouses' club that are still called wives' clubs informally in many conversations including these interviews. Many of the wives of these dual career couples feel like they are included, but do not understand why their husbands are not. Other couples feel like they are not welcome based on their experiences with the spouses' club as Helen points out, "Some wives' clubs are very accepting of the

females in the squadron and some are not.” Isabel recounts her experience trying to work with her command to make the spouses’ club more useful for her family and specifically her husband while she is the deployed service member:

...the ship was horrible for male spouses. And [I] talked to the XO about it, talked to the CO’s wife about it, talked to the CO about it, nothing got done. [The] CO’s wife told me flat out that she didn’t see the difference between a male spouse and a female spouse. Tried to explain to her some of the differences and she didn’t get it. Talked to the XO’s [wife], one of my friends a female whose husband was involved in the spouses’ thing trying to, he tried to change from within, he had more patience than my husband did and he eventually dropped out when he asked for a list of all the male spouses so he could plan like a beer/football night and was told that that would be discriminatory.

Many of these officers perceive spouses’ clubs to be anachronistic and a function of an older Navy culture that does not apply to them. They see the spouses’ clubs as being organized to support the traditional male service member and female stay at home spouse. Activities are typically described as being the traditional arts and crafts or afternoon tea parties that serve no purpose for these couples who are employed. Kirk presents his perspective on the spouses’ club:

...we find that it’s more often than not it seems to be rooted in an older tradition of the husband is working, is a Navy active duty, and then the wife is kind of the homemaker with kids and kind of the stereotypical spouse club experience.

The outcome of having a perceived traditional spouses’ club means that the husbands are not receiving any support, especially when they need it most for their wives’ deployments. The historical location of the husbands places them in a situation where little support is provided from the organization but work demands are still maintained. Stephanie conveys her thoughts on her husband being supported, “I think for husbands, I think that there is no network, formal or informal, for the spouse

of a woman in the military. The informal networks such as spouses clubs, absolutely not even a chance.”

For wives, one of the reasons they do not have a positive experience with the spouses’ club is based on their perception that civilian wives are jealous of the Navy women and their role in the organization. The Navy women understand this perception to be based on the work relationships they have with all the men in the command which is a relationship that the civilian wives cannot have. Jessica understands this perception and it deters her from participating:

It’s they know that you know him in a way that they can’t by definition. You know who he is when they aren’t there. And you’re a woman with a relationship with him that they can’t have that’s different and special in a way. It really is familial, especially in the squadron. So that kind of put a bad taste in my mouth.

Peggy understands the perception also and works in her leadership role to dispel the misperception with civilian spouses,

...as an outsider coming in is really hard, but I said we’re going to have a meeting and I want you to bring your spouses. I want everybody to meet me, because it was, I was the officer in charge...I want all the wives to meet me. I’m me, I’m a nice person and I’m not Bambi OK. I am not going to be sleeping with your husband, so I don’t want you thinking that. I can’t help you with anybody else, but I want you to know I will take care; I will do my best to bring your husband home.

Rachel is active in her husband’s spouses’ club and tries to use her familiarity and trust with the other spouses to explain why their perceptions are misguided:

I would hear some of the other wives talk, not so much derogatory, but with an attitude about some of the women that were in the squadron. So there’s always this connotation, why would they want to be in the Navy or why would they do this? I think some of it comes down to, is if I’d be jealous because those women spend so much time with their husbands when they’re deployed...You’re not attracted to a guy,

you're dirty and loud after awhile, you're not attracted to that. But I think it's a fear of some women not understanding it.

Stephanie is another woman who has been active in all her husband's spouses' clubs. She even held leadership positions in his last two squadron's spouses' clubs. She often feels like she is a "double agent" because she is a service member and a spouse, "I'm really on the inside, well I felt like a double agent. So I've gotten, I think that's gotten a little easier. But yeah, it's almost been an advantage to fitting in because they have lots of questions for me." Some of the men who participated feel like they are being used for inside information on what is "really" happening when their spouses are deployed. Doug relates one of his experiences with the spouses' club for his wife's squadron:

...I went to a couple spouses' club meetings and it always started out very fun to see all the wives and stuff like that because we're all roughly the same age, but it inevitably turned to the what's cruise like, what do you guys really act like when you pull into port? Kind of a little bit prodding, questioning and to the point where like, I know they knew that I knew what their husbands were doing because Dana and I would talk on the phone.

Formal support rarely has a direct impact on a career or family decision, but facilitates or influences the couples' overall experience which impacts satisfaction. Life satisfaction of both service members is important to career decisions and a couple's decision to continue to serve as they determine how to prioritize work and family in their life course trajectory.

Setting priorities

Many of the participants' underlying perspective about combining work and family in a military context often means choosing one over the other. In an organization that is designed to have its workers exclusively committed to work, dual

military couples are left in a quandary of who cares for the children. Because work and family domains are so integrated in the military organization, in combining the roles within those domains, these couples feel they have to choose to prioritize work over family or family over work so that someone is designated to care for children and someone's career takes priority when there is a conflict. The perceived outcomes for work and family roles vary by how these couples set priorities. Some couples who choose to prioritize family over work still feel that they are able to have successful careers and are not hindered by their priorities. Other families find that by prioritizing family over work there are negative career outcomes for at least one partner. Stephanie summarizes her perspective, "I have a lot of people ask me about balance because that's the new buzzword. And it's really just about, for me it's just about priorities."

Some couples feel that there is not a choice about setting priorities and that a military career and its associated work demands require couples to choose the priority of work or family. Faith's perspective on this is, "I feel the military, they may like to say you can have them both, but I really do feel that military or civilian, you do end up having to put one before the other." Only a few of the couples in the study feel like it is not possible to combine work and family roles in the military, but most see setting a priority scheme as being important to meeting work and family goals across the life course.

Several couples state that it is important to be explicit in setting priorities as a family and to communicate this to their supervisors. Gloria sees being candid about their family's priorities helps gain support from their supervisors as she discusses:

...it's been better to fully disclose what you want and why you want it, and if you have a relationship like that to fully disclose those things to the people who are going to have to help you in the long run, because my experience has been, people will always want to hear bad news early as opposed to late even if the bad news is I don't want to stay in the military. I'm going to be honest about it with whoever I have to be honest about it with because people appreciate that a lot more and you don't ever want to burn those bridges. I think we had a good policy of full disclosure with the people we worked for about that kind of stuff and I really think it worked out for us because the trust was already there, so that's good.

Other couples talk about the need to verbalize their personal and professional goals so that they have the right priorities set for the family and that there are no misunderstandings later in the marriage and work careers, when difficult career decisions are being made. Ike gives his perspective on setting goals and priorities to aid in decision-making:

Make up your mind and be honest with each other about what your goals are. If your intent is to stay in and do a 20 year career, you need to discuss that with one another. If one of you intends that your career is gonna be [priority]...and making Flag is the goal, then you need to be honest with one another, because those sorts of things have to be hashed out early so that...when you face these decisions and challenges you can say well you've gotta go to the carrier and the job over here is not going to be a career-enhancing job. You know what, I'll take that non-career-enhancing job.

Some couples feel that whatever their priorities are, they are committed to maintaining those priorities throughout the life course and achieving the goals associated with work and family. There are variations in this property where couples would change their priorities based on changing circumstances or entering a new stage in their life with children, or nearing retirement and thereby creating a new trajectory. Stephanie's explanation is consistent with those couples who maintain their priorities throughout their career:

Commit to each other. Just commit to, make a decision, you're committing to a marriage...If you're going to commit to the Navy commit to the Navy. And then don't worry about the small stuff. Because once you get those two major roadblocks out of the way, everything else just falls into place.

The timing of priorities is viewed retrospectively and explained by the age, life stage, and roles that couples occupied. When looking back at decisions such as having children, getting married or joining the military, some couples realize their perspective has changed as well as their priorities. Looking back at her decision to marry someone else in the military and have children, Amy recounts:

You know, you're 17 and things fit together in weird ways. One, you think you're invincible and you can do anything. So I always knew I wanted to be a mom at some point, but I was 17 and didn't want to be a mom [then]. Certainly didn't want to be a mom when I was 19 either. And so it was sort of a far off goal and you also think you can do anything. So it's like, I can do it. Everyone signs up thinking, no one's done it before me, but I can do it, I'm so cool, right?

Brad explains his realization that he is now prioritizing family over work when he talks about what type of job assignments he is willing to accept. Brad perceives it as a change in outlook:

So, looking back on it, I think I started making my, unconsciously making my choices to choose family in some ways over career because I immediately wasn't just jumping on the career hand grenades of well you gotta do this, you gotta do this if you want to stay, or be on the fast track.

Setting priorities gives these couples an outlook on their work and family lives that help them make work and family decisions that keep them on a pathway that they perceive will help attain their personal and professional goals. The military organizational context requires them to make career and family decisions on a regular basis, nominally every two to three years, based on the career paths and timing of

their respective careers. The underlying impact of setting priorities for dual military couples is to facilitate collocation while accepting a known amount of career risk or reward based on their choices.

Balancing work and family

While these couples see setting priorities as necessary based on the military demands placed on the work and family careers, they refer to balancing work and family in terms of wanting to do it all. They want a competitive military career and a happy family, and they come to different conclusions on what that means and how they accomplish balance in the military. Doug has some early experiences in his career where he meets resistance from the Navy in trying to be collocated with his wife and realizes what it will take early in his career to find balance:

So, the beginning and the end of the [Fleet Replacement Squadron] I would definitely say were defining moments for me in terms of where I realized what it was going to take from me in terms of balancing the personal and the professional aspects of being a dual military couple.

Rachel looks introspectively and sees that her motivation and drive to be successful in both domains will be challenging but still resists the idea that she cannot fully commit to doing it all:

I'm worried about being tired all the time and I work long hours and at work I take it very seriously. I'm critical of myself. I want to perform well. I want to be able to get good [officer evaluations]. Compared to some of my other friends, I'm goal-oriented. I want to go as far as I can in the Navy. So sometimes I worry, will I be able to balance that and have kids? And if you do balance it, how long can you balance it and be, I mean Rick's even said this to me, you can't be everything to everybody Rachel. You can't be perfect and juggle every ball all the time. So I'm worried sometimes I'll try to do that and get burned out in the process.

By changing life course trajectories, these couples use their human agency to adapt to the organizational structures. Wanting to do it all leads some officers to make lateral transitions out of warfare communities; they feel this allows them to have both a Navy career and a family life. While they do not perceive the lateral transition as a sacrifice, they do acknowledge that it is a different experience. Beth represents it this way:

I guess the big decision I made was obviously to [lateral transition to a restricted line community] and I did that thinking that OK, I don't have to go on regular deployment stuff. I can have a family, stay in the military because I enjoy what I'm doing and kind of do it all, and that's why I did it. And I knew too that staying, staying on your regular [unrestricted line] track and going to department head tour and all this stuff wasn't going to allow me to do that, let alone ever see [my husband].

Other officers adjust their career goals (change trajectory) to achieve balance between work in the military and family. Wendy decides that with four children, a successful career is now defined as being an O-5 and making it to 20 years of service and retirement:

And I have to balance that with the fact that I was also committed to the Navy and it just didn't make any sense for me once I had a child just to get out at that point because I had invested all this time in the Navy. And I figured I could make it work to stay in the Navy and complete my 20 year career and then get out. So I knew I didn't want to do any more than 20 years in the Navy because I want to be able to focus my time on my kids. So, I mean, it was a very easy decision, one I don't have any regrets about.

Some couples talk about balance in terms of flexibility to choose a trajectory that allows them to achieve all their personal and professional goals. One couple finds that they cannot achieve their goals with both partners on active duty in the Navy, but decides that the Navy Reserves could give them the flexibility to have a

Navy career, a viable civilian career, and a family life with children. Amy explains why she thinks the Reserves work for her family, “After thinking about it a lot and decided the Reserves for me were a good fit, still love the Navy, still was very ambitious, still wanted to do things and I could still have a family.” Her husband, Alan, provides additional detail on how they balance two military careers, two civilian careers, and a family:

Except, now you also have a day job and so it forces you to really rack and stack your life. Well what’s going to come first, what’s going to come second, how do you prioritize so you know what to give on? And with both of us in the Reserves, there’s the extra calculation of, OK, well when two Reserve careers get in conflict, what wins? Hers does. Because, you know, I’ve got, I’m going to focus on the day job.

Many couples perceive balance for work and family to be achieved with an associated cost in the form of compromises and sacrifices, either work or family related. At the other end of the spectrum, some couples believe that sacrificing a career is not the only option. Yancey depicts his perspective on compromises and sacrifices in his career as a temporal quality:

But the whole time it’s been kind of a balance between work and home and trying to find that right balance. And for the most part I have tried not to sacrifice one for the other. If I have sacrificed, it’s generally been a short term sacrifice and it’s generally work, which is kind of something I don’t want to do. I want to make sure I’m kind of keeping them in balance.

Other couples believe the Navy is trying to help them achieve balance in their work and family lives. They say the Navy wants to provide examples of how to have it all for other couples to emulate. Elise gives her view of what the Navy wants, “I think the SWO community’s looking for that cookie cutter...woman with kids, in

command, successful...they want that person to show to all the junior women that hey, you can make it work too.”

Pathways to balancing work and family vary based on what balance means to the couple and is personalized for their individual life course. For some couples it means accepting compromises or sacrifices whereas for others it means not sacrificing. The options and choices couples make sets them on different pathways at work (lateral transition, retirement, Reserves) in the military context of how they combine work and family.

Integrating children

The organizational structural constraints of integrating children in the life course are most often discussed in terms of the timing of children, childcare options, and work schedules with children. The timing of children for dual military couples is influenced by Navy policy which prohibits women from being assigned to ships beyond the 20th week of pregnancy. Flight personnel must receive a waiver to fly while pregnant until the 28th week of pregnancy when they are no longer allowed to fly. These couples perceive the pregnancy policy as not only a policy, but a constraint for their career and family planning that is reinforced through Navy culture and stigma. Maintaining a viable career as an aviator is extremely difficult as a woman since it is expected that aviators will spend most of their tours in flying assignments even on shore duty.

SWO and SWO(N) female officers have a little more flexibility with two opportunities in the first 18 years of their careers to have children. The first 18 years of their career typically equates to ages 22 through 40 when many women are trying

to start families. Many women are not married by the time they reach the first shore duty tour, which is 18 months long, when they are typically 25 to 26 years old. The average age of the women in this study when they married was 28 years old. To have children in the typical life course sequence of marriage and then children, these women can either wait until the next shore duty opportunity in their mid-thirties, lateral transition to another warfare community, separate from the Navy, have children during their sea duty tours, or adopt. The other obvious option is for these families not to have children, but most want to have children. Elise explains how the timing of children worked for her, “to have kids or not to have kids and when do you have kids. I mean that’s really, that decision is made for me by my career pipeline.”

Jessica discusses their family plan on when they plan to have children:

So the plan right now is we said we would start trying for our first kid in [3 years]. So I’ll be 29, almost 30. And to try and do two [children] in a row as close together as we can and then stop. Because if I execute my second sea duty, I have 30 month orders, then I’ll be able to go to two shore duties in a row after that so that’s kind of the ideal time. I’ll have to do some kind of other competitive tour, be it training command or watch floor, but it will be shore duty and a department head tour.

Melissa illustrates the timing of children in shore duty opportunities as they overlap with her biological age:

And so if you’re married before your first shore duty, then it’s great. It’s a great window to have children. We got married on this shore duty; we’re not having children right away. And then it would be another three, four years before I’m on shore duty again, which would be a three year window. By that point I’d be 34, 35 years old.

Delaying having children is a common theme among these couples, which works out for some couples, while other couples have fertility problems or are not

able to have as many children as they would like. Beth talks about the impact of the Navy forcing family decisions and the long-term impact on the life course:

...it's a stressful thing because I feel like decisions the Navy makes affect us long-term way beyond the Navy with family. [The Navy's] not concerned about that. That affects the outcome of how many kids we have, and when we have them. That's a huge stressor.

Isabel talks about marrying later and the impact of waiting to start a family on their pathway:

When we were in Guam, we tried to have a child through natural childbirth and were unsuccessful. So immediately we went through fertility testing, that kind of stuff, and basically they didn't say we couldn't have kids, they just basically said, it would be more of a challenge than most normal couples would have.

In addition to timing children with the wife's career path, these couples have to be collocated and not deployed which is often an influence on delaying having children. Vanessa expresses her frustration with trying to get collocated so they can start a family after marrying later in her career, "So the whole point of trying to get him collocated here is this is my time when we can have kids. And so for the first 9 months of when we could actually try, we weren't collocated."

Other couples consider adoption or did adopt because of infertility problems based on being older. After giving birth to her first child, Faith feels like they ran out of time for a second child:

I'm almost 40 and we thought about adoption. Actually when I was getting off of BATAAN, we were working on adoption, but he got stationed apart and we just said this is too hard. I mean we had been going through a lot of applications. We were going to adopt from Guatemala. We were quite a ways along in it, but then when he got stationed up here we just stopped. So yeah, I think we'll stop at one. Maybe, chances are we'd adopt an older child or something.

A few couples choose not to have children up to this point in their careers so that they can focus on their work and because children are not a priority for them yet. Claire is an O-5 aviator heading to command a squadron next and she explains her situation:

And I guess I've always wanted to stay in the cockpit, stay in the flight station, stay in the plane, and once you pass a certain trimester, you can't do that anymore. I guess in a personal or a selfish move, it's been a choice that I've made. I haven't wanted to give that up. It's something that we talk about. But I guess it's not necessarily a priority. I don't have a driving need, I don't feel a driving need and neither does he. I think awhile ago when we first got married, he definitely felt a desire to have a family a little bit more immediately than I did. But I'd say a lot of my girlfriends who are contemporaries right now are of the same opinion, who are in the military, who are still kind of doing you know operation mindset, something that we've, or at least I've chosen to postpone. It's not out of the question, but it's not something that I'm considering at least right now with the next tour coming up.

Many of the women discuss the perception that they have to choose between having children and having a career in the Navy. Kate explains, "To keep a female officer in, you have to allow them the option to have a family. Women don't want to choose." Stephanie feels that she does not necessarily have to choose and that other women should not feel like they have to choose between career and family:

Because I don't want people to think that that's a choice that they need to make, because I haven't found that. But I understand that a lot better at 37 than I did at 22. That's something the [SWO] community has struggled with as well because the surface community has put a lot of time and effort into recruiting women and some of the feedback that they've gotten is well, you know I have to choose. I have to choose whether I'm going to be, whether I'm going to have family or whether I'm going to be, as my grandmother would say, a "career girl." I just don't like that perception. Everybody needs to make choices that are best for them and everybody's choices are not the same and everything... One woman's choice should not be judged against another's.

Stigmatizing women who get pregnant in the Navy is a cultural constraint that serves to deter women from having children. This stigma is associated with women getting pregnant to avoid sea duty or deployments. Every woman in this study talks about the stigma of pregnancy but cannot decide where it comes from or when they first heard it. Most of the men mention it also, but not with the emphasis that the women discuss it. With the women, it is a point of pride and presented as a self-enforced rule they are bound by within their circle of officers. Of the 14 women in this study with children, only two were pregnant during times they perceive as less than optimal. Vanessa describes the pregnancy stigma from her experience:

Just the whole stigma I've seen on all my ships, I've had officers and enlisted get pregnant and then they get taken off and everyone's mad at them. It's not good for either side. You shouldn't have to look at getting pregnant as like punishment, which for me it would have been. You know it's been drilled into our head for so long, since I was 18 years old. If you get pregnant, you're going to get kicked out of the Academy. If you get pregnant, you're not going to be able to stay on track for your career. If you get pregnant, you're going to miss your career timing.

Melissa describes the stigma from a mission perspective:

There's really a stigma against women having babies while they're at sea, and I kind of agree with that. I'm probably one of the worst propagators of the stigma, because I think when you're on a ship, you have a mission to do and you need to get the job done.

Stephanie had a personal experience with getting pregnant on sea duty during her first tour as a SWO. From a life course trajectory and outcome perspective, it did not affect her career negatively and her career path looks like a typical SWO career path. She reflects on her pregnancy experience:

I felt like I had a "scarlet letter" on me a little bit because, although I didn't understand it at the time because I was too young and immature, but looking back on it, I really was kind of sent off the ship. And even

though the Captain had said, he was a big religious guy, he was like, well you know, these things happen you know and it's good to know you, here you go. I was off the ship in a couple days and even though outwardly there were never any signs of hostility or you let us down or anything like that, really things were not done right. I was really sent off the ship in kind of the middle of the night kind of scenario and I think looking back, that that's not how I would have handled it if I was the CO.

Stephanie is going to command a ship next and looked back on her career and earlier pregnancy and views it as a different pathway:

My long view is did it really matter in hindsight? No. Got pregnant with Susan unexpectedly, still got my SWO pin, I still went to department head. I still got all the things done that needed to get done. I just did it my own way.

Many people feel that looking at their career paths, trying to time children during responsible and appropriate times, and not waiting too long that fertility will be a potential problem, that there is not a right time to have children in the life course. Harry explains, "If you wait, you'll just keep waiting, keep waiting, and keep waiting, and there's just never going to be a right time. Not a real right time." Other couples look at trying to time and schedule getting pregnant and having children as not being within their control. Stephanie defends not having more than one child:

A question I get a lot, especially from younger female officers, is well you only have one child, did you only decide to have one child because you had a career? And fortunately I have to say that no, that wasn't the case. You know, babies come when babies come and we wanted to have more children and we didn't. And so now I kind of feel like I have to make an excuse for that, that I feel like I should tell everybody that no, no we really did want to have more kids. Because I don't want people to think that that's a choice that they need to make, because I haven't found that.

Finding the right fit for childcare options for these dual military couples influenced their life course through their decisions to relocate or collocate for job

assignments considering childcare options. The childcare solutions are individualized for a couple's work and family situation and include: civilian daycare, military daycare, au pairs, nannies, in-home childcare providers, neighbors, and extended family. Both husband and wife are typically involved in the decision process for childcare and their decision becomes an integral part of the work and family pathway affecting their daily routine and the ability to attain their career goals. Many couples prefer to use the military Child Development Center (CDC) provided at their military base because of the flexibility for being able to pick up and drop off their children as well as because the military subsidizes the service, making it more affordable than civilian childcare options. Zach explains his preference for the military childcare option:

Yeah, I've been reasonably, it's not the world's greatest situation; I mean there are better daycares out there probably. But for what we pay, I thought we were getting...and there's certain things, I mean the nice thing about the CDCs are they understand people are in the military. So if you gotta drop them off at 6:30 A.M. in the morning, I mean there are a lot of childcare centers where you've gotta drop them off at 8:00 A.M. and you've gotta pick them up at 5:30 P.M. and if you don't, you're going to jail or paying hundreds of dollars. The CDC, it's very nice that they, OK, they open at 6:00 A.M. and they understand if you gotta pick them up at 6:00 P.M. or 6:30 P.M. because you had something on the ship that ran over or your wife's [on travel]. They'll kind of accommodate and be understanding of certain situations. So that's been, that's a nice tradeoff. And the other thing is they're subsidized. Here in the DC area you're paying much less. For childcare in DC we'd pay more than our mortgage for our house to put two kids in a [civilian] daycare center. I mean that's just, I mean we're dual O-5s making a lot of money, but to siphon off a third of your income for childcare is kind of hurting you.

The most common complaint about the military CDC is the long waiting list which often makes it an unviable option. Dual military couples receive priority for

placing their children in the CDC, but in many cases the waiting list is still too long.

Evan describes their experience trying to get their children into the CDC:

...getting into the CDC is next to impossible. We were told we were kind of top priority other than a single military parent and we've yet to be able to get into any of the CDCs, not in Hawaii, not in here. And I think we did eventually get into the one up in Rhode Island after a couple months, but by that point we had made the decision to go with an au pair.

Using extended family for short periods of childcare and for long-term childcare is a common strategy among several of the couples with children. For those without children and planning to start a family, planning to locate near extended family is often the goal to help out with childcare. Some couples even help their parents move to their location to help with their childcare situation. Scott reveals how this worked for his family:

So the decision we made was we shelled out the cash to move my parents from Massachusetts to down here. So we kind of had that ready-made babysitter. And they've moved around a little bit since they've been here. In fact, now they live two streets over. So it's really nice, it's easy. In the mornings now we drop Susan off over there before she goes to work, she catches the school bus over there and things are good...we built the command structure if you will, by bringing my parents here. I mean, no way would we be able to do what we're doing if they didn't live here.

Having two incomes helps provide these couples with the flexibility to find a childcare solution that fits their family's needs. For Wendy, the ability to pay for two childcare providers to help with her four children is important to her family:

In fact when I had my daughter, the last one, we actually had the nanny that watched my daughter, my first daughter, she came back and lived with us for six months. So we had her in addition to the au pair. We pretty much had two caregivers in the house. So Cheryl watched the baby and that's all she did was take care of the baby and then Nancy watched the other three because it went through the summer and the summer's a hard time when they're not in school. So Nancy

could take the kids and do whatever she wanted and the baby slept and napped and did what it did until the school year started. And by then the baby was old enough and established so now we're back down to the au pair. And financially that was a burden, but the peace of mind that it gave us was definitely worth it. And again, that's something like an enlisted person wouldn't be able to afford. We were able to afford because we were dual military and we're O-5s, so I feel for those that can't necessarily work it that way...

When it came to identifying a primary parent, not necessarily for providing daycare since all the parents work, but is the primary provider for the children's needs outside of daycare, most of the couples share the responsibilities. By sharing childcare responsibility, these couples were able to maintain stable work career paths and the life course trajectory they have created. The involvement of the fathers ranges from sharing responsibility for the children's needs to being the primary provider. Helen explains how her husband's involvement helps her:

...he has been really active. A lot of people, what I'm learning more is that not all men are that actively involved in the kids. He is very actively involved with the kids. And he's big time with her a lot. Like from the time I hit TPS we've split late nights and she's been, he's been the one, for awhile there I thought the Pediatrician thought I was a neglectful mother because he'd always be the one in there with her. He's been the one who's done swimming lessons with her in the summer and that kind of stuff. He's been extraordinarily active.

Ike explains his role as the primary provider for his children while his wife was on sea duty and he was on shore duty:

When we found out she was pregnant, we made a decision to go ahead and maintain those [sea duty] orders for her and I would just basically stay home [after work] with the two kids. I know it was a heavy concern for her on whether or not I could handle being at home with an infant and a toddler so I know that weighed a lot on her. Basically we talked a lot about it and decided it was doable.

While the fathers are involved in the sharing of the responsibility of providing for the children's needs, the mothers still feel that they have inherent commitment as

a mother for being the primary provider. Beth portrays her perspective that she should be the primary provider because she is not able to let go:

He brought it up at one point, and I was like, what? You think I'm going to be comfortable with...? We did talk about it at one point because we were talking about next jobs. And he's like well, what if they offered you a job and they wanted you to go up to DC next and I get a job down there? And he's like well, I can just come down there and you can be up in DC and then I'll be with the boy the whole time and you can...and I was like, I don't like that idea. It's no offense against your care, it's just I think it's a Mom-child thing, like you just, it's hard to just completely let go.

Laura gives her perspective as mothers being naturally the logical choice for a primary provider:

I think it's nature's way. I mean when push comes to shove, who's going to take care of the kids? The mom is. That's kind of just the way I think we're wired. And that's not an absolute, it's not always the way it is with every family, but I think it's by and whole, that's just the way it is. For the most part, women can stand a lot more in terms of their patience, like their patience can go a lot farther. Seems again, this is all based on my very limited nine months of experience, but it just seems like mothers have that longer stretch of patience than fathers.

Whether the mother is the primary provider or not, the fathers in these couples with children are involved to some extent out of necessity. For their wives to have Navy careers including sea duty tours and deployments, the fathers need to be available and capable of providing care for their children which they all do to some extent.

Coordinating work schedules with children is another structural constraint which influences the decision-making of these couples. The demands of a Navy career are influenced by a culture which is greedy for the workers' devotion of time and energy. Most of these officers convey that they learn early in their careers that to

be as competitive as possible, they have to work long hours even if they do not really have anything specific to accomplish. Most of them do not complain about this when they are single or do not have children. Ike perceives this culture of putting in time as unnecessary for the mission:

...there are people that when you come to work are there, they're there when you leave. You don't really know what they're doing but they're there all the time, on the grind, people assume they're doing great things and defending democracy when in actuality they're trying to put on that air I guess.

Zoe perceives a change in the Navy's culture to where it is now more accepted not to work long hours:

But I think a lot now, that a lot more COs do have that family view and it's more accepted to leave at a decent hour. I don't know if, I think things have changed. Or I don't know if it's just my perspective or I think things kind of have changed as far as expectations from the Navy that this isn't, you're not supposed to have to be a workaholic.

For most of the couples with children, they find it stressful when they have children in daycare and they cannot work the long hours they are accustomed to working. Similarly, if they have set work hours that their supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates are working; having a daycare schedule that does not allow them to work those hours is also stressful. Yancey describes the change in his perception of work hours after having their daughter, "For daycare right now, it's open for 10 hours. There's been many times at work where I've sat there and said hey, I'm going to have to do this tomorrow because I have to go get my kids." Some couples feel that their peers perceive a lack of commitment to the job or command when parents have to come to work later or leave earlier because of daycare hours. Stephanie explains her negative reaction from peers:

...which I sometimes have taken some flack for. Perhaps some people's lack of commitment, that you're not here, you don't work as long as I do. I've never felt that from my boss. I've gotten it from peers, so that's kind of been a hard row to hoe, so to say.

Some officers feel guilty for not being able to start and end their workday when everyone else does. Faith expresses her frustration with her work hours at one command:

Because the days there started, like the shifts started at 5:30 AM. Daycare doesn't open up at 5:30 A.M., not to mention I wouldn't want to drop my child off at 5:30 A.M. So I was always dropping her off as soon as it was open. And so that was always a big guilt factor for me.

Several couples cope with the stress of working fewer hours by adopting a performance counts attitude. They feel that if they can accomplish the work tasks required and meet deadlines for required products, then they feel good about working the hours they need to accommodate their family and childcare situation. Nora explains her view of performance and work hours:

But when I'm at work, they know that I get all my work done. I think you might have issues with that if you're not, if you're just the average performer or poor performer, then they may give you a little more hassle about doing things like that. But when I'm at work, I get everything done. I go, I do it and I do it as good as I can and they're always appreciative of that. So if I do have something I have to go and do, there's never any issue.

All of the couples with children convey their appreciation for their supervisors in the Navy and the flexibility they provide for their work-family situation as dual military couples. The only negative perceptions they have are based on peers or their own internal conflict with the stated work hours and trying to match childcare hours. These officers perceive being given the flexibility and time to do what they need to

do for their families. Zoe gives an account of how her changing childcare and school requirements for her twin girls affect her work schedule:

Like I said, the last few bosses that I've had have been very family friendly, but like to everybody, so that was nice that they understood. Like even here, last year the girls were at the Child Development Center and they could be dropped off before when I would consider my regular working hours. Well now the girls go to Kindergarten and there's no pre-school care. The school doesn't offer it. I don't know, it's not like I can drop them off here and pick them up and bring them down to Kindergarten. So I just told my boss I would start later, get in about 8:20 A.M. because I can't drop them off before [7:50 A.M.] and then he just wrote back: "Go Mom" on the e-mail.

Finally, the deployments for each spouse leave one parent at home to care for the children by themselves at some point. Several of the parents complain about being a single parent for periods of time because of deployments and underway periods for their commands. Zoe recounts how she feels being a single parent with Zach deployed and the potential of not being collocated for the next job assignments:

I wonder if I can take being a single mom for two or three years. I mean I had to do it for like Zach's deployments. He was deployed to Afghanistan when the girls were only one. He was away for seven months. Did it while he was in Norfolk, a six month deployment plus they were out a lot. A lot of sea trials, and then they went out for another deployment. He got two months of that before he transferred. It was going to be a four month deployment. He got transferred after doing two of it. But I mean, so put it all together, I was a single parent for a lot of it.

Integrating children into the pathways of dual military couples provides a key insight into the influence of institutional and cultural structures on the decisions with which these couples are faced. Timing children within institutional timelines for career paths, biological time for fertility, and life stage for marriage produces a variation in pathways which results in fewer or no children, or career transitions that are perceived to allow more flexibility for having a career and family.

Dealing with time away

The sacrifices involved with serving in the Navy are most often referred to as dealing with time away by dual military couples. The cumulative amount of time these couples spend apart is measured in years for most couples. In every case, each couple describes time away from their family as the biggest sacrifice they make by being a dual military couple. Finding time to spend together, making time to spend together, maximizing time together, and protecting time together are just some of the many variations these couples use to describe the importance of time. As deployments and time away are central to these couples' decisions, experiences, and pathways, they develop coping strategies to deal with time away. The couples in this study depict how they deal with time away as being collocated but deployed, maximizing time together when they are home, adjusting and readjusting from being gone, being away from children, and the importance of communicating while apart. To summarize these couples' experiences, Olivia says, "We spend twice as much time away as other [Navy] couples."

Many of these couples experienced being collocated and able to live in the same house but spend a significant amount of time apart because of deployments and operational schedules. When this experience occurs early in work careers and the family life course, it influences later work and family decision-making in determining pathways. Changes to pathways take the form of delaying or not having children, transitions to warfare communities that are less sea duty-intensive, separation from the Navy, or strategically adapting their work and family careers. Lance describes his experience during their early years of marriage, "[Surface nuclear] tours are hard

tours, especially when every time her ship pulled in, my ship pulled out. Every time my ship pulled in, her ship pulled out. I estimate the first two years we were married, we saw each other six or seven months total. So that's pretty difficult." Claire rationalizes the experience of being separated by looking back and placing the separations in the context of their entire career and marriage when she states:

We did multiple back to back deployments, so that would be a year apart, six months together, a year apart. So we had, somebody was always home for the dogs. But a year in the grand scheme now looking back on it, because we've been married for 15 years, doesn't seem like that big of a deal, but at the time it definitely was a big deal... especially the first few deployments not knowing what to expect.

Because dual military couples spend so much time apart, when they are together they maximize their time together and helping to maintain their life course trajectory. The couples in this study develop different strategies and ways to make the most of any time they might get together. Charles says this started early in their careers and marriage and became integral to their perspective on life and reports, "Claire had to go down to Corpus [Christi] and that really got us discussing how were we going to facilitate the next opportunity to be together which is definitely kind of the mindset as a young married couple in maximizing time together." The desire to spend time together when they were not deployed influenced couples' work schedules and desire to spend long hours at work.

When separated from each other, these couples do not mind spending long hours at work and find it helpful in keeping busy while their spouse is gone. But when they are together at home, Dana explains, "But when Doug was home, it was the exact opposite. It's ticking on 4 o'clock, see you later. I'll do the paperwork

tomorrow.” Although a spouse might be deployed, when their ship makes a port visit overseas, their partners often take time off from work to fly out and meet them for a couple days to help break up the long separations. One couple even devised a way to see each other while they were both deployed and on different ships, as Patrick recounts during one deployment, “But when the ships got close enough together, we were doing [underway replenishment] and stuff like that, we would do sign language back and forth.

One of the detractors to spending so much time away and wanting to be together as much as possible is the repetitive adjusting and readjusting. Many of these couples talk about the stress of the constant change in their lives by both of them coming and going without being able to establish a routine at home. Gary describes the routine of deploying as:

I think we did a really good job of falling into a routine of that. We got really [good], the first two months of each deployment were definitely the hardest, because you establish that routine, you kind of figure out who you are as a couple, but still as an individual because your significant other’s around the world. So you figure that out in the first two months and then the next four months hopefully go by a lot faster and you’re in the routine where talking on the phone cuts it. And then you see each other for three days, and then that erases all that and you get, you’re so excited to see each other, then you gotta do it all over again. So that was hard.

From a more positive perspective, some couples acknowledge that the return and reunion time after deployments is a good aspect to the constant coming and going in their lives. Scott portrays their family’s experience in this manner, “Every time we come home it’s like having a little honeymoon. I mean we’ve done...eight deployments between us. So hey, every six to nine months or nine to 12 months, 15 months, we get to get acquainted all over again.”

For those couples with children, being away from children is an aspect of spending time away that is aggravated by the repetitive adjusting and readjusting. For those couples with children, combining the roles of parent and service member comes into conflict. How these conflicts are resolved often influences career decision-making and the life course trajectory for the couple. Isabel recounts how her last deployment and its impact on her son is challenging:

It did wonders for the career, but...I still feel like we're paying for it. It's still, it's tough at home and it's tough on the kids and emotionally for me every time I hear the phrase, oh well when you weren't here we did..., and it's not from my husband, it's from my son trying to explain when he met so and so and he did something. And [my son's] trying to explain to me what he did, but it starts with when you weren't here...listening to him in conversations, we're up one night and he was talking to me asking me about the cat. The cat's name is Phoenix, and he asked me where is Phoenix's mother? And I said, well I don't know. And he said, is she on the ship? And my husband said [my son] was at the playground once and he asked a little boy...so is your mother on the ship? And [my son] thinks everybody has a mommy and daddy, but their mother must be on the ship if he doesn't see them.

Dual military couples deal with time away from family by effectively communicating while apart. While being separated from a spouse happens to almost all military families at some point, dual military couples are separated twice as much and feel that effective communication is important to a strong relationship, as well as managing careers and making decisions long distance. Every couple has their own method of communicating, routines, and rules. Many of them have been in the middle of phone conversations or e-mail exchanges when they find that one of them has lost communication connectivity which sometimes results in misunderstandings and hurt feelings on the other end. Dana sums up her advice for communicating while apart:

...we kind of have this thing after we got burned with the e-mail shutting down on the ship, that if you're mad, it's much better to go to your stateroom and write your e-mail on Microsoft Word, save it, sleep on it, and then if you're still that angry, cut and paste it into an e-mail and by all means, hit send. But don't ever just hit send, because inevitably as soon as you do, e-mail on the ship is going to [stop working], and the person on the other end is going to get an angry e-mail and then you're not going to be able to do anything about it for two days.

Brad feels that being separated so often has made him more effective in communicating with Beth:

Communication with her, in an odd sense...people say absence makes the heart grow fonder. It's not necessarily more fond. It's that it's...we've had to verbalize our communication a lot more because of the distances we've had. Literally within months of us meeting each other...in the romantic sense...we [found ourselves] 3000 miles apart. And we spoke multiple times on the telephone and so you have to be clear in what you're saying and be able to verbalize it repeatedly to say hey, this is where I'm sitting at. So I believe we have great communication from that perspective.

Dealing with time away gives the concept of time a different meaning for dual military couples. Time for these couples is not related to the typical division of labor or household and childcare duties of other dual career couples. These couples talk about time in the context of months and years more often than the daily schedule of hours more often discussed in the work and family literature. The strategies they use to protect time together are often innovative and display their human agency and knowledge of the institutional structures they work and live within.

Motivations

Despite the negative aspects of challenges such as dealing with time away, these couples maintain motivations to continue serving together because of the value

they place on service, mission, and their military identity. These couples, like most Navy officers, have a desire and motivation to serve their country which in historical location is important because of the all-volunteer force's dependence on people who volunteer to serve their country. The interaction of the organizational constraints with family processes has not hindered this call to serve and may have enhanced their desire to serve together. Similarly, these couples love their job and place a high value on accomplishing the Navy's mission. For the wives in this study, maintaining their individual military identity and status is important from a cultural location perspective as they confront the normative expectations of a male-dominated institution as it intersects with the gendered family roles.

Valuing service

These couples are motivated to overcome the challenges of managing two careers, and the frustrations of collocation and time away, because they value service to their country. Some officers serve their country out of a need to contribute as a citizen and some see service as a part of their identity. Still other people take great pride in representing themselves and what they accomplish in serving their country individually, as well as the value in serving together as a family. A few participants discuss whether serving is just a job or something more. Finally, many couples see their service as an example for young people including their own children and are aware that they are role models for others. Brad relates generally what service meant to him when he describes his decision to join the military:

...a lot of people ask me, how do you go from wanting to be in the Peace Corps to all of a sudden joining the military? Because they see that as diametrically opposed. In my mind they're very, very closely aligned. Having gone through Boy Scouts and always done service

kinds of things, I saw it as service to my country, one way or the other. It was just, OK, I'm going to be officially doing it as a military person.

For many of the dual military couples, taking pride in service is a common theme. Serving her country is important to Kate and being deployed to Iraq reinforced her value of service in what she was able to help accomplish as she states, "I came home and a few months into it I just said I don't want to...get out. I'm really proud of what we did there." Mark reflects on his family's experiences in relation to their recent decision to separate from the Navy and says, "We both have really good experiences. I think we both did fairly good jobs that we're proud of. But in the end, there's a lot more out there." All of these couples are proud of their service to the Navy and the country and in some cases this became a part of their identity.

Some couples value service and explain it as a part of their personal identity. Decision-making is influenced by the importance these officers attribute to serving in the Navy, and specifically for decisions on whether to stay in the Navy. In considering her recent decision to stay in the Navy and lateral transfer to another warfare community, Laura gives this account, "Being part of the Navy, being part of something. I'm very patriotic. And being part of the military is important, that idea of service." Amy decided to leave active duty and join the Reserves which helps her maintain her military identity which is important to her, as she discloses:

That I have this outlook, that I do give up my Navy self, that I'm still engaged and have a tie to that part of me that I always liked which was service and service to country. This has been my entire adult life. I want to maintain some element of that. Again, that's hard to explain to people that haven't realized it. I certainly have, I don't even know if I can think of someone that I can discuss my fears about mobilizing [back to active duty] as a mother with, without them going ballistic saying you're stupid, get out, there's no one keeping you in. Unless you're talking to another military person, they don't understand the

drive to be in [the military]. So the reward you get from that is strong and comes with other sacrifices. But it's hard to translate to someone who doesn't have service, doesn't feel the pull to do something bigger than themselves or patriotic or anything like that, all insufficient words.

Because they value service and it becomes a part of their personal identity for some couples, serving also increases commitment to the Navy. Being in the military, a sense of commitment is instilled from the first time people put on the uniform. Commitment is reinforced through military culture and is evident when Kate discusses when she found out she was going on a short notice deployment for a year to Iraq, "But then once I decided, once I was going, not that I decided, we just sucked it up....I mean there's an element to wearing the uniform, you turn around and go."

People who are satisfied and enjoy serving are more committed to staying in the Navy as Brad relates, "Every command I've been in professionally has just reinforced my commitment to stay in. It's like it's the right thing to do, we're doing the right job. There's no better place to do it in." Brad also provides a different perspective on commitment and the sacrifices that are associated with being allowed to serve when he says, "I think I had a good understanding of what privileges and rights I was giving up getting in the military...And that wasn't a problem, because I thought it was, personally, I thought it was a privilege to serve. So, it's like, it's the honorable thing."

Commitment to staying in the Navy is reinforced in these couples and has the added nuance of increasing commitment to serving together which creates conflict with the organization that is not designed for two military members in one family. Some of these couples found that sharing their value of service is important to helping

them both continuing to serve. Lance explains, “Laura and I both have a desire to serve our country, so that in itself is a benefit. That’s why we’re staying dual military.” Stephanie explains the importance of service from a family perspective, “I feel like our lives are very rich and I feel that, I kind of joke too that we’re the only family I know who has a mission statement because we serve, that’s our mission.” Jack describes the value of both he and Jessica serving in terms of compromises that need to be made so that both partners can achieve their goal of service, “...but over the course of a career you want to look back and think wow, that’s why people join the military. It’s like yeah, I get to fly planes and feel like I’m making a difference in some way or shape or form. So you can’t deny that other person that.”

The pride many of these couples take in what they do individually and as a couple in their service is indicative of how they talk about being role models to friends and family, as well as those junior to them in the Navy. Several of the couples with children talk about their role in providing a good example to their children and that service to the country is valuable and desirable. Amy explains her hopes that their family legacy of service would be carried on by her kids:

...I hope that one day when our kids are older they will realize there is also a reward in having a family legacy and a strong family legacy from both aspects, mother and father, of service. Hopefully that will help Amanda be a strong, happy, confident woman when she grows up. Those rewards are ones that I hope for the future. I don’t see them now, there’s no way to. But it’s one of the reasons I stay in, some tangential reason, but I do want, I want to be able to give that as a gift to my children. And I want them to be able to see everything as an option. I want them to be a 17-year old who thinks that they can do anything. I don’t want them to think that you have to quit, you have to get out, you have to alter your life and do things that you don’t want to do and be unhappy, because you know, kids, or because of something in life that forces you to do that. I want them to find a way to make it work. We’ll see if they do.

Often these officers as parents are not completely aware of the impact they have on their children as positive role models which Scott explains when talking about Stephanie as a role model for their daughter:

...now she's going to see you go command a ship. In fact she just did a project for school, and on the thing she wrote, my mom, Captain of the ship. Stuff like that's, I think nowadays she sees it a little more, but she's never really, she's never really looked at it like that even though myself, her [husband], I point that out to her, I point out the role model that she is...

Other couples discuss teaching their children what it means to serve and present the military and service to the country as a positive value worth pursuing. Yvonne conveys, "...I don't mind that they see the Navy as a good and a positive thing, they develop patriotism and they understand the meaning of service."

For many of the couples, serving in the military is more than a job which has both positive and negative aspects. Following Moskos' institution or occupation argument, some of these officers struggle with how ingrained the military is in their family life and their identity that when it comes time to make career decisions on whether to stay in the Navy, they are conflicted with their options, as Gary states:

This is your life. This is the culture that we live in. This is what we do day in and day out. These are the people we hang out with. And then to make that decision, I gotta get off this train for these reasons is not an easy one to do. So I think we've got the right priorities in line. Now it's making those tough decisions on how to follow those priorities.

Later in the interview Gary rationalizes the Navy as only a job in the upcoming decision his wife, Gloria, is making to leave the Navy so they can start having children, "That's, in essence, this is just a job when you break it down. Yeah it's important to us and it becomes a large part of our identity but it is just a job."

Dual military couples have a common desire to serve their country in the Navy. The value of service, being able to serve together, and providing good role models motivates these families to find a life course trajectory to serve together in today's historical and cultural location. In some cases they continue service when they leave active duty by joining the Navy Reserves helping to retain an important value and reach their goal to continue serving their country.

Valuing mission

Just as important from a historical location perspective for maintaining an all-volunteer military is the importance these couples place on their job. Closely related and interdependent to valuing service, valuing mission reinforces the value of service for these dual military couples. These officers are motivated to be members of a team that is task-oriented and is successful in accomplishing the stated goals of the team. Many feel this mission-oriented attitude is instilled by the military while others feel that is something they have always valued. The other aspect of this property the couples discuss is the desire to have their hard work and sacrifices in serving their country matter and contribute to a greater good. Jessica explains how she values the Navy's mission when she describes deploying:

One of the things that I love about deploying, and this is terrible to say, is the ability you have to some extent to ignore your life and say I have more important things to do and I'm going to focus on the mission to the detriment of everything else and that's socially acceptable at this point. And I like the freedom that that has because I love what I do.

Several couples recognize the importance of the mission they are assigned as naval officers and realize that when it comes to a conflict between family and mission, the importance of the mission outweighs their family concerns. This work-

family conflict results in some couples deciding that the only right solution is for them to separate from the Navy because staying in is not fair to their family or the Navy. Melissa explains this conflict with her description of how she and her husband view the value of mission, “We’re both very committed, mission-oriented people and 90 percent of the time, if we stayed in the Navy, we would probably choose mission over family, because that’s just our personalities.” Dana explains the value of mission as more of a personal need:

...it was also because of that, I don’t know what you call it, they instill it, that mission commitment, in you at the Naval Academy. That you want to be a part of the team, you want to help achieve the mission, and you want to do something that is going to be professionally satisfying.

The value of mission also has the dimension of mattering or sense of contribution to a greater goal for many couples. Some of these officers refer to their efforts to contribute to a larger perspective of an overall military or political strategy for the country as contributing to the “fight”, as Doug reveals, “...fill that need of us really feeling like we were contributing to the fight and doing, you know, having a warfare specialty and having a contribution.” Whether it is a personal perspective of being team and mission-oriented or needing to feel like they are contributing to a larger national strategy or goal, these couples find value in their mission as an integral characteristic of developing their pathway to serving their country.

Understanding women’s military identity and status

Another historical and cultural location aspect is found specifically in women’s desire to maintain a separate professional identity and status from their husband. The value these women place on their professional identity is influential in

the trajectory they create for their family. Several women in this study talk about the importance of being self-sufficient in terms of women's military identity and status. They want to be able to move on with their life if something ever happens to their husband. Being self-sufficient vests itself in the decision-making of these women because they are not willing to make career sacrifices that will put their work career at risk. Kate explains how she perceived being self-sufficient:

I like the fact that if Kirk falls out of the sky in a helicopter, I'm not going to be looking for a job at Starbucks. I mean I hate to think about him passing away and we've had to discuss those types of things, but I don't want to ever be dependent on a man. Because I've just seen so many women who have been and something tragic happens and you're just like wow, I gave up everything for this guy and he's in the Navy.

Nora's perspective on being self-sufficient varies in that she is interested in being able to provide for her family as the sole provider and give flexibility to her work-family pathway:

So one of my life goals was just I wanted to be in a position where it didn't matter whether I ended up falling in love with a starving artist, there would be enough money to have the family, you know, have a house, have a nice car, have food on the table or go out and have fun or whatever. Or occasionally go on family trips, stuff that I didn't get to do when I was little; I wanted to be able to do with my family. Kind of having that helps keep me be goal-oriented as far as what my career should or shouldn't be or where it should or shouldn't go.

Because the job assignment process is intertwined with the two work careers, some of the couples discuss the desire to make it publicly known that the jobs assigned are earned and not only a part of the collocation process. In some cases couples are able to be collocated and both assigned to very competitive and desirable jobs. While there are no instances of the men being concerned about earning the jobs based on their own merit, several of the women are concerned that this is a perception

among their peers. Charles discusses how his wife feels about the possibility of this perception, “She’s adamant about getting there on her own and I have every confidence that she did and she made good on it while she was there. If someone questioned her on that to this day, that would bother her.” Gloria recounts her concerns about the perception that they are collocated because of her husband:

I worry that the perception is that he’s the smart one and I’m the baggage a little bit...but I do worry a little bit about the perception. If they think I’m here based on merit or because we’re married and they had to collocate us.

Rachel’s perspective is based on being respected individually as an officer and a professional:

...me being a woman in the military, I want people to respect me that I’m a woman, but I also want to be respected that I can do my job just as well as anyone. Be it a woman or a man. And I don’t want to get special treatment because I am a woman, to be seen as different. I know that there [are] limitations, I’m not as strong as men, but I can be just as smart and I can perform intellectually and at a job just as well.

In addition to being judged on their merit, the women in these couples also convey their desire to have their own identity as a professional military officer that is separate from their identity as in a dual military couple. Kate expresses her thought on why having her own identity is important and valued:

I really want to have a career. I looked around at people that...and I worked with a lot of men whose wives...[who] stayed home. And I think a lot of time a military spouse feels like, especially the educated military spouse, feels like they really have given up a lot of themselves for their husband’s career. And they love their husband, they love being a mom, they love all that stuff. But a piece of women nowadays, I think especially when you’ve invested in your education, is to have an identity outside of that. And I really, I really enjoyed that. I mean, Kirk and I are always the same identity kind of, like we’re a team, but I like having...me making an impact. I really enjoy that.

Jessica had planned to separate from the Navy to have children, but finds that her identity as a naval officer is too important to her:

So we do want children, but the hard part of it and the bigger thing we go back and forth on was, my original plan was when we have kids I'll be at the 10 year mark and I'm going to get out. But honestly, so much of my personal identity is tied up in what I do, that I'm not sure I'll be satisfied with being at home with the children. Not that I don't want them and not that I wouldn't like being involved and like have somebody else raising them, but I'm not sure I can walk away.

Other women find that through spending time with civilian Navy wives, they have a different perspective on what it means to be a military spouse and where they find meaning in their relationship. Yvonne illustrates her perspective on having a separate identity that is not attached to her husband's status:

Other times I've spent time with Navy wives have been like poking pencils in my eyeballs because the way they talk. Like oh my husband does this, and well you forget who my husband is, I'm like ugh, stop, stop. What about you? What about you as an individual? Are you going to live vicariously through your husband and use his status as your own? It doesn't sit right with me.

Chapter 9: Adapting Strategically

The couples are described in Chapter 4 in four groups based on the strategic selection process they use to create their prioritization strategy for work and family; summary descriptions were given there. In this chapter, additional detail is provided that provides a better understanding of the processes and decision-making by which these couples get to the strategy and the associated outcomes as described by the couples. These groups are based on how the couples adapt strategically and is a key life course concept in the human agency applied to developing pathways for these couples as they challenge and adapt to the institutional structures the Navy presents in the form of career paths and other personnel policies. While the structural constraints frustrate some of the couples in this study, they view the structure of career paths and institutional policies as challenges to be surmounted. Overcoming these restrictions is a function of their creativity, persistence, and desire to have two Navy careers and a family. The strategies they use shape their pathways and give meaning to their role transitions. Adapting strategically manifests itself through how some of the couples see themselves making decisions individually, while others prioritize career and family in different ways through their decision-making.

Choosing Family First

Eight couples in this study prioritize family before their work career. Whether work career decisions are made individually or jointly as a couple, dual military couples in this study reference decisions made in the life course when they talk about their family being their first priority. Most of the decisions are related to being

collocated in their job assignments as part of the adapting to the constraints of two career paths and the associated timing issues for career milestones. A couple talks about family being the most important when they make a career decision that allows them to be collocated but is not necessarily a career-enhancing decision. Ike explains making career decisions that kept him collocated with his wife:

I made some career choices based on...spouse collocation and living in the same place vice taking a job over here where I'm more likely to get promoted. But I am able to say I'm not regretting those decisions at this point.

Outcomes from using a family first strategy include lateral transition, separation from the Navy, and making career sacrifices. The sacrifices made for family include not being promoted, not taking career-enhancing jobs, not taking job opportunities that would have been personally challenging and exciting, and giving up command. Elise talks about her decision to turn down command at sea, "I think I've sacrificed, not my own choice, I'm not going to have command at sea. That's a big deal. I mean that's what I've been training for my whole career." In putting family first, Beth chooses a lateral transfer for her family:

So, I think [a restricted line community] was kind of the one thing I saw that could work out well for me. And of course when I was choosing to do all this, you know I talked to different people about it. And you know, it sounded like something that would work really well with a family and all these things.

Mark decides that making family his priority mean he cannot continue his career, "I feel like it's irresponsible to have a family and not be around in port and at sea and have so much of your mind occupied by this very abstract thing that they couldn't understand or see." Helen provides her thought process for why she would leave the Navy and give up her retirement to keep her family prioritized first:

And also I had to address the issue with me that if [my daughter] comes down with a sickness or she needs me home more, I'm gonna give [my Navy career] up. I'm gonna give the Navy up and that's just the end of it. And I told my husband that. I said if that means at 14 years, if that means at 16 years I'm out, then I'm out. I can always come back to it, not ideally, but her priority is more important to me. And I said it could be as much as we've got a wild child going down the wrong road and she needs a parent there. We just have to accept the fact that that could happen and that's what we're going to deal with.

Finally, some couples are quick to point out that using a family first strategy can still result in two successful careers. Stephanie analyzes her career success in terms of placing family first:

I think that now I'm command screened and I'm O-5 screened, I think I'm kind of looking back at it saying, you know hindsight's 20/20. I know that going into that I felt very comfortable with saying that I've done what I need to do for my family and I'll just let the chips fall where they may. And if I don't screen for command or they don't want to me to be [an O-5] then I'm OK with that. But now, it's hard to say that it's adversely affected me because it really hasn't.

Making Career a Priority

Compared to the family first strategy, making the career the priority is less commonly employed by the couples in this study with only five couples in this category. The reason it is not as common as other strategies is because it often results in not being collocated and making family sacrifices related to not having children or delaying having children. Jessica exposes how, prioritizing their careers, she and her husband will end up not being collocated for their next tour, "So when I got offered exactly what I wanted, we had a long conversation about it, because I'm going to DC and Jack's not coming."

The couples who use a career priority strategy talk about making career decisions individually and then based on their individual decisions, they determine how to make those choices fit into their work-family situation. The couples discuss this concept in terms of making decisions in an egalitarian way, but in conjunction with strategies of prioritizing work before family. These officers discuss how they do not want to unduly influence each other's decisions. Owen describes the conversation he had with Olivia when they first started thinking about how to make a dual military marriage work for both of them, "So I think that one of the things Olivia and I talked about five years ago was when we go to make career decisions, let's start separate and then make those work within what we want." Claire has a similar conversation with her husband about making job choices without influencing the spouse:

So there's never been an, I want you to do this and having it either positively or negatively affect your career. It's been more, you make your decision and we'll go on from there. And he's been very supportive of me in that same way.

Some couples are concerned that if they influence their spouse to do something they do not want to do, or prevent them from doing something they want to do, it will cause problems in their family. Doug worries about influencing Dana:

And what happens is if one person in a couple is doing something they love, then the other person picked a community they weren't crazy about for the person, he comes home happy every night, she comes home miserable...If you're not happy doing that, you're not going to be happy with that person and he's not going to be happy with you.

The most common reason given for making decisions individually and not influencing their spouse is not wanting them to regret their decision or resent them for

making a decision based on something they did not really want. Jessica expresses her feelings about being able to do what's best for each other:

The stuff that's been hardest for us is communicating my needs and not feeling guilty about it. So my need to go do this next tour, that was a hard conversation to have. But if you don't, you will resent your partner. If you sacrifice your career at every turn for the other service member you'll resent them and you'll punish them for it, and you'll end your marriage. And then not only will you not have your career, you won't have your spouse.

Claire talks about why she does not want her husband to regret a career decision:

One thing we've always said to each, when it comes to a career decision, although we'll talk about it with each other, I've never wanted, I've purposely never told Charles my preference on a set of orders he takes. With the feeling that, if I were to tell him, I want you to go do this job and he's miserable there or doesn't make him competitive or it affects his career in some way, I never want there to be a regret, saying well that was based on your input.

Sometimes making decisions individually led to couples not living together because they chose an assignment that is career enhancing over collocation. Jack explains why this happened and how it was positive for their marriage and careers:

But I think there's ways to compromise and kind of make everything work and I think it's important to do that because, if I would have just said, oh sorry take this crappy job so I can see you everyday, she would do it because she loves me and then she'd resent me for it and then that would cause problems and I would feel guilty. Now it's like, I can be happy and she can be happy and that's good.

By focusing on career, some couples will delay or not have children. Claire talks about her focus on career, "But I'd say a lot of my girlfriends who are contemporaries right now are of the same opinion, who are in the military, who are still kind of doing, you know, operation mindset, something that we've, or at least

I've chosen to postpone." Jack and Jessica talk about their career and family plans to wait to have children:

...initially it was like when [Jessica] turns 30, we're getting pregnant...But now it's like, [Jessica's] realizing the potential of her career...and kind of where it can take her, so now she's willing to be more like hey, 32, 33 that's fine with me.

Rachel looks into the future and decides that she would regret giving up a career for children and family, "I knew that I'd be most bitter if I was 35, had a couple kids, and had no career."

Finally, one husband has the traditional male perspective of placing career first so that he will be successful at work and be able to provide for his family. Troy explains his career first strategy:

My train of thought has always been that, you know everybody says family first. Well to me that's [nonsense]. If you put your family first, you're going to put your job second. You put your job second, then you're not going to do well. So if you don't do well at your job, how are you going to take care of your family? So I've always put my job first.

Leading and Following

A more common adaptive strategy (there are seven couples in this category) than putting career first for both spouses is to designate one person's career the lead career and base decision-making on what is best for that career in what these couples call a "lead-follow" strategy. The career labeled as the lead career varies by who has the more chance for success, who is senior in rank, or whose career is approaching a more important career milestone. The number of women who are considered the lead career is equal to the number of men considered lead career. The other variation on leading and following is alternating who has the lead career based on the importance

of the next career milestone in an effort to keep both partners' careers competitive which is a successful strategy overall. Several of the couples mention they thought that using a leading and following strategy is basically forced on them by the Navy. Faith states, "whether the military policy says it or not, somebody eventually has to lead and somebody has to follow..." Isabel discusses that she has the lead career in her family, "So we've really worked around mostly my schedule. And that's another challenge being the, I am considered the lead career, he's the one that's followed me."

Other couples use a more balanced approach of alternating whose career has priority based on what is needed for each career and makes the most logical sense for their family situation and timing of children. Wendy relates her perspective for her family's situation:

And understanding when there's times when you're going to have priority, when he's going to have priority, but figure out the balanced approach to when one person's career is going to be more important. And then ultimately you'll have to figure out whose career is going to override the other one.

One peculiarity arose when considering the wives who are aviators. For the two wives in this study who stayed in aviation, one does not have children and the other followed her husband's career. Peggy is the wife who was an aviator and followed her husband's career, but she also spent over half of her career in the time period when the Combat Exclusion Law prevented her from flying combat aircraft thus she did not really have the same career path as women aviators who entered the Navy later. However, Peggy's perspective on women aviators and dual military couples holds true for the women in this study:

But you gotta go where the lead person is and I think it should be the guy because I kind of feel like, because it's wild card aviation here, if you want to have kids, you're not going to be able to fly for some time of that, it's just a fact.

Shifting Priority

The least common strategy, employed by three couples, is a variation of the leading and following strategy. Some couples call this a "leap frog" strategy where the priority for careers shifts from one spouse to the other for significant periods of time and is related to the timing of retirement. This strategy is employed or planned to be employed for couples where there is a significant difference in age and rank, and often when one of the officers has prior enlisted service putting them closer to being retirement eligible.

For Vince and Vanessa, because Vince is younger and junior to Vanessa, they decide to make her career the lead career while he is still in the Navy. Now that Vince has separated from the Navy, they plan to continue to use the shifting priority after Vanessa finishes her Navy career. Vince describes this strategy in his terms:

Long term, I think in a way we'll both have options in terms of...me being younger too makes a difference as well. But if I want to pursue something seriously as a career, that option is still out there for me, but it's a time delay. It's a waiting game.

For Rick and Rachel, his career has priority since he is senior and much further along in his career. Rick looks at their career timing as alternating:

At that point, in my opinion almost, my career's going to be over. Rachel can take precedence. I think I'm more at the point if I don't make command then, not that my career's over, but I think the emphasis on my career is probably going to be put on the back burner in my mind.

Yancey and Yvonne are in the process of transitioning to her career taking priority over his even though they are the same rank and relative seniority. Because Yancey has prior enlisted service time, he is much closer to retirement. He sees their transition to her career as having just occurred:

With family we have talked consistently about one career taking primacy over the other. Early on I would say it was my career taking primacy, primarily because I had already committed to a career in the Navy, where she had not. As we've moved farther along in it, I'd say her career has started to take primacy. And I'd say this is our transition tour mainly because looking forward, I don't see another pay raise or another promotion. I pretty much see myself as being a terminal O-4 and retiring.

Strategic adaptation is a key theme for the dual military couples in this study. Their ability to find creative solutions to their individual career and family situations so that they can attain their personal and professional goals is influential in shaping their decision-making. Adapting to the structural constraints of the Navy's career paths and personnel policies shows the resilience and motivation for these couples' desire to serve in the face of the challenges placed in front of them. How work and family decisions are made within their work-family strategies is found in the way they enact their roles as a family process to form their family's pathway.

Chapter 10: Discussion and Conclusions

Although the study is not a generalizable representation of all dual military career couples, the results do offer a detailed description of the pathways and decision-making of dual career couples that help them maintain their desire and ability to serve their country while adapting to the challenges and demands of the military institution. Specifically, there are several key findings in this study.

For these dual career couples, the organizational context in which they live and work monopolizes most aspects of their life. To maintain control of as much of their lives as possible and to cope with uncertainty, these dual career couples purposively and planfully display their human agency in an attempt to have a sense of control over how they create their life course trajectories. Managing two intertwined work careers is an intricate and long-term planning process which is required to meet career and family goals, negotiate the job assignment process, and develop strategies to achieve collocation. Navigating two structured career paths that are composed of cultural and organizational structures is hampered by the desire to live together. For dual military couples who are coordinating two officer careers with a family life cycle, maintaining flexibility and options is vital to achieving their work and family goals. The overarching cultural constraint that these officers talk about is the Navy's institutional career fast track. The culture that pushes people toward the most competitive career path is limiting for dual military couples who are balancing two careers and the needs of each while being in collocated job assignments.

The organizational context shapes the meaning of the role transition to becoming a spouse through the timing of work career paths and the mobile nature of

relationships in the organization's lifestyle. As the organization dominates most aspects of their lives, these dual career couples typically meet in the work environment and have to contend with frequent relocations in the course of the personal relationships leading up to marriage. Dating is often long distance and deployment schedules and relocation are often a driving factor in the timing of marriage. The organizational context even influences the meaning found in couples' relationships. The importance of being married to another service member is found in their conversations about the meaning in a common understanding of their work experiences in the military, sharing a common knowledge and language in the military, and having an underlying trust and commitment in their relationship. The timing of marriage in the life course establishes a sequencing of other expected role transitions including parenthood and retirement.

In the performance of expected work and family activities within the organization, combining, separating, and adapting the meaning of roles shape these couples' life course and their life satisfaction. Both men and women in this study encounter challenges within the organization in performing traditional gender roles for parent and spouse and find that giving a different meaning to gender roles has outcomes that range from adding stress to adding value. Expected role transitions such as becoming a spouse do not impact career paths for these couples other than to coordinate collocation where that is a priority. However, timing of role transitions is influenced when these couples decide to wait to get married until they acquire their own life experiences and establish their own careers. The expected role transition for becoming a parent is usually planned, sometimes with exacting precision, but often

results in changes in work career perspective and less of a desire to endure deployments for both parents.

Interestingly, the couples in this study often have a long-term outlook on life, despite their relatively young age and early life stage, that includes perceiving their Navy careers as a life stage or stepping stone and will have an associated role transition to a second career, retirement, or new meanings for family roles, such as parents focusing more on their children. The long term outlook influences their early career and family decision-making in the context of meeting their goals of serving their country while learning to cope with the frustrations and challenges of managing two careers, dealing with twice as much time away, and inflexible Navy career paths.

A fundamental concern for dual military couples is that they want to have the same support and opportunities provided to traditional families by the Navy. While these couples understand they have different needs related to having two Navy careers and a family, they feel the institution needs to accommodate not only traditional families, but all family types. They see the needs of single parents and other dual career professional couples as being similar to theirs and that the institution needs to adapt its policies and practices to support all family types. The couples in the study generally experience positive support in their commands' work environment and from their supervisors, but occasionally have negative reactions from their peers. However, the job assignment process is less positive and the source of stress for many couples.

A strong motivation and goal for these dual military couples is to be able to serve their country together and with a family. The desire to serve is a key concept

and is embedded in their need to contribute as a citizen and to support what many couples feel is an important part of their identity. The pride and admiration these couples have in their work accomplishments and maintaining a successful dual military family is evident when they discuss the importance of serving their country individually, as well as the importance in serving together as a couple. As role models in many cases, especially for the women, there is an additional motivation to continue serving to help those who are junior and looking for examples of how to succeed as a dual military couple in the Navy.

Collocation and dealing with time away is a fundamental motivation for every couple. Experiencing twice as many deployments and requirements to be away from home, they are keenly aware of the cumulative amount of time they spend away from each other and time is in the context of years for most couples. Time away from their family is the most common sacrifice expressed by these dual military couples. Discourse of time is an integral concept as these couples discuss finding time to spend together, making time to spend together, maximizing time together, and protecting time together. Prioritization strategies are developed by these couples to adapt to the constraining structures that determine numbers of deployments and time away from home.

Timing of children in the life course is another fundamental concern for dual military couples that is determined largely by the organizational career paths of these couples. The Navy's pregnancy policy is perceived as not only a policy, but as a structural constraint for their career and family planning. Navy culture reinforces the importance of not having children on sea duty through the stigma most of these

women experience and employ themselves. Still other women see Navy culture as the most influential factor and feel that a change in culture to accept women having children at any point in their career should not be seen as an unusual accommodation but as integral to their normal career as one of many possible pathways.

Couples differ in the work-family prioritization strategies they use to adapt to the institutional and cultural structures while managing two work careers and collocation: choosing family first, making career a priority, leading and following, or shifting priority. For the couples interviewed, using a leading and following strategy - where career and family decision-making is based on one spouse's career being designated the lead career and the other spouse's career is the follow career - is the most successful strategy overall in achieving successful work careers, collocation, and having children as they desire. Adapting strategically is a key concept in developing pathways for these couples as they challenge and adapt to the institutional structures the Navy presents in the form of career paths and personnel policies and practices. Overcoming these obstacles is a function of their creativity, persistence, and desire to have two Navy careers and a family. The strategies they use shape their pathways and give meaning to their role transitions.

The Grounded Theory Model

As the grounded theory model for developing pathways to families serving together emerged, it became apparent that the work and family decisions these couples made were overwhelmingly a display of human agency in reaction to the organization's subtle ability to infiltrate most facets of their lives (Figure 2).

Maintaining and regaining control of any aspect of their lives was a measure of success in their negotiation with the organization. Their efficacious behavior is evident in how they discuss their life course timing and planning, use of all available resources, and knowledge of the organization. Their decision-making related to role transitions is shaped most importantly by organizational constraints, of which most are keenly aware.

Purposively navigating the structure of career paths, warfare community demands, and deployments and time away from family establishes the life course trajectories and outcomes of two interdependent work careers and a family life cycle. Managing two intertwined work careers and a family is motivated by personal and professional goals including having both partners serving together and maintaining a high level of life satisfaction. Achieving life satisfaction is often measured in terms of having a successful career and a family while reaching the point of retirement eligibility at 20 years of service. The role transition to retirement provides a planned stepping stone to a second career and often enables couples to pursue loftier goals and dreams; it also provides a secure and stable family environment beyond their Navy careers.

This chapter explains how the grounded theory model developed in this study relates to the research questions; how the emergent theory relates to the existing literature on the life course of dual career couples, implications of this study on existing theory, implications of this study for practice, strengths and weaknesses of this study, and conclusions.

The Grounded Theory Model in Relation to Research Questions

One over-arching research question guides this inquiry: How do work and family decisions influence the life course trajectories of dual career couples in the U.S. military? The research shows that the timing and sequencing of work and family decisions are instrumental to developing the life course trajectories. As shown in the grounded theory model, work and family decisions are heavily influenced by the Navy's organizational formal constraints as well as institutional and cultural norms. The organization's far-reaching effects and control of family processes is observed in the cyclic changing of job assignments and locations, the rotation of sea and shore duty assignments, the warfare specialty career paths designed for promotion, and the cultural fast track and its associated work ethic. Dual military couples live their daily lives within these structural constraints and make work and family decisions to accommodate these constraints; these constraints challenge their ability to attain their work and family goals. Interdependent to making work and family decisions within the institutional structures are the family processes of the life course including the biological and life stage timing and sequencing of role transitions. Many couples have a long-term perspective and goal of becoming eligible for retirement which is also a fundamental motivation for work and family decisions.

Do military work demands uniquely affect work and family decisions of dual career military couples as they consider their long term implications over the life course? Undoubtedly, the most influential work demands affecting decision-making in the life course are frequent job relocations, deployments, and time away from family. The experiences these couples have in trying to live together with collocated

job assignments shape their long-term decision-making for maintaining a career in the Navy, their warfare specialty, timing of children, childcare options, and retirement. Indeed, every facet of the work career and family life course is affected by collocation decision-making that occurs every two to three years.

The experiences of couples who are both in unrestricted line communities are more negative than those couples where at least one officer is not in the unrestricted line. The negative experiences are largely because of the rigid and structured career paths, the increased amount of sea duty tours and deployments, and the perceived low priority in the assignment process for collocation. There is also a difference in outcomes between families who are both unrestricted line and those who are not. For the couples in this study, the only officers who separated from the Navy are from families where both are unrestricted line, of whom there are three men and three women who have separated or are in the process of separating. Outcomes related to children are similarly shaped by warfare specialty with families where both officers are unrestricted line being less likely to have children, and to have fewer children if any, as compared to families where one or both officers are not in an unrestricted line community.

How has the timing and sequencing of work and family decisions and role transitions influenced life course trajectories? The couples in this study typically delayed marriage to establish work careers, gain life experience, and to find a partner in the challenging environment of a highly mobile work career. As shown in the grounded theory model, the organization dictates the availability and access these officers have to the population of potential partners since the domains of work and

family are so interrelated, 85 percent of the Navy is comprised of men. From a gendered role perspective, women are more likely to marry another military officer who understands the organization's demands and requirements. People who marry relatively young are more likely to have their marriages result in divorce (nine people) and then subsequently delay their present marriage to a military service member. Being previously divorced did not negatively influence the decision-making of these people related to maintaining a career in the Navy, as all nine people are either still on active duty with successful careers or have retired from a successful career.

Another outcome of marrying early was unplanned pregnancy, which occurred for two couples who married before age 25. Of note, both service members in these couples are still on active duty with successful careers.

The timing of these couples' lives shows that career decisions to stay in the Navy and family decisions to get married or begin having children are often interrelated based on the completion of the officers' initial service obligation incurred when they entered the Navy. Of the nine couples without children, five are approaching - or at the end of - their initial service obligation. In four of those couples, one or both officers are in the process of separating or planning to separate from the Navy. The other five couples without children either have decided not to have children yet and continue to focus on their careers, are still establishing their careers, or are having fertility problems.

For the 14 couples with children, four had children before completing their initial service obligation and 10 had their children after the initial service obligation.

Both spouses of all 14 couples with children plan to stay in the Navy until retirement. Decisions to stay in the Navy beyond the initial service obligation result in couples planning to stay in the Navy until they are eligible for retirement. The initial service obligation is typically five to eight years which makes the average age for this decision 27 to 30 years of age. Notably, this is roughly the same average age for when these couples married, thereby potentially combining a major work decision with a major family decision in the timing of these couples' lives. In reality, the sequencing of one of the major decisions preceded the other, but many were considered in combination, which reinforces the organization's ability to keep dual career couples' decision-making for family linked and within the context of the organization's needs.

Career decisions to transition to a different warfare specialty also typically occurred just after the initial service obligation was completed; in part the timing of the decision is usually constrained by Navy policy to consider warfare transitions only after the initial service obligation has been fulfilled. The decision to transition warfare specialties typically occurs before children and the decision to have children often influences the lateral transition for both men and women.

The effects of the organization on the control of couples' lives is apparent throughout their life course and including retirement as shown in the long-term perspective in the grounded theory model. Of the six officers who have reached 20 years of service and are eligible for retirement, two have retired. The four officers who have not retired, but are eligible, are still pursuing other career goals or increasing their retirement benefits by increasing their number of years of service.

Three officers are within two years of retirement and have already planned to retire at 20 years of service or when they complete their current job assignment after they reach 20 years of service. All nine officers at or near retirement have plans to start a second career as part of a life course mid-career role transition.

How do dual military couples perceive that the historical context (e.g., when law and policy changes occur and periods of war) affects their life course trajectories? Most apparent in the research is the historical and cultural location of these couples with respect to the changes in family pathways and types. Because these couples are often pioneers and forging new life course pathways in the military organization, they have to contend with organizational policies and practices that are not conducive to their needs. However, these couples are also at a historical location where they are in one of a very few work organizations (if not the only one) that still provides all-inclusive benefits for daily life including: dental, medical, housing, food and subsistence, education, and retirement. The unique location in time when a family can have two work careers in the military and the advantages of these benefits is a motivating factor for these couples. The grounded theory model shows how the organizational supports interact with the families needs to motivate them to continue to serve.

Also, many of the women reference the Combat Exclusion Law repeal and how that event changed their options for career choices as a positive experience. There are also several women who took for granted their career opportunities. There are no men who talk about the repeal of the Combat Exclusion Law and the opportunities afforded their spouses. There are important differences in the

experiences of the women who entered the Navy before 1994, because they are in warfare specialties that are not as sea duty intensive and offered flexible career paths. These four women have collectively served over 77 years and have five sea duty tours among them. Because they have less sea duty and more flexible career paths helping them be collocated with their husbands, these women find it easier to have children (eight children total) and maintain a two career marriage than those women entering the service after 1993.

Interestingly, September 11th, 2001 is not a significant historical marker for most of these couples, although it affects their decision-making and life course trajectories. The most significant impact of September 11th is the IA process (deployments as Individual Augmentees) which is discussed by every couple. The decision-making related to the IA process involves the timing of children and often disrupts couples' family planning because IA assignments occur during shore duty. Deployments after September 11th, 2001 are not unusual because the Navy as a traditional sea service essentially continued its normal deployment schedules with few exceptions. Most common disruptions to family planning are caused by unplanned increases in the length of deployment or an additional short notice deployment. Generally, September 11th, 2001 is not as much of an influence on the life course trajectories and role transitions of the couples in this study as expected. However, there are other policy changes that are referenced and have positive impacts on the outcomes of these couples which include: allowing a 12 month operational deployment deferment after childbirth for women, providing two weeks of paternity leave, and providing 21 days of adoption leave.

How aware are dual military couples of structural constraints (institutional/organizational work policies) that shape their decision-making and life events? The grounded theory model shows how couples in this study are aware of the organizational policies and practices that constrain their choices and opportunities as dual military couples. Not only being aware of these constraints, these couples devote a majority of their energy to challenge the institutional policies and practices and create structural changes related to career paths for some warfare communities, as well as an operational deferment policy, adoption leave policy, paternity leave policy, collocation policy, and the new Career Intermission Program (which provides an opportunity for sabbaticals).

What enables dual military couples to continue their military service? The interaction of organizational constraints and supports with family processes and goals as shown in the grounded theory model produces the motivation for these dual career couples to serve their country and innovatively develop pathways that help them serve in the Navy as well as have a family. To maintain some control of their lives, dual military couples negotiate the Navy's assignment process by planning well in advance of normal career timelines and use the resources available to create strategies and solutions that keep them collocated and career competitive. The grounded theory model shows that couples strategically adapt their life course trajectories by employing work-family strategies for achieving their personal and professional goals.

Learning how to successfully combine and separate roles within the confines of the organization reduces stress and increases life satisfaction. These couples use various mechanisms to do this, including: helping each other to serve by supporting

each other personally and professionally; using informal support networks of friends, co-workers, and other dual military couples; and relying on mentors to help guide their decision-making.

Dual military couples depend on their dual incomes to facilitate the cost of outsourcing household tasks and childcare, which enables their organizational lifestyle. Finally, these couples have a long-term forward-looking perspective for their life course that values Navy retirement benefits and enables them to pursue mid-life career and family goals.

How do men's and women's decision-making and associated outcomes about work and family decisions compare for dual military couples? In the grounded theory model, the most influential gendered role difference is based on the integration of children in the life course. The severe limitation placed on women in this organization, and these couples, on when they can have children is an overriding concern. Planning for children is often long-term, precise, and to some extent unrealistic based on fertility, pregnancy, and opportunity. While having children is a family process, having children while both workers are in the military is subject to the policies, practices and culture of the organization (and is depicted as a challenge in the grounded theory model).

As an example of how the organization controls family processes, several of the women discuss how they negatively perceive the public nature of pregnancy in the Navy. Women are required by Navy policy to notify their command within two weeks of finding out they are pregnant, have their pregnancy verified by the Navy, and receive official written counseling on their rights and responsibilities as a

pregnant service woman. Several mothers explain that they were not ready to tell the Navy they were pregnant because of concerns for first term miscarriages. In some cases, women had to notify the Navy they had miscarried and were back in an operational and deployable status while they were still coping with the physical and emotional loss.

Although integrating children is depicted as a challenge in the grounded theory model, maintaining a separate professional identity is a motivation for women to continue to serve in the organization. Whereas men do not mention concern about maintaining a separate identity from their wives, it is important to women to maintain their own professional work identity separate from their husband. Having their own work career and associated professional identity produces positive experiences for women, leading to positive family and work outcomes. The military's focus on the individual officer's career serves as a positive aspect of the organization in interaction with the family to motivate women to continue to serve in a stable career path across their life course in the military.

In the family processes of the grounded theory model, women find it is more difficult to start and maintain a relationship that leads to a marriage partner because of the mobile nature of the Navy lifestyle. Women are less likely to have relationships with civilians and therefore are limited in their potential partner options.

It is not a commonly reported occurrence, but women are also more likely to have negative experiences at work than men – an organizational constraint of the grounded theory model that affects women more than men. Sexual harassment and gender harassment when it occurred was experienced only by the women in this

study. However, most of the women interviewed feel that Navy culture and command climate have positively changed and that women are mostly accepted.

While the family outcomes do not differ greatly between women and men, there are some nuanced differences in their experiences that shape life satisfaction and perspective. For men, combining the roles of spouse and naval officer produce anxiety and stress in several situations based on untraditional gender roles. Specifically, husbands are not always comfortable participating in spouses' club events because of their male minority status. However, husbands enjoy attending their wives' command social functions because they are not a minority and are treated more like a service member and less like a spouse. In comparison, women also feel uncomfortable sometimes at spouses' club events but because of their role as a naval officer and not as a woman, unlike the husbands whose gender makes them uncomfortable. Interestingly, men are just as likely as women to experience stress related to performing parental roles related to normal work schedule hours conflicting with childcare arrangements. It seems that not being at work because of family responsibilities does not invoke a gendered response from co-workers.

Women are more likely than men to be viewed as role models and to serve as mentors for other women (an organizational support in the grounded theory model). While women report having both male and female mentors, women who have female mentors have more positive experiences in developing their pathways to serving together with their husband. Mentors are important for both men and women in creating more positive experiences in their work and family life course.

Regarding another organizational support in the grounded theory model, women as minorities in the Navy are more likely to use informal professional support networks which are reported to be helpful in finding jobs, gaining career guidance, and discussing strategies for combining work and family in the Navy. Personal informal support networks are used by both men and women to help with emotional support needed while spouses are deployed and to share experiences as dual career couples.

In this study, the life course decision-making for work and family is based on the couples' work-family strategy in the grounded theory model and I observe only small differences individually between the men and women based on trajectories. Generally, these couples share the family and work career planning. However, in a few cases, the women feel responsible for the long-term planning needed to coordinate two work careers and a family. These women feel responsible for the long-term planning because their husbands have a "wait and see" perspective to job assignments and when to have children. In terms of sacrifices, both men and women in this study make work career sacrifices, but more women do than men. For family sacrifices, there is essentially no difference between women and men because family sacrifices are interdependent.

However, there are a few decisions where both wife and husband agreed that one person influences the decision more than the other. For example, for the couple that chooses not to have children, both husband and wife say that the wife is more influential in that decision and the husband supports her decision. In another case, the

husband decides not to be collocated for a job assignment, but the wife also agrees that it is the best solution for the family.

Examining work career outcomes, the number of men and women in this study who separate from the Navy is the same. Similarly, the number of women and men who transition to another warfare specialty is almost equal. Regarding the work success of these officers, women and men are just as likely to be promoted to O-5, which is a career goal for most of the couples. However, the women are more likely than the men to be selected to command.

The Grounded Theory Model in Relation to Existing Literature

Dual military couples adapt their intertwined work and family careers through their role configurations and must overcome military demands and challenges so that they can both serve a full career as a family being together; that is the grounded theory model for this study. To understand better how the key categories that comprise the central category of developing pathways to serving together relate to the existing literature, the findings of this study are related and compared to life course research on dual career couples in general, dual academic couples, dual physician couples, and dual career couples who are co-workers.

Dual career couples

The core category of developing pathways to families serving together is based on dual military couples having family and work career needs that differ from traditional military families. In her research on 18 to 32 year-old professional men and women, Gerson (2009) sees the work-family strategies these couples develop to

combine work and family roles creating new and different needs that work institutions are not always able to accommodate. Like Gerson's (2009) research on younger generation couples, dual military couples in this study maintain a high level of commitment to their work career while adopting an egalitarian perspective on work and family roles and career decision-making that are inconsistent with a traditional military institution that demands total commitment to the work career. In this study of dual military couples, the variation in behavior of these couples' peers, supervisors, assignment officers, and their warfare community leadership displays a dichotomy between organizational policy and practice. While organizational policy provides only traditional structured career paths, ambiguous collocation guidance, and an inconsistent assignment process that conflicts with dual military couples' needs, these couples are supported in practice in their daily lives by some of their peers and supervisors to accommodate their families' needs. This dichotomy between policy and practice may be an example of "structural lag" where outdated policies continue to be applied despite changes in reality (Riley, Kahn and Foner 1994).

In addition to coping with the military institution's traditional work and family demands, these couples manage two intertwined work careers. Life course research on dual earner couples' relational careers emphasizes a linked lives perspective of how the effects of gender, work, and family interact at the work-family boundary. Han and Moen (1999) introduce the concept of "coupled careers" in their life course research on dual earner couples and find that there are five gendered work career pathways: delayed entry, orderly, fast track, steady part-time, and intermittent. Men are more likely to follow the traditional orderly or fast track pathways, whereas

women are more likely to follow the delayed entry, steady part-time, or intermittent pathways. Han and Moen (1999) find that women who follow the orderly or fast track pathways are more likely to have experienced marital instability. They also find that wives' pathways and careers are dependent upon their husbands' pathway, but the husbands' pathways are not contingent upon the wives' pathways.

Dual military couples differ somewhat in that they are constrained to what Han and Moen (1999) label the orderly and fast track pathways, with the exception of the six officers who separated from the Navy. Although dual military couples exhibit a similar interrelated work careers concept, their work and family relationships have more in common with dual career couples who are both maintaining professional careers. In comparison to Han and Moen's (1999) finding that women are more likely to experience marital instability when they follow an orderly or fast track pathway to this study of dual military couples, I find no evidence of an increase in marital instability in this sample. However, the sample was selected based on currently married couples since the Navy only maintains records on marriage and not divorce. Further, couples experiencing marital problems may be less likely to agree to be interviewed. Karney and Crown (2007) analyze marital dissolution rates for military personnel and find that military women are more likely to experience divorce than men. Specifically in 2005, active duty officers in all Services had a divorce rate of 3.9 percent for women married to civilian men, 3.3 percent for women in dual military marriages, 2.5 percent for men in dual military marriages, and 1.5 percent for men in civilian marriages (Karney and Crown 2007). These divorce rates are based

on all Services and are not specific to the Navy and they also include inter-Service marriages.

Another perspective on relational and gendered careers is Pixley and Moen's (2003) research on dual earner couples' work career prioritization that finds careers are prioritized according to relative resources (age and education) of the spouses. In their sample of dual earner couples, men's careers are more likely to be given priority, although 30 percent of the couples said that neither career has priority or that they take turns. Women's careers are given priority in 18 percent of the couples. Pixley and Moen (2003) also find that when husbands were older or more educated than their wives, their careers are more likely to receive priority. Only a relatively higher education level predicts the wives' career being given priority. In my study, 17 of the 23 dual military couples do not give priority to either career or take turns, three couples give priority to the husband's career, and three couples give priority to the wife's career. Age as a relative resource shows mixed results in these dual military couples since two of the husbands who have priority are older and one of the wives who has priority is older. Education levels for these couples are the same when they married with the exception of one couple where the wife has a higher level education and her career is given priority.

To manage two interdependent work careers, dual career couples in Haddock, Zimmerman, Ziemia and Current's (2001) research report making decisions proactively is important to maintaining control of their lives. In a similar sense, the dual military couples in my research state they have to use longer planning and decision timelines related to negotiating new job assignments so they have a better

opportunity to be in control of their choices to be collocated and find competitive jobs that meet their work career needs and family needs.

Dual career couples endure the hardships of managing two work careers and a family life because they find satisfaction in their work. Haddock et al. (2001) discover that successful dual career couples find meaning in their work that brings purpose and enjoyment to their professional life and motivates them to continue as a dual career couple. Relatedly, two reasons why dual military couples in this study endure the frustrations and additional effort required in coordinating two work careers and a family is because they value service to their country and the Navy's mission.

Another hardship for dual career couples is the amount of time together they sacrifice in maintaining two professional work careers. The dual career couples in Haddock et al.'s (2001) research emphasize the value of time through their focus on maximizing time together and protecting time together. Dual military couples in this study also value time and discuss the same concepts of maximizing time together and protecting time together. Additionally, dual military couples' conversations about time also reflects the amount of time they spend apart through deployments. The concept of dealing with time away in the grounded theory model, explains how dual military couples value time together as well as learning how to cope with separation, adjusting and readjusting to spouses and parents coming and going on deployment, and establishing methods of communication for the long periods of time they spend apart. The other important difference in the concept of time is that dual military couples are more likely to talk about time in a long-term context of years or months instead of hours in a daily schedule, as is more common in dual career couples

(Becker and Moen 1999; Haddock et al. 2001; Hertz 1991). I attribute the difference in the context of time primarily to the more lengthy separations required by Navy duty, but also to the couples' focus on a long-term perspective related to their planning. Although not explicitly asked in the interview, most couples do not discuss division of household labor except for childcare as part of their decision-making, most likely because of the egalitarian nature of their relationship.

In order to use their time efficiently, dual career couples set priorities and apply them in their decision-making. In Haddock et al.'s (2001) research, dual career couples talk about setting priorities for work and family and applying those priorities to decision-making across their life course to remain consistent in their decisions. They also report that dual career couples maintain work boundaries through negotiating commitments with their employers. Dual military couples in my research also set priorities for work and family, commit to these priorities through their work and family decision-making, and ensure these priorities are clearly communicated with each other and, in many cases, their supervisors. Communicating their priorities to their supervisors ensures there are no misunderstandings about their priorities in relation to work and any boundaries they feel are needed. If being collocated is the highest priority for job relocation, these couples feel they need to make that explicit with their supervisors who might have influence in the job assignment process.

By setting priorities, dual career couples ensure the success of both work careers and family satisfaction. Hertz (1991) labels the marriage of a dual career couple as the "third career." According to Hertz (1991), one of the aspects that distinguish dual career couples from traditional couples is the third career's ability to

reduce the couples' stress over income level fluctuations of one income. Dual military couples also convey the importance of job security in the Navy, but do so knowing their income is not at risk and is generally a stable part of their experience.

One aspect of job security is understanding what the work career path is and that it leads to the work career goals desired. Moen and Han (2001) show that the traditional lock-step career path is standardized to meet the needs of the traditional breadwinner-homemaker family. Moen and Roehling (2005) describe the lock-step career path that transcends the life course from education to employment to retirement as the "career mystique." This standardized career path based on the sole breadwinner model is usually considered to be the pathways Moen and Han (2001) called orderly or high-g geared. Men who follow these pathways have successful work and family outcomes. However, women who follow these pathways are more likely to experience family discontinuity. For the dual military couples in my study, the structured career paths of the unrestricted line warfare specialties are the most challenging when both husbands and wives are in the unrestricted line. Trying to meet the timing of career milestones for two officers' careers in their job assignments is difficult and often resulted in one or both officers separating from the Navy, transitioning to another warfare specialty, or not being collocated. Several officers remark that they would like to have the flexibility to diverge from the standard career path when they need to and would accept the negative consequences in their career if necessary. However, that is usually not an option considered in the Navy's assignment process.

Another impact of the structured career path is the decision to have children and the timing and sequencing of children for dual career couples. Altucher and Williams' (2003) study of dual earner couples shows that couples often struggle to find the right time to have children. Fitting children into the schedule of a work career path so that it does not negatively affect the career is challenging for many dual career couples. Women who plan to take time off from work after birth to care for the child have the additional concern of being perceived as not committed to their career and the organization (Altucher and Williams 2003; Hertz 1991).

The most common strategy for having children for women in dual career couples is to postpone having children until their career is established or not to have children (Hertz 1991). Postponing children can also lead to infertility outcomes, although Altucher and Williams (2003) do not find this to be the case with the couples in their study. Altucher and Williams (2003) acknowledge that childless couples in their study may not have reported fertility problems or have rationalized their situation. The childless couples do talk about why they did not desire to have children in terms of work and family conflict.

For dual military couples in my study, the most commonly discussed constraint by husbands and wives on having children or timing of children, is that women cannot be pregnant on sea duty in the Navy. For those wives who are in unrestricted line warfare specialties, they have the most difficulty finding time to have children based on the greater amount of sea duty. Women aviators are the most extreme case because, in addition to not being able to be pregnant on sea duty, they also cannot be pregnant in a flying status on shore duty. Delaying having children is

typically a decision based on the wife being on sea duty and waiting until an appropriate time on shore duty. However, several women note that the sequencing of marriage before children often complicated their timing in that they delayed marriage and missed key periods of opportunity to have children earlier in their career path.

Of the nine childless couples in this study, two report having fertility problems that may have been caused by postponing having children. Two couples adopted children because of fertility problems, although one couple was happily surprised to find out they were later able to have a biological child. The other seven couples are typically early in their life stage and are not ready to have children. There is only one couple who were married for more than five years who chose not to have children so that they could focus on their work careers.

For those dual career couples with children, interrupting the work career to care for children is generally not an option. Hertz (1991) finds that dual career couples in her research solve their childcare situation by hiring an in-home childcare provider. Having the financial resources to be able to afford the option of an in-home provider is perceived as a benefit by the couples in Hertz's (1991) study and that may not be possible for other families. The childcare options used by dual military couples in my research are varied and individualized for each family's situation. However, all the couples with children in this study were confronted with finding new providers each time they were relocated. Most dual military couples use military or civilian daycare providers, although this varies based on where the couple is living and the availability of extended family. Several couples rely on extended family to fill gaps when both parents are not home and they are not comfortable leaving their

children with anyone else for extended periods of time. A few families use nannies and au pairs in situations where they can afford them and to fill in during times when daycare is inconvenient or not available. Dual military couples adapt their support to meet the situational needs of the family as they support their work careers and meet Navy demands.

Dual career couples develop adaptive strategies in the life course to accommodate organizational constraints that restrict their ability to achieve their work and family goals. Becker and Moen (1999) report in their research on dual earner couples that most couples engage in strategies which limit their involvement in work, which they collectively call “scaling back.” There are three common strategies involved in protecting the family from the greedy workplace and are labeled: placing limits, job versus career, and trading off. Placing limits is reducing the number of hours worked and turning down job opportunities that require travel or relocation. This strategy is most often used by the women in their study. Job versus career relates to labeling one spouse the primary breadwinner with a career and the other spouse has a job and is the primary caregiver; it is most common for the husband to have the career and the wife to have the job. Trading off entailed alternating which spouse has the job and which has the career or which spouse places limits on his/her career.

Placing limits is not a specific strategy for the dual military couples in my research, but many of the parents talk about limiting their work hours based on childcare hours. Similarly, none of the dual military couples specifically employ a job versus career strategy since they are all working on careers in the Navy, but there

are two couples who use the lead-follow strategy discussed earlier which closely parallels the job versus career strategy. For these two couples, the following spouse is identified early in the family life course and work career and maintains that status and has a less successful career in terms of retiring as an O-4. Trading off these strategies is not employed by dual military couples in my study. Lateral transfers from unrestricted warfare specialties to restricted line warfare specialties were common in this study and appears to be a way for these couples to continue to serve together.

Another perspective on adaptive strategies is Pixley's (2008) career prioritization strategies for dual earner couples. She found dual earner couples prioritization strategies are based on prioritizing the husbands' careers, equal prioritization, or taking turns. Outcomes are measured based on relative income levels and husbands gain in strategies that prioritize their careers as well as equal prioritization. However, women have positive outcomes when they are in a couple that uses the taking turns strategy. Taking turns is similar to the lead-follow strategy used by dual military couples who alternate the lead career. Like the taking turns strategy, lead-follow also results in the most positive results for women in terms of family and career outcomes. Pixley (2008) uses only work-related outcomes in her analysis of career prioritization, but it would be interesting to see the family outcomes included also.

Another adaptive strategy identified by Haddock et al. (2001) in their research on successful dual career couples is valuing family. This strategy is employed to place family satisfaction above the work career demands and to keep decision-making

for the family as the highest priority. Dual Navy couples also use a family first priority which focuses on maintaining collocation for the couple in the job assignment process and keeping the family together as much as possible.

A gender specific strategy for women is reported as self-reliance by Gerson (2009). Gerson (2009) finds that women between 18 and 32 years of age hold the attitude that marriage is a fragile institution, so they need to be guard against insecurity by being self-reliant. With domesticity having less social value, and the uncertainty of relationships and financial dependence in marriage, women value self-reliance through maintaining their own separate professional identity and economic status (Gerson 2009). Wives in dual military couples also emphasize maintaining their own military identity and status separate from their husband and make efforts to separate work and family roles to keep the distinction clear to others. Having their own career so they can be self-sufficient is also important to the wives in the dual military couples in this study.

While wives in dual career couples want to be self-reliant, they and their husbands also value their mutual personal and professional support. Haddock et al. (2001) show in their study that dual career couples display admiration, pride, and support for each other as a partnership. Hertz (1991) also reports that dual career couples support each other with career information and support as well as having a mutual professional understanding of their careers. I have similar findings in my research on dual Navy couples who talk about the pride and admiration they have for their spouses. Mutual understanding is also important to dual military couples and especially for the wives.

Another source of satisfaction and support for dual career couples comes from having a family and two careers. Taking pride in dual earning is a common theme in Haddock et al.'s (2001) research. Hertz (1991) reports that dual career couples display an awareness of the satisfaction they enjoy from having a successful "third career" and all the associated achievements. Some of the dual military couples in my study also talk about the pride they have in successfully combining two military careers and having a family. They find satisfaction in overcoming the challenges presented by the Navy's structural constraints and proving they can be successful despite the resistance they meet in the work environment.

Dual academic couples

An interesting comparison for dual military couples is dual academic couples because they also work in a profession with institutional and structural constraints which may work similarly to the military. Some similarities between the two populations in their family outcomes are that women have lower rates of marriage than men and fewer children than men (Perna 2001). For military and academic women who do marry, they are more likely to marry someone in their same profession (Astin and Milem 1997). Dual academic couples also are less likely to be in a traditional relationship and therefore wives are less likely to follow their husbands' careers (Sweet and Moen 2004). Most interesting is the similar experience of having difficulty with collocated job assignments for dual academic couples and dual military couples (Sweet and Moen 2004). The ability to successfully integrate work and family roles for dual academic couples leads to women having the highest family and marital satisfaction compared to other academics (Sweet and Moen 2004).

In her study of women professors, Armenti (2003) finds that the career structure for university professors results in senior women professors timing babies in the month of May and junior women professors waiting until they have tenure to have babies. While the academic stigma and constraint is cultural, the constraint for the military is formal policy in addition to the cultural and institutional stigma associated with pregnancy on sea duty. Armenti (2003) also discovers that women professors often hide their pregnancy if they are in the process of interviewing for a job. It appears the hidden pregnancy phenomenon for academic women could be similar to the pregnancy on sea duty stigma for military women. Of note, military women are required by policy to inform their supervisor of their pregnancy within two weeks of finding out they are pregnant. While Armenti's (2003) research is based on women professors and not necessarily dual academic professors, it is still relevant because women professors are more likely to be married to another professor. Also related to family formation, Mason and Goulden (2004) find that women in dual academic couples are more successful if they postpone marriage and children or do not marry at all. The women in dual military couples in my research are not necessarily more successful if they delay marriage or children; this is possibly due to sample selection.

Dual physician couples

Another profession with dual career couples that has been researched to a lesser extent is the medical profession, and specifically, physicians. Sobecks et al. (1999) report that dual physician couples report higher overall satisfaction and women have the greatest career satisfaction compared to men and women not married to physicians. Women in dual physician couples also have the highest success in

achieving career goals. Much like other dual career couples and including dual military couples, these dual physician couples find the structure of medical careers to be challenging in a dual career relationship. There are very high career investments necessary early in the work career that also are the prime childbearing years for these couples. The women in dual physician couples also are more likely to delay marriage and having children, have fewer children, and a higher divorce rate (Boulis 2004). In Gjerberg's (2003) study of dual physician couples, women are more likely to specialize and limit their training compared to other women physicians. This finding is similar to the overall number of military women who are more likely to be in warfare specialties that are not unrestricted line, although the trend since 1994 is an increase in women in unrestricted line. Like dual military couples, dual physician couples also find satisfaction in their marriage to another professional in their field who is supportive, understanding, and has common experiences and interests (Gjerberg 2003).

Co-working dual career couples

A final comparison is specific to Moen and Sweet's (2002) research on dual career couples and the co-working strategy. The researchers define co-working as a couple that works for the same organization. This study is the closest civilian population comparison to dual military couples. Moen and Sweet (2002) report that these couples typically meet while on the job in the same organization much the same as dual military couples in my study. These couples are also more likely to be in their early life stages, younger, and without children or to have young children. Like dual military couples, these co-workers give more equal consideration to spouses' careers.

Although women are still more likely to follow their husbands' careers in Moen and Sweet's (2002) research, dual military couples in my research do not exhibit this decision-making. However, co-workers find their careers to be interdependent much the same as dual military couples. As is the case for one of my dual military couples, Moen and Sweet (2002) find that co-workers will hide their relationship at work.

The comparison of dual military couples to other dual career couples reveals some common themes including: challenges with structured careers, higher satisfaction, fewer children, high achievement, and more egalitarian relationships. The next section will describe the implications of this research on existing theory.

Theoretical Implications

The grounded theory model developed in this research shows how a work organization can be so demanding and controlling that it incorporates most aspects of a couple's life including family processes and creates long-term effects related to family outcomes and mid-life career transitions. The meaning of this type of organizational control emerges in the interviews with the dual career couples in this research and how they exert their human agency to control, or regain control, of as much of their lives as possible through their planning and decision-making related to their career family. This adds to the life course and dual career couples literature as well as the military families literature. My findings focus on the life course concepts of human agency and strategic adaptation, linked lives, timing of lives, and historical and cultural location.

From the life course perspective concept of human agency, decision-making based on exerting control of every aspect of their lives emerges from the conversations with these couples. The organizational constraints and demands are so overwhelming and comprehensive with two people in the same organization that these couples focus their time, energy, and efforts on keeping control of their lives and not letting the organization dictate any more decision-making than necessary. These dual career couples use an integrated couples approach in their work and family decisions which focuses on the interaction with the organization instead of within the couple.

One example of the effect of their human agency emphasizes the application of duality of structure and agency. In addition to adapting strategically to the organization's structural constraints, Navy structure has changed to include career path modifications for some warfare specialties that provide new periods of less-intensive work; this is being touted as a family-friendly window of opportunity for women in the organization to have children. A change that incorporates life course planning from a perspective of linked lives within the organization, a new online tool personalizes a worker's career path to include the spouse and children, their timing and school age sequencing in relation to the career milestones and spouse's career milestones. This is used by assignment officers, service members, and mentors to plan the integrated work-family career path. Other policy changes that have been developed recently include: providing paternity leave, adoption leave, deferment of operational deployment after childbirth, and an experimental program for career intermission.

An interesting perspective these couples have is their long-term view of their work and family trajectory. While the organizational work demands of being a dual career couple create a stressful and challenging daily life, these couples adapt by keeping a long-term perspective and positive outlook. Their current situation may be difficult based on their job, their spouse's job, and their childcare or school situation, but knowing that this current situation will only last two to three years allows them to look forward to a better and more satisfying work and family situation in the future. The nature of an organization that plans relocations every two to three years for its employees and provides long-term meaning to a 20 year career and then retirement, creates a culture of being able to endure a difficult situation, perceive a Navy career as relatively short, and look ahead to better days.

The life course concept of historical and cultural location emphasizes the structural lag based on the organization's outdated career paths and assignment policies. The structuring of work careers based on the male sole breadwinner model conflicts with the work-family roles of dual military couples as well other family pathways. Studying the work and family role configurations and outcomes together helped to uncover the challenges to which these couples adapt while serving together.

Contributing to life course career prioritization research, this study analyzes not only work outcomes, but work and family outcomes as the product of their decision-making as couples develop career priority strategies. A unique aspect of this research is the impact organizational structure has on couples' decision-making and prioritization. With both spouses following a structured career path on a specific timeline, there tends to be a period of time (usually in their the couples' late 20's) that

overlaps both the typical major career decision point after initial service obligation and the family role sequencing and timing of marriage and having children. The mobile nature of the Navy lifestyle also creates more opportunities in the early formation and launching years to combine important family and work decisions which have long-term impacts beyond the Navy, such as number of children or childlessness.

Adding to life course research (e.g., Elder 1986) on the effects of military service, this study provides an example of how Navy officers perceive their military service as a finite phase of their life course which will enable them to pursue other life goals in the mid-career stage of their life. As Gade (1991) calls for in his discussion of life course research in the military, this research provides a new perspective in military sociology to model the temporal effects of combining work and family roles in the context of military service. The most important historical context finding that adds to life course and military families literature is the different experiences of women who serve before and after the Combat Exclusion Law repeal. As women enter the unrestricted line warfare specialties, they encounter the new challenges of combining work and family roles in a structured career path based on a male sole breadwinner model. Strategic adaptation in dual military couples has proven challenging for many women in trying to combine work and family roles in a way that they can be successful at both.

Practical Implications

The over-arching practical implication of this research is the recommendation for the Navy to alter its fundamental perspective on how to manage an officer's career. The current male breadwinner model is outdated and does not support the diversity of family pathways (including most male officers married to civilian women – the largest group) present in today's society. A new career perspective should encompass the work careers and family life course of officers to support the varied and different needs of dual career, dual earner, dual military, single parent, female service member and civilian spouse, and traditional families. Many of the challenges facing dual military couples also apply to officers' in other family types and especially those officers whose spouses have professional civilian careers.

Unrestricted line warfare specialties need to reexamine how family pathways can be incorporated into Navy officer career paths. Embedding assignment flexibility, diversity of assignments, and reducing job relocations should be the first step as career paths are restructured. To support the diversity of family pathways, the Navy should also analyze the formal and informal support networks to identify families' needs and how they can best be supported. For example, officer spouses' clubs are shown in this research as not supporting the needs of dual military couples from the husbands' or the wives' perspective in general. It is apparent from the research that officer spouses' clubs also do not meet the needs of many other family pathways other than traditional families. Similarly, the entire network of family support - including Fleet and Family Support Centers, Family Readiness Groups, and

the Ombudsman program - should be carefully reviewed to determine how it can better meet the needs of all Navy family pathways.

While there are mixed perceptions on the effectiveness of the Navy's collocation policy, as part of restructuring officer career paths, the collocation policy should be restated and promulgated to ensure assignment officers have a more formal and consistent policy to put into practice. Currently, the assignment process and collocation is the most common detractor for dual military couples' work and family satisfaction and can lead to lower commitment to the Navy and more negative work outcomes. The Navy uses a career milestone tracking survey called an ARGUS survey which is voluntarily and anonymously completed by service members at career milestones, including separating from the Navy. This survey could be analyzed based on family pathways to increase our knowledge and understanding of the needs of Navy families. Similarly, the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) regularly administers large-scale surveys to all military service members and their spouses and could include questions related to family pathways.

Frequent relocations are a contributing factor to challenges faced by dual military couples and the collocation policy, but is also noted in previous research for all military families. As noted at a recent conference (2009 National Leadership Summit on Military Families), frequent relocations are an important concern for all military families and one of the top five issues to be addressed by the Department of Defense. Reducing the number of relocations to only those that are mission essential could have a positive impact of the work careers and family life of dual military couples as well as all military families.

Mentorship is found to be important to supporting the dual military couple pathway in this study. Officers in these couples have more positive experiences related to work and family when they are being actively mentored. Dual military couples find it helpful to have senior dual military couples available to discuss their work and family frustrations and help in problem-solving. Women often have male and female mentors who have helped them in combining work and family roles and having more positive experiences with role transitions. Dual military couples - and especially the wives in these couples - are often mentors and role models for junior dual military couples and women. The Navy's emphasis on mentoring is effective and viable in helping these families serve together.

Strengths and Limitations of This Study

As with all qualitative research, the strength of this life course research on how work and family decision-making of dual military couples affects their life course trajectories is found in the rich, thick description from over 54 hours of in-depth interviews with 23 dual military couples. Including as much of the conversation as possible in this research so that the participants give their meaning to the concepts as they emerge is important to the credibility of the findings using a grounded theory model. All cases are included in the analysis to provide a comprehensive treatment while using a constant comparative method to analyze the data. Identifying deviant cases is important to ensuring the key categories and the core category is inclusive in the grounded theory model.

Interviewing both spouses in each couple provides several positive outcomes in this research: corroborating information and decisions, identifying individual experiences and meaning, identifying shared or common experiences, and understanding gendered experiences. Additionally, by interviewing spouses separately, I had a better opportunity to capture both spouses' experiences without as much concern for the couple giving a coherent and rationalized account of their decisions or one spouse dominating the interview.

Since the interviews are a retrospective account of the participants' careers, experiences and decision-making, I have the advantage of being able to capture multiple decisions across the life course and how they are related to role transitions, timing and sequencing of roles, and the context of the decisions. Military career paths that require job reassignments every two to three years also facilitate having numerous decisions to evaluate.

Using a life history calendar for each participant is a helpful tool in both the course of the interview as well as post-hoc analysis and follow-up with participants. During the interview, the life history calendar is a helpful tool to make the participants comfortable with the interview process by discussing relatively easy and factual information related to their work and family careers. The life history calendar also serves as a memory aid in helping participants anchor their timing of decisions and puts them in a life course context of timing, sequencing, and interrelatedness. The life history calendar was often referenced by the participants later in the interviews as they gave accounts of their decision-making. Post-hoc analysis of life

history calendars provides meaningful data in understanding timing and sequencing of decisions as well as corroborating information between spouses.

By comparing the findings to those of other dual career couples, I have a higher confidence that this research on dual military couples has applicability to the literature on other dual career couples.

Limitations of this study include having a finite set of resources, including time and money for this research, which inherently limited the scope of the population and sample. The research population of Navy officers limits the ability to generalize this research to other populations who may have different experiences. While the population is only Navy officers, I do feel the findings are likely to apply to officers in other Services based on the commonality of the Services, but perhaps with different institutional constraints. However, I do feel there could be important differences in the enlisted population's experiences as dual military couples and this warrants further research. Differences in the enlisted population could be related to career path flexibility, formal enlistment contracts, nature of enlisted assignment process, increased number of jobs available, and demographic differences (socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, age, presence and number of children).

The most significant limitation in my sample is that I was not able to include as many couples where one or both officers were not as successful from a work career perspective and a family perspective. Because many of the officers with negative experiences have already left the Navy, they are not included in this sample since they are no longer dual military couples. Of the 46 officers interviewed, only 17 were interviewed prior to their first opportunity to leave the Navy at the end of their initial

service obligation. Of the 17 officers, four were in the process of leaving the Navy which is a lower than expected number based on historical retention rates for junior officers in the Navy. It appears that the sample of officer couples who volunteered were more successful on average in maintaining two careers and a family.

Also, there were no divorced dual military couples in the sample. While I had several couples who had been divorced from previous spouses, they had not been in dual officer couples. Because the Navy does not track divorces in the personnel system, I had to rely on chance and volunteers from professional networks to solicit divorcees. I had one wife who volunteered, but her former husband was not willing to participate. Follow-on research would benefit from a concerted effort to include divorced couples who had been dual career military couples. The addition of these couples would help to understand negative family outcomes such as marital instability based on organizational constraints and demands, and couples' prioritization strategies.

Because the data are based on a retrospective account of participants, there is the possibility of memory recall errors despite checks put in place to corroborate information between spouses, but spouses could tell the same socially reconstructed story. Cross-checking information with Navy personnel records, life history calendars, digitally recorded interviews, and spouses' accounts helps to reduce the possibility of memory recall errors, although it is still possible. A more likely limitation of the retrospective data is the ability for participants to socially construct a coherent story (McAdams 2001). Although the spouses were interviewed separately

to avoid coherence, it is still possible couples have internalized their story, leading each to give the same account.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, reflexivity in my role as a researcher cannot be discounted. While my biases and experiences as a senior, male naval officer were acknowledged, there was still evidence in the interview process that my experiences were different from my participants. In reference to a conversation with a well-meaning but unaware supervisor at one point in an interview, I found myself thinking that could have been me. By recognizing my biases and different experiences, I attempted to remove as much of my influence as possible and to use my different experiences to explore why and how these officers may have different experiences.

This study is cross-sectional based on resource limitations. A longitudinal study would provide the opportunity to revisit decisions and look at changes in trajectories and outcomes based on decisions and strategies used earlier in the career.

Conclusion

In the course of the 46 interviews, the couples describe the meaning of their work and family decisions and reveal their frustration with the constraints placed on their work careers and family life course. They also display their creativity in adapting so they could fulfill their desire to serve together as a family in the Navy. Not wanting preferential treatment or consideration, these couples talked about having their families' needs supported based on work and family role combinations as one of a diverse group of family pathways in the military today.

Because of the nature of their jobs as naval officers, these couples focus intently on the concept of time and in the context of time away from each other and their children. The family life course is organized around the two work careers and the cyclic sea and shore duty rotations that are fundamental to the identity of the Navy as a sea service. Deployments and time away from home are inherent in the Navy lifestyle and understandably are more challenging for dual military couples who have twice as much time away (as much as 75 percent of their sea duty assignments). Collocation became a central focus for these couples in relation to maintaining control of their lives and providing a sense of stability for a part of their pathway they feel they can control.

As professionals, they value the importance of their mission in the Navy and their spouse's role as a service member also fulfilling an important and necessary mission. These couples' common experiences, understanding of their work experiences, and shared commitment to serve their country in the Navy provides the mutual respect and admiration for each officer to succeed in his/her work career. Their mutual goals in work and family create egalitarian relationships where decisions are made that attempt to make choices that best serve each of the three careers: hers, his, and theirs.

As proactive and educated people, trained to be task and mission-oriented while supporting their subordinates, these couples adapt strategically to the structural constraints that challenge their ability to achieve personal and professional goals. Through the timing, sequencing, adapting, and performing of work and family roles, dual military couples establish pathways based on their work and family prioritization

strategies. While some of these strategies follow the standardized breadwinner model, others such as the leading and following strategy develop because of the need to balance work and family to be able to have both as officers in the Navy.

Maintaining the choice to form a family and the size of a family while in a dual military family is important to these couples, but the long-term impact of the decisions made by couples or forced by structural constraints are still evident. By challenging the military culture, institution, and organizational structures, these couples influence social change within the Navy institution in the form of family and career policy.

Appendix A

Sample Respondent Invitation Letter

Dear [_____],

I am conducting a research project for my doctoral dissertation in Sociology at the University of Maryland on dual military couples. I have included my biography as an enclosure to this letter to give you an idea of who I am and the experiences I bring to this project.

My research project, entitled “Military Family Life Course and Decision-making of Dual Military Couples” focuses on military couples like you and your spouse who have chosen to have families and serve in the military. Dual military couples are a growing population of military families about whom little is known and military family policy does not adequately address. Looking beyond retention and satisfaction issues, my research intends to address how these couples create their family and work careers in through their decision-making process. This study will compile information derived from interviews of officer dual military couples in the Navy. This research is important due to the increasing number of women joining the military and the increasing number of dual military couples in the military. No individuals or families will be identified (or identifiable), and all personal information will be kept confidential.

To participate, or if you have any questions, please contact me via e-mail at: dasmith@socy.umd.edu or via telephone: (443) 694-2664. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Professor Mady W. Segal: msegal@socy.umd.edu or (301) 405-6433.

I hope you and your spouse will agree to participate. I understand you and your spouse are busy people, and I thank you in advance for considering this request. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

David G. Smith
Commander, USN
Ph.D. Candidate

Appendix B

Page 1 of 2
Initials _____

Date _____

CONSENT FORM

Project Title	Military Family Life Course and Decision-making of Dual Military Couples.
Why is this research being done?	This is a research project being conducted by David Smith, under the supervision of Professor Mady W. Segal, at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are in member of a dual military couple. The purpose of this research project is to understand the experiences of dual military couples, including how they make decisions about work and family, and how they deal with potential conflict between military requirements and family needs.
What will I be asked to do?	The procedures involve individual in-depth interviews as the primary research method. You will be asked to participate in a minimum of one interview. During the interview, you will be asked to respond to open-ended questions posed by the researcher focusing on your experience as a member of a dual military couple. You may be contacted for follow-up questions to clarify information.
What about confidentiality?	<p>We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. All information will be reported anonymously and no individual will be identified in the report at any time. Excerpts from the interviews will be used in the written report of this study, but your name will not be used. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</p> <p>This research project involves making a digital recording of your interview to help the researchers in transcribing the interview. Access to the digital recordings is limited to the principal and student investigator. Digital recordings will be destroyed within a year of publishing the final report.</p> <p>___ I agree to be digitally recorded during my participation in this study. ___ I do not agree to be digitally recorded during my participation in this study.</p>
What are the risks of this research?	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.

Date _____

Project Title	Military Family Life Course and Decision-making of Dual Military Couples.
What are the benefits of this research?	This research is not designed to help you personally. The results will help the investigator learn more about dual military couples that can be shared with other researchers and with policy makers and others who work with military family programs.
Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.
What if I have questions?	This research is being conducted by David Smith of the Sociology Department at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact David Smith at: dasmith@socy.umd.edu , 2112 Art-Sociology Building, College Park, Maryland, 20742, (443) 694-2664 or his advisor Dr. Mady Wechsler Segal msegal@socy.umd.edu . If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu ; (telephone) 301-405-0678 Or: Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Office, United States Naval Academy, 589 McNair Road, Stop 10M, Annapolis, MD 21402; (e-mail) hrppoffice@usna.edu ; (telephone) 410-293-2533. This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park and U. S. Naval Academy IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Age of Subject and Consent	Your signature indicates that: you are at least 18 years of age; the research has been explained to you; your questions have been fully answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.
Signature and Date	NAME OF SUBJECT
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT
	DATE

Appendix C

Military Family Life Course and Decision-Making of Dual Military Couples

Interview Overview:

ID number: _____

Date and Time: _____

Location: _____

Other observations: _____

Introduction: “Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research of dual military couples. My name is David Smith and I am a graduate student at the University of Maryland. This research will help me write my dissertation and complete my PhD requirements. I am on active duty in the Navy, but my research is solely being conducted for graduate school requirements. My research interest comes from my experience of being in a dual military couple and wanting to understand the decision-making processes involved with work and family decisions while being in the Navy.

I will be digitally recording the interview so that I can listen more closely to our conversation and not have to write everything you say or rely on my memory. Our conversation will be kept confidential as will your identity. My advisor and I will be the only people with access to your identity. I will also be taking notes during the interview to assist in analyzing the data.

First, I would like to review the informed consent form with you and answer any questions you may have. When you understand the informed consent form and agree, please sign the bottom of the form.

The interview will take about 1 to 2 hours depending on your responses and we can take a break when you need to. Do you have any questions I can answer before we begin the interview?

(Pause for 10 seconds before continuing)

Next I would like you to help me create a life history calendar which notes important events in your life.

1. Please tell me about your military service.
 - a. (If not discussed, identify the years for: military service started, career milestones, deployments for more than 30 days, relocations, lateral transition, reserve transition, military service ended.)
2. Please tell me about your family.
 - a. (If not discussed, identify the years for: marriage started, marriage ended, children born, children from previous marriage, separations other than work requirements.)
3. Please tell me about an important work decision you made that positively or negatively influenced your career. (Repeat as necessary to include all important work decisions.)

- a. What were the circumstances which led up to this decision?
 - b. What other choices did you consider?
 - c. Who else participated in the decision and how did they influence the decision?
 - d. When did this decision occur and how did this timing affect your life at that time? How did it affect your life today?
 - e. How did this decision create or alleviate any conflict between work and family?
 - f. What did this decision mean to you in terms of your work career and family?
 - g. How did Navy policies or practices affect your decision?
4. Please tell me about an important family decision you have made that positively or negatively affected your family. (Repeat as necessary to include all important family decisions.)
 - a. What were the circumstances which led up to this decision?
 - b. What other choices did you consider?
 - c. Who else participated in the decision and how did they influence the decision?
 - d. When did this decision occur and how did this timing affect your life at that time? How did it affect your life today?
 - e. How did this decision create or alleviate any conflict between work and family?
 - f. What did this decision mean to you in terms of your work career and family?
 - g. How did Navy policies or practices affect your decision?
 5. Turning points are important life events which may be viewed as crossroads in our lives where we make decisions and choices which determine the future course of our lives. Can you identify a turning point in your life? (Repeat as necessary)
 - a. When did this turning point occur and how did this timing affect your life at that time? How did it affect your life today?
 - b. What did this turning point mean to you when it occurred? What does it mean to you today?
 - c. How much personal choice do you feel you had in this life event?
 6. How has your family helped or hindered your ability to maintain a military career?
 7. What formal support networks are available to you and how do you use them?
 8. How have your peers, supervisors, or mentors helped or hindered your ability to maintain a military career?
 - a. What about work environment, command climate, or military culture?
 9. How have military policies or practices helped or hindered your ability to maintain a military career?
 10. If you could change one military policy, what would it be and why?
 11. What sacrifices or rewards have you experienced by having both a career and a family? How do you feel about these?

- a. How has being a parent affected your career goals and aspirations?
What has that meant to you?
 - b. What have you sacrificed or gained by serving in the military?
 - c. What have you sacrificed or gained by being a parent? (If the couple has children)
 - d. Do you have any regrets?
12. Considering your work and family life, what advice would you give to other dual career couples?
 13. If you were talking with dual career couples in the military, what other question should I ask or is there another important topic I should include?

Thank you for participating in this study.”

Turn off the recorder.

Remind them that the transcript is available to them by request.

Confirm with them that they would be amenable to a follow-up phone interview.

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