

ABSTRACT

DRAEGER, OLIVIA RENEE. Navigating the Dual Professional Roles of an Army National Guard Leader as a Citizen-Soldier. (Under the direction of Dr. Susan J. Barcinas).

Also known as ‘citizen-Soldiers’ or ‘citizen warriors’, Army National Guard Soldiers maintain military and civilian roles, occupations and lifestyles. Because of their military requirements, Army National Guard Soldiers experience a continuous transition from their civilian roles to their Guard service, and back again. This unique balancing act poses an opportunity for further research. The purpose of this study is to study currently serving, seasoned Army National Guard Soldiers’ perspectives to gain a better understanding of Army National Guard Soldiers’ lived experiences, including needs and challenges as they navigate civilian and military environments, roles, and identities simultaneously. This research investigates the following research question: How do Army National Guard Soldiers perceive their dual role as citizen-Soldiers? Using a qualitative interpretive design approach, data collection includes 13 loosely structured interviews with Army National Guard Soldiers. Role theory served as the theoretical framework and helped guide data analysis. The three overarching themes and sub-themes derived from the findings of this research were: (1) conflicting expectations, (1a) compartmentalization, (2) time constraints, (2a) prioritization, (3) family, and (3a) sacrifice. A fourth theme, their ‘Why’, emerged from open coding outside of the core components of role theory. This qualitative study explores the experiences of ARNG Soldiers balancing their military and civilian roles, highlighting the ongoing relevance of this population as operational demands grow. Using role theory, the research reveals the complexities faced by Soldiers managing dual responsibilities and suggests practical strategies for improving their performance and well-being. These include promoting self-awareness, communication, stress management

and role prioritization for Soldiers, while advocating for understanding and flexibility from military leaders and civilian employers. The study also challenges the public perception of the ARNG and calls for more institutional support, emphasizing the need for equitable benefits and recognition compared to active-duty Soldiers. Additionally, it recommends expanding research on ARNG Soldiers' experiences, including the impact of gender, social networks and identity negotiation, and proposes expanding role theory with the concept of "role harmony" to better understand how Soldiers balance these interconnected roles. Future studies should explore how varying operational demands influence Soldiers' role navigation and well-being, ultimately supporting better long-term outcomes for both ARNG Soldiers and their families.

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Navigating the Dual Professional Roles of an Army National Guard Leader as a Citizen-Soldier

by
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NOTE TO THE READER

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldiers hold a deep sense of unique responsibility, serving in a capacity halfway between emergency management and active duty for the Armed Forces, executing both domestic operations and overseas contingency operations together. “The National Guard is categorized as a militia force in that it can be mobilized by a State’s Governor or the President of the United States” (Kness, 2023). As service members who maintain both military and civilian roles, occupations and lifestyles, also known as ‘citizen-Soldiers’ or ‘citizen warriors’, National Guard service members may experience distinctive challenges during periods of transition, such as navigating on and off periods of active-duty service required for emergency management and annual training. In addition to their military service obligations, they must also balance a civilian lifestyle and job (Sripada et al., 2018). This dichotomy of lifestyles leads to “competing norms, values and standards of behavior,” displacing an ARNG Soldier’s sense of identity (Vest, 2013). Shuffling back and forth between the two employment sectors creates a complex relationship with each environment, causing not only a shift in professional identity, but a continuous loop of culture shock (Peat & Permann-Graham, 2023).

The transition from a military environment to a civilian work environment has been studied, with much of the literature in this area focusing on service members transitioning from a deployment, the psychological effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), labor laws and the transition of veterans to higher education; yet, the experience of National Guard members in navigating the back and forth nature of military and civilian work environments, career transitions and professional education is not widely studied (Sullivan, K. & Yoon, K., 2020; Stull et al., 2020; Sripada et al., 2018; Robertson, H. & Eschenauer, R., 2020; Peat, D. & Permann-

Graham, J., 2023). Studying the experiences of members serving in the ARNG component is uniquely different from studying veterans separating from service entirely because they must juggle both personal and professional roles. There is a gap in the research and knowledge that could inform both military and civilian workplace and/or legal policies and practices to better understand the dual roles of ARNG service members.

Background of the Problem

The ARNG is a constitutionally recognized militia and reserve component of the United States Army that works in tandem with the Air National Guard in each state. The ARNG is composed of traditional Guardsmen and full-time support staff - around 430,000 citizen-Soldiers training in hundreds of hometown armories and regional facilities across each state with 22,000 service members overseas (Garamone, 2023). From the initial founding of the National Guard in 1636, to operations in response to the Coronavirus outbreak and civil unrest, the ARNG has nearly three centuries of experience responding to the call to service at home and abroad and is the oldest military component in the United States Military (National Guard, n.d.).

The National Guard has relied upon volunteer citizen-Soldiers to fill its ranks since its inception when volunteer militia companies offered their service to duty and country. Soldiers join for several reasons: satisfaction in sacrifice for their nation, sense of camaraderie and teamwork, opportunity for self-development, transition, etc. Soldiers in the ARNG component are called upon to support overseas deployments in addition to stateside missions such as infection control, medical support teams, foodbanks and civil disturbance/riot control missions; they have fought in every major American conflict from 1637 to present day operations (National Guard Bureau, n.d.).

Currently, the Army utilizes the Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model, “a flexible, predictable force generation process that will create an Army that is regionally and functionally capable of supporting the Nation’s Defense Strategy” (Deputy Chief of Staff, 2020). This model is used to predict the needs of a modern force to remain operationally capable in terms of equipment and personnel. Despite its designed ‘predictability’, it can be argued that the ARNG component is not quite as predictable due to the unplanned nature of state-supported missions such as natural disasters and riots (Kness, 2023). These unplanned events add to the two-week requirements mandated of ARNG Soldiers annually and cause disruption to a service member’s daily life – placing them in the jarring position of expressing a dual identity in preparation for a swift transition at any moment, adhering to the significance of the ARNG posture statement, “Always Ready, Always There” (National Guard Bureau, n.d.).

Although there are laws, rules, regulations and programs that meet the needs of military service members, there currently is not a program or process to facilitate and support the flexibility Soldiers maintain to juggle their civilian and military responsibilities with ease. While programs such as the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and the DOD Skillbridge Program have focused on helping troops and their families reintegrate after service completion or post-deployment, few support services are developed to assist with the ongoing juggling of roles uniquely experienced by National Guard Soldiers.

The current body of literature focuses on the likes of education, healthcare and employment, particularly for active-duty Soldiers (Atuel, H., & Castro, C., 2019; Becker et al., 2022; Bell et al., 2014). For ARNG Soldiers, the rules and processes are different in military environments compared to civilian ones; service personnel must navigate a complex cultural transition when moving between these two environments. There are numerous implications of

the militarized culture that can seep into civilian processes and politics: such as higher education, civic engagement and police forces.

Just as immigrants balance identities aligned with their home culture with westernized practice in the United States, service members experience a “disorientation, change of status and a search for identity and meaning” when transitioning outside of the “close bonds and collectivist value system experienced in the military,” into society as a collective whole, and back to service again. Because they are balancing both worlds without a consistent social support system, ARNG Soldiers may experience feelings of isolation and trouble reintegrating into both environments’ norms and expectations (Pease et al., 2016).

Significance of Study

Experiential learning describes the learning process as creating knowledge through the transformation of experience (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984). Learners must actively engage with their experiences to reflect and learn from them. Recognizing shared human experience from different perspectives can help make learners more engaged in the learning process, increasing the knowledge of the process by which people learn from their own and others’ experiences (Peterson & Kolb, 2018). By placing participant experience at the center of learning, this research helps develop awareness about how ARNG Soldiers experience their dual roles.

ARNG Soldiers, because of their status as an employee of the government in addition to the responsibilities held outside of duty, “embrace a multifaceted professional identity,” (Moore & Barnett, 2013). Furthermore, National Guard forces have seen an increased Operational Tempo (OPTEMPO) since 2020 with a combination of civil disturbances, natural disasters, election and political support, COVID-19 pandemic response, border control and federal

deployments, requiring the citizen-Soldiers' support "for longer than any time period since World War II" (Winkie, 2021).

While frequency of military operations has heightened, the size of the ARNG component has decreased, placing a strain on these citizen-Soldiers as more is asked of them to respond (Garamone, 2023). Additionally, specific skill sets such as engineering and medical sciences remain in high demand to be able to accomplish today's military missions (US Army Careers, n.d.). While competing priorities in both the military space and civilian space continue to uptick, these ARNG Soldiers work to maintain stability despite the "dual civilian-military and federal-state nature of National Guard work [which] can complicate the delivery of benefits and services to this population" (Kamarck et al., 2019).

The incorporation of consistent training reinforces skills and ensures that service members become subject matter experts respective to their job roles while maintaining the culture of the military at each rank. Due to the strict necessity of developing proficient and skilled Armed Forces, the culture of expectations aligns at an inopportune time with the rapid transformations occurring in the modern workforce that will require proficient and skilled laborers (Davis & Minnis, 2017). In addition to niche skill sets held by service members for their service term(s), the military prioritizes the development of their forces' professional culture and leadership by requiring professional military education to further leadership potential and enabling the acquisition of the next rank (AR 600-8-19). Training and development make up just one facet of a multitude of competing priorities service members must navigate to ensure both their military and professional careers remain strategically aligned.

Problem Statement

Military culture may contribute to difficulty in absorbing and fitting into the civilian culture while outside of duty, causing a “reinforcement of the military-civilian divide” (Flack, 2021). Physical and psychological injuries, family, intimate and social relationships, finances, employment and educational factors can influence the way Soldiers navigate the duality between their service role and personal roles, which impacts their professional lives. As Soldiers face a steady trend of increasing work demands in the military sector while assuming that more is put on their plate professionally and personally as they rise through the ranks, the problem addressed in this study is the lack of understanding about currently serving ARNG Soldiers as they navigate a complex relationship within different environments. This serves as a unique perspective for the government, military transition support organizations, companies that employ ARNG service members, as well as ARNG Soldiers and their families as opposed to the focus on a one-way transition of veterans exiting the service, where roles are more easily defined.

Purpose Statement

The citizen-Soldier lifestyle, categorized by the two different professional roles served at the same time entails a unique perspective for each Soldier as he or she considers the factors involved in navigating back and forth into different environments. The shared professional duality involves decisions about maintaining employment and/or educational opportunities, meeting family members’ needs, as well as managing the societal expectation of what a Soldier should be (Stull, 2020). Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate currently serving, seasoned ARNG Soldiers’ perspectives to gain a better understanding of ARNG Soldiers’ lived experiences, including needs and challenges as they navigate civilian and military environments, roles and identities simultaneously.

Theoretical Frameworks

Role theory provided structure and framing for this research as a method for analyzing the phenomenon of the dual professional roles of experienced ARNG Soldiers. This framework connects the literature review with the purpose and research question to guide the researcher in the research design steps as well as the analysis, interpretation and synthesis process.

Research Question

Framed by an interpretive design investigation of the experience of Army National Guard Soldiers, one research question guides this study:

1. How do Army National Guard Soldiers perceive their dual role as citizen-Soldiers?

Definition of Key Terms (Researcher Defined)

Active duty: A full-time Soldier, whose primary job is to support both full and part-time personnel in pursuit of the designated workforce's mission and service branch's intent re: training, logistical and human resources support

Citizen-Soldier or Citizen-Warrior: A part-time Soldier serving the Army National Guard. This group does not include Active Guard Reserve Soldiers who fall under active-duty status as their daily professional job

Civilian: A person not serving, nor has served in the Armed Forces

Deployment or Mobilization: Mission-specific unit temporary duty assignments that may be conducted overseas or within the US., which may or may not serve as a combat function

MOS: Military Occupational Specialties are the specific job duty/duties that service members hold within the military as both an assigned functional role and direct task assignments

OPTEMPO: The frequency of mobilization. Not associated with solely combat missions, and can include foreign and domestic operations - civil disturbances, overseas alliance support, combat tours, and combined training exercises

Service members: Qualified military personnel

Veteran: A member who previously served in the Armed Forces. Referenced throughout this research as a proxy group for the ARNG due to limited publications about the ARNG and other Reserve/part-time forces

Organization of the Study

This document is divided and structured into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the topic, including the research questions and significance of the study. Chapter 2 provides a highlight and review of the literature surrounding the experiences of ARNG Soldiers as well as the theoretical framework that guided this study. Chapter 3 contains a detailed description of the methodology used, including its rationale and benefits for this study. Chapter 4 presents an overview of the participants and the narratives they contributed, thematically organized. Chapter 5 reports on the study's findings in relation to prior research and the theoretical framework, as well as implications for future practice, theory and research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Simultaneously navigating professional roles within multiple environments is challenging in several ways. First, as professionals in the civilian realm, Soldiers encounter a variety of barriers. Second, as members of the Armed Forces, Soldiers experience perceptions and values that differ between the military and the civilian world, which influence how they fulfill their professional roles. The complexities of two professions that operate within competitive institutional standards and systems can cause friction. In addition to their professional fulfillment, family and life obligations beyond their workload lead them to hold mixed and often conflicting goals and commitments. To understand what Soldiers endure within this multifaceted structure, this research highlights Soldiers' stories through their own narrations of experience.

Much of the existing literature about service members analyzes veteran identity and the processes of separating from the military in a one-way transition from the service to the civilian workforce (Beech, N., Gold, J., & Beech, S., 2017). For example, research examines the separation from the service to higher education, to civilian work-life generally, or in relation to surrounding health and well-being issues (Becker et al., 2023). Most of this literature comes from the lens of Psychology, Organizational or Leadership Theory, Health Care, Education and Public Policy (Atuel & Castro, 2019; Becker et al., 2020; Blauuw-Hara, 2017; Keeling et al., 2018). Soldiers serving in a part-time capacity do not receive heightened attention in the research despite the unique experiences they face as participants who balance multiple roles in conflicting environments and repeated transitions between professional roles over their military-contractual time. Thus, by examining how current ARNG service members experience frequent transitions, this research seeks to address the potential needs and challenges faced by that population.

About the Army National Guard

The United States Army contains two components: an active-duty force that serves full time, and a reserve component serving part-time that is made up of both the US Army Reserve and the Army National Guard (US Army, 2024). ARNG Soldiers enhance personnel readiness by “combining civilian-acquired skills and experiences with their combat training... bringing rich and unique capabilities to the Joint Force... Today, more than 325,000 service members across more than 2,400 communities in 50 states, three territories and the District of Columbia,” serve in the Army National Guard (National Guard Bureau, n.d.). Like many sectors within the civilian workforce, the ARNG has a represented labor force - The Association of Civilian Technicians is the workforce bargaining unit representing full-time federal technicians serving the ARNG.

In support of the total mission, the Army has a “system of leadership that indicates a Soldier's level of expertise, responsibility and authority inside that profession,” with an organization of enlisted personnel, warrant officers, and commissioned officers (US Army, 2024). Each of the three ranks oversees specific duties to perform specialized tasks. Enlisted personnel are considered the ‘backbone’ of the Army. Within the enlisted ranks, privates through corporals are considered junior members of this labor force. Sergeants through Sergeants Major of the Army (encompassing eight levels of organizational hierarchy) are considered noncommissioned officers. Warrant officers have five levels of hierarchy and are coined as subject matter experts in their respective fields. Commissioned officers are federally recognized by the US government and function as managers and commanders of all tasks and missions, forming eleven levels of organizational hierarchy. Noncommissioned officers, warrant officers, and commissioned officers make up the body of leaders that play a significant role in directing

the US Army, to include the ARNG, and were the members of focus for this body of research given their level of expertise and expectations placed upon them.

Discussion

While the research shows that the benefits and experiences of military service evolve, particularly after deployment, the existing research on part-time Soldiers and their dual status is limited, primarily focusing on the transition they face when leaving the military or returning home from deployment. Citizen-Soldiers enlist for a variety of reasons, including financial incentives, educational benefits and retirement plans, yet many encounter challenges in balancing their service with growing expectations (Griffith, 2022). However, some recurring themes have emerged within the studies on citizen-Soldiers, including those in the Army/Air National Guard and the Reserve components of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force. These themes often involve mental health issues, struggles with parenting and relationships, and feelings of isolation (Burrell et al., 2006; Heilman et al., 2009).

The Ohio ARNG recently studied the mental health impact of Soldiers' dual roles resulting from increased obligations in both their military and civilian roles, particularly since 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom. The Ohio ARNG Mental Health Initiative was launched to study a longitudinal outlook on the risks of ARNG Soldiers particularly; early results indicate a higher risk of alcohol abuse, PTSD and depression, although this has typically been associated with combat deployments (Sampson et al., 2021). Another item of discussion in the literature for ARNG and Reserve Soldiers is the conflict of parenting and relationship struggles. Gewirtz et al. (2010) introduces the additional challenges of citizen-Soldiers who "tend to be older, partnered with dependent children, and [are] less prepared for prolonged separations from family than active-duty service members" (p. 599). Their study found that part-time Soldiers experience

more than twice the rates of PTSD, depression and relationship issues compared to their active-duty counterparts, largely due to the family stress caused by deployments. Farero et al. (2021) highlights the critical role of family support upon returning from deployment, noting its importance in managing stress and alleviating PTSD symptoms. Additionally, it is essential to assist part-time Soldiers as they face the added challenge of re-integrating into civilian employment after their military service.

To create a more favorable experience, Vest et al. (2017) emphasizes the importance of resiliency factors such as pre-deployment preparation, unit social support, marital satisfaction and family support. Specifically, women citizen-Soldiers who are also mothers face the greatest challenges when reintegrating into their family roles after a deployment. Nicholson and DeVoe (2020) conducted interviews with a sample of these women and found that their struggles stem from a combination of mental health challenges and the pressure to meet gendered expectations as women and mothers. This is especially difficult for those who live far from active-duty bases and do not have easy access to the social-emotional services available to active-duty personnel. Additionally, these women face the complex task of renegotiating their roles within the family as they try to reintegrate into daily routines.

Additional research provided by Ross et al. (2020) addresses spouses of ARNG Soldiers who are also mothers of young children. As mothers perform similarly to a single parent when their spouses are on duty, they report feeling isolated. One participant in the study shared “it’s almost like you have one and one-half feet in the civilian world and a half a foot in the military world because [as a National Guard Family] you don’t - you don’t live the [military] life everyday—so you don’t have that circle of support” (p. 1370). With this, they not only discuss the overwhelming ways in which they must play a solo parent, but also the challenges associated

with their spouse coming back home. When their spouse returns, they must re-establish a new routine while knowing their spouse can get called away at any point at the drop of a hat, hence the statement that the ARNG “becomes your life” (p. 1370). Juggling additional roles takes a toll on more than just the service members, as illustrated by Thompson et al. (2015). Their research explores the experiences of the children of National Guard Soldiers during their parents’ activation in having to step up to assist their other parents or emotionally withdrawing from their role as a child to cope with their own or other parents’ stress.

The primary issue examined in studies is the PTSD and stress experienced by part-time Soldiers returning from deployment and adjusting to a new 'normal.' However, more research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of their day-to-day experiences by capturing their personal stories and lived experiences.

Theoretical Framework

Role theory served as the theoretical foundation and analytical framework for this research. Drawing from concepts in life-span development, organizational change, and occupational socialization, role theory explores how individuals and organizations adjust to new or changing professional environments, influenced by the behavioral expectations within a given social context. The key elements of role theory outlined in this chapter will help to deepen the understanding of how ARNG Soldiers perceive, navigate, and engage with their dual roles.

Conceptualized as a social change, Nicholson introduces two outcomes relevant to his study: identity shifts due to realignment of values and skills, and behavioral outcomes of adapting to different environments (1984). Early literature on the theory argues that professional role transition brings about a period of personal development heavily dependent on situational-specific cues from their respective environments (Ashforth & Saks, 1995). During this period of

transition, role strain (Goode, 1960) can be felt in having trouble fulfilling the obligations of a role.

Role theory has two common structures throughout literature: structural-functional and symbolic-interactionist (Merton, 1957; Parsons, 1951). The structural-functional approach views society as a structured mechanism with strict rules that create order and assign value to behavior and role inner workings (Vandenberghe et al., 2017). Alternatively, the symbolic-interactionist approach suggests that people associate meaning with the behaviors and values they place on their roles based on their unique experiences and the relationship they hold between them (Stryker, 2001). A key component of the symbolic-interactionist approach is the social interaction between roles and those in them, which suggests that roles take on a flexible meaning and their expectations can be negotiated (Sluss et al., 2011).

Role Consensus & Role Conformity

Role consensus refers to adhering to the behavioral expectations of a role, otherwise referred to as desirable social norms (Biddle, 1979). Utilizing social interaction theory, Patulny et al. (2015) discovered that veterans in particular experience bonding during their service to their country, creating social cohesion that in turn led to isolation outside of the confines of those group norms. Mead (1934) introduces symbolic interaction as the concept of individuals signaling the taking on of a role driven by social interaction. During the role-taking process, social structures influence the interaction that takes place within the context of the expected norms within that environment. Because of these norms, individuals both conform to the culture and provide nuances of their own that shift the cultural norms (Turner, 2011). During this culture shift, “meaning is created, shared, maintained, and changed; [and] individual selves form and develop”. This creates a social implication of change through formation of routines within an

organization to align individual action to the rest of the group norms, especially in determining skills and habits of the group within an organization (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013).

Role conformity is categorized by the adherence to role expectations, which is rooted in the structural-functional approach to role theory due to its emphasis on how others perceive individuals based on how closely they conform to the consensus (Biddle, 1979). Military members balance the needs, relationships, and expectations of their personal families. Outside of ‘Soldier’, identities such as “parent, life partner, citizen - are contingent and expendable for the ideal [civilian] worker” (Padavic et al., 2019). Frequent time away from family due to training or deployments takes a toll on the stability of a personal family, especially on families with children given the increased stress of time away from home and the mental health challenges that service members often can’t vocalize to their family members who did not serve and can’t fully understand (Sheppard et al., 2010). Additionally, the familiar American narrative reinforces the idea of “Soldier masculinity, which include strength, athleticism, aggression, (hetero)sexual conquest, and brotherhood,” a challenging narrative for Soldiers - fathers and husbands who struggle with this masculine narrative to be a stronghold for their families, and mothers and wives who not only work against this narrative but also struggle to leave their family behind given the work-family narrative of the American labor force (MacKenzie, 2021). Having to conform to these role expectations (or veer away from it) can place Soldiers in a strained position because of potentially the way in which they see their own roles fulfilled and valued, or because of the disconnect in role expectations.

Boundaries, Conflict, & Strain

Role theory indicates that individuals have various roles in their daily lives that affect behavior, how they see themselves, and how others see them (Anglin et al., 2022). Conflict

occurs in these roles when there are conflicting expectations in the demands of those roles. Behavioral changes take place to alleviate role strain by adjusting actions through role negotiation and aligning with social expectations. This often involves reallocating time and energy from one area to ensure that roles are performed in the expected way. Heilman et al. (2009) investigated the impacts of the work-home conflict because of role strain between the Air Force expectations and home role expectations in military officers, affecting their decision to stay in the military versus those that decided to leave in order to minimize the strain.

In fulfilling roles, it is understood that a Soldier's MOS may vary from their daily civilian profession, making them both versatile, well-rounded professionals, and can stretch them thin when navigating their dual roles. The challenge that arises, per Caylor et al. (2019), is that Soldiers are expected to perform as a highly efficient performing team "when it is likely that individuals will possess different workplace preferences, capabilities, and duties". Each of these specialties requires a different tasking and skillset, requiring Soldiers to remain proficient by attending various military schools, additional skill trainings, and ensuring their practice is up to par - all of which happens during what would traditionally be their 'civilian' time (Winkler et al., 1999). Given the demands and attention required by both roles, the likelihood of role strain increases.

Boundaries within various environments are heavily permeable, meaning that individuals can be ingrained in one role while situated in a different role or environment (Desrochers, S. & Sargent, L.D., 2004). Similar to an employee transitioning between remote work and an in-office setting, an ARNG Soldier may experience "spillover" between one or both of their environments, leading to a blur of professional boundaries for each role, as well as an intrusion of work into their personal life. (Delanoije et al., 2019). Too much spillover can lead to role contagion or

role overload, which is associated with the inability to fulfill a role due to too many conflicting expectations or priorities (Coverman, 1989). For an ARNG service member, this may look like taking a call from a superior of the military while at their civilian job, responding to an emergent issue such as being called for state activity duty missions with a 24-hour reporting expectation (storm duty, riot control), or completing an administrative required task or additional training to support their readiness posture while at home outside of their drill weekend.

Research shows that because of blurring the boundaries between roles, role conflict often occurs for individuals as they try to manage the expectations of every environment “because they have to mediate between different groups with different values, beliefs, and interests” (Mehra, 2008). With different situational demands, individuals must navigate how they display themselves in a dynamic way depending on social expectations.

Vietnam Era draftees used service in the National Guard to avoid deployments to Vietnam. Since that time, one way in which service has changed for the Army National Guard is the enticing recruitment tool that citizen-Soldiers can serve one weekend a month and two weeks during the summer. There is a common misconception that National Guard Soldiers serve on less deployments and active-duty missions than their active-duty counterparts. Post 9/11 conflicts have increased readiness requirements and the operational tempo for Army National Guard Soldiers in comparison to their active-duty counterparts, placing an increasing burden on Soldiers who signed up for a part-time commitment. Being called for “everything from the COVID response to support at the U.S.-Mexico border,” for example, Soldiers have far exceeded the minimum expectations marketed by recruiters. Additionally, in response to increased conflicts in locations such as Iraq, Syria and Ukraine, Soldiers notified of a mobilization receive a series of administrative and preparatory tasks of equipment and medical readiness “followed by

a month-long pre-deployment training evolution... that may be further augmented by unit-level exercises specific to select commands or career fields,” and require more time away from their civilian lives (Clark, 2023).

Role Accumulation (Dual Roles)

Known in the literature as role accumulation, which is categorized as holding more than one role at once (Sieber, 1974), role conflict also occurs more frequently when there's stake in two collective organizations or two parts of an organization. “Dualities are particularly likely to provoke ambivalence,” because of the opposition these conflicting priorities bring. In response to role conflict or ambiguity over duality, individuals cope using avoidance, dominating one orientation of the role over another, compromising in the middle, or holistically accepting both roles in their entirety - to include all the expectations of social norms and incorporate more of a ‘both/and’ mentality to embrace each together (Ashforth et al., 2014).

When portraying dual (or more) roles, individuals can experience inter-role stress, often related to work-family literature, categorized as “attempting to balance their role as a spouse with that of a professional in the workforce” (Richards, 2015). Part of this stress is brought on by role ambiguity, which is categorized as “uncertainty about how to prioritize and execute the expectations” of each role due to the complexity of navigating different complex environments (Teh et al, 2014). Studied in feminist role theory literature depicting work-family balance, duality can also lead to role strain “due to conflicting demands and constant overload,” increasing stress and potentially causing burnout of role performance (Home, 1998). It is evident the ARNG population is vulnerable to these stressors from the applicable literature.

Despite their military skills and training, veterans are often placed in positions well below their previous military roles when evaluated by civilian companies. This is often due to a lack of

understanding of the technical and leadership skills veterans possess or the desire to ensure that veterans better assimilate into the workplace culture before assigning them higher responsibilities or leadership roles. “Instead of a steady, military-grade paycheck, some veterans struggle to find jobs with equivalent pay;” In the civilian sector, there are reportedly earnings deficits for veterans with higher levels of education from for-profit universities until spending more time in the civilian sector - earning about \$1800-\$1900 less than their peers from other institution types (Wheeler, 2012). Additionally, “unemployment rates are higher among post-9/11 veterans than among the civilian population”, which is a burden that typically causes financial hardship (Kleykamp, 2013). Financial hardship impacts the general wellbeing of ARNG Soldiers, contributing to the stress placed on their family identity. Due to the increased OPTEMPO of service members, often “working military spouses [have] to leave their jobs, which, in turn, reduces family income and creates additional family stressors (Bell et al., 2014).

Role Transfer & Role Identity

Early role theory suggested that roles were stagnant as determined by an organization rather than an individual (Grant & Ashford, 2008). As role theory has evolved, a key contemporary element is that social change occurs when individuals accept a role transition that aligns with their personal values. People with the same job description often interpret their roles differently based on the identity they attach to the role. Some individuals “incorporate a wide range of responsibilities and activities into their roles... engag[ing] in more frequent helping and citizenship behaviors” and leading to role expansion (Grant & Hoffman, 2011).

“The Army expands the most in times of major mobilizations; sustains by far the heaviest casualties; and always comprises the vast majority of forces... provid[ing] a core of professional military expertise that would enable a large wartime force of citizen-Soldiers” (Goldich, 2011).

What is particularly interesting about experienced ARNG Soldiers is the challenge of transitioning from a group-based role in the military to an individual role in civilian employment, and vice versa. Although individuals hold specific roles, collective professional role identity helps professionals understand “who they are in relationship to others and the work they do” as a group (Reay et al., 2017). This relationship is becoming increasingly important for military members, as the norm for those serving is to be viewed as respected individuals across various settings, “different countries, regions, cultures, and political regime types,” serving in one of the most trusted institutions (Albrecht et al., 2021). The symbolism of who Soldiers are expected to be as a core aspect of their role is deeply embedded in their identities and personalities. As a result, any portrayal of their role, regardless of the environment, becomes a behavioral choice influenced by social factors (Stryker, 2007).

Social standards/norms are applied to roles in certain behavioral expectations of which assign an identity to roles. While a role operates as filling a vacancy or position in an organization, role identity is interpreted by an individual and assigned internal expectations (Sluus et al., 2011). Throughout their experience, Soldier roles shift through a re-construction of themselves each time they put on and take off the uniform. The concept of role identity refers to the symbolic-interactionist perspective (Stryker & Serpe, 1994) and has led to an “understanding of how individuals respond to the demands placed on them when facing multiple sets of role expectations” (Anglin et al., 2022). Situational influences impact the role identity that individuals take on and change the way in which they play each role. Role identity is attributing meaning by oneself to the role in which they take on (Sluss et al., 2011; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007).

While balancing military and civilian obligations, pressure is put on Soldiers from their military chain of command and often their civilian management to simultaneously commit their

time and primary efforts to their responsibilities in each of their roles. Although there are laws protecting Soldiers from discrimination in the workplace and safeguarding their mandatory service time, there are accounts of Soldiers expressing that they experience bias during job screenings, discrimination, negative stereotypes, stigma, underemployment, identity strain, and exclusion because of their service (Gonzalez & Simpson, 2021). These stereotypes and challenges remain a challenge, especially for the U.S. Reserve and National Guard members that must balance civilian employment with their military obligations, including longer deployments. Combating these challenges is particularly difficult when “civilian employers can often be insensitive or downright hostile to their veteran employees’ wartime experiences... [while] popular culture reflects and reinforces this stereotype by regularly portraying veterans as broken and unstable” (Bradford, 2021).

Leadership as a Role Catalyst

When ARNG Soldier leaders transition from being key decision-makers and implementers of important initiatives during active-duty periods to becoming individual contributors of lesser significance in civilian jobs the following day, they often experience a rapid sense of disorientation. Reportedly, service members have expressed frustration in the loss of autonomy, “level of responsibility, security clearance, training and supervisor experience” not granted to them in the civilian workforce compared to their service responsibilities (Harrod et al., 2017). The research shows that “overqualified employees [are] more likely to withdraw from their work,” a ‘crafting’ of their role that impacts the social order (Tims et al., 2021).

Due to the necessity of developing a proficient and skilled armed force, the culture of expectations encourages rapid transformation that requires proficient and skilled laborers of a new variety; veterans are particularly proficient at responding to rapidly changing orders and

meeting the need for redesign and innovation. Large scale military operations shifted drastically after the First World War as stainless steel and aero-dynamic technology enhancements developed the opportunity for troops to approach their work more tactically from a capability of mass production. Due to the pressures faced in mass casualty warfare, the Department of Defense generated various training tactics; talent was maximized in enforcing technological advancements geared toward large-scale operational success of service members by building enhanced communication systems and coordinated training efforts because “many military tasks are of a complex nature, requiring high levels of skill on the part of their operators” (Ginzburg & Dar-El, 2000).

In addition to niche skill sets held by service members for their service term(s), the Army National Guard places a strong emphasis on the development of their forces’ professional culture and leadership. Creating its own vocational training programs such as Reserve Officer Training Cadet programming in colleges and universities, the United States Military Academy, branch specific academies, and in-depth leadership professional education schooling during a member’s time in service as they advance in their careers, the Armed Forces has developed rigorous curriculums dedicated to providing their members with timely skills and information when they need it according to their level of authority and responsibility (Shumovetska, 2019). Military schools focus on future transfer of training and maximizing return on expectations. The Select, Train, Educate and Promote process utilized by the military seeks to introduce leadership abilities at the lowest levels of the organization while expanding and developing more proficient skills at each rank (US Army). The incorporation of consistent training reinforces skills and ensures that service members become subject matter experts respective to their job roles while maintaining the culture of the military at each rank.

While each job within the military maintains specific training requirements, the culture within the military is essential to training. The military creates basic job duties and responsibilities that all service members are responsible for. This encourages consistent leadership qualities with the same theme of leadership skills across differing job roles. The priorities of each schooling shifts per target leader group; however, as a whole system of military vocational education in the United States, schooling for service members targets “knowledge and analytical intelligence, leadership, theory and practice of management, military history, operational doctrine, national defense policy, planning and decision-making, legal responsibilities and professional ethics... [in addition to] political science, the basics of economic theory, history, psychology, jurisprudence, sociology, world culture, the foundations of military leadership, logic, philosophy, racial theory, leadership theory, literature, theology, art, [and] foreign languages” (Shumovetska, 2019). With the fundamentals of these courses and programs, service members often accumulate knowledge the traditional college student would acquire in their preliminary studies in addition to a heavy emphasis on leadership development and the active experience of leading teams in stressful and austere environments - skills many civilians do not obtain in their careers until they reach a high level of leadership in the organization as they hone their skills over more than double the time it takes a service member to gain the necessary experience.

Army leadership principles identify the attributes and competencies that leaders need to possess and practice; these attributes (character, presence, and intellect) are what ARNG leaders expect to be, while the competencies (leads, develops, and achieves) are what leaders are expected to do. ARNG senior leaders apply these principles in leading the organization by describing the commander's role in leading through a process used for all direct, organizational,

and strategic level processes as leaders guide and instruct their subordinates through published guidance, appraisal systems, meetings, forums, and personal interaction.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a review of the bodies of research that inform this study. First, the chapter explored the literature on the military structure, values, and culture - specifically including differentiation of ARNG Soldiers and how periods of transition are continuously experienced. Second was an introduction to the framework for the development of this study, role theory, and its association to the strenuous expectations of leadership as catalysts for how roles are fulfilled by this unique group of people. It is the goal of this chapter to build a foundation to support a comprehensive understanding of what little is known about this population and inform future data analysis.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of experienced ARNG Soldiers' needs and challenges as they navigate civilian and military environments regarding professional role adaptation. This chapter outlines the overall methodology of the study by describing the research design, sample selection, data collection methods and data analysis. The chapter also describes the procedures for validity and reliability, the researcher's role and positionality, and the ethical considerations and trustworthiness associated with conducting the study.

Research Question

Through an interpretive, qualitative approach, this study sought to understand how currently serving ARNG Soldiers navigate civilian and military professional roles simultaneously. For this study, the researcher conducted one-on-one Zoom interviews with participants who identify as currently serving ARNG Soldiers. Through the interviews, narratives shared elaborate upon their experience within military and civilian environments. Using thematic narrative analysis, themes were identified within each narrative that explain the needs and challenges these ARNG Soldiers face. Using these themes as a basis, the following research question guided the study:

1. How do Army National Guard Soldiers perceive their dual role as citizen-Soldiers?

Research Design

This study draws upon qualitative methods because the researcher's interest in exploring participants' lived experiences is best captured by gathering data where participants can share detailed contextual information rather than via a quantitative survey or form. This is especially

the case in the qualitative, interpretive paradigm of research because narratives, or stories, anchor the storyteller's identity as they are rooted in unique lived human experience (Czarniawska, 2007). Interpretive research relies on the understanding that reality is socially constructed (Merriam, 2015). Qualitative research focuses on the lived experiences of individuals; personal narratives help to contribute to this study and will be able to outline the complexities of navigating dual professional roles. Qualitative research as theorized by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explores individuals' social interactions in various situations and allows researchers to convey meaning from these interactions. One of the goals of qualitative research is to gain depth of understanding in individual experience rather than encapsulate experience broadly for a larger population (Creswell, 2007).

Narrative inquiry first influenced the interview protocol for this study. In narrative inquiry, the researcher is the primary instrument of the study, who then can interpret and analyze data to assign meaning (Creswell, 2007). In-depth meaning in the case of narrative inquiry helps to honor the lived experience of possible participants in keeping their own voice and culture (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Described by Clandinin (2016), narrative inquiry is a relational methodology that examines the relationship between a person and the world in which they live. Not only do participants of a study share their experiences through story, but the researcher themselves becomes a part of their lived story by facilitating the conversation. This provides the researcher with an opportunity to consider why the study should be approached in such a personal manner, and how the researcher's perspective can contribute to the understanding of a phenomenon without altering or reshaping the story. Stories are utilized in qualitative research to capture individuals' social, cultural, and historical background in the way in which it is narrated as shaped by that individual. Narrative inquiry can showcase the formation of a community

through the co-telling of the lived experience by connecting them together (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Because the re-storying of a narrative is a collaborative process, it is crucial to give voice to all parties in the process of retelling and to also distinguish between the space and time in which the point of view is being highlighted to depict the most accurate account.

In Merriam's research (2015), interpretive design refers to a qualitative research approach that focuses on understanding the meaning and experiences of participants. In interpretive design, the researcher interprets and constructs meaning from the data collected through interviews or observations. Interpretive design was selected as an appropriate approach of analysis for this proposed study to learn more about the culture, identity, and lives of the participants through their stories about workplace experiences as well as explanations and descriptions that reflect in-depth meanings of daily work life. With a strong relationship, participants can offer vulnerable moments of themselves, making the establishment of trust and rapport essential elements of study design (Clandinin, 2016). Mishler (1995) suggests that retelling participant stories through an interpretive lens brings about a full construction of the story, by assigning meaning to lived experience. Part of capturing this experience involves “collecting open-ended (nonnumerical) verbally reported experiences or observations to answer these research questions... [and] then translating and illuminating the meaning conveyed” (Elliott and Timulak, 2021).

Statement of Positionality

As a former member of the ARNG, I reflect often on the unique and sometimes difficult experience of serving in a dual professional role, attempting to balance the demands of military service with the realities of personal and civilian life. I remember vividly the challenges I faced, both professionally and personally, as I navigated the tension between these two roles. One

experience that stands out was when a senior leader told me that I would have to choose between excelling in a civilian career or excelling in a military career, but that I could not realistically expect to advance in both. According to this leader, it was impossible to achieve success in both career tracks simultaneously. This statement, while infuriating, was a sentiment that I came to understand in various forms over the course of my service.

On top of this, I often found myself in situations where I had to step away from my civilian career to fulfill training or state active duty missions. In addition to the stress of juggling Guard and civilian obligations, there was also the personal toll of trying to maintain a sense of balance. After months of working non-stop trying to fit in training commitments, state missions, and Guard-related activities, I longed for a break. When I tried to take vacation time to recharge, a different leader once told me that I should have planned better and given up my vacation after returning from an extensive ARNG training stint. I was told, rather bluntly, that I should not have expected to be allowed to take any vacation that year, as I had already taken enough time away from the office for military duties.

These two examples, from two different human resources professionals, painted a clear picture for me of what my career would look like if I stayed in the ARNG long-term. The message I received was clear: either I would have to give up my civilian aspirations or sacrifice my military ambitions if I wanted to thrive in either world. But these were not isolated instances. In fact, the frustrations I experienced were mirrored by many of the Soldiers I served with and led. The stress of balancing military and civilian roles was a shared reality, and it was something that many of us discussed over the years.

In the end, these challenges, along with the fact that my husband, who also serves full-time in the ARNG with over a decade of service remaining, led me to make the difficult decision

not to reenlist after six years of service. I chose to focus on my civilian career and family life, without the constant pressure of having to sacrifice one for the other. I wanted space to pursue my professional goals without the looming tension of military obligations pulling me in opposite directions.

This personal experience, though just a small piece of my story, reflects the broader struggles faced by many ARNG Soldiers. The challenges I encountered were not unique to me but were shared by countless service members who have grappled with the demands of dual professional roles. This is why I believe this research is so important. It gives ARNG Soldiers the opportunity to voice their own narratives to share their experiences of balancing the often-conflicting demands of their military and civilian careers. By capturing their stories, we can better understand the complexities of their dual roles and the impact these challenges have on their lives, both professionally and personally.

Participants

Qualitative research requires a sample of participants who can provide descriptive information to generate a deeper understanding of the phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants (Creswell, 2013). Although initially selected through convenience sampling, in which participants were easily accessible to the researcher, this study ultimately ended up with snowball sampling as participants often informed the researcher, they had recruited ARNG leaders they knew to assist in increasing participation (Cassell & Symon, 2012). This study draws on narrated stories from individual interviews of NCOs and commissioned ARNG Soldiers, focused on the meaning they make of their professional roles in both the military and civilian environments.

This study included 13 participants from the southeastern United States, chosen for their proximity to the researcher and the area's significant military presence. To protect participants' privacy and reduce the risk of re-identification, only minimal demographic and personally identifiable information was collected and presented. Each participant was assigned a random pseudonym to further safeguard their anonymity, and some participants hold leadership positions that could increase the likelihood of re-identification. This sample serves as a representative cross-section of the ARNG leadership population in terms of key demographic and social factors, such as military rank, gender, and age.

Criteria for Selection

For this study, participants were required to meet the following criteria:

1. must identify as an Army National Guard Soldier of the rank E5 and above (noncommissioned officer, warrant officer, or commissioned officer)
2. must currently be a full-time employee in a civilian organization; and
3. must have served in the Army National Guard for a minimum of 12 months.

Participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity throughout the analysis and documentation process, all randomly assigned, with the option for participants to change their pseudonym if desired during the member-checking process.

Data Collection Method/s

This research project received IRB approval in July 2024. Participant recruitment began almost immediately. Data collection occurred between August 2024 and September 2024. Data collection occurred in three phases: participant recruitment, one round of one-on-one interview via Zoom, and member-checking. Designed to capture lived experiences, the data collection

centered around interviews in which participants were asked about their experiences and the meaning they made of those experiences.

Recruitment

For this study, participants were recruited from one state located in the southeastern United States. The service members who participated all met the three criteria for selection. The researcher contacted the state National Guard's Director of the Employment Center because of their direct and regular communication with the full listserv of service members who may be eligible to participate. This Director agreed to send an email to all the state ARNG members, asking them to contact the researcher if they thought they matched the selection criteria and might be willing to participate in the study. The email was sent out in summer 2024. In response, 13 service members contacted the researcher about the study. Each of whom responded met selection criteria and agreed to participate in the study. After acknowledgement and confirmation of their information, a follow-up email was sent to participants for scheduling and subsequent confirmation of the participants' chosen date.

Interview

Mishler suggests that interviews invoke narratives by asking participants to describe a certain process or experience. By asking open-ended questions, allowing participants to elaborate without much interruption, and utilizing the participant's own linguistic references, interviews can gather rich stories (1986). This qualitative study utilized a loosely interview design and thematic narrative analysis to help understand the lived experiences of a sample of 13 Army National Guard Soldiers who were employed by both the Army National Guard and the civilian workforce at the time of their interview. Appendix A includes the interview protocol for this study.

Interviews were conducted between August 30, 2024, and September 6, 2024. Participant interviews were scheduled via email after they expressed interest. After confirming scheduling, the researcher confirmed the time and date of the one-on-one Zoom interview and provided the informed consent information as a preview, noting that the researcher would ask for verbal consent upon beginning the interview. Zoom was selected for the mode of which to conduct interviews in order to accommodate the research and participants schedules, because of lack of proximity to the participants, and to allow participants to feel most comfortable in a convenient location and time. At the start of each interview, participants confirmed their consent to participate as well as record and were asked about what their jobs looked like in both the civilian and military environments, in addition to their home. This was not recorded to protect the identities of the participants as the combination of information in a small population could lead to probable identification.

Each interview was conducted one-on-one via Zoom and lasted no more than an hour. The interviews were recorded and transcribed automatically by Zoom, after which the researcher reviewed and edited the transcripts, removing any personally identifiable information. At the end of each interview, the researcher sent a cleaned version of the transcript to the participant via email for member checking. Before concluding the interview, the researcher explained this process to each participant, making it clear that it was optional and aimed at ensuring their comfort with the information being shared in the research. Participants were informed that they could edit or remove any material they did not want included in the study. None of the participants requested changes to the interview content. To further protect participant anonymity, the researcher redacted sensitive information such as employer names, family members' names, and other identifying details.

Data Analysis

According to Merriam (2009), data analysis in qualitative research applies to making sense of stories collected by consolidating and interpreting the data collected by the researcher. By assigning codes to the data collected, the researcher focused on the overall experiences of the ARNG Soldiers. All interview transcriptions of participants were reviewed after utilizing the Zoom transcription method, cleaned for accuracy, and coded with a descriptive, open coding process to help make sense of the data. This process applies words or short phrases to describe the situation the participant is describing (Miles et al., 2014). Following, a second round of coding, framework coding, showed emerging themes related to role theory concepts such as role identity, role conflict, role strain, contagion, and boundaries, using the research question as a guiding point.

Issues of Rigor and Quality

Establishing trustworthiness of the transcript addresses one aspect of rigor in qualitative studies. Therefore, there was a thorough review of the transcription, ensuring accurate accounts of what occurred in the interviews while also ensuring the safety of participants' identity by removing personally identifiable information (Poland, 1995). Another way of addressing rigor in this study is through reciprocity. With clarity about the process and purpose as well as remaining transparent in building rapport, providing a safe environment for the Soldiers interviewed, and honestly honoring their stories, this study builds additional trustworthiness and credibility (Harrison et al., 2001). This was done by conversing prior to starting the interview and offering personal connection to the research as a previous ARNG member. When coding and analyzing data, the researcher periodically reflected on personal biases and how these influenced thought process. A thorough explanation of the process was given to participants along with ample time

to ensure participant questions were answered. Following their interviews, the next steps of optional member-checking were discussed.

IRB, Ethics, & Trustworthiness

Participants were given full disclosure on the purpose of the interview upon initial contact and the environment in which the information would be shared. Prior to the start of each interview, full consent of participants was obtained to be recorded via audio for the researcher to reference in analysis. In the spirit of gaining trust and building rapport, participants were provided the opportunity to decline answering any questions they were not comfortable answering. Additionally, they were given the opportunity to redact or change verbiage through the process of member checking. Member-checking is the process of presenting the transcripts to participants for feedback, which establishes credibility for the data (Stahl & King, 2020). To maintain confidentiality of Soldiers' confidential information, the protection and privacy of participants was adhered to by enabling the use of basic pseudonyms and removing any additional identifiable information such as unit, location, or employer.

To comply with research guidelines, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Submission for New Studies application was submitted and approved. An Informed Consent form can be found in Appendix B.

Assumptions, Delimitations, Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is the geographical situation of participants in the southeastern United States because of its proximity to the researcher and its significant military and veteran population. The limited landscape of participants is not fully representative of all ARNG Soldiers and does not capture the experience of every state Guard - each of which is governed by their state representatives, which reinforces the need for further study across the US

military population - to include additional components of military service. Another limitation of the study was the small number of sample participants willing to participate, which was a necessary limitation due to the timeline of study and lack of personnel and financial resources to actively source additional participants.

Alternatively, a strength of the study was the researcher's position as a veteran of the ARNG who went through the same challenges gives a strong foundation to the study. This could enrich the understanding of the participants' narratives provided and allow the researcher to specifically probe into unanswered questions. Not only does this background make the opportunity for analysis more deeply defined but presumably allows participants to feel more comfortable during the interview and provide them with the opportunity to express their unfiltered experiences. Prior to starting the recording of each interview, the researcher shared her personal background with each participation to support the efforts of building rapport and trust.

The researcher acknowledges the potential bias presented by her affiliation with the study's ARNG population. She recognizes that her military service in the North Carolina ARNG could influence her perception of Soldiers and thus presents a possible limitation of this study. Additionally, her prior service adds a grounding perspective for the research in the ability to communicate seamlessly with the study participants and navigate/elaborate upon both the military and civilian cultural components. The researcher ensured to capture the experiences of ARNG Soldiers from varied backgrounds, units, and skills to combat any potential delimitation caused by any internal, inherent bias that may have been interpreted by participants when sharing their own stories.

Using interpretive design methods for the design of this study allowed the researcher to learn aspects of ARNG experiences that had not been previously known in literature, which may

lead to the creation of practices or interventions that employers of ARNG Soldiers, military units and programs, and service members themselves may employ to support the success of experiencing a dual professional role.

Chapter Summary

This chapter illustrates the research design for this study. Data was gathered through virtual Zoom interviews with currently serving ARNG members. Role theory was used as a theoretical framework for data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Chapter Four introduces the findings organized by the themes that emerged after the interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed by the researcher. The chapter is divided into two sections: profiles of the participants and the findings of the study.

Participant Profiles

A total of 13 ARNG Soldiers were interviewed (Table 4.1) via loosely structured one-on-one interviews, all serving in a Southeastern state of the United States ARNG. Eight participants were noncommissioned officers, five commissioned officers, all representing various military and civilian job-types, and demographically diverse. Participants are organized below in order by rank. Participant profiles are expanded below in addition to a brief synopsis of how they experience dual professional roles; some details are omitted for participant protection and anonymity.

Table 4.1

Participant	Rank	Previously Deployed	Years in ARNG	Military Profession	Civilian Profession
Sierra	Sergeant	N	6	Preventative Medicine	Health & Safety
Sydney	Sergeant	N	8	Human Resources	Retail
Juliette	Staff Sergeant	N	9	Supply Maintenance	Maintenance
Grant	Staff Sergeant	Y	17	Logistics	Parts Management
Craig	Sergeant First Class	Y	13	Military Police	Vice President - Operations, Property Management & Hospitality
Sean	Sergeant First Class	Y	16	Infantry	Law Enforcement
Victor	Sergeant First Class	Y	16	Military Police	Heavy Equip Operator
Steven	Master Sergeant	Y	11	Military Police	Capital Project Management
Alex	Captain	N	15	Company Commander	Car Sales
Cameron	Captain	Y	10	Finance	Finance
Martin	Captain	N	4	Cybersecurity	Finance Cybersecurity
Charlie	Major	N	15	Battalion Commander	Cybersecurity Director
Freddy	Major	Y	21	Signal	IT Director, Project Management

Sierra is a newly promoted NCO in preventative medicine, who recently completed her undergraduate studies. She is currently working as an individual contributor on the health and safety team at an engineering company. Although Sierra does not yet have a family of her own, she receives support from her parents and mentioned that, outside of her professional commitments, she faces few barriers to serving in the ARNG.

Sierra has served in the ARNG for six years, during which time she has gained valuable experience both in the military and in her civilian career. However, she has decided not to re-enlist when her current contract expires at the end of 2024. She cites the increasingly intensive demands of her military duties as a key factor in her decision, explaining that the time and energy required by the Guard have started to interfere with her civilian career aspirations. Although she has found fulfillment in her service, Sierra believes that continuing in the ARNG would hinder her ability to fully advance and focus on her professional growth in the civilian sector. For her, this decision marks the end of her dual-career trajectory, as she prioritizes long-term career stability and work-life balance over continued military service.

I've enjoyed the experiences that I've had in the Guard, and I feel like it's built me up as a person to who I am today. But I feel like knowing that I could be pulled away from civilian life, from my career, pulled away to state active duty for weeks at a time, I could miss crucial projects during annual training. That has been something that has steered me away from re-enlisting and from going active duty... I would need to put everything else on the back burner, and that's something I'm not interested in any longer.

Sydney is a newly promoted human resources NCO in the ARNG, having served eight years in total. In her civilian career, she works in retail and, at this point, is neither married nor has children. Sydney values her time in the ARNG, particularly the sense of camaraderie and the purpose it provides, which she feels is central to her identity and personal fulfillment.

However, she also faces a challenging adjustment when transitioning back to her civilian job after completing extended military duties. Sydney describes a "harsh reality check" and a kind of culture shock when returning to retail, where the expectations and work dynamics are far less structured than in the military. In the ARNG, the strict standards of discipline,

accountability, and organization are constant, and the contrast with her civilian workplace can feel jarring. The difference in how time is managed, how authority is exercised, and the overall level of responsibility she carries in the military versus her civilian role can lead to feelings of frustration and disorientation. For Sydney, this shift is mainly cultural - moving from an environment of high accountability and clear structure, to one that often lacks the same level of rigor and purpose.

I think one thing with being in the National Guard and transitioning back to the civilian side from talking to other Soldiers, I realized that I was not alone. It seems like it's normal for there to be a depressive episode whenever you first get back from full time or training.

And it's not something that is really discussed whenever you're about to leave for your training but going back to the civilian side and not having a clear plan in place, for whenever you return, your sense of purpose kind of decreases, and you don't know what to do with yourself, and you get in a funk. And I wish that they kind of prepared you more for that transitional period.

Juliette has served in the ARNG for nine years and currently holds the position of maintenance NCO. In her civilian career, she works in a role that closely mirrors her military duties, managing the administration and oversight of her battalion's maintenance fleet. This dual role allows Juliette to seamlessly apply the skills and knowledge she gains from her Guard responsibilities to her civilian job, and vice versa, creating a sense of continuity between her two professional lives.

Her commitment to the ARNG is further supported by her husband, who also serves full-time in the Guard. This shared commitment enables them both to focus on their military careers

without the same level of personal conflict that some service members may experience when balancing civilian and military obligations. Both are committed to advancing in the Guard, and this dual-service dynamic helps them manage the demands of their military careers while still maintaining a strong family unit.

I think the military itself has shaped me to be who I am today, and I feel like I use my communication skills that I've learned with the military, the resiliency they've taught me. I'm able to use both of those in different ways on the military side and civilian side.

Grant is a senior NCO in the ARNG where he serves in a logistics role. In his civilian career, he works as a technician for the Department of Defense at a flight facility, performing duties like those he fulfills in the Guard. His experience in both realms has given him a unique perspective on the challenges of balancing dual professional roles. Having deployed overseas once, Grant is aware of the specific difficulties that ARNG Soldiers face, particularly in comparison to their active-duty counterparts.

For Grant, this dual commitment means that his civilian responsibilities sometimes conflict with his military obligations, and vice versa. The demands of managing both roles can be overwhelming, particularly when trying to meet the expectations of both his civilian job and his military duties. The experience of juggling both careers has given him a deep appreciation for the resilience and dedication required of ARNG Soldiers. He recognizes that while active-duty Soldiers may have fewer external pressures, ARNG Soldiers must constantly adapt and manage the additional challenge of balancing their military service with civilian life. This ongoing struggle is something Grant believes deserves greater recognition, as it is a key factor in the daily lives of many service members in the National Guard.

I try to tell people how hard it is to be National Guard versus active duty when I tell them like, all right, let's just take the supply room. For example, if you go into an active-duty supply room. They got E7s in charge, an E6 second in charge, E5, 15 to 20 E4s, depending on how big the supply room is to handle their supply issues for a whole unit. In the National Guard, you have one person who only has help one week a month to do the same exact mission. So I feel like that right there helps people get a more clear view of how much we have to accomplish in such a small amount of time, but we have the same mission set to be ready to deploy, ready to do whatever our tasks may be, but in a short amount of period of time, and I feel like the more people get privy of that information, they'll understand that the guard is just not part time Soldiers.

Craig serves as the vice president of operations for a property management company, a role that involves overseeing multiple teams, handling critical operations, and ensuring the efficient management of properties. Outside of his civilian career, he is a dedicated senior military police NCO in the ARNG. Craig is married with children, and his family plays a central role in his life, though he continues to balance his professional responsibilities with his military service.

With 13 years of service in the ARNG, Craig finds himself balancing the long hours and strategic decision-making of his civilian job with the rigorous physical, mental, and emotional demands of his military duties. He has been deployed once, and despite the demands of both positions, Craig feels a deep sense of duty and purpose. His dual commitment often requires careful time management and sacrifices on his part. For example, there are times when he must take time away from his civilian job to fulfill ARNG duties, such as weekend drills, training exercises, or deployments. These periods can be especially challenging for Craig, as they often

overlap with important work commitments or family events. Despite the challenges, Craig remains steadfast in his commitment to both his professional responsibilities and his service to the military, finding a sense of fulfillment in the ability to balance the demands of both worlds while being a dedicated husband and father.

It's super cliché but deep down, I believe in service to the country and fighting. You know, without our military, we wouldn't have the freedoms that we have. I don't like being the world's police, but sometimes that's necessary... One of my proudest moments in my National Guard career was being deployed with Soldiers and trying to mentor and get through to them... I forced them to set goals, and had a conversation with [one Soldier] about a civilian life and his family... And he said, "I know I'm settling for this mediocre job". I said, "I know you can do better than that". And we continued to discuss it throughout the deployment, and about two months after we got home, he called me. He said, "I want you to be the first person to know... that I just bought my first house. When I got back, I got a new job making more than double what I was making, and I bought a house, and it's all because of you". That hit me in a way - I've never been impacted before like that... They all teach me. They all have different experiences both on the civilian and the military side. And so, the reward is so much higher than the sacrifices... That's what I'm trying to say.

Sean is an experienced infantry NCO who has served in the ARNG for 16 years. In addition to his military service, he is a law enforcement officer, balancing the demands of both careers while also fulfilling his responsibilities as a husband and father to a young child. Sean is an advocate for the unique value that ARNG Soldiers gain from their dual-role status. He believes that the combination of military and civilian careers not only fosters a diverse skill set

but also strengthens their overall professionalism and adaptability. Despite the challenges of managing competing priorities - whether it's training, deployments, law enforcement duties, or family life, he views these demands as opportunities for personal and professional growth. According to Sean, the ability to juggle multiple roles makes ARNG Soldiers more resilient, disciplined, and capable, shaping them into well-rounded professionals who excel in both their military and civilian responsibilities.

I'm under the impression that National Guard Soldiers do better at understanding the job and their ability to quickly adapt and understand things because we do it on a daily basis, or we do it on a monthly basis when we go from a drill status back to civilian, and then taking the civilian life, and then the things that it throws at us and then adapting to it.

Victor is the highest-ranking NCO in charge of his assigned detachment. Outside of his military duties, he works as a heavy equipment operator in his civilian career, a role where he does not have direct reports. In addition to his professional roles, Victor is a devoted husband and father to two children, balancing the demands of his personal life with his professional commitments.

Having served in the ARNG for 16 years, Victor's motivation to serve stems from a desire to contribute to something larger than himself, a commitment that began at a young age. Over the years, he has come to understand firsthand the challenges that come with military service, particularly as a seasoned NCO. Victor candidly shared that, as one progresses further in their military career, the demands of the job tend to increase, often resulting in more time away from home and family.

One thing that I've realized as I've been in so many years and have started a family... I miss a lot. The older I get I realize kids aren't gonna be kids forever. It gets tough to carve that weekend time out or go do these special events or the battle handoffs which don't take too long, but it gets tough, because that's just time that I'm not able to be there. My daughter is doing a lot of traveling and things right now that I'm not able to play as big a part in. So, I'm still doing what I signed up to do and honoring that, still loving to serve, but then, trying to really get back the time I've missed out on.

Steven recently returned from a deployment where he supported an active-duty component, providing support as a senior military police NCO in the ARNG. He has dedicated 11 years of service to the ARNG, after initially serving six years in the Marine Corps. Following his time in the Marines, Steven took a two-year break before rejoining the Guard, driven by his continued commitment to serve his country.

In his civilian career, Steven works as a capital project manager, a demanding role that requires him to oversee complex projects while managing multiple teams and timelines. Outside of his professional life, Steven is a dedicated husband and father. Steven shared that the typically advertised "one weekend a month, two weeks a year" commitment for ARNG Soldiers has not been his reality. In his experience, and in the experiences of many Soldiers he's served with, the demands of the Guard extend far beyond these expectations, requiring more time and energy. This, he noted, is one of the biggest challenges facing ARNG personnel, as time commitments can be unpredictable and often require sacrifices in both personal and professional spheres.

Normally, National Guard is one weekend a month, two weeks a year. We respond to hurricanes, civil disturbance, things of that nature, whereas active duty was focused on a global presence being mobilized. I was selected from a National Guard status into a full-

time status based on paragraph and line number. Within two days after accepting that promotion, all of a sudden, “Hey, you’re one of the 25 being mobilized to assist and augment active duty”. So, they gave us less than a 30-day window, and we had to get our affairs in order. Our civilian careers with USERRA rights and everything there, our families here, and then also kind of prepare yourself and put you in the right mindset, because now you are active duty. There is no more part-time. So, it was quite the transition and a lot to grasp in a short amount of time, but as soon as I accepted it and I briefed it to my family and my employer, I had to knock out those dominoes and then, just to move forward with the mission, and the mission at that time was to be augmentees, National Guard, tactical duty component.

Alex serves as a company commander in the ARNG with 15 years of service and works as a car salesman in his civilian role. In addition to his leadership in the Guard, he is a dedicated husband and father. As a company commander, Alex provides leadership and guidance to his Soldiers while navigating the complexities and challenges of an ever-evolving Army. In a time when military strategies, policies, and technologies are rapidly changing, Alex offers a unique perspective on the additional struggles he faces in his role. He shared that, in addition to the usual challenges of command - such as maintaining morale, ensuring training readiness and managing personnel, he must also address the increasing pressures of adapting to a constantly shifting landscape within the Army.

These changes, along with the unpredictable nature of the ARNG's commitments, add layers of complexity to his duties as a commander. Alex pointed out that the Army's evolving demands require him to remain agile, often making difficult decisions that balance the needs of his unit with the realities of his civilian job and family life. Despite these obstacles, Alex

believes that the unique challenges he faces help shape his leadership style and make him a stronger, more resilient Soldier and civilian professional.

It's hard enough being at some point a leader, or even just being a Soldier and having to balance things. Everybody has that as a common ground. But you kind of live in this world of - there is a world that's spinning, and your full-timers world, and with your unit, and what's going on with Army policies, and whatever's going on in the news and everything, and especially with the last few years when I started my command, it was right in the thick of COVID and vaccinations and different PT tests and all these different things that were changing for the Army.

Cameron is a finance officer in the ARNG where he has served for 10 years. In addition to his military duties, he works as a financial consultant in the civilian sector, helping clients navigate complex financial landscapes. Recently, Cameron returned from a deployment, and his life has been further transformed by the arrival of his newborn baby, which has led him to reevaluate his priorities.

After much thought and consideration, Cameron has decided that he will be leaving the ARNG at the end of this year when his mandatory service obligation expires. This decision comes because of his family's current situation - his wife is in the midst of her medical residency, and with the demands of her career and the responsibilities of raising a young child, Cameron and his wife have concluded that the military is an additional commitment they need to step away from for the time being. While Cameron's decision to leave the Guard is a difficult one, he feels it is in the best interest of his family at this stage in their lives.

Cameron grew up in a military family, and the values of service and duty have been deeply ingrained in him throughout his life. Many members of his family are still actively

servicing, and Cameron hopes that his decision to step away from the military might serve as a point of reflection for them as well. He acknowledges that his departure could influence his family's perspective on service, encouraging them to consider what is best for their own lives and futures.

Nobody in my family has been a professional outside of the military, and so making that jump was very nerve-wracking for me because I had no experience or nobody to kind of talk to or rely on whether this was a smart decision or not. But I can't see myself anywhere else, and so I'm very glad that I did, and I made that jump. Maybe that experience will influence them, or my brothers specifically, to make whenever they do decide to hang up their boots.

Martin works in a similar capacity in both the ARNG and his civilian career, serving as an officer in cybersecurity. He joined the ARNG later in his professional journey, having now served for four years. Martin is married but has no children, which has allowed him to focus more on his career and personal development.

Because his military role aligns closely with his civilian career, Martin finds that his service in the ARNG offers him unique opportunities to enhance his professional skills in ways that directly benefit his civilian job. Through the Guard, he has access to specialized training, certifications, and cutting-edge cybersecurity technologies that would be difficult to obtain in a civilian role alone. This alignment between his military and civilian responsibilities has proven to be a significant advantage, enabling him to stay ahead of his peers in the competitive field of cybersecurity.

Martin believes that his experience in the ARNG has not only broadened his technical expertise but also helped him develop key leadership and problem-solving skills that are highly

valued in the private sector. He views his time in the Guard as an investment in his future, providing him with a unique set of qualifications that set him apart from others in his field.

I think it's been helpful for my career, being that it's cyber. I have friends in the Guard, who are different branches, and their National Guard Army job doesn't necessarily carry over much to their civilian job. But being that mine is basically the same thing, all the training that the Guard sends me to is good to put on my resume, which has helped a lot. The Guard has a pretty good budget for training courses for cyber. I think, just because you see the other units, it costs a lot for them to supply their bullets and beans and stuff, and they look at a cyber course that's a few \$1,000, and they were like, "oh, that's not that bad compared to everything else," but the cyber world, you know... It's expensive but being that the Guard can send us to things like that has been super helpful. So, I've had the opportunity to go to extra training and get certifications that were not funded by my civilian employer that were funded by the Guard. That's been super helpful, and I'd say the other good benefit of it is just the networking aspect.

Charlie is a seasoned battalion commander in the ARNG with 15 years of dedicated service. In his civilian career, he holds a senior leadership position overseeing a Cybersecurity team, where he manages complex projects and ensures the protection of critical information systems. In addition to his professional roles, Charlie is a committed husband and father, balancing the demands of his personal life with his professional responsibilities.

Charlie views his dual-role career as both rewarding and challenging, as the leadership approaches and expectations in each environment require distinct skill sets and mindsets. In the ARNG, his leadership is focused on military discipline, strategic decision-making and readiness, while in his civilian role, he navigates a more technical, fast-paced and often collaborative

environment in the rapidly evolving field of cybersecurity. While it can sometimes be difficult to juggle the demands of both worlds, Charlie finds that each role enhances his effectiveness in the other, ultimately making him a more well-rounded and capable leader in both settings.

One thing I wish my coworkers knew is that the military may not be as exciting all the time as they seem to think it is. They were always like, “Wow, that's so cool. You get to go do XYZ” and they don't see kind of the... the non-glamorous sides of the military that come with all of that. So, I mean good in a way that they have a positive image of what the military is. But sometimes I wish they kind of understood. It wasn't like I'm getting to go on vacation and go do things in the military... that it truly is a second JOB, and something that takes a lot of time and energy and effort to do well.

Freddy has dedicated a total of 21 years of service to the military, having served in both the Marine Corps and the ARNG. After initially stepping away from the Marine Corps, he rejoined the ARNG in 2004, inspired by the events of 9/11 and driven by a renewed sense of duty. Freddy is married and has three children. In the ARNG, Freddy serves as a Signal Officer, where he is responsible for overseeing communication systems and ensuring the smooth operation of critical technology. In his civilian career, he works as an IT Director, where he manages the technology infrastructure for his organization. Freddy's military service has taken him overseas on five deployments.

Growing up in a military family with a strong Army background, Freddy has always felt a deep connection to service. The values of duty, honor, and commitment were instilled in him from an early age, and he takes pride in continuing the tradition of service in his own life. Despite the challenges that come with balancing military and civilian careers, Freddy finds great joy and a sense of accomplishment in his work with the ARNG. This sense of fulfillment keeps

him engaged and motivated, and he has expressed that he will continue to serve as long as he is able.

I would say as I've gotten older, particularly in a leadership role, I spend a lot of time trying to talk to young Soldiers and help them with some of the skills I think I've seen lacking financial skills, life skills, trying to make sure they're aware of the benefits that they get being in the military. The civilian side is I mean it's night and day of how little people understand really what I think the military goes through. And when I go back to my civilian job on a Monday there is a culture shock, and sometimes I will catch myself still in an officer mindset. For me it's just joy and the feeling of what you're doing when you serve. I've got maybe five years before I age out, and I'm dreading putting on that uniform for the last time.

Presentation of Findings

Research Question: How do Army National Guard Soldiers perceive their dual role as citizen-Soldiers?

The three overarching themes and sub-themes derived from the findings of this research that emerged from framework coding were: (1) conflicting expectations, (1a) compartmentalization, (2) time constraints, (2a) prioritization, (3) family, and (3a) sacrifice. A fourth theme, their 'Why', emerged from open coding outside of the role theory framework. This section will present each theme as it relates to role theory and the ARNG Soldiers' experiences as professionals juggling multiple roles. These themes are shared through curated participant stories gathered from the data analysis.

Theme 1: Conflicting Expectations

Multiple participants discussed the conflicting expectations between their roles, making it difficult to fulfill each to its greatest extent. Predominantly, the ARNG has shown drawing participants away from other roles due to their contractual agreement with the agency, and it interferes with both their civilian professional role and their family responsibilities. Participants discussed that they must navigate varied expectations of environments, cultures, and responsibilities - leading to additional stress.

Transition to an all-volunteer force truly shaped the Army's culture, and it's evident that there is a difference in conforming to the institution of the Army driven by a post-Vietnam era increase in benefits such as housing and pay. The military's culture accepts violence on other humans, is more authoritarian than civilians are used to, and "emphasizes organizational and collective effectiveness, discipline, and commitment rather than individual rights, prerogatives, and liberties... a lifestyle far removed from the civilian world" (Goldich, 2011, p. 62). Multiple participants explained the cultural differences between the military and their home/civilian professional lives as the ARNG expects a level of professionalism and standard that does not always equate to what is expected in the civilian world. These conflicting expectations leave participants in a lingering, almost out-of-body experience, particularly when they transition off an ARNG duty period and back into fulfilling their civilian roles.

Charlie: *The military can be a much more direct, bottom line up front... whereas in the civilian world that can come off as maybe abrasive to people, or rude... and then at home trying not to take that direct bottom line up front attitude with my family isn't always the best. So, I think there's certainly some cultural differences... there's definitely some very*

serious differences between what's accepted in this norm in the military versus what can be considered acceptable and normal in regular civilian life.

Freddy: *When I go back to my civilian job on a Monday there is a culture shock, and sometimes I will catch myself still in an officer mindset... it's night and day of how little people understand really what I think the military goes through.*

Sierra: *I think in my civilian job you must be a more professional person when you're talking with other people when you're networking, and I feel like, maybe that's not the same in the Guard. There's a rank structure that needs to be respected. But there's not the same professionalism necessary in some circumstances.*

Victor: *On the civilian side of the house, they don't take as much pride in what they do, and they don't. They don't necessarily care if the other person fails. They don't work as a unit or as a united group per se. The rank structure is different. There's still that leadership in place. But there's no standard for that leadership.*

Role theory indicates that people develop a sense of who they are through the way in which they play out their roles and impact their identity and purpose. The more roles an individual has, the more role strain is increased due to the demanding conflicts of each role (Giarusso & Bengston, 2007). Multiple participants expressed their military role gives them a sense of purpose and belonging, especially with the camaraderie their service brings. Driven by the purpose the military gives them, longer periods of duty such as deployment or annual training for ARNG participants increases the jarring effect of returning to their civilian roles.

Steven: *Whether it's on drill weekend for National Guard or for a nine-month deployment. I catch myself wanting to go back to my civilian career. There I could feel like I'm a little more impactful. I could measure my results a little quicker and being*

called by my first name 90% of the time. And then, when I'm in my civilian career, I catch myself wanting to go back to uniform because there's certain simplicities about just, hey, this is our mission, this is our timeline, and this is our commander's intent, and this is our desired end state.

Sydney: *I think one thing, with being in the National Guard and transitioning back to the civilian side from talking to other Soldiers, I realized that I was not alone. It seems like it's normal for there to be a depressive episode whenever you first get back from full time or training. And it's not something that is really discussed whenever you're about to leave for your training but going back to the civilian side and not having a clear plan in place, for whenever you return, your sense of purpose kind of decreases, and you don't know what to do with yourself, and you get in a funk. I wish that they kind of prepared you more for that transitional period.*

The Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (commonly referred to as USERRA) requires that military personnel have protected employment during periods of duty that require them to leave their civilian employment for a duration and protects service members from discrimination due to their military service (USERRA). Typically, reservists, including ARNG members, serve for the military less than 40 days a year, when not tasked with additional schools, training, or supplemental duty in support of an active-duty mission such as for a deployment or a national mission such as for civil disturbance or natural disaster response (Figinski, 2017). In Figinski's (2017) resume study, he tested the discrimination of employers based on military status alone, finding that reservists were less likely to receive a callback from their job application stating current military service than those who had stated previous military experience. This is just one example of potential discrimination ARNG Soldiers face during their

employment, which is compiled with participants' feedback that is mixed in how their military experience has been perceived by their employer(s) - sometimes positive/supportive, and sometimes negative.

Martin: *It's just a huge hassle to go on military leave from an administrative way... I've been trying to figure out where to send my orders. No one from HR can give me an answer. They don't really have as many military employees there as my previous company did, so I just don't think that they're really set up for something like this.*

Alex: *You're responsible to three different parties [military, work, home], and every single one of them is going to tell you that they're the most important party... Every employer I've ever worked for in the last 15 years has had a different interpretation of what to do with National Guard status... I had a manager tell me once, 'you need to choose your military career or your civilian career'... sometimes it can be a little bit overwhelming and can cause some stress at home... I wish my civilian coworkers would just understand [I] ha[ve] more responsibility outside of this job than they would ever imagine.*

Grant: *I feel like professionally, it does make you more well-rounded because the military teaches you such discipline and accountability, and in a sense, morality that you may not have had if you're in your own upbringing that people, businesses and other companies tend to want to hire people of that nature because they know you have a background and some sort of discipline to get things done.*

Charlie: *Coming into the civilian world, they can look at military experience as or just being in the military as a sort of a vetting process of itself. In that you have, you know, met the standards to join the military. You understand kind of how chain of command*

works, and there's kind of just certain things that is implied by being in the military that I think civilian employers look favorably upon and when you get further into it.

Sub-Theme 1a: Compartmentalization

One of the components of role strain introduced by Goode (1960) is experiencing inconsistencies among role demands, “required at particular times and places... for each of which there will be somewhat different obligations... [to include] contradictory performances required... or conflicts of time, place, or resources” (p. 485). This does not only require immense energy and behavioral demands of having to negotiate their role behaviors, but also naturally risks meeting the demands of each role satisfactorily. As a result of these conflicting expectations and as a method to decrease role strain, consistent with Goode’s findings, is a form of “manipulation of the role structure,” participants all unanimously responded that they must be incredibly organized and focus their attention on one role at a time via compartmentalization in order to succeed (p. 486). Multiple participants mentioned playing a part or character, making several references to ‘taking off and putting on different hats’ and having to ‘flip a switch’ to immerse themselves in the obligations of those roles satisfactorily.

Juliette: *It's hard to differentiate the different roles and be able to essentially just flip a switch... You're going through the demands of drill weekend, which could be super tiring, and it can be exhausting mentally. And then you have to come home Sunday night at whatever hour, and then essentially get up that Monday morning and go back to work on the civilian side.*

Sean: *So, when I go to drill at my unit for the weekend, or AT, annual training, the 2 weeks that we have, I could flip that switch, and then I am Sergeant Sean. Now, once the uniform comes off, it's like flicking a light switch.*

Steven: *I struggle the hardest to maintain my 'character'... whether I'm a senior enlisted advisor or project manager with direct reports or subordinates, I must remain in character... [and] make sure you accomplish those key tasks.*

Victor: *I've kind of looked at it as far as navigating those roles separately as dual hats. Kind of trying to take one hat off and put the other one on and realize where I am, as far as if I'm at home, working, or if I'm with the Guard.*

Soldiers experience the strain of playing these roles especially when they have families at home that they need to ensure to reverse their military mindset and style of communication. Participants also expressed the difficulties between the harshness of managing Soldiers compared to managing employees in the civilian sector. Both their families and their civilian employees require a level of softer communication and agreeable mannerisms, which participants found it difficult to assimilate into, especially after being in a demanding, senior-level position in the military where so much is required of them to take charge and make decisions in a quick and abrupt manner.

Grant: *I'm hard on myself to make sure that I'm doing what I'm supposed to do in both areas of my life. And that takes a lot of attention to detail, a lot of focus, a lot of self-discipline and a lot of self-reflection... I feel like they get the best parts at home.*

Charlie: *Going to drill is a totally different world for me. What I do is not the most technical. It's more, I would say, interpersonal and much less technical. So just two very different mindsets - two different hats to kind of wear that you have to quickly change between one to the other, and then also kind of coming home then, and trying to put both of those to the side and go back to being just a father and husband, and transitioning back to the family mindset; Trying to juggle all three of those is certainly a challenge...*

While I'm at drill, that is my total focus. I'll call my wife or daughter in the evening for a little bit, but I try to have that separation so that I'm not trying to handle three different things at once, and doing poorly, probably, at all three of them...

I don't like bringing home stress from the Guard and dumping that on my wife, adding to what she's already dealing with. [I try] to have that mindset of keep[ing] work at work and then be able to come home. It's something I must really be mindful of, because it's easy to let everything kind of blend together.

Craig: *I tell myself all the time when I'm switching from my civilian career to the military field, I've got to put my military hat on. Cause it is a very different culture, and you have to treat problems and things differently. You handle your Soldiers differently than you handle your civilian employees.*

Theme 2: Time Constraints

Every participant in this study expressed the immense pressure their time is under having the responsibility of juggling multiple roles. Each of the participants held unique stories of the ways in which they navigated their roles - by organizing and prioritizing their lives to fulfill each of their roles effectively. Many times, this required time outside of their expected work windows and often over-extended their capacity to maximize time with their families. Notably, several participants declared that as they progressed further in their rank within the ARNG, the more time they spent in that part of their lives. Similarly, as several had children, the time constraints grew as they had to split their attention between additional balanced role fulfillment.

A common narrative of the ARNG, as illustrated by several participants, is that the ARNG is expected to serve 'one weekend a month and two weeks out of the year'. Based on the experiences of the participants, this has not been the case, and the ARNG has instead required far

more time than they anticipated upon joining. On occasion, this feels to ARNG Soldiers as if they're working two full-time jobs and often require them to put in excessive hours and foregoing rest time to accomplish all their roles demand.

Craig: *They say the National Guard's a part-time job. My experience has been very different than that and the fact that it does require a lot of time outside of your one weekend a month that you're supposed to serve... When I get activated by civilian unrest, or state active duty to go to any cities for riots or floods or natural disasters or anything like that, I typically bring my work civilian laptop. And as I'm working for the National Guard and doing my job throughout the day or whenever my shift is, I'm also answering emails and phone calls for my civilian job. When everybody else goes to bed at night and we end the day, I stay up for the next 3, 4, and 5 hours, and I work for my civilian job on the side so that I can stay caught up, and it doesn't suffer due to my absence.*

Martin: *It becomes more of a headache to put extra hours in, and do things when I have to go in on the weekend, or if they have an additional duty outside of annual training that they want people to come in for. I think my patience is lower for a little bit, for the guard for things like that versus my civilian job... They ask so much.*

Steven: *I wish that my civilian counterparts would understand the pressures of having 2 jobs. A lot of them think that their salary position right now is the end all be all. But I remind them regularly. Yes, Monday, through Friday, some Saturdays... 50, 60 Hour weeks could be stressful, especially when you have deadlines, you know, with a startup or you're a consultant, whatever. We all have our goals and quarterly revenues to revenue goals to achieve. But when you throw in another job, especially the longer you*

stay in - the longer I've stayed in, it isn't just 2 or 3 days a month. Almost every week somebody's calling, texting, asking for something.

Juliette: *Honestly, the higher you go and rank when it comes to the military side, you're gonna gain more responsibilities, and you're gonna have to take care of more outside of the IDT weekend.*

A component for ARNG Soldiers specifically is their dedication to one state primarily. While they have the flexibility to relocate to a different state to serve, some participants mentioned the additional time commitment of not only having to dedicate additional hours to work away from their home at inopportune times, but also the dedication spent traveling to and from periods of military duty. The extensive time required of them to get to a duty station that is not central to where they live or close to their daily routines, such as what an active-duty service member would experience living on or near a military installation, creates an isolating and exhausting commitment beyond their active time (Pnina et al., 2017).

Cameron: *Drilling is never going to be at the most convenient time. What's unique about drill is that you have people that live in different States. Usually in the active duty side, everybody's kind of surrounded or lives in the vicinity of that base versus in the Guard, you can have people coming from other states. That happens a lot. And so, the time to commute to drill, to commute back home, to spend the weekend away and then have to work and then go into a drill and then go into another work week... It's just a lot of time, and it can be hard for a lot of people if they don't have a great support system.*

Charlie: *For a while I was drilling six hours away from where I live. So, leaving on a Friday driving six hours, getting somewhere, working all weekend, driving home, and then getting home sometimes after midnight on Sunday, then, still having to turn around*

and go back into work on Monday is just a huge challenge to still be able to give it your best effort at both. Not to mention on top of that, still be a husband and father at home, and not just get home and completely disconnect, and go straight to bed Monday night after I get home after normal work. So just the strain on your time has been the biggest challenge, I would say.

Sub-Theme 2a: Prioritization

Each participant shared that due to the time constraints placed on them, they had to prioritize to ensure ‘the mission’ gets done in each role. Participants were also asked about their ideal allocation of resources, time, and energy to the roles in their lives (Military profession, civilian profession, home). Goode (1960) also discusses the concept of the “ideal role fulfillment... some activities [or expectations,] are ranked higher than others” such as, presumably, the role of protector for the country and participants’ personal homes (p. 493). Despite this ‘ideal fulfillment’, participants noted that their reality evolves in the way their fulfillment changes depending on what needs to be prioritized. All expressed their families were their biggest priority, but also understood their civilian job pays the bills and the military is an expectation they cannot say no to, which ultimately ends up placing it above all other priorities.

Cameron: *The deployment within itself has already impacted on our life and [my wife’s] residency selection and has kind of forced us to go one particular way. And to a certain extent I do realize that’s what I signed up for; that’s my responsibility. But I don’t necessarily want that or need that to impact future decisions down the road. And so that’s the reason why I’ve come to the decision [to get out and join the Individual Ready Reserve] ... The cards have changed from when I was 18 years old versus now, and so along the way, as major life events happen, I [have had to] reevaluate. We’re making the*

decision to drop the military off at this point and continue with our professional and family situations.

Craig: *I think it was two years ago I was gone from my civilian career for nine weeks out of the year [just for additional military training]. Not only my civilian career, but I was gone from my family. In that same year I had two opportunities to go other places for [the military] two weeks at a time, but I had to turn those opportunities down because I didn't feel it fair to my civilian career or my family to take those on top of all the other time that I was already gone... in my career at this point, I've done just in leadership schools and no other schools... I've done 10. I'm leaving again in February for two more weeks, so that'll be about 12 weeks of additional just leadership schools. It can be a lot. It could be very demanding, especially if you want to progress and you want your career to go somewhere in the Guard... but if you don't go to them, you can't get promoted.*

Despite the prioritization, there are times participants shared, such as state active duty for natural disasters or other immediate needs, that the military will always be placed higher in the priority list because of the contract they signed and the requirements to report. As a result of this order of prioritization, participants shared they lose time from family and work, could lose money because of lost wages, and feel the need to show up for their fellow service members.

Grant: *We're on a limited schedule but we still have to keep the same standards as active duty... Oftentimes we also get activated for state active duty stuff to where it could be very last minute. So, you have to inform your civilian employers of that, and then you may even lose money.*

Martin: *I feel like I need to volunteer more to advance my Guard career and to be a good team player, or I'm just a yes man and when they ask for help, I just say yes, because I feel like trying to help out so that guard number ends up creeping up more.*

Sydney: *You don't know what to expect with the National Guard. You can show up at 6 in the morning, or show up at 7 in the morning, get done at 3 PM or be there till 7 or 8 Pm. It really varies. And you're still expected to show up and be on your A-game regardless of what's going on with your life, civilian side.*

Theme 3: Family

The consensus among participants was that family was the one constant in their lives; despite the phase of life they were in, each of their family members have to provide immense support - from childcare to emotional support, in order for them to be able to fulfill their professional roles. Despite the roles they fulfill, participants internalized themselves as whatever role they played within their family predominantly - mom, dad, husband, daughter... which conflicted with what they shared about their Soldier responsibilities having to overtake that family role when they are on duty. Goode (1960) discusses family in relation to role strain, consistent with participants' experiences that "the family is the main center of role allocation," the role that is most stable and consistent as far as obligations (p. 493). This role is also the support system which knows how their family members are spending their total time and energy. Because of this stability, Goode references one's ability to relax within their familial role. The importance of family as central to role fulfillment is crucial in understanding role bargaining and role negotiation as it relates to how ARNG Soldiers experience their dual professional roles. ARNG families must be supportive of these participants to be able to fulfill their military duty.

Freddy: *Going back into the military - it was a big discussion with the wife, because now we're raising very young children. When I was gone, she was basically performing as a single mother of three children... We always talk about the sacrifice the family gives, and that couldn't be truer. I think only people that are in might understand that as much as it really is true. I mean, I've been blessed to have a wife that's been able to support me for doing this. Didn't laugh at me when I told her I wanted to go back in the military in the middle of a war... if something is tragic happening back home that Soldier can't focus on their mission... I mean, you're stepping away, and you're just leaving them to fend for themselves,*

Grant: *Just being away from family, the abruptness, especially when you're on a rotation for state active duty. You can't control the weather, and you can't control natural disasters. You can't control riots. And when you get activated like that it just changes your family plans or things that you may have because of your responsibility and what you signed up for. I think that's the biggest issue... you must be ready all the time.*

Martin: *My unit is a few hours away from me, so I usually must get a hotel... I'm fully away from my family. If it's a weekend, that's free time that I wasn't going to be working, that now I no longer have with my family. And then if it's during the week, yeah, that cuts into my work time. But a lot more of the time, it's remote work the Guard needs, so that [also] cuts into family time.*

Sean: *How do I balance everything when I'm gone for the military a lot and when I'm gone for the law enforcement side a lot, and then just being able to spend time with my kids be there for them because I don't want to be an absent father? I want to be the best father that I can, and it's just... It's a very fine line. It's a hard balance.*

Steven: *The constant in that is the family aspect because you must make time for them. I've had to make time for them because when I was younger and earlier on in my civilian career and my military career, I prioritized those over everything. I didn't give my family a lot of attention because I assumed just in the machismo mode of thinking that I had to be the provider, you know.*

On the other hand, some participants expressed that the military was like a family to them and they lean on their fellow service members, known in the literature as unit cohesion, in order to cope and build resilience to carry on with the roles they must fulfill (Layman et al., 2019). This is especially true on longer stints of military service such as on deployments, where roles must be renegotiated for their families at home, and service members lean on their peers for social support and to fulfill work roles to help relieve role stress (Wadsworth & Southwell, 2011).

Sierra: *I feel closer in some ways to those members in the National Guard than I do in my civilian career, or with even people that I went to school with. There's sort of connection you build together in the Guard.*

Sydney: *I show up to drill like we haven't just been away for an entire month... It's so interesting to see how the Soldiers interact with each other and how they're able to continue like there hasn't been that space between these people.*

Cameron: *I still in a way get the military camaraderie, that military itch that a lot of people talk about, but in a suit and tie as opposed to being in a uniform, because I'm surrounded by so many people who have served previously.*

Sub-Theme 3a: Sacrifice

As a part of role strain and role bargaining, individuals must set a role price, in which their performance of roles is decided and consequently, they must bargain away something else - coincidentally rewarding themselves internally for their decision, or feeling guilt, shame, etc. for giving away pieces of another demand (Goode, 1960). Participants all addressed items they've had to sacrifice in their lives to fulfill their military obligations on top of their civilian roles - predominantly those with families. They've missed time with their children and spouses, as well as ill family members by being at the military's beck and call.

Charlie: *Some employers look at it as a detriment specifically in the Guard, in that there's gonna be times where you're absent from the workplace fulfilling your Guard obligation... If you're going to get deployed, your employers are losing you for probably a year at a time, and for some employers that may be a seriously hard gap to fill.*

Alex: *It's never easy when you have a birthday or holiday or wedding anniversary*

Freddy: *Family time has always been a challenge and being aware of how much time away from your family, your kids... Perfect example: Just got back from a trip and I missed moving my youngest into college. There's so many birthdays, anniversaries, I think, because of annual training I miss about every single one of our anniversaries, which is in June, which happens to be a pretty common time for annual training... Part of me feels really guilty for doing it.*

Participants also expressed they've had to sacrifice professional fulfillment/advancement due to their strenuous Guard requirements. The social norms of being a Soldier have solidified their role identity within the profession of the military and expressed that despite these sacrifices, they accept it because it is what is expected of them.

Juliette: *Well, do I really want to do schoolwork, a full-time job and be in the military? I know a lot of people do it. But I personally think that would have been too much stress for me, so I guess in a sense it did kind of hinder my plans or shape where I'm at today.*

Sydney: *I've always been too concerned to step into a supervisor position just because the Guard does take up a lot of my time. I don't want to get pulled away for annual training or a state active duty mission or even a new school, and not being able to fill my role with my civilian job.*

Victor: *It's been a struggle for me even though legally, civilian employees aren't supposed to hold any of that against you. I've been passed up for jobs, promotions, and things of that being in the Guard.*

Theme 4: Participant 'Why'

Outside of core role theory concepts, a theme for most every participant was a deep sense of direction as to why they continue to devote time, energy, and effort to the multiple professional and personal roles in their lives, especially to the military of which they expressed takes up so much. Participants would contribute the harsh realities and strenuous nature of their service to the ARNG, especially during deployments, and would capitalize on why they've remained in, most participants for over a decade, committed to the route of service they've chosen. For one, they feel the ARNG gives them something in return - additional training that enhances their skills and professionalism.

Cameron: *And why the Guard is great is that you have people who work in companies outside of the Guard, who may not necessarily have related MOS at all, but they bring value to the unit in a way, because they have that exposure outside versus on the active side, everybody's doing Army 24/7, and so they don't really get the opportunity to do that.*

Charlie: *The biggest key I've taken from the military to my civilian world is backwards planning so like starting at where I need, where's the result we're trying to get to and then working a backwards plan from there*

Juliette: *I think the military itself has shaped me to be who I am today, and I feel like I use my communication skills that I've learned with the military, the resiliency they've taught me. I'm able to use both of those in different ways on the military side and civilian side.*

Sean: *I'm under the impression that National Guard Soldiers do better at understanding the job and their ability to quickly adapt and understand things because we do it on a daily basis, or we do it on a monthly basis when we go from a drill status back to civilian, and then taking the civilian life, and then the things that it throws at us and then adapting to it. So, when we get into that, that deployment setting, or when we're in that full time setting, we have skills that active duty does not have.*

For other participants, serving in the ARNG has given them a renewed sense of self and identity. It's something they may have always felt called to do, is part of their family legacy, or it's something that they see and feel gives them a sense of purpose. They can contribute to building up their own communities and families, increasing their civic participation (Wilson & Ruger, 2020).

Craig: *I've wanted to do it my entire life. Service, not just to the country, but that's who I am... One of the big reasons, now that I'm a dad, is I don't want my kids to ever have to do it... I put myself through all of that in the hope that one day [they] won't have to.*

Freddy: *When I ran the COVID site, I saw my neighbors. I saw coworkers. I saw my son's Driver's Ed teacher come through, I mean, so you're seeing your community, and*

you're there helping your community again. You're my neighbors. So, I love the state active duty side, because it hits really close to home, whereas if I you know, if I go to Iraq, or if I go to Kuwait or something, I mean, you're not saying you're not doing something for the greater good, but it doesn't hit as home as when you're in your own state to help out.

Steven: *Any Reserves, National Guard - any part time component. It's like we must prove ourselves... But being in the Guard now, the dual role, it's really impressive, and you know it's something to take seriously and be proud of to be honest with you.*

Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the results and findings from the 13 interviews conducted with currently serving, experienced ARNG Soldiers. The purpose of the interviews was to learn about the experiences of Soldiers' dual professional roles. After collecting the data and coding the interviews, findings were discussed in terms of the research question presented in this study. Chapter Five discusses the limitations of the study, implications for practice and research, and final conclusions.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion & Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to capture currently serving, seasoned ARNG Soldiers' perspectives to gain a better understanding of ARNG Soldiers' lived experiences, including needs and challenges as they navigate civilian and military environments and roles simultaneously. It investigates the research question: How do Army National Guard Soldiers perceive their dual role as citizen-Soldiers? The themes that emerged from analysis of the data were: (1) conflicting expectations, (1a) compartmentalization, (2) time constraints, (2a) prioritization, (3) family, (3a) sacrifice, and (4) participant 'why'. The final chapter discusses conclusions made from the key findings by returning to the role theory framework. The chapter will also provide the limitations of the study and will propose implications for research, theory and practice.

Role Consensus & Role Conformity

Role consensus and conformity refer to how individuals understand, agree upon, and behave in relation to the expectations associated with their roles. Role consensus refers to the degree to which there is agreement among members of a group about the expectations, responsibilities and behaviors associated with a role (Anglin et al., 2022). In other words, role consensus occurs when people share a common understanding of what a role entails and how it should be performed. In a military unit, role consensus exists when Soldiers understand that the commander is responsible for making strategic decisions, while the Soldiers are expected to follow those decisions and execute missions. Servicemembers agree on the hierarchal dynamic and understand their respective duties, ensuring the group functions smoothly. Role consensus showed up through participant interviews in various ways:

- Clear communication of expectations by commanders and strict military policies
- Shared experiences within the ARNG, bonding service members together in and out of the uniform
- Training and education that clarify roles and provide a roadmap for what is expected of them to climb the hierarchy
- Cultural norms and values that align with role performance, enabling service members to conduct operations in a way that moves the mission forward without lack of clarity in how to proceed

Multiple participants addressed the lack of these expectations within their civilian sectors, causing them angst. As participants rise in the military ranks, they seek to emulate those expectations as leaders themselves.

Role conformity refers to the extent to which individuals adhere to or behave in accordance with the prescribed norms and expectations of their roles (Anglin et al., 2022). In a military setting, role conformity might be seen when Soldiers adhere to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, follow orders promptly, and maintain discipline as required by their roles as service members. Conformity and compliance is expected in the ARNG, and participants found that the rules of their ARNG role follow them into their civilian professional organizations despite the laissez-faire style of many of their civilian professions. Role conformity showed up through participants in their drive to adhere to the highest standards both in their military environments and civilian roles. Their military experience prompted an internal motivation to meet the expectations of their roles, social pressure to act in accordance with a military-style norm and caused them to crave authority structures like the military ranks that help enforce compliance with role standards.

Hands-on training and field exercises are necessary for a modern ARNG to remain ready to mobilize as needed, given the time constraints and requirements of their time will be steady as it has historically ramped up to be (Hall, 2007). Martin discussed the internal conflict he felt while juggling the training requirements of his civilian job and that of the military, both of which are similar roles. On the one hand, Martin mentioned that the training the military sends him to assist his civilian career because of the cost of attending the courses. On the other hand, he stated that he wants to help his military team and feels he must take on more work outside of a typical duty period and during his free time, without pay, because he feels it's expected of him. In a recent study conducted on Veterans Health Administration providers, composed of both military and non-military members, findings concluded that their team leaders did in fact experience higher role conflict than their individual contributors, but perform better when their team exhibits higher attributes of teamwork support (Carter et al., 2024). While civilian organizations differentiate in teamwork and collaboration efforts depending on the workplace culture, the military is founded on camaraderie and collaboration to achieve the mission.

In Kumar (2019), Rosinha et al. discuss the importance of collective leadership practices as a form of social identity bargaining. By ensuring role consensus of leaders, they emphasize the complexities of leaders' drive to internally conform to the social expectations to prove themselves in a more rewarding social identity. Victor discusses the strict expectations of leadership within the ARNG and his observation that the civilian organizations he's worked in and seen do not rise to the level of what he thinks a leader should embody. He points out that even new military leaders may have different perspectives when they step into a leadership role, but the expectations never change and he as a leader feels very attached to those strict expectations. In navigating his senior leadership role and expectations within the military and his

civilian roles as a husband, parent, and civilian employee, he shared that he struggles in both his husband/father role when it comes to conforming to the more relaxed environment a family environment or even civilian workplace environment entails because the “ready when called” standard has been drilled into him from the ARNG.

Victor’s discomfort with a lack of standards is an idea that is supported by Kaur and Sati in Kumar (2020), who illustrate the anxieties veterans face when transitioning into a one-way exit from the military. These anxieties stem from the role consensus that the military entails as an institution that offers an isolating yet secure environment by providing a place for service members to not only work, but also experience all phases of life with members of the same values and expectations, not to mention the specific language and familiarity with a military lifestyle. Participants from the ARNG however, suggest that the ARNG is similar to a family because of the standards and culture the military instills, so much so that Sydney for example, shared that every time she and others return to a period of active duty, it feels as if no time has passed at all because they can pick up from where they left off likely a full month ago.

Boundaries, Conflict, & Strain

Role boundaries, role conflict, and role strain relate to the challenges individuals face in balancing the different roles they occupy (Coverman, 1989). These concepts are relevant in understanding how people navigate multiple roles in their personal and professional lives. Clear role boundaries help individuals understand how to behave in different social or professional contexts and what is expected of them in each role as far as behaviors, and responsibilities associated with each role a person holds. Participants expressed difficulty with role boundaries because they felt their roles of Soldier, employee, parent and spouse were often blurred. To cope with the challenge of lacking firm boundaries, conflict and strain showed up in these ways:

- Time strain in meeting the various demands of the culmination of roles
- Emotional strain such as stress resulting from the struggle to meet competing demands
- Work-family conflict as professional family responsibilities clash, leading to challenges in both domains, and even the removal of the military role for both Sierra and Cameron

As an employee, participants worked overtime at odd hours of the evenings and weekends to meet work deadlines and contribute to team projects. As leaders in the ARNG over Soldiers, they blurred into the boundaries of employee, parent, and spouse to respond to texts and calls, as well as ensure they were prepared for upcoming duty periods. Their roles as spouses and parents typically fell to the backburner, having to rely on supportive families to be able to focus on their professional roles and navigate expectations.

Due to the incompatible demands placed on multiple roles, role theory suggests that conflict arises from the strain that occurs (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000; Siu et al., 2010). An organization such as the military, along with other government agencies, operates in a hierarchical culture, valuing “efficiency, timeliness, consistency, and uniformity” (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 53). Collectively, participants offered reflections that the further they go in their military careers and the higher their rank, the more is expected of them and the harder time they have juggling their multiple roles because of their military responsibilities. Multiple ARNG Soldiers interviewed for this study expressed their burnout, two (an NCO and a Commissioned Officer) even indicating their intention to exit the military due to the complexities of having to navigate the expectations placed on them as leaders. Role theory literature expresses that role ambiguity and role conflict often lead to tension and lack of job satisfaction (Tubre & Collins,

2000). They discuss that jobs that require more interaction with others, such as managing employees, lead to increased role ambiguity due to the lack of formal activities and job complexities. Soldiers interviewed emphasized this point as they had indicated the higher up in leadership, the more complex their role becomes, supporting Jackson and Schuler's initial findings (1985). Schmidt & Dolis (2009) also state that team leaders may experience role conflict as a baseline job demand, which is a stressor that can lead to employee burnout, according to Ghorpade et al. (2011).

Molendijk (2023) studies how military members cope with challenges associated with the profession that could be considered traumatic and immoral to their personal beliefs. Referring specifically to those who have deployed, service members in the study reported that "they used coping strategies of simplification, justification, and rationalization, including doing good, rules and instructions, reciprocity, numbing, and compartmentalization" to justify their means to an end (p. 982). This is in line with findings by ARNG service members, both those who deployed and those who did not sort through their multiple roles and be able to give their all to each individually.

To handle the multiple and competing demands associated with their roles, particularly the strict and draining role of military leadership, participants discussed that they must compartmentalize to be able to complete their demands. Charlie mentions that it can be too overwhelming to try and handle multiple tasks between roles such as trying to engage with his family while also leading a large organization as a key stakeholder and leader. To ensure the demands of each are met, he prefers to leave work at work and home at home, which takes a supportive family and a strong military team to be able to perform both. Steven shared similar views that he has to remember who he is when he switches environments and embrace the

culture change from being in a military scenario in which he holds a large senior responsibility versus being at home or work, both of which he is expected to take a softer approach. To be his best version of himself as a leader, parent, and husband, he prefers the strategies of prioritizing, organizing, and executing only after he's adjusted to the audience he's around. Regardless of the environment, he emphasized that he needs a purpose and a mission because of the way the ARNG has molded himself.

Role Enrichment & Role Accumulation

An unexpected finding from participants was role enrichment, the positive impact that engaging in multiple roles has on an individual's well-being, satisfaction, or effectiveness within each role. This concept was illustrated by participants' emphasis on how their roles, despite the challenges they experienced, complemented and enhanced each other by leading to personal growth, improved performance, and greater purpose. Role accumulation, classified as holding multiple roles, is a similar concept. Some participants found that role accumulation was beneficial for them by enabling cross-functional skill development, increased their social support network by providing an additional military family to turn to, and increased their satisfaction with their overall sense of accomplishment. Other participants indicated their multiple roles required a higher demand of energy and time than they always felt they held, and all participants indicated that the accumulation of multiple roles led to role conflict as the demands of one role (often the role of the military) interfered with the others.

Bourne et al. (2009) looks at role accumulation in Fortune 100 Magazine's 100 Best Companies to Work For, highlighting key initiatives companies undergo to recognize the whole employee as a person who has more to offer than what they bring to their professional role. They suggest that not only do employees who balance multiple roles find alternative ways to reduce

role strain and stress through finding positivity in their separate responsibilities, but the divide can also help them feel more fulfilled at work and can improve their working and personal relationships. Findings from this study indicate that ARNG Soldiers not only feel concepts such as role strain and conflict, but also get a sense of role enrichment from the fulfillment of their dual roles in which their experience in one role enriches their experience of another (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006).

Role enrichment examines how a role may better the portrayal of another role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), such as the role of a nurturing parent aiding in the management of a team or the role of a Firefighter being able to remain calm in an emergency at home. Throughout role theory literature, role enrichment is most frequently associated with work-family enrichment, with employees feeling more enriched with a better work-life balance. In the findings of this study, participants showed that in some cases, they've experienced role enrichment over their time in the military because it has made them better employees in the civilian world and sometimes even better family members. Role enrichment was an unexpected find during this study but was apparent in participant interviews while members discussed all the challenges, they experienced yet also continued to explain why they were intent to continue and to prioritize the military typically over other roles, whether it be by contractual obligation, to achieve the benefits, or to serve a greater purpose. Sean discussed how in the police force, he recognizes that the members on his team who are ARNG members or who have served in the military, all pay closer attention to crucial safety work methods that his non-military counterparts do not, as down to the detail as which hand they use to open the door when clearing a building. He shared that the military's culture of safety has helped him be a more thorough and detail-oriented police officer that keeps him safer on the job. Charlie discussed how the military has even helped his day-to-day life by

teaching him backwards planning and organization, tools that he utilizes to help him not only get work done, but in his daily family life such as for vacations.

Role Transfer & Role Identity

Role transfer refers to the process of leveraging the resources or competencies acquired in one role to enhance performance in a different role (Biddle, 1979). Participants expressed various ways in which role transfer occurred, always from their military role to their civilian professional, parent, and spouse, and never described as the other way around. These manifested from explanations of better time management skills, a calm and clear approach to urgent situations, managing conflicting dynamics and problem-solving. On the other hand, most participants expressed that poor habits transferred from their military role such as the lack of patience and empathy for achieving less-than-perfect results.

Role identity refers to the way an individual perceives and defines themselves in relation to the roles they occupy in society (Anglin et al., 2022). As mentioned, participants always referred to their military role as the predominant reference point in their expectations and standards, despite the way in which they verbalized having their parent and spouse roles as the most important to them. They recognized the adaptability needed to fulfill their roles, from a rigid leadership style in their ARNG role, to a more relaxed and understanding style in their civilian workplace and at home. Both role transfer and role identity expressed the dynamic process of adapting to, fulfilling, and reconciling multiple roles in participants' lives and creating their sense of self.

Schultz (2002) provides a crucial, historical example of the sacrifice not only ARNG Soldiers face, but their families as well, in illustrating the ARNG response to the 9/11 conflict. Schultz reports that the first call from the governor of New York was to none other than the

3,000 New York National Guardsmen who gathered at their armories to respond before the official order was even given. Following the immediate response, the Department of Defense activated more than 35,000 additional Guardsmen to protect key infrastructure across the United States. Throughout that year and into 2002, National Guard members were also deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, “placing civilian careers and family lives on hold to deploy around the country and the world to fight our nation's wars and protect our homeland” (p. 104). Freddy re-joined the ARNG after 9/11 because of the intense calling he felt to return to duty and serve his country again, despite the fact he had two small children and his wife at home in a logistically challenging time.

Since 9/11, Soldiers most recently have responded to the George Floyd riots, the DC Capital Response, and COVID-19, just to name a few. With a rapid succession of disaster and immediate response needed both in the United States and overseas, ARNG sacrifice of family and other roles will remain looming. Soldiers have experienced role transfer through the acceptance of citizenship behaviors through their service because of 9/11. The Department of the Army implemented a program in 1997, Strong Bonds, which aims at strengthening relationships between Soldiers and their families in preparation for and returning from a deployment (Strong Bonds). While this program is available to ARNG Soldiers, it does not assist in the day-to-day of juggling simultaneous roles regardless of deployment status, and especially to assist when family members are divided for extensive training periods or during activations for national response.

Juliette spoke to the fundamental ‘self’ that the ARNG provided her, having shaped who she is today by providing her leadership experience, communication skills, and the tools to be able to navigate the civilian world. She shared that the military has built up a resiliency to the constant transition between military and non-military time by forcing a routine and a strict set of

expectations surrounding deadlines, communication, and structure. She leaned into her military role as being central to her identity, and like virtually every other participant, constantly referred to the military role as the one in which to compare their other roles too because of the overwhelming military culture that has become who they are.

Implications

The findings for this qualitative study on the experience of ARNG Soldiers' navigation of dual professional roles at a military leadership level suggest that the population will continue to be relevant in the field, especially as operational needs continue to increase. Role theory was utilized for this study because it provides a mechanism to examine the complexities of navigating multiple roles. Analyzing data through this lens generated a reinforced framework to the experiences of ARNG Soldiers, an under-studied population. This section will discuss implications for practice, theory, and proposed future research based on the findings presented.

Implications for Practice

Based on the findings of this research, employers, families, society, policymakers and practitioners can implement practical ways in which National Guard leaders and Soldiers can better navigate the complexities of their dual military-civilian lives. This study lends an opportunity for the stakeholders above to learn from the experiences of participants and to adapt to the realities of the ARNG Soldier perceptions in how their dual roles are played out. By understanding how ARNG experience their dual roles, stakeholders can develop skills and behaviors to respond to different situations in which various levels of support are necessary, or to help further support the learning process of engaging in dual roles. Below are implications to help optimize performance and well-being, some of which were demonstrated by participants as tactics they utilize in the present day to address demands of their dual roles.

Implications for ARNG Soldiers:

- **Self-awareness and Prioritization:** Soldiers should be encouraged or supported in developing strategies to recognize and address role conflict that occurs when the demands of their military role clash with civilian responsibilities such as work and family. By becoming more self-aware, Soldiers can better prioritize tasks and manage their time to meet the needs of both roles. For example, understanding that military drills or deployments may interfere with family events allows Soldiers to plan ahead and communicate openly with family members.
- **Open Communication:** Soldiers should be encouraged and supported in communicating openly with their civilian employers and family members about the challenges of balancing their military and civilian roles. This can include discussing potential schedule conflicts ahead of time or negotiating flexible work arrangements with civilian employers to reduce stress and avoid role strain.
- **Stress Management:** Role strain can result when the demands of a particular role become overwhelming. Soldiers should be encouraged and supported in being proactive to managing stress through self-care, time management, and seeking support from peers, leaders, or counseling services. This can help prevent burnout and maintain mental and physical well-being.

Implications for Military Leaders and Employers:

- **Understanding and Flexibility:** The data suggests that military leaders could adjust their process to acknowledge the challenges of managing dual roles and offer support to Soldiers facing role conflict. This can include flexible training

schedules, understanding when Soldiers need time off for personal matters, or providing additional resources for mental health support.

- **Work-Life Balance Initiatives:** Implementing programs that promote a healthy balance between military service and civilian commitments, such as family support programs or career development resources, can help reduce role strain and enhance overall well-being.
- **Educate Employers:** Along with support services that aid in the role commitments at home, employers play a crucial part in ensuring work is taken care of for Soldiers while they are activated for service. Participants shared that commitments are often viewed as voluntary from civilian employment. Despite USERRA laws that protect Soldiers' position at a civilian organization, some participants addressed the harsh reality of leaving their place of employment for any period by experiencing backlash such as being told they would not rise through levels of leadership if they could not fully commit to their place of employment. Employers would benefit from greater advance notice of an employee's leave for training and mobilizations when possible and would benefit from additional education on the usage case of ARNG Soldiers. Additionally, employers would benefit in education in evaluating the skills of service members by assisting them in translating military skills into civilian functions.

Implications for Society:

- **Challenge the Social Narrative:** It is evident that the dominant narrative drawn around ARNG Soldiers, that they serve 'one weekend a month and two weeks out of the year', is false. Participants shared they've also been told that they are less

qualified than active branches of service and capabilities are limited to state responses rather than playing a role in warfighting capabilities. The findings from this study serve as an opportunity to inform and empower other ARNG Soldiers who may be experiencing the elevator effect of taking on increasing responsibility as their civilian or military careers progress, while also remaining drawn to their commitment to serve and their purpose or ‘why’ in the first place. An opportunity exists for media outlets to strengthen their transparency in the true usage of ARNG Soldiers. This could dispel the idea of a minimal commitment in the public eye, weakening the concept of part-time forces being a ‘weaker’ or ‘lesser’ branch of service.

- **Generate Awareness of the ARNG Commitment:** An awareness of the time commitment and usage ARNG Soldiers take on is needed throughout the US to ensure there is a social change in the broad narrative that they are less qualified than or less affected by their military service. The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves addressed Congress and the Secretary of Defense, echoing the sentiments against this stigma as “the reserve components have responded to the call for service. Despite shortages in equipment, training, and personnel they have once again proven their essential contribution to meeting national security requirements in a time of need” (p. 27). In tandem, recruiting tactics should reflect an honest narrative of the commitment expected of ARNG Soldiers rather than advertising that they have an opportunity for flexible service of part-time nature.
- **Institutional Support:** A key takeaway of this study was that support services are crucial to Soldiers being able to fulfill all commitments in their variety of roles.

Institutional support via family programs for families, spouses, supervisors, etc. could help decrease role conflict and aid in balancing multiple roles (Westring & Ryan, 2010). Heilmann et al. (2009) examined the influence of family on service members' decision to stay in the military. What they found was that family satisfaction of the military lifestyle was considered in retention decisions more so than personal satisfaction. Although this is typically done through the familial element as we gathered in the findings, a social change towards community and employer support could enhance Soldiers' confidence and capacity to be able to manage their roles.

Implications for Practitioners and Policymakers:

- **Level the Playing Field Between Active Components and the ARNG:** Current research suggests that active-duty Soldiers and Soldiers transitioning out of the military as a veteran must receive physical, mental, and social support due to the vulnerability of “cumulative effect of deployment stressors, combat exposures, and posttraumatic responses” experienced in their time with the military (Wooten et al., 2019). However, ARNG Soldiers, since the abandonment of the reserve mobilization policy, have turned into a “surrogate active force” and do not reap the same benefits as their active-duty counterparts having earned only 29% of the active-duty GI Bill for educational benefit use, limited healthcare and dental benefits, and delayed access to their retirement benefits at a substantially less payout than active duty (Lynn & Stober, 2008). As an operational reserve, the disparities and requirements placed on ARNG Soldiers are unprecedented; policymakers and practitioners could continue making strides towards re-

organizing policies and supporting citizen-Soldiers to alleviate the stress to meet the demands of ongoing conflict and response.

Implications for Theory

In this study, role theory provided valuable insights into how individuals manage multiple roles, particularly in the case of National Guard Soldiers who balance military responsibilities with civilian careers, family life, and other commitments. The application of role theory to National Guard Soldiers not only enhances practical understanding but also offers opportunities to expand the theoretical framework within military context. Role theory should account for this dual-role phenomenon, considering how military obligations intersect with civilian role demands and the associated challenges. Compounded by the unpredictability of military schedules, deployments, or training exercises, which can disrupt both civilian careers and family life for ARNG Soldiers, there is a need to further explore cumulative role strain, where Soldiers' stress builds up over time due to repeated transitions between military and civilian roles.

Within role theory concepts, particularly interesting was the finding of role enrichment within participants' experiences. For National Guard Soldiers, military service adds a role that potentially enriches their lives, offering opportunities for skill development, leadership experience, and technical skills that can benefit them in civilian life. Further exploration of how role enrichment leads to personal and professional benefits, especially in a dual-role context, could help refine the role enrichment and role accumulation for that matter to apply more specifically to individuals in high-demand environments like the National Guard. Alternatively, role theory lacks broader terms for a different conceptualization of what intersectionality of role demands looks like. Rather than positively impacting participant lives, or causing conflict and

strain, role theory lacks a term or description of the function or capacity of juggling multiple roles simultaneously and treating them as intertwined entities rather than separate parts with distinct characteristics. For example, ‘role harmony’ could be a concept introduced within role theory literature as the coexistence and balance of role demands for ARNG Soldiers in this study showed that navigating dual roles simultaneously required them to immerse themselves within a full ecosystem at various points rather than adhering to the sole rules of one situational environment.

Another potential lens from which to study the ARNG population is identity theory. For National Guard Soldiers who must navigate a dual identity in addition to their dual roles, one as a civilian and another as a Soldier, there is an opportunity to expand what was learned from this study into identity theory for better understanding of the ways that integration or disjuncture of these dual identities in each role Soldiers occur and the meaning it holds for them. There is a theoretical gap in understanding how Soldiers manage these conflicting identity demands and how this impacts their self-esteem and mental health. Further research could delve deeper into how identity negotiation occurs in response to these conflicts, particularly when Soldiers feel torn between their identities as Soldiers and their roles in civilian life – parent, civilian employee, spouse, etc.

Implications for Future Research

The opportunity for future research remains prevalent given the lack of literature in the space surrounding how ARNG Soldiers experience their multiple roles. Limitations emerged in the study such as a small geographical sample in addition to the focus on leaders, excluding warrant officers due to their lack of interest/engagement in participating. As a result, further research should be conducted on a larger scale - to include expanding the geographical region of

emphasis, the inclusion of all levels/experience of Soldiers, and can be replicated in multiple branches of the military. Future research could also benefit from using a different approach to capturing participant experiences by using a more structured questioning approach to get at what solutions ARNG Soldiers are looking for, if any, to navigating their roles.

Future studies should examine how gender impacts the experiences of National Guard Soldiers, particularly in balancing military service with family and civilian roles. For instance, how do female Soldiers experience role conflict differently from their male counterparts, especially regarding traditional gender expectations around caregiving and work? Research should explore how diverse identities such as race, ethnicity and family structure affect role experiences and the social expectations placed on Soldiers in both their military and civilian roles.

National Guard Soldiers often rely on a mix of military and civilian social networks to navigate their dual roles. Research could examine how Soldiers build and maintain social capital across these networks, particularly how military connections might enhance civilian career opportunities or how civilian relationships support Soldiers during deployments. Understanding these networks can shed light on how social support from both spheres facilitates role navigation and helps Soldiers manage the stress and demands of multiple roles.

The data represented in this study also present a single point in time in which operations have been rampant. Although this study did not hone in on a timeline of how Soldiers experience their dual roles, narratives were captured through complex stories of both the present and past experiences depending on the nature of the story, reflection on their perspective of when they were most utilized by the ARNG, and when they were most needed at work and mostly at home during crucial life events such as when they had children.

The ARNG population offers rich opportunities for future research. Future research should be conducted on a regular basis to check and adjust how ARNG Soldiers' experiences differentiate during different intervals of operational necessity, perhaps through a longitudinal analysis in different communities requiring different levels of ARNG support. Lastly, it's crucial for future researchers to continue to thread the needle through meaning making for Soldiers in their professional roles - both in the ARNG and in their civilian organizations. Assigning meaning to their role fulfillment has a direct link to well-being, of which is the predominant thread that has been pulled for this population in the existing body of research (Fivush et al., 2008). Assisting Soldiers with the process of navigating the experience of their dual roles could result in better long-term outcomes for the Soldiers' personal well-being and their families', as well as success outcomes that could follow for the ARNG and civilian organizations.

Conclusion

The increase in OPTEMPO for the ARNG since 2020 brings about crucial relevance and need to study the population and the ways in which they experience their dual professional roles. The utilization of role theory as a framework helped guide the data collection and analysis of this interpretive design to get a baseline understanding of the uniquely formed experiences of the ARNG population. As practice and research continues in this field, programs may be able to serve as a tool for Soldiers to better navigate their roles and serve their communities and country. Developing a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of National Guard Soldiers could enhance both theory and practical strategies to support Soldiers in balancing their military and civilian lives. This will help to better understand the complexities of dual-role life, ultimately contributing to improved support for service members and more effective military practices.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Thank you for participating in this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate currently serving, experienced ARNG Soldiers' perspectives to gain a better understanding of ARNG Soldiers' needs and challenges as they navigate civilian and military environments, roles, and identities simultaneously.

This interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes. I am recording the interview so that it can be transcribed for analysis. You are welcome to pause or terminate the interview at any time. If there are any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering, please just let me know and we will move on.

Once we have completed the interview, the interview will be transcribed, and you will have the opportunity to review the transcript in order to revise or add to any responses that you shared. I may also contact you if I have any questions or areas that warrant further exploration.

I want you to feel comfortable speaking freely and openly during this interview. Before we begin recording, I would like to ask you to adjust your name in Zoom as it appears to be a pseudonym to protect your identity. In addition, any specific comments from the interview will not be attributed to you individually. I also ask that, if you refer to another individual during our conversation, please refrain from using references of their unit, last name, or any other personal identifying information. For example, say "Sergeant" rather than "Sergeant Smith".

Do you have any questions? Can you confirm your consent verbally to participate in this research study and interview today?

Let's begin.

1. Could you share a story or example of how you navigate each of your different roles – as an Army National Guard member, as a civilian employee, at home?
2. What strategies do you use to handle competing demands?
3. What kinds of things do you have to pay attention to in shifting back and forth in terms of different environments and cultures (military, civilian job, family)?
4. What do you notice about yourself as a person as you change back and forth in these environments?
5. What have been some of your greatest challenges as a military person that has competing priorities?
6. In what ways do you feel like your dual role status has impacted your professional progression or role fulfillment, if any?
7. Can you share a story or example of something that might surprise people if they

knew? For example, what do you wish your military colleagues knew about how you are in your civilian role? What do you wish your family knew? Your civilian co-workers about your military life?

8. Can you talk about the potential impact of your leadership role(s)? Is it difficult to transition between the two positions?

9. Do you feel any role takes up more time (military, civilian, family)? How would you picture a pie chart of the roles in your life? Do any of those lines blur or change at times?

10. Is there anything that I didn't ask that you would like to share?

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Consent Form

Title of Study: Navigating the Dual Professional Roles of an Army National Guard Leader as a Citizen-Soldier (eIRB # 27202)

Principal Investigator(s): Olivia Draeger, ordraege@ncsu.edu, 815-566-6356

Funding Source: None

NC State Faculty Point of Contact: Susan Barcinas, susan_barcinas@ncsu.edu, (919) 515-6298

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are invited to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate, and to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of this research study is to gain a better understanding of how Army National Guard Soldiers navigate dual professional roles. We will do this by performing one-on-one Zoom interviews with experienced Army National Guard Soldiers and analyzing the interview data to identify prevalent themes.

You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study. Research studies also may pose risks to those who participate. You may want to participate in this research because you want to contribute to the field of knowledge about Army National Guard Soldiers. You may not want to participate in this research because you do not want to or cannot participate in interviews or share details of your own professional identity.

Specific details about the research in which you are invited to participate are contained below. If you do not understand something in this form, please ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If, at any time, you have questions about your participation in this research, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above or the NC State IRB office. The IRB office's contact information is listed in the *What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?* section of this form.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of the study is to explore the dual professional roles of Army National Guard Soldiers.

How many people will be in the study?

There will be approximately 21-30 participants in this study.

Am I eligible to be a participant in this study?

In order to be a participant in this study, you must agree to be in the study and meet the following criteria: 1) Must identify as an Army National Guard Soldier of the rank E5 and above (Non-commissioned Officer, Warrant Officer, or Commissioned Officer); Must currently be a full-time employee in a civilian organization; and Must have served in the Army National Guard for a minimum of 12 months.

You cannot participate in this study if you do not meet the inclusion criteria.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do all of the following:

1. Participate in a one-on-one interview. The interview is expected to last 1-1.5 hours. The interview will be completed on Zoom and will be video and audio recorded through the Zoom platform.
2. You will have the option to review your interview transcript for accuracy. This is not a required aspect of participation and is completely optional. This activity is anticipated to require approximately 15 minutes of your time.

The total amount of time that you will be participating in this study is a maximum of 90 to 120 minutes.

Recording and images

If you want to participate in this research, you must agree to be audio-recorded and video recorded. If you do not agree to be audio-recorded or video recorded, you cannot participate in this research.

Risks and benefits

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this research.

There are no direct benefits to your participation in the research. The indirect benefits are self-reflection on professional identity and your role as a clinical instructor.

Right to withdraw your participation

You can stop participating in this study at any time for any reason. To do so, just stop any research activity that you are doing or contact the student researcher, Olivia Draeger, at ordraege@ncsu.edu and 815-566-6356. You can also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Susan Barcinas, at Susan_Barcinas@ncsu.edu and 919-515-6298. If you choose to withdraw your consent and to stop participating in this research, you can expect that the researcher(s) will redact your data from their data set, securely destroy your data, and prevent future uses of your data for research purposes wherever possible. This is possible in some, but not all, cases.

Confidentiality, personal privacy, and data management

Trust is the foundation of the participant/researcher relationship. Much of that principle of trust is tied to keeping your information private and in the manner that I have

described to you in this form. The information that you share with me will be held in confidence to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Protecting your privacy as related to this research is of utmost importance to me. There are very rare circumstances related to confidentiality where I may have to share information about you. Your information collected in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies (for example, the FDA) for purposes such as quality control or safety. In other cases, I must report instances in which imminent harm could come to you or others.

How I manage, protect, and share your data are the principal ways that I protect your personal privacy. Data that will be shared with others about you will be de-identified.

De-identified. De-identified data is information that at one time can directly identify you, but I will record this data so that your identity will be separated from the data. I will have a master list with your code and real name that I can use to link to your data.

Future use of your research data

Your information even with identifiers removed, will not be stored or distributed for future research studies.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the student researcher, Olivia Draeger, at ordraege@ncsu.edu and 815-566-6356. You can also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Susan Barcinas, at Susan_Barcinas@ncsu.edu and 919-515-6298.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the NC State IRB (Institutional Review Board) office. An IRB office helps participants if they have any issues regarding research activities. You can contact the NC State University IRB office at IRB-Director@ncsu.edu, 919-515-8754, or [fill out a confidential form online](#) at <https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/compliance/research-compliance/irb/irb-forms-and-templates/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/>

Consent to participate

Before beginning our one-on-one interview, I will ask for your verbal consent to participate. In asking for your verbal consent you are affirming that you will have read and understand the above information. All of the questions that you had about this research will have been answered. You have chosen to participate in this study with the understanding that you may stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of

benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You are aware that you may revoke your consent at any time.