Work and Family Role Integration among Professional and Managerial Mothers At the Mid-Career Stage

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Abstract of Dissertation

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Women who delay childbearing until they reach the mid-career stage may encounter a unique set of challenges related to the ability to balance the conflicting demands of motherhood and their careers. Organizations are failing to retain their most highly educated and talented females and, as a result, women are poorly represented at higher levels in organizations (Cabrera, 2009). The degree to which a woman believes she can effectively manage, or integrate, her competing roles may have significant practical implications for her well being, her personal career trajectory, and her organization's ability to benefit from her talent and expertise. This study focuses on understanding how managerial and professional women at the mid-career stage, with one or more young children, manage their competing roles and how the need for work and family integration influences their career choices.

This study used a phenomenological research design, specifically, the *Empirical Psychological Phenomenological Research Method* (EPPRM), which consisted of in-depth interviews with eleven women who met the criteria for the study. The findings of this study indicated seven overarching themes that emerged from the interviews with the eleven participants. Most ideas related to these seven areas were presented and reviewed in theory and literature.

The findings of this study demonstrated mid-career women, though wanting to engage strongly and perform optimally in their work roles, have a strong pull toward the

family domain. Mid-career women described their experiences in integrating work and family roles as consisting of elements of both work-family role conflict and role enhancement. Also found was that a heightened focus on balance and relationships existed simultaneously with a desire to continue to learn and grow in their career. The interplay of these elements was influenced by role salience and work-family borders, and characterized by the need for flexibility and a preference for working pragmatically.

The need for women to feel they are performing successfully at work, while at the same time focusing on the needs of their families, represents a challenge for individuals as well as organizations. Thus, understanding these experiences is important for organizations that want to retain professional women at mid-to-senior levels.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Background

Demographic trends suggest the number of women in the workforce has grown significantly since 1970 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey). In 2010, about 59% of women were participating in the labor force, compared to 45% in 1973 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey). Of the 59%, the majority of them (roughly 70%), were working full-time in 2010.

Dual-earner heterosexual couples, characterized by both the husband and wife jointly assuming the roles of breadwinner for the family, have also increased in recent years (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey). In 2010, 55% of married couples were dual career couples. Moreover, women's contributions to family incomes have substantially increased since 1970. Specifically, in 1970, women's contribution to the family income averaged about 27%, while in 2010, contributions averaged around 37% (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey). Additionally, in 2010, women held more than half (52%) of all managerial and professional positions (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey). Finally, relatively recent data suggests about 58% of all college graduates are women and almost 50% of professional and graduate degrees are earned by women. The number of women expected to pursue graduate and professional degrees is expected to increase by 16% by 2015 (Hewlett and Luce, 2005).

Hoschchild (2003) suggested there continues to be a growing number of women participating in the labor force who are mothers of very young children, particularly under the age of three years old. According to data from Catalyst (2009) a non-profit research and advisory organization focused on expanding opportunities for women at work, the labor force participation rate of married mothers with children under the age of three years increased from 32.7% in 1975 to 58.9% in 2007. Census data indicates that, in 2007, 59.5 % of all married women with children under the age of six and 55.4% of all women with children under the age of three were participating in the labor force. In addition, 51.4 % of women with children under the age of one were in the labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey).

Research Problem Statement

Very recent data, however, indicates the labor force participation rate of women with children under the age of 18 has declined. According to census data, the participation rate decreased from 73% in 2000 to 71.3% in 2010 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey). Many factors could explain this decline in mothers' labor force participation rate, such as longer time focused on pursuing higher education and a leveling out of the baby boom generation. Though there are many push and pull factors for women's career exits or interruptions, (Cabrera, 2007) a major contributing factor to this decline could be the increased strain many women experience in attempting to balance the competing demands of modern day career and parenting requirements. Moreover, other areas of women's lives that provide them with a sense of satisfaction, self-worth and balance may become increasingly important to women during this time period (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006).

Data from Catalyst (2008) suggests when women leave their careers, it is often because they are not able to effectively or conceivably combine work with the other aspects of their lives. This challenge in balancing work and family needs may be intensified at the mid-career stage (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006). The research problem for this study, therefore, is the unique problem women, who have delayed childbearing until they have reached the mid-career stage, face in managing the conflicting demands of motherhood and career.

The mid-career stage, for the purposes of this study, is defined as the stage of *Pragmatic Endurance*, which involves the middle stage of one's career (ages 36-45) and is characterized by a practical view of one's career (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). During the stage of Pragmatic Endurance, women may divert energy from their careers to other areas of their lives that also provide them with a sense of satisfaction, self-worth, achievement, and recognition (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). The mid-career stage, an important factor in the link between work-family role integration and career choice, sets the unique context for this study.

Work-Family Integration

According to Catalyst (2009c), working parents are striving for work-life balance and flexible working arrangements that will facilitate work-family integration. Data suggests about 63% of employees stated that job pressures have interfered with their family or personal lives. Senior-level managers, in particular, are reluctant to take advantage of flexible work-life policies due to perceived negative perceptions from the organization and the use of family-friendly programs is often discouraged (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). This challenge is also exacerbated by the fact that working hours among

employed Americans have increased significantly over the past several decades, particularly in professional and managerial jobs. Work week hours for dual earner couples are steadily rising and the once common forty hour work week is not so common today (Catalyst, 2009c). Jacobs and Gerson (2000) suggest worker preferences are increasingly at odds with employer demands, and working parents face new challenges in finding good jobs that give them more time and flexibility.

Research suggests female workers are changing jobs every 4-5 years or leaving the workforce entirely and this is stimulated, in part, by a desire to find a better balance between work and family (Hewlett & Luce, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006). Other reasons may include lack of challenge at work, a desire to change careers or advance education, and the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities. Additional factors could involve gender discrimination in the workplace or lack of promotional opportunities or advancement (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006). More information is needed to understand the various factors that may contribute to these career choices.

Studies suggest women between the ages of 30 and 40, with children, may experience the largest gap between their actual and optimal working hours, particularly if their children are pre-school age (under the age of 6), as more time is usually needed to attend to home and childcare responsibilities (Jacobs & Gerson, 2000). A 2009 study by Catalyst suggested 29% of women between the ages of 33 and 44 considered spillover of their jobs into their personal lives to be severe or very severe (Catalyst, 2009a). A segment of this age range represents the mid-stage of one's career (ages 36-45, the stage of Pragmatic Endurance), as discussed previously, which is characterized by a pragmatic

view of one's career coupled with an increased desire to focus on other elements of life, such as family (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005).

Some studies have also shown women are leaving the corporate world at increasing rates and many are deciding to become self-employed (Hewlett & Luce, 2005; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; Mattis, 2004; McCarty-Kilian, Hukai, & McCarty, 2005; O'Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2008) in order to gain more control and flexibility in how they balance work and family. As mentioned previously, issues related to work-family balance challenges have been cited as one of the top three reasons why women leave corporations, in addition to generational differences and shifts in work values (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Although a desire for more flexibility, dissatisfaction with work environments, and lack of challenging work have been found to be reasons for why women leave organizations to start their own businesses (Mattis, 2004), a recent survey (Hewlett & Luce, 2005) indicated the top reason (44%) professional women leave their careers is due to a desire for more family time. Unfortunately, professional part-time work options are often not viable options in many organizations, as data indicates only about 8% of women are employed in such arrangements (as compared to 23% and 20% in the legal and medical fields, respectively) (Hewlett & Luce, 2005). The consequence of this is a high attrition rate of valuable mid-career stage women.

The Research Problem

"Organizational realities faced by contemporary managerial and professional women appear not to have caught up with their career preferences and life choices" (O'Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2008, p. 730). Moreover, organizations are failing to retain their most highly educated and talented females and, as a result, these women are

poorly represented at higher levels in organizations (Cabrera, 2009). This may be partially related to their unwillingness and lack of desire to adhere to the traditional career model that most organizations espouse (Cabrera). Moreover, Litzky and Greenhaus (2007) found women have less desire (than men) for senior management positions partially because they are less likely to see themselves as fitting into senior management positions, but also for reasons that are not yet known.

Much of the current research in the area of career development has focused on the linear career patterns of men, as based on continuous employment, position advancement, and the separation of career and family. Women's career patterns tend to be less linear and more complex (Catalyst, 2008; Kirchmeyer, 1999; O'Neil et al., 2008; Pazy, 1987) and more relational and dynamic (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006). Organizational leaders may be less willing to reward or encourage those who follow non-traditional career paths (Volpe & Murphy, 2011). Unfortunately, organizations' failure to understand and embrace women's contemporary career patterns often results in a loss of female talent at the mid-career stage and above. According to Hewlett and Luce (2005), only 5% of highly qualified and experienced professionals who are looking to re-enter the workforce are interested in returning to work for their prior employers; within the business sector, this percentage declines to 0%. In 2011, 22% percent of women holding professional or graduate degrees have chosen to opt out of the workforce (Volpe & Murphy, 2011). An understanding of what drives women's career decisions needs to be better understood (Cabrera, 2009). Based on this challenge, this study will address how mid-career women manage their careers to facilitate work and family integration.

Women who have delayed childbearing until they have reached the mid-career stage may have a unique set of challenges related to the ability to balance the conflicting demands of motherhood and career. This study focuses on understanding how managerial and professional women at the mid-career stage, with one or more young children (under the age of six), manage their competing roles and how the need for work and family integration may influence their career choices. The degree to which women believe they can effectively manage or integrate their competing roles may have significant practical implications for their own well being, their career trajectories, and the ability of organizations to benefit from this group of talent. Simply stated, "How individuals manage the interaction between the work and family can have implications for the individual and the organization" (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000).

Women's decision to delay childbearing until their careers are well established (the mid-career stage) is a relatively recent phenomenon which suggests a distinct set of challenges regarding the ability to balance the multiple and potentially conflicting roles of career and family. The career stage of mid to senior management increasingly intersects with prime childbearing years (Auster, 2001). Hence, despite data that suggests there are benefits to delaying childrearing, such as increased feelings of parental competence, greater encouragement of father participation and enhanced financial, emotional, and career stability (Ehrenberg, Gearing-Small, Hunter, & Small, 2001), the challenges can be significant due to the work demands of a mid-to-senior level position. For senior level professional women with demanding careers, an intense conflict often occurs between competing cultural models of work versus family (Blair-Loy, 2003). Research has not specifically addressed the problem of understanding how work and family demands are

integrated by women who are at the mid-career stage with children under the age of six. Prior research has primarily focused on younger women at earlier stages in their careers (Gordon, Beatty, & Whelan-Berry, 2002).

Work-Family Role Conflict

It has been suggested that work and family patterns shift throughout the life course (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001), and prior research has provided evidence that the ability to balance work and family roles is more difficult for women than it is for men (Bird, 1999; Blair-Loy, 2001; Catalyst, 2003b; DiBenedetto & Tittle, 1990; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001; Graham, Fisher, Crawford, Fitzpatrick, & Bina, 2000; Hall, 1991; Hall, 1992; Milkie & Petola, 1999; Miller & Garrison, 1982). Research has also shown that, regardless of employment status, women generally still have a greater percentage of home and childcare responsibilities (Mayrhofer, Meyer, Schiffinger, & Schmidt, 2008). These findings may also be influenced by mothers' feelings that they must take on more family responsibilities for the well being of their children (Ehrenberg, Gearing-Small, Hunter, & Small, 2001). Further research suggests the existence of small children (under the age of six), in particular, can make this balancing act extremely difficult for women (Milkie & Petola, 1999; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001; Beutell & Greenhaus, 1980; Greenhaus & Kopelman, 1981; Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980; Bedian, Burke, & Moffett, 1988; Cooper, Chassin & Zeiss, 1985; Vistnes, 1997). This experience may intensify feelings of role conflict, which is an incompatibility either between roles or within the attributes of a role (Ashforth, 2001). The difficulty women experience in attempting to balance work and family roles can lead to the stressors of one role negatively impacting the ability to perform other roles (Sinacore-Quinn, Akcali, &

Fledderus, 1999). Other research has suggested the existence of multiple roles may be a beneficial experience for women (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Baruch & Barnett, 1986). Demanding jobs, however, may put individuals at risk for increased levels of role strain. Finally, it has been proposed that additional research is needed to address the complexity surrounding how role balance occurs (Clark, 2002b).

Career Choices

The mutual role salience of women's work and family roles may contribute to more work-family role conflict because of increasing professional requirements, coupled with the increased intensity of modern-day mothering (Graham, Sorell, & Montgomery, 2004). The integration of work and family roles continues to have important ramifications for women's career choices. Women's career development and advancement in organizations continues to be challenging for both women and organizations, as many are in middle management positions, but are underrepresented at top levels (O'Neil et al., 2008). Hence, the effective balancing of women's roles also has implications for organizations that must focus on the attraction, development, and retention of female senior talent in a competitive labor market where demographic trends are rapidly shifting. Thus, organizations that foster work environments that enable women to lead integrated lives while pursuing career opportunities will have a competitive edge in retaining their most talented employees (O'Neil et al., 2008). Sullivan and Mainiero (2008) suggested that in order to effectively increase female retention, contemporary organizational policies are needed to address a woman's need for work challenge while also addressing her commitment to family. Understanding how women in professional and managerial occupations, with pre-school age children, accommodate these multiple roles at the mid-career stage and how this may

influence their subsequent career choices is an area that is ripe for future research (Harrington, 2007). Finally, research that focuses on the relationship between career development and work-family conflict is needed (Carlson, Derr, & Wadsworth, 2003).

In addition, career development research based on the male linear career model is no longer adequate as a means of understanding women's career patterns, and non-linear career models have been subject to limited empirical research (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008; O'Neil et al., 2008). Organizations will benefit by understanding the complex patterns of women's careers and by fostering an environment that supports those who take alternate routes (Hewlett & Luce, 2005). Research is needed that focuses on the role of family on how women personally experience their careers (Kirchmeyer, 2006).

Finally, research focused on women's professional lives at mid-career is sparse (Auster, 2001). Mid-career is often a time period when women struggle with the competing demands of children and high performance expectations from their work (Auster, 2001).The mid-life stage involves an assessment and rebalancing of the personal and professional components of a person's life (Gordon et al., 2002) and the exact nature of this rebalancing process, including causes and consequences, have not been extensively studied among professional women with children. "The particulars of the mid-life transition also may differ for women with children of different ages since the demands for immediacy and fragmentation of time likely decrease as children get older" (Gordon et al., 2002, p. 337). Since parenting responsibilities may be different for younger children, understanding these experiences (which have not been extensively researched) among this group of mid-career women with pre-school age children is important for organizations that want to retain women at management and executive levels. Though the age of women

and the ages of children have an influence on the experience of mid-life transitions and career implications, work-family integration literature has primarily focused on younger women who are at early stages of their careers (Gordon et al., 2002).

Thus, this study will focus on is this very significant and timely issue: the interrelationship between work-family integration and career choices for professional and managerial mid-career women with pre-school age children. Though this topic is widely discussed in the press, there has been limited theoretical and empirical research of a scholarly nature on this subject (Marcinkus & Hamilton, 2006).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to examine work-family integration among managerial and professional women at the mid-career stage, who (1) work in organizational settings and (2) have young children (under the age of six). The goal is to understand how these women, whose jobs are characterized by significant work demands, and pressure, manage the dual roles of mother and working professional. This study will examine the interrelationship between work-family role integration and career choices for this specific cohort of women.

The broad research questions for this study are as follows:

1. How do women describe and perceive the interrelationship between work-family role integration and their subsequent career choices?
2. How do women describe the experience of work-family role integration and their career choices?
3. What is the essential structure of women's descriptions of their experience in integrating work and family roles and career choices?

Statement of Significance

According to Harrington (2007), individual career management is a recent topic of interest within the work-life arena; specifically, an understanding of individual career strategies to promote and facilitate successful work-family integration. Examining the mid-career stage is important since it is a critical stage of women's career development and can have a significant impact on organizations. The mid-career stage is frequently a time period when organizational needs and women's life requirements are at odds and subsequently may have a considerable impact on the retention of professional women (Auster, 2001). Employers will benefit from understanding how mid-career women, in particular, manage their career options in the context of competing work and family roles to positively influence attrition among this group of talent. This study will contribute to the theory and research in the area of work-family integration among women. This research will focus on the intersection between work-family role integration and career choices through the qualitative examination of this phenomenon, as experienced by mid-to-senior level female professionals who have recently had their first child.

Summary of Methodology

The phenomenological method is appropriate for this study because it describes the meaning of the lived experiences (Creswell, 1998). Hence, this research will specifically use the *Empirical Psychological Phenomenological Research Method* (EPPRM) for phenomenological research. The goal of the EPPRM is to describe the meaning structure of a psychological phenomenon. As a result, descriptive results are produced which show the intentional relationship between the subject and the object of experience. The data has

the structure of a text which consists of retrospectively written descriptions of various individual's experiences of the phenomenon being studied (Karlsson, 1993).

In-depth interviews will be conducted with women who meet the criteria for participation in this study. There are four participant selection criteria for this study as follows:

1. The participant must have recently (within three years) given birth to, or adopted, a first child and the child must be under the age of six years.
2. The participant must be employed by an organization in a managerial or professional position.
3. The participant must be between 36 and 45 years of age.
4. The participant must be married.

(An additional criterion is that the participant be willing to engage in an interview and allow the researcher to audio-tape the interview).

Delimitations

The qualitative, phenomenological nature of this study means the findings will be descriptive in nature. This study will focus on women in mid to senior level managerial or professional positions, who recently have given birth to, or adopted, their first child. The career stage, type of position, and age of the women who are selected to participate in this study are contextual factors that may contribute to a unique experience. Finally, this study will focus on women who are employed by organizations and, therefore, will not include self-employed individuals.

Limitations

Broad generalizations will not be possible from this study. Younger women employed in more traditional types of occupations and/or who have older children may have completely different career patterns and experiences in integrating work and family roles. These cohorts of women will not be explored in this study. Moreover, different findings could emerge with participants from different socioeconomic, educational, cultural, religious, and /or ethnic backgrounds and different levels of work performance. These variables will not be addressed in this study, as this would add additional criteria to the study sample, and increase the challenge of obtaining the sample (which is currently very specific). Finally, since the cultures, values, social policies and organizational climates of different countries could influence the findings, this study will specifically examine this experience from an American cultural perspective and therefore will not be applicable to those working in other countries.

Another limitation of this study is that the researcher is defining the mid-career stage--for the purpose of this study--specifically by age, in alignment with the time period representing the middle of one's career (ages 36-45) (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). The researcher recognizes that this definition is very narrow and although participants will be within the same age range, there could be some differences in job tenure, career and life experience, degree of career change, personal development, and maturity among the women. Each of the aforementioned factors could influence individual and organizational perceptions of a person being at a mid-career stage. Moreover as women's careers adhere to less of a linear pattern and involve more changes, this definition of "mid-career" may continue to evolve.

Chapter 2 will discuss the theoretical framework used to guide the research.

Definition of Key Terms

Adaptability - a meta-competency that defines the protean career mindset. Adaptability in the protean context refers to being open to new work or task conditions and self-directed in one's learning process (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Hall, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995).

Balance – a kaleidoscope career attribute which refers to a state of equilibrium and of wanting to successfully integrate one's work and non-work lives (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).

Career – a series of work and life decisions or the "sequence of work-related experiences and attitudes that occur over the span of a person's work life" (Hall, 1976, as cited in Hall, 1991).

Career Choice - the decision or decisions one makes as related to the "sequence of work-related experiences and attitudes that occur over the span of a person's work life" (Hall, 1976, as cited in Hall, 1991).

Career Pattern - a path or trajectory of work experiences that one participates in over a life course, which can range from very linear and ordered to very reactive and emergent (O'Neil, Bilimoria, & Saatcioglu, 2004).

High Boundary Separation – a work-family border concept that refers to the decision to make more of a distinction regarding what is classified as belonging to work versus belonging to non-work. This has also been referred to as high boundary separation, where work and family roles are non-overlapping (Ashforth, 2001; Clark, 2001; Kossek et al., 1999).

Kaleidoscope Career - a relational career framework based upon individuals creating and re-creating their careers on their own terms, defined by one's changing values, life choices, and parameters at different points in time (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).

Life Structure – an underlying pattern in a person's life at a point in time; the foundations upon which developmental periods are created (Levinson, 1996).

Low Boundary Separation - a work-family border concept that refers to the decision to make less distinction regarding what behaviors, thoughts, emotions, and relationships belong to one or the other (work and family) domains (Ashforth, 2001; Clark, 2001; Kossek et al., 1999).

Mid-Career Satisfaction – a combination of individual and career factors that combine to influence women's level of satisfaction at the mid-career stage (Auster, 2001).

Mid-Career Stage – the stage of *Pragmatic Endurance*, which involves the middle stage of one's career (ages 36-45) and is characterized by a pragmatic view of one's career (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005).

Multi – Role Structuring - involves balancing only those roles that are viewed to be most important (salient) (Graham et al., 2004).

Protean Career – a career framework characterized by flexibility and adaptability to change, is driven by the person instead of the organization, and involves a search for self-fulfillment (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Hall, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995).

Relationalism – a kaleidoscope career concept that emphasizes how a career action will impact the needs of family, children, spouses, parents, and other significant relationships in one's life at any given point in time (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008).

Role Balance - characterized by an equal importance of all roles as well as being fully engaged in the performance of every role of one's total role system (Marks and MacDermid, 1996).

Role Conflict - the simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations, such that compliance with one makes compliance with the other very challenging (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

Role Enhancement - idea that multiple roles are beneficial for women and that a strong commitment to one role does not hinder a strong commitment to another role (Barnett & Hyde, 2001).

Role Salience – refers to the importance of a role to one's self-image; the unique combinations of role commitment, participation, and knowledge (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Cook, 1994).

Work-Family Borders - the borders between the work and family domains; Border strength is characterized by the relative attributes of permeability, flexibility, and blending. (Clark, 2001).

Work-Family Integration – refers to how an individual manages work and family roles, including the strategies used, and processes by which the time and demand requirements of the work and family domains are reconciled in an effort to create balance in one's life. Work-family role integration is also known as work-family (or work-life) balance (Grady & McCarthy, 2008) or work-family role synthesis (Kossek et al., 1999).

Work-Family Role Conflict – a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Background

This study focuses on how women integrate dual roles at the mid-career stage and implications for career choices. Mid-career can be conceptualized as a period of transition that may involve work role adjustments (Grady & McCarthy, 2008). Hence, the mid-career stage is an important factor in the intersection between work-family role integration and career choice and therefore sets the unique context for this study. The mid-career stage was examined in this study through the theoretical frameworks of women's career stages (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005), mid-career satisfaction (Auster, 2001) and women's life structures (Levinson, 1996).

Mid-Career Stage

For the purpose of this study, the middle stage of one's career is defined as occurring between the ages of 36 and 45 years and is characterized by a pragmatic view of one's career (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Career stage may be related to one's experience of work-family role conflict (Bedian, Burke, & Moffett, 1988). Levinson (1996) found work-family conflict is most evident during the mid-career stage. Sullivan and Mainiero (2006) found women had an increased need for balance during the mid-career stage and that a lack of balance often prompted a mid-career change.

Women's Career Stages

O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) proposed a three-stage model of women's career development with the first stage being *Idealistic Achievement,* the second being *Pragmatic Endurance,* and the third, *Reinventive Contribution.* Idealistic Achievement, the first

phase, encompasses the early stage of one's career (ages 24-35). Women in this phase are typically focused on career satisfaction, achievement and success and tend to have an internal career focus. Pragmatic Endurance, the second phase, includes the middle stage of one's career (ages 36-45) and is characterized by a pragmatic view of one's career. Women in this career stage are aware of the multiple demands on their time and tend to be production oriented, doing whatever they need to get things done. Moreover, because their careers are no longer as fulfilling, these women may re-focus energy from their careers to other areas of life that provide them with a sense of satisfaction, self-worth, achievement, and recognition. As a result, they may need flexible work hours and schedules to help them manage different roles in their lives and also may desire more challenging and interesting assignments. The careers of those at mid-career stage tend to be embedded in their larger life contexts. Finally, the third phase, Reinventive Contribution, is the advanced career stage which typically includes women between the ages of 46-60. Women in this final phase are more involved in contributing to their organizations, their families, and their communities. This study focuses on women with young children who are at the middle stage of their careers.

Mid-Career Satisfaction

Auster (2001) developed a framework to understand the factors that influence mid-career satisfaction among professional women. She suggested several distinct critical factors have an impact on mid-career satisfaction. All of these factors combine to influence women's level of satisfaction at the mid-career stage. They include:

- individual characteristics such as parental responsibilities

- career characteristics including career history (such as employment gaps and work-life programs utilized)
- career support (such as the use of mentors and professional networks)
- stress factors (such as time, feelings of balance, office politics)
- organizational characteristics (such as organizational culture and human resource practices)
- specific job characteristics (such as opportunities for growth and relationships with co-workers)

Based on this framework, Auster suggested parental responsibilities, as well as opportunities for career growth and development, will be positively linked to mid-career satisfaction. Stressful factors such as time pressures and low levels of perceived work-life balance will be negatively associated with mid-career satisfaction (Auster, 2001). These positive factors that correlate to mid-career satisfaction are aligned with the role enhancement perspective, which suggests multiple roles are beneficial to one's well being (Barnett & Hyde, 2001).

Women's Life Structures

Levinson (1996) examined the stages of women's development from the perspective of what he calls *life structures*. He defined a life structure as an underlying pattern in a person's life at a point in time. Levinson proposed that life structures develop through a standard sequence of time periods throughout the adult years. Levinson stated the most important tasks of a *structure-building period* are to develop and maintain a life structure and enhance life within it.

In contrast, to structure-building periods, *structure-changing periods* end the life structure that exists and start to create a new life structure. Levinson (1996) stated the most critical tasks of this transitional period are to re-evaluate the existing structure, to explore the possibilities for change in one's self and the world, and to move toward committing to the important choices that form the basis for a new life structure. He suggested these transitional periods typically last about five years. He proposed that the *Mid-life Transition* occurs between the ages of 40 and 45 and serves as the bridge between early and middle adulthood. Levinson proposed these two periods, the Culminating Structure for Early Adulthood, which occurs between the ages of 33 and 40, and the Mid-life Transition, conclude the early adulthood phase and launch one into the stage of middle adulthood.

Levinson's (1996) research on employed women suggested that reconciling the childbearing process with an occupation was very challenging, difficult to balance, and resulted in the development of a new life structure that integrated work and family as central components. Research has proposed that additional studies are needed that focus on the connection between life stages and mid-career challenges (Greller & Stroh, 1995).

This study focuses on the time-period representing Levinson's culminating structure for early adulthood and the mid-life transition, which also coincides with the middle stage of one's career (age 36-45), pragmatic endurance (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005).

Work-Family Role Integration

Work-family role integration can be viewed as how an individual manages work and family roles-- including the strategies used--and processes by which the time and demand requirements of the work and family domains are reconciled. Work-family role

integration is also known as work-family (or work-life) balance (Grady & McCarthy, 2008) or work-family role synthesis (Kossek et al., 1999). There are several different frameworks that can be used to understand the process of work-family integration: the role conflict perspective, the role enhancement perspective, and work-family border theory (Clark, 2001).

Role Conflict

A role can be defined as a position within a social structure which includes a commonly understood set of expectations and behaviors (Ashforth, 2001). Broadly speaking, role conflict can be defined as the simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one makes compliance with the other very challenging (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Role conflict also may be generated between two or more roles held by the same person, such as the roles of worker and mother (Katz & Kahn, 1996).

Work-Family Role Conflict

Role conflict, in a broad sense, can be conceptualized as an incompatibility either between roles or within the attributes of a role (Ashforth, 2001). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work-family conflict as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible. They proposed a model which suggests work-family conflict can be more pronounced when the work and family roles are salient to one's self-concept.

The model (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) identified three distinct forms of work-family conflict:

1. time-based conflict

2. strain-based conflict
3. behavior-based conflict

According to the model, time-based conflict suggests multiple roles can compete for a person's time (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Strain-based conflict, in contrast, involves the tension that occurs as a result of involvement in multiple roles and occurs when the strain in one role has a negative impact on performance in another role. The final type of role conflict, behavior-based, can occur when the behaviors required of one role are not compatible with the behaviors needed for another role, and this conflict can be expressed as difficulty moving from one set of role behaviors to another set of role behaviors (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). It is important to note that strain-based conflict and time-based conflict are not mutually exclusive. For example, stressors such as inflexible work hours, business travel, and excessive overtime can produce time-based conflict as well as strain-based conflict (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001).

Within work-family conflict, there is a conceptual distinction between *work interfering with family* and *family interfering with work* (Gutek Searle, & Klepa, 1991). This is also known as *work-to-family conflict* and *family-to-work conflict* (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). These two directions of work-family conflict are separate, yet interrelated aspects of work-family conflict (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lee, 1994). Work-to-family conflict occurs when work responsibilities hinder the ability to attend to family responsibilities, such as business travel or long hours prohibiting one from being able to prepare meals for the family (Higgins et al., 1994). Conversely, family-to-work conflict occurs when family responsibilities interfere with one's ability to perform work tasks, such as when the need to

pick up a sick child from school prevents one from completing a work assignment by the specified deadline (Higgins et al., 1994).

Positive Effects of Multiple Roles – Role Enhancement

Barnett and Hyde (2001) suggested multiple roles are beneficial for women and a strong commitment to one role does not hinder a strong commitment to another role. They further suggested there are many factors that can buffer the experience of managing multiple roles, such as additional income, social support, opportunities for success, expanded frame of reference, increased self-complexity, similarity of experiences, and gender-role ideology. Moreover, they state multiple roles can be influenced by number of roles, time demands, and quality of the roles. Other research also supports a role-enhancement perspective, which suggests multiple roles enhance psychological well being by providing opportunities for social integration, mastery, and social and personal recognition ((Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001) and reduce role strain (Amatea & Fong, 1991). Rothbard (2001) also proposed a role enrichment perspective to the study of work-family integration, which suggests more role commitments produce more benefits to people's well being and energy is not fixed and can grow. Thus, the enrichment perspective suggests that being engaged in a role can lead to energy expansion, enhanced self-esteem, gratification, and a positive emotional response to that role, as well as increased engagement to other roles (through increased availability to that role). Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) found that, rather than simply focusing on the negative outcomes of combining work and family roles, women strive to find ways to blend their work and non-work roles. The role enrichment process has been less explored within the work-family

arena (Rothbard, 2001) and it has been suggested future research should consider the positive and negative outcomes of combining work and family roles.

Role Salience

The integration of work and family roles can be influenced by the salience of the roles. Role salience is an important factor in how one integrates work and family roles because it serves to influence which role activities to engage. The term role salience refers to unique combinations of commitment, participation, and knowledge (Cook, 1994). Commitment involves a person's emotional attachment to a role. Participation refers to the time and energy actually spent in a role. Finally, knowledge is gained through experience in the role (Neville & Super, 1986). According to Cook, role salience expresses how an individual interacts with the environment over a period of time. Moreover, as individuals become more involved in a particular role, that role becomes important to their self-image (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000). Career role salience may be viewed as "the relative importance of work versus family domains" (Marcinkus & Hamilton, 2006, p. 2). Marcinkus and Hamilton (2006) proposed that career and gender role salience are related to women's career choices, and the "unique combinations of salient identity factors interact with the social context to influence women's career choices" (p. 5) through influencing viable work options. Role salience has also been referred to as role embracement, which is the 'zeal with which one enacts a role" (Kossek et al., 1999, p. 106). Salience is shown through the relative degree of energy and time one chooses to devote to work and family roles (Kossek, et al., 1999). Research in the area of role salience has produced contradictory findings, indicating some people organize their roles according to a hierarchy of salience (Stryker,

1968), whereas others may not adhere to any form of role salience (Graham et al., 2004; Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Role Structures

Role salience may influence how one organizes work and family roles through a hierarchical structuring of the roles, which is organized by the relative importance of roles (Stryker, 1968). Stryker suggested that roles exist in a hierarchy of salience. The salience hierarchy involves a ranking of roles by the likelihood with which they will be enacted within or across situations (Stryker, 1987). Graham, Sorell, and Montgomery (2004) found that about 60% of women, regardless of vocational category, organized their roles within a hierarchical order, giving each a relative priority. Although the majority of women may organize their roles within a hierarchical structure, this framework may not be sufficient to understand how women integrate work and family roles (Graham, et al., 2004).

There are alternative role structures that may also influence how one may integrate work and family roles. These alternative role structures include a lateral structuring of roles, also known as role balance (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) and a combination of hierarchical and lateral structuring of roles, known as multi-role structuring (Graham, et al., 2004). Role balance is characterized by an equal importance of all roles as well as by being fully engaged in the performance of every role of one's total role system (Marks and MacDermid, 1996). Multi-role structuring (Graham et al., 2004), on the other hand, involves balancing only those roles viewed to be most important (salient). Graham et al. examined women's role-related identity structures through in-depth interviews with 60 employed and stay-at-home mothers and found that 10% of women integrated their roles

through balancing them and about 13% of women organized their roles through multi-role structuring.

Marks and MacDermid (1996) proposed that lower levels of role strain are associated with higher levels of role balance. They also suggested that significant life events, such as death, divorce, career change, or birth of a child, may encourage people to move toward balancing their roles. Finally, they found older individuals may have higher levels of maturity needed to achieve role balance.

Work-Family Border Theory

Clark (2001) suggested that although researchers have proposed that several variables influence the interaction between work and family roles--such as one's personal values, levels of supervisor support, and flexible work environments--additional research is needed to address the complexity surrounding how and why role conflict or role balance occurs. Work-family border theory (Clark, 2001) was developed to address how individuals integrate work and family domains and the borders, or boundaries (Ashforth, 2001) that exist between these two spheres. For example, for some individuals, the transitions between the two spheres are minimal, whereas for others, the contrast between the spheres is more pronounced (Ashforth, 2001; Clark, 2001).

Clark's theory suggests an optimal balance between work and family can be shaped by how individuals enact the borders between the work and family domains (Clark, 2001). For example, an individual who has integrated work and family has less distinction regarding what behaviors, thoughts, emotions, and relationships belong to one or the other domains. This has also been referred to as low boundary separation (Kossek et al., 1999) and high boundary integration (Ashforth, 2001). A role boundary serves to define the

perimeter and scope of a role and allow one to focus more on whichever domain is more salient at a given time (Ashforth, 2001). It has been proposed that women are more likely to use work-family role synthesis strategies that promote lower levels of work-family boundary separation (Kossek et al., 1999). A challenge with high boundary integration, however, is in creating and maintaining role boundaries when needed (Ashforth, 2001).

In contrast, a person with less integration between these domains, and therefore more segmentation, will make more of a distinction regarding what is classified as belonging to work versus belonging to non-work. This has also been referred to as high boundary separation, where work and family roles are non-overlapping (Kossek et al., 1999) and high boundary segmentation (Ashforth, 2001). Contemporary familial and organizational environments may make this higher level of segmentation less likely to be feasible today; however, job characteristics, such as a low degree of job autonomy, may be associated with strategies that promote higher levels of work-family boundary separation (Kossek et al., 1999). According to Ashforth, high boundary segmentation can create challenges in crossing role boundaries. Although it may make sense that individuals who have a more integrative approach between work and family domains will therefore be more balanced, this is not necessarily the case, as people with a more segmented approach to work and family may also feel their lives are fully balanced, and the perceived distinction between work and family further creates this balance (Clark, 2001; Graham, 2000; Graham et al., 2004).

Work-family border theory stimulates questions regarding the process of how individuals separate and integrate work and non-work aspects of their lives and how these processes lead to overall feelings of balance. Understanding how the borders between work

and family are managed is an important element to this theory. Border strength is characterized by the relative attributes of permeability, flexibility, and blending.

Permeability of a domain refers to the degree to which elements of the other domain may enter it (Ashforth, 2001; Clark, 2001). Flexibility refers to the degree to which a domain can expand or contract (Clark, 2001) and the extent to which it can be enacted in different settings and during different times (Ashforth, 2001). Blending is characterized by the extent to which permeability and flexibility both occur. Strong borders are more impermeable, inflexible, and do not allow much blending between work and family. In contrast, weak borders are more permeable, flexible, and allow more blending. Ashforth (2001) suggested that permeability and flexibility could serve to reduce inter-role conflict, by facilitating role transitions when needed, or increase role conflict, through mutual salience of the roles or difficulty in decoupling the roles. Clark (2001) proposed that when domains are similar, weak borders will facilitate work/family balance; however, when domains are very different, strong borders will more effectively facilitate work/family balance. She also proposed that more enhanced feelings of work/family balance will occur when one identifies to a greater extent with the more strongly bordered domain, whereas less work/family balance will occur when one identifies primarily with the more weakly bordered domain. Ashforth suggested high segmentation of roles occurs most often in the domains of work and home, though complete segmentation of roles is a rare occurrence. Moreover, even for those who prefer high integration of roles, a least some segmentation is often desirable. Kossek et al. (1999) suggested stronger alignment between the individual's strategy for work-family role synthesis and the organizational culture will promote more positive work-family balance for the individual.

Work-family border theory suggests one's experience of integrating work and family roles will be influenced by how one manages the borders between work and family. Work-family border theory may provide a useful framework for this study to understand how work-family role conflict occurs and explain the varying degrees of work-family role conflict individuals may experience. In addition, work-family border theory may be beneficial to this study in identifying ways to enhance work/family balance.

There have been empirical studies that have examined work-family border theory (e.g., Clark, 2002a; Lambert, Kass, Piotrowski & Vodanovich, 2006); however, these studies have not focused exclusively on women with pre-school age children at the mid-career stage. The current study examines work-family borders in the context of this unique sample of women. Prior studies (Clark, 2002a; Lambert et al., 2006) have found that high levels of communication, job autonomy, and flexibility are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and work-family balance and with lower levels of work-family conflict. Clark (2001) found that when work flexibility is high, weak borders may enhance work-family balance; however, when work flexibility is low, a high degree of separation (high border) between the two domains may be preferred to increase work-family balance.

Career Choices

Work-family role integration can influence women's career choices. A career can be defined as a series of work and life decisions or "the sequence of work-related experiences and attitudes that occur over the span of a person's work life" (Hall, 1976, as cited in Hall, 1991). Harrington (2007) proposed the intersection between work-family integration and individual career choices is an important area for future research focus. Efforts to achieve work-family role integration may prompt people to take personal

ownership of their career paths, which could include efforts such as renegotiating an optional job arrangement, considering an alternative career path, and challenging current career development paradigms (Harrington, 2007). According to Hall and Mirvis (1995), a new job, career, or even a new work assignment, which requires the development of new knowledge and skills, can result in new ways of working and learning. The cultivation of new knowledge and skills can also facilitate feelings of satisfaction at the mid-life stage and beyond. Moreover, career changes are becoming increasingly common among older workers as changes in technology and business strategies require ongoing development of new skills (Greller & Stroh, 1995). Hence, being skilled for a stable position is no longer viewed as an asset (Harrison, 2006) and talents and skills tailored only to specific jobs are considered to be a liability. Finally, the bureaucratic career path, characterized by hierarchical advancement (O'Leary, 1997) and still very much in existence, no longer provides firm structure and sense of stability (Harrison, 2006). This connection between work-family integration and women's career choices has been subject to limited empirical studies. This study fills this gap by focusing on the link between individual career choices and work-family role integration among managerial and professional women at the mid-career stage, who have young children (under the age of six).

Women's Career Patterns

Much of the research in the area of careers has attempted to fit women's career patterns into male career frameworks (O'Leary, 1997). As a result, most career models have focused mostly on the career events of men (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) and most career management programs used by organizations are still based on traditional career patterns (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006). Moreover, women's

careers may progress differently based on their broader life experiences (O'Leary, 1997; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Research suggests women's career patterns and outcomes are more characterized by the blending and integration of work and family domains, in contrast to the separation of work and non-work aspects of their lives (Kirchmeyer, 1999; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; O'Leary, 1997; Pazy, 1987; Valcour & Tolbert, 2003). In addition, women's age may be an important factor in their career choices (Marcinkus & Hamilton, 2006); and at the mid-life stage, women may redesign careers (Cabrera, 2007; Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; O'Neil et al., 2008; Whitmarsh, Brown, Cooper, Hawkins-Rodgers, & Wentworth, 2007). Moreover, women's careers follow less of a linear path (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006; O'Leary, 1997; Pringle & Mallon, 2003) and their career interruptions tend to be influenced more by non-work issues, such as personal fulfillment and the opportunity to achieve balance (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Finally, it has been suggested women and men have different perceptions of career success (Ladge, 2005; O'Leary, 1997; O'Neil et al., 2008) and values and goals that may change throughout the life course can influence feelings of career success (Mahler, 2008). Women tend to view career success as more than just success at work, but more holistically incorporating elements of success in both work and non-work areas of their lives. This is because women view their careers as including more than just work, but instead see their careers embedded in their larger life contexts (O'Neil et al., 2008), which involve relationships, connectedness, personal development and work-life balance. As a result, women evaluate their career success based upon both professional *and* personal success. On the other hand, men are more likely to equate career success with hierarchical

progression, income, achievement, advancement, and consistent, focused dedication to work.

Career choices may be made based on how women plan to integrate their work and family lives. Weitzman (1994) discussed some examples of multiple-role planning among women, which he classified as either a traditional or non-traditional variation. A common example of the traditional variation would be to select a career traditionally occupied by women, such as nursing, with the plan to either work part-time or interrupt the career for a period of time when children are very young. In contrast, an example of a non-traditional variation of multiple role planning could be to select a more demanding career, such as law or medicine, and delay childbirth or make the choice for a smaller family. He also stated, however, that it is this group of women (that pursue non-traditional career choices) that may struggle more intensely with work-family role conflict. Levinson's (1996) research on women's life stages supports this position. Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) suggest many women make career decisions based on the concept of *relationalism*, which emphasizes how the career action will impact the needs of family, children, spouses, parents, and other significant relationships in their lives at any given point in time (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). According to Ladge (2005), there are three possible outcomes for work-family integration: optimal family, optimal work/family balance, and optimal career. If a woman's priority is optimal family, then she may decide to work part-time or in a home based capacity. If her goal is to achieve work-family integration, then neither family nor career will take top priority. Finally, if a woman's goal is to achieve optimal success in her career, then family becomes secondary and childcare resources are utilized to fulfill that need. Each of these different priorities will affect women's career patterns and perceptions

of career success (Ladge, 2005). Ladge's framework, however, does not account for those women who may put family first, but must work because of financial necessity (Ladge, 2005). This study focused on career choices and patterns of those women with very young children and how they experience work-family integration, looking beyond the concrete outcome of career success.

Women's Career Choice Lenses

Research suggests that, while some women continue to climb the corporate ladder, many redefine career success based on more flexible, dynamic and lateral career patterns (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). Heslin (2005) suggests not all people view work in the context of a career, but instead may be primarily motivated to work for reasons related to the personal fulfillment they achieve as a result of their jobs or aspirations related to satisfying and challenging work (O'Leary, 1997). According to O'Leary (1997), challenging work involves that which challenges an individual to grow both personally and professionally. Rewarding and fulfilling work is distinct from, yet no less important, than challenging work in that rewarding work is focused on work that creates value and personal satisfaction for the individual. Both are important, particularly for women (O'Leary, 1997), and subjective as well as objective measures of success are relevant to contemporary career patterns (Mahler, 2008). O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2008) suggested new theory must be used to understand how women make career choices. Two contemporary conceptual frameworks, *Protean Careers* and *Kaleidoscope Careers*, are used to examine women's career choices and patterns. These frameworks have been shown to be particularly useful in understanding women's careers, and both have been the focus

of limited empirical research (Cabrera, 2009). Each of these career choice lenses will be discussed in the following sections.

Protean career model. Hall (1996) suggested the careers of the 21st century will be more protean in nature. The protean career is characterized by flexibility and adaptability to change, is driven by the person instead of the organization, and involves a search for self-fulfillment. Individuals with protean orientations are more likely to participate in diverse roles (Ashforth, 2001). Protean careers are dynamic because these are reconstructed by the individual as the individual and the environment change. A protean mindset suggests the career "becomes less of an orderly progression of clearly linked roles and more of an opportunistic sampling of often diverse and diffuse roles" (Ashforth, 2001, p. 242).

Briscoe and Hall (2006) characterize a protean career orientation as being values-driven as well as self-directed. *Values-driven* refers to one's internal values guiding career priorities, and *self-directed* refers to being adaptive to the performance and learning requirements of one's career. The desired outcome of the protean career is psychological success, which is based on happiness, self-fulfillment and personal accomplishment, in contrast to only vertical, or hierarchical, career success. Protean career outcomes are based upon continuous learning, personal transformation and expansion of one's identity, which are rooted in development of the meta-competencies of identity and adaptability. These capabilities involve learning how to learn and require forming new images of the self as the environment changes (Hall, 1996).

The protean career orientation requires the ability and willingness to engage in continuous learning, which is cultivated by the development of the meta-competencies of

identity and adaptability. The term meta-competency involves learning how to learn and manage change (Ashforth, 2001). Learning can involve coming to a new awareness about one's self or learning how to adapt to new work or task conditions over a period of time (Hall, 1996). Continuous learning can be achieved through activities such as participating in challenging work assignments, developing and cultivating relationships, and networking, mentoring, and coaching (Hall, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995).

In summary, the protean career concept suggests people can bring their whole selves-- that is to say their passions, values and creative energy-- to work due to the continuous learning processes of identity expansion and adaptability. Hall and Mirvis (1995) suggested the protean career could be challenging for people at the mid-career stage and beyond, as their work identities may be strongly developed and tied to the organizations where they have worked. Finally, the protean career model emphasizes the significance of career stages. For example, an optimal career arrangement for someone in the early stage of her career may not be the best situation for a person at mid-career. The protean career lens may be particularly relevant in understanding women's career choices at the mid-career stage, a time when individuals may be particularly open to engage in continuous learning (Hall & Mirvis, 1995) and as work and family integration issues become more salient and complex. The current study examines how mid-career women with very young children experience their careers.

Kaleidoscope career model. The kaleidoscope career model is a relational framework based upon individuals creating and re-creating their careers on their own terms, defined by one's changing values, life choices, and parameters at different points in time (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). The model suggests that as one aspect of one's life

changes, other parts change as well and any decision involving career will impact various aspects of one's non-work life. As a result, a particular aspect of one's life may be of primary importance, while the other areas may be active, but taking on secondary roles (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). According to the kaleidoscope career model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006), there are three factors that influence career decisions: *authenticity*, *balance,* and *challenge*. Authenticity refers to being true to one's values and alignment between values and behaviors. Balance refers to a state of equilibrium and of wanting to successfully integrate one's work and non-work lives. Challenge refers to the desire to learn, grow and experience stimulation and career advancement (Cabrera, 2007; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). For example, at one point in her career, a woman may be focused on devoting time and energy to career advancement. At another point, such as after the birth of a child, she may be more focused on work and family integration. Finally, at a later time, she may be most concerned with meaning and spirituality in her life (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). Mainiero and Sullivan (2005, 2006) proposed the factor of balance (and relationships) has the most influence on women's careers at the mid-career stage, when family needs tend to become high priority. The kaleidoscope career model is unique in that it provides context to facilitate the understanding of women's career choices (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006) and suggests women's careers do not fit well within the traditional career stage model (which is focused more on the career patterns of men). The kaleidoscope career model may be the more relevant framework for understanding women's career choices as it focuses on work-life integration and the need for balance at the mid-career stage; however, limited research has been done using this model and additional empirical research is needed (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008) with different

populations (Cabrera, 2007). The current study addresses this need by investigating the career experiences of mid-career women with very young children.

Summary of career choice lenses. The protean framework emphasizes agency and personal attributes, such as adaptability and willingness to engage in continuous learning. The kaleidoscope model emphasizes agency, but also includes life context, which may be particularly relevant to understanding women's career patterns. The two frameworks are also related in the sense women may be driven to embrace protean career orientations as a means of satisfying changing values throughout their lives (which may emphasize challenge, balance, authenticity, depending upon the stages of career) (Cabrera, 2009).

The common thread among both of these career constructs is they are based on contemporary ideas about careers and have developed over time as a result of evolving organizational and employment patterns. Moreover, both of these lenses are based on the idea that contemporary careers are managed primarily by the individual and not an organization. Finally, each career lens describes career choices that do not fit within the hierarchical and organization-driven career models on which much prior research has been based. As a result, both of these career lenses are beneficial as they provide rich metaphors for facilitating a deeper understanding of women's contemporary career choices, particularly in the context of the current economic and organizational climate. As the economy and workforce become more global and organizations are increasingly challenged to cut costs and streamline layers of management, these contemporary career lenses may provide a more applicable and realistic framework to guide women's career

choices. Figure 2-1 illustrates the interrelationships between the constructs of women's work-family integration and women's career choices, as discussed in the prior sections.

Conceptual Framework Diagram

Study Sample:

- *Married, Heterosexual Women*
- *Professional or Managerial Position*
- *Organizational Setting*
- *Pre-school Age Child (under the age of six)*
- *Between ages of 36 and 45*

Study Context:

- *Mid-Career Stage*
- *Culminating Structure for Early Adulthood*
- *Mid-Life*

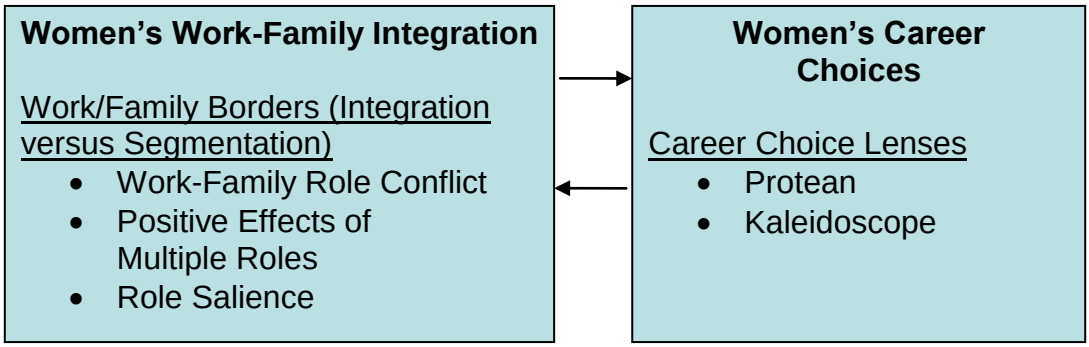

Figure 2-1. Conceptual Framework Diagram

Women's process of work and family integration, as examined through the perspective of work-family border theory, is influenced by role salience and one's relative experience of work-family role conflict as well as the positive effects of multiple roles. Women's career choices may be viewed through the perspective of non-traditional and non-linear career patterns, which include two contemporary career frameworks. Women's process of work and family integration may affect their career choices and women's career choices also may influence women's process of work and family integration. Women's

perceptions of their process of integrating work and family roles, and career choices, can have an impact on individual and organizational effectiveness.

Summary

Work-family role integration can be viewed as how an individual manages work and family roles, including the strategies used and processes by which the time and demand requirements of the work and family domains are reconciled in an effort to create balance in one's life. There are several different frameworks that can be used to understand the process of work-family integration: the role conflict perspective, the role enhancement perspective, and work-family border theory (Clark, 2001). The experience of work-family role integration, influenced also by role salience, can influence women's career choices.

A career can be defined as "the sequence of work-related experiences and attitudes that occur over the span of a person's work life" (Hall, 1976, as cited in Hall, 1991). Women's careers may progress differently based on their broader life experiences (O'Leary, 1997; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) and therefore may follow less of a linear path (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006; O'Leary, 1997; Pringle & Mallon, 2003). There are two contemporary conceptual frameworks that can be used to examine women's career choices and patterns: *Protean Careers,* and *Kaleidoscope Careers*.

The mid-career stage is an important factor in the intersection between work-family role integration and career choice and therefore sets the unique context for the current study. The mid-career stage was examined in this study through the theoretical frameworks of women's career stages (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005), mid-career satisfaction (Auster, 2001) and women's life structures (Levinson, 1996). The study focuses on the

connection between individual career choices and work-family role integration among managerial and professional women at the mid-career stage, who have young children. Chapter 3 will review the literature related to women and work-family integration and career choices.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of the current study was to explore and understand the experience of work-family role integration among women at the mid-career stage who have small children. Prior research has already suggested the ability to balance work and family roles can be very difficult for women. This may be influenced by the dilemma women face in trying to manage the majority of home and childcare responsibilities, while also attempting to manage the demands of a career. Though there is a significant amount of scholarly research on this topic, changes in the characteristics of women's work and family lives over the past decade bring a renewed and more focused interest in this arena.

This chapter reviews the literature related to women and work-family integration and career choices. It is organized into two major sections: work-family integration and women's career choices. With regard to work-family integration, since there is a vast amount of research that has been undertaken within this construct (specifically in the area of role conflict), there will not be an attempt to review all of the research in this particular area. Rather, this construct only includes those relevant studies most closely related to the particular characteristics of this study, which is focused on mid-career women with small children. The researcher is making the assumption that there are gender differences in how men and women experience work-family role conflict through the findings of several older studies (Milkie & Petola, 1999; Miller & Garrison, 1982; Pleck, et al., 1980). Therefore research related to gender is briefly summarized to set the stage for the literature review. More in depth analyses of literature within the construct of work-family role integration

are reviewed in the subsections of role enhancement, role salience, and work-family borders.

Work-Family Integration Studies

Work-family integration can be defined as the process by which the time and demand requirements of the work and family domains are reconciled in an effort to create balance in one's life. Work-family integration is also known as work-family (or work-life) balance (Grady & McCarthy, 2008). The ability to integrate work and family roles is linked to life satisfaction, and meaningfulness (Grady & McCarthy, 2008). Specifically, women have a distinct need for better integration between their work and non-work lives and without support for their multiple life roles, women may find difficulty in fulfilling their work responsibilities (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005).

Studies on Gender Differences in Work-Family Role Integration

As mentioned above, this section briefly reviews and summarizes, at a high level, key findings in the area of gender differences in work and family integration. Many studies have found there are gender differences in the ability to integrate work and family roles (DiBenedetto & Tittle, 1990; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001; Graham et al., 2000; Hall, 1991; Loscocco, 1997; Miller & Garrison, 1982; Pleck et al., 1980). Studies have suggested the ability to balance work and family roles is more difficult for women than it is for men because, although many women often continue to engage in their careers after the birth of a child, they still have the majority of responsibility for care of the home and children (Pleck et al., 1980).

Higgins, Duxbury, and Lee (1994) explored life-cycle stage and gender and found work-family conflict for men declines moderately over the life cycle stages, while

women's levels of work-family role conflict decline significantly when their children reach age 13. Hence, the combination of working while having young children can be very challenging for women. Furthermore, during this time period, it has been found traditional views regarding the role of motherhood conflict most strongly with career commitment (O'Connell, Betz, & Kurth, 1989). Crouter (1984) also found mothers experienced significantly more spillover from family to work than did fathers when children were under the age of 12.

Moreover, mothers may indeed experience work-family role conflict differently than men, based on the mutual salience of the worker and mother roles. Duxbury and Higgins (1991) suggested the reallocation of roles within the family to address increased role responsibilities outside the home has not yet occurred. Miller and Garrison (1982) suggested work-family role conflict is more acute for women than it is for men; and males and females integrate their professional and domestic roles very differently. This may be an effect of the role inequity that exists within the household.

Whether or not a woman chooses to work, she still has the majority of responsibility for domestic tasks. Bird (1999) found there are significant gender differences in the equity of household labor and that this negatively impacts women's psychological well being. Parasurama, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992) found work-role salience is high for both men and women in dual earner couples, and family-role salience is higher for women. Thus, the potential conflict between work and family roles tends to be more of a challenge for women than it is for men.

Research has indicated that women's roles tend to be less flexible and are more likely to be interrupted (Barnett & Shen, 1997; Milkie & Petola, 1999). A study by

Loscocco (1997) found self-employed women were more likely than men to try to enhance the flexibility of their work and family time spilled over more into work time more so for women than for men. DiBenedetto and Tittle (1990) examined the tradeoffs that women must make, relative to men, in attempting to balance the concurrent demands of career and family. Their findings suggested that while men tend to view their simultaneous commitment to work and family as independent of one another, women view these roles to be in conflict with one another. Other research supports this finding (Bedian, Burke, & Moffett, 1988; Blair-Loy, 2001; Rothbard, 2001). Moreover, women see themselves as having to make a trade-off in order to balance these roles, whereas they do not see men as having to make a similar type of tradeoff. DiBenedetto and Tittle (1990) found, however, this perception only existed (among women and men) when the conflicting demands involved the simultaneous engagement in paid work and caring for children. Barnett and Shen (1997) found that when husbands participate in family demands, they are more likely to engage in tasks easily scheduled around work demands, whereas wives tend to complete more inflexible family tasks. Thus, studies suggest men experience more flexibility in integrating work and family roles.

Other studies have also suggested that, for women, work and family roles do not support one another and the time spent attempting to satisfy the role requirements of each area leads to increased conflict between these domains (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). Career women are challenged to take time away from their work roles to satisfy family obligations. In addition, women are often expected to modify their career aspirations to meet their family demands (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). According to research by Catalyst (2003b), women with children often need to reduce work hours,

which results in different career paths for men and women. Their data suggests only 29% of women with MBA degrees have worked full-time since graduating, and that those MBA graduates who worked full-time were more likely to be single and without children.

Summary of Studies on Gender Differences in Work-Family Role Integration

A review of recent studies (Catalyst, 2003) indicates most fathers and mothers find it very difficult to balance work and family responsibilities; however, studies suggest the ability to balance work and family roles can be particularly difficult for mothers (DiBenedetto & Tittle, 1990; Miller & Garrison, 1982). Many studies have found women, and particularly mothers, experience more substantial role conflict than men (Milkie & Petola, 1999; Miller & Garrison, 1982; Pleck et al., 1980). This is based on the mutual salience of the worker and mother roles, as well as role inequities in household labor and higher expectations of role flexibility.

Studies on Women and Work-Family Role Conflict

Barnett and Baruch (1985) studied the relationship between role strain (overload and conflict) and three aspects of women's multiple roles and found the role of mother is the major source of stress for women in the mid-life years. Furthermore, the quality of how women experience their multiple roles is significantly related to role overload, role conflict, and anxiety. These findings are important because they suggest the demands of motherhood, as opposed to the demands associated with of paid work, are the primary source of stress for women and may be linked to the role conflict that may occur as a result of this role combination. More recent studies have also supported this finding concerning increased stress from the mother role (Hughs & Galinsky, 1994; Lambert, Kass, Piotrowski, & Vodanovich, 2006; Stephens & Townsend, 1994). This section reviews the

studies of women's experience of work-family role conflict specifically focused on women with pre-school age children.

Several studies (Crouter, 1984; Loscocco, 1997; Milkie & Petola, 1999) have suggested the existence of children, particularly young children, will make work-family role conflict even more difficult for women. Milkie and Petola (1999) assessed women's and men's feelings about the trade-offs made between work and family life. Their findings were that for women who were employed full-time, the demands associated with young children had a negative impact on their feelings of success in balancing work and family roles. Fredriksen-Goldsen and Scharlach (2001) also found the existence of small children (under the age of six), in particular, can make this balancing act extremely difficult for women. Vistnes (1997) found a positive relationship between the number of children under age six and women's likelihood of absenteeism from the workplace which suggests this may be related to care-giving for sick children. Jacobs and Gerson (2000) found women between the ages of 30 and 40, with children, may experience the largest gap between their actual and optimal working hours, particularly if their children are young. In sum, employed mothers appeared to experience work-family conflict more than other groups of women.

Summary of Studies on Women and Work-Family Role Conflict

The literature which has been summarized in the area of work-family role conflict seems to indicate that the role of paid worker is not the primary source of women's experience of role strain, but rather it is the combination of the roles of worker and mother that produce the negative effects on their psychological health. Earlier studies suggested that although multiple roles can enhance women's psychological well being, the role of

mother has been found to be the major contributing factor to women's feelings of role strain (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Hughs & Galinsky, 1994; Stephens & Townsend, 1997). Studies indicated the combination of the roles of mother and paid worker can be particularly stressful (DiBenedetto & Tittle, 1990; Miller & Garrison, 1982; Parasurama, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992; Pleck et al., 1980), particularly when children are very young (Higgins, Duxbury & Lee 1994; Milkie & Petola, 1999; Weitzman, 1994). These studies, however, have not all focused on women at the mid-career stage. In terms of method, most of the studies used a quantitative study design, which, unfortunately, provides limited information relative to how women are experiencing work-family role conflict.

Studies on the Contradictory Evidence to Work-Family Role Conflict: The Enhancement Perspective

Research has also suggested that multiple roles enhance women's well being (Baruch & Barnett, 1986; Barnett & Hyde, 2001; White, 1995). This section reviews and discusses research related to the role enhancement perspective.

Baruch and Barnett (1986) examined the relationship between women's multiple roles and several indices of psychological well being. The sample included 238 women between the ages of 35 and 55 who were classified as one of the following: never-married, married without children, married with children, and divorced with children. Of those with children, 30 women had children under eight, and 89 women had children between the ages of eight and 18 living at home. Half of the married women and all of the never-married and divorced women were employed. Employed women within each family status group were drawn equally from those in high, medium, and low-prestige occupations.

Women who had been working at least seventeen hours a week for at least three months prior to being interviewed were classified as employed. The study included qualitative and quantitative measures. The first stage of the study consisted of intensive, semi-structured interviews. Then, a survey instrument was designed for the second stage of the study, in which approximately 45 women in each of the six role pattern groups were selected through disproportionate random sampling, using the voting lists of a community in the greater Boston area. The study found the quality of women's roles is important and that even as the number of roles one has increases, the net gain that can be experienced from each role can have a positive effect on psychological well being. This study had several limitations. First, the majority of the sample with children had older children (over 8 years) and the study included those who did not have children. In addition, parental status and age of child were not controlled or analyzed . Moreover, this quantitative study included those with part-time positions, a diverse set of occupations, and did not specify career stages. Finally, this study is several decades old, and contemporary work and home environments may contribute to more roles resulting in greater (or possibly less) stress, particularly since many women in this age group are just beginning to start families.

Kandel, Davies, and Raveis (1985) also found support for this link between multiple roles and increased levels of well being. Their study examined the nature of role strains on women's psychological well being. Their sample included 197 women between the ages of 18 to 54 (63% were between the ages of 25-44 years old) who worked full-time, part-time and those who were not employed. The study was quantitative and used structured interviews for data collection. The results of this study indicated that levels of depressive symptoms among women of different roles were lower among those who were

married, parents, and employed and higher among those who were single and housewives. In addition, those with the most complex role patterns demonstrated decreased sensitivity to role-related stress. The implications are that marital and household stresses have an impact on well being and have more severe consequences for well being compared to stressors from the occupational role. This study has several limitations, in particular the inclusion of those without children as well as women who were employed part-time or not employed. Moreover, the age range of the women was very broad and career stages of the women in the sample were not indicated. Finally, this study is older and, as mentioned previously, today's occupations have become more time intensive.

White (1995) studied women's multiple roles, focusing on the career implications of women at the mid-career stage. The sample for White's study consisted of 48 women managers or entrepreneurs in commerce and industry or senior members of high status professions (such as law and accountancy). The priority placed on family and work issues was explored along with the changes in these priorities over time. About half of the women who participated in the study had children, though the age range of the children was not specified. The study design was qualitative and included in depth interviews that examined career issues across the entire life span. The results of the study found that a common pattern among the women was to wait until their career was well established before contemplating a family. The women who decided to have children in their early thirties began to feel the strain of career and family conflict, however, the overall finding was that the multiple roles may have offered unique psychological benefits. These benefits fulfilled different needs (e.g. growth needs, security needs, the need to belong etc.). The results of this study also suggested the quality of the role involvement is what is most important,

rather than role occupancy per se. This supports the findings of Baruch and Barnett (1986). White's study, however, did have some limitations, specifically, the inclusion of self-employed individuals and those without children in the study sample. Furthermore, the mothers that participated in White's study had children of diverse ages. None of the enhancement perspective studies that have been examined thus far have controlled the age of the child or children, which could influence study findings and implications.

Schwartzberg and Dytell (1988) investigated the sources of family stress among employed and non-employed mothers and the relevance of these stresses to women's well being. They found that employed women were less sensitive to the various sources of family stress. Their findings suggested that combining the roles of mother and paid worker reduced women's sensitivity to stressors that occurred within their family roles. As a result, they were less dependent on one of these roles as the source of their psychological well being. Swartzberg and Dytell (1988) suggested this supports the idea that multiple roles protect individuals by providing different sources of gratification. Their study sample consisted of employed and non-employed women who were married with at least one elementary school age child living at home. About 41% of the employed mothers worked in professional, managerial, or technical positions; the rest of the sample was comprised of clerical or service workers. The number of hours worked was not specified, nor was the age range or career stage of the employed mothers. The employed women had significantly fewer and older children, as compared to the non-employed women. The study design was quantitative and utilized questionnaires that captured demographic data and indicators of family stressors and psychological well being. Though this study also supports Baruch and Barnett (1986), there were some study limitations, which include the diversity of

occupations represented, low reliability of some of the survey subscales, as well as limited data relative to the employment characteristics (such as career stage) and age range of the mothers. Again, as in previous enhancement perspective studies, this quantitative study did not specify if any of the mothers sampled had children younger than elementary school age, a factor which could influence study findings.

Other factors that have been found to reduce feelings of work-family role conflict include feelings of role enhancement versus role depletion (Rothbard, 2001), enhanced perceptions of occupational and parental self-efficacy (Erdwins, Buffardi, Casper, & O'Brien, 2001) and feelings of work satisfaction (Greenberger & O'Neil, 1993).

Rothbard (2001) examined two competing views of role integration, depletion and enrichment, and attempted to integrate them. His sample consisted of 790 men and women between the ages of 23 and 70 years employed in a variety of different positions. His study did not specify what percentage of the women in the sample were mothers. The study design was quantitative and used survey data from a larger study of work-family issues. Control variables included levels of work and family importance and work and family demands. The findings of Rothbard's study indicated that patterns of both role depletion and role enrichment existed (Rothbard, 2001). Specifically, depletion processes only occurred for women in this study and only in the work-to-family direction. Enrichment existed for both men and women, but in opposite ways. Enrichment existed for men from work-to-family and for women from family to work. A significant limitation of the study was that a broad sample of jobs were represented, and a university setting is a unique organizational environment characterized by job tenure and relatively high levels of perceived job security and work flexibility, making the findings difficult to generalize to

other organizational environments. Moreover, it is not known how many women in this sample were mothers. In addition, the sample over-represented positions typically held by women. A major contribution of Rothbard's study was the finding that both role enrichment and depletion are important to understanding the complexity of integrating work and family roles (Rothbard, 2001). A major implication is that organizations should encourage women's participation in other roles, as it may have a positive impact on work performance through creation of increased energy.

Erdwins, Buffardi, Casper, and O'Brien (2001) examined women's self-efficacy in parent and work roles through surveys distributed to working mothers with at least one pre-school age child. Their study found women's self-efficacy in parent and work roles helps to alleviate role strain. Specifically, the more confident these women felt as parents, the less intense feelings they had related to role strain. In addition, perceptions of effectiveness in their work roles were related to perceptions of fewer conflicts between work and family. The limitations of this study include lack of information regarding the age range of the women, as well as their career stage or career characteristics.

Greenberger and O'Neil (1993) examined relations between role strain and role experiences that included commitment, demands, satisfactions, evaluations, and social support for role-related activities. The sample included 102 fathers and 194 mothers between the ages of 25 and 40 with at least one pre-school age child, who were employed in administrative, clerical, and professional positions. About 25% of the sample worked part-time and the average workweek was 40 hours. The study design involved surveys. The results of the study indicated that role-related demands were significantly related to women's level of role strain, but not to symptoms of anxiety or depression. Moreover, a

greater time allocation to work and work-related activities was associated with less depression for women. Negative self-appraisal of their job performance and lack of supervisor support, however, was more strongly associated with anxiety among older women. Furthermore, job satisfaction and the perception of being competent as a worker was more important to older participants and was linked with increased investment in the worker role. Women who spent more time working and were dissatisfied with their jobs and who did not have spousal and social support for being employed, however, were shown to have more role strain. There are several limitations to this study. First, the sample included both men and women and the women were not analyzed separately. Second, patterns were not portioned from full-time, and professional and non-professional positions were not separately analyzed. Finally, the age range of the women tended to be younger than would be expected of those at mid-career, and career stage was not specifically indicated.

Summary of Studies on the Contradictory Evidence to Work-Family Role Conflict: Role Enhancement

There is increasing evidence that multiple roles enhance women's well being (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Baruch & Barnett, 1986; Kandel, Davies, & Raveis, 1985; Schwartzberg and Dytell, 1988; White, 1995). High levels of work satisfaction may be an important factor in overall positive feelings associated with the existence of multiple roles (Greenberger & O'Neil 1993). Again, however, a major gap in the role enhancement arena is that the studies reviewed have not focused exclusively on women at the mid-career stage with pre-school age children. We know the demands of young children, coupled with being at the mid-career stage (which is characterized by an increased need for work-family

balance), may present a unique challenge for women with these life circumstances. In addition, many of the studies reviewed included women without children. Moreover, most of the studies discussed used a quantitative study design, which provides limited information relative to how women are experiencing the situation of work-family role integration. More qualitative studies, which can provide a deeper understanding of how women integrate multiple roles, are needed. Finally, there are other factors, such as work-family borders and role salience, which may explain varying perceptions of role integration, further illuminating how and why feelings of role enhancement or role conflict occur. This next section will review and discuss empirical research related to role salience and work-family border theory.

Studies on Role Salience

A high level of role involvement in one role makes it difficult to adhere to the expectations of a second role (Frone & Rice, 1987). Frone and Rice (1987) examined the effect of family involvement as a moderator between job involvement and perceived work-family conflict and found job involvement was positively related to work-family conflict regardless of the level of parental involvement. The study design was quantitative and used surveys as the method of data collection. The sample included employed women working an average of 44 hours per week. About 53% of the women had children, though the age range of the children was not specified. All of the women in the sample were employed in professional positions within a single university, though the career stage of the women was not indicated. Limitations of this study include a mixed gender sample and inclusion of women without children. In addition, the participants were university

employees, but no detail was provided regarding their specific positions or how long they had been working in these positions.

Hall (1992) qualitatively examined how eight women redefined their roles in dual earner families following the birth of their first infant. The sample included employed nurses, teachers, managers between the ages of 25 and 35 who worked between 35 and 45 hours per week. All of the women had infants between 5 and 11 months old during the time of the study. The study design used grounded theory, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews and observations. The findings of the study suggested high levels of role strain were experienced by women as a result of guilt, awareness of unmet household needs, denial of their own needs, and perceptions of others expectations. Gaps in this study included a small sample size, the variety of occupations represented, and the inclusion of relatively young mothers, in the early stages of their careers. A sampling of older mothers at mid-career may have demonstrated different findings. A strength of this study is that it focused exclusively on mothers of infants. It is also one of the relatively few qualitative studies in the area of role salience and work-family role conflict that has been examined.

Martire, Stephens, and Townsend (2000) examined the relationship between role centrality and psychological well being in women who simultaneously occupied the roles of parent care provider, mother, wife, and employee. The study design was quantitative and used a survey instrument. Surveys were given to 296 women who occupied the four roles indicated above. All of the participants were married and had at least one child age 25 years or younger living in the home. The sample included those who worked part-time. The age range of the women was not provided. Almost half (45%) of the participants were

employed in managerial or professional occupations. The study findings indicated that when the mother role was high in centrality, there was a protective effect for women from the negative impact of stressors resulting from the mother role. Moreover, centrality of all four of the roles was linked to increased life satisfaction, whereas only employee centrality was associated with less depressive symptoms. Finally, role centrality increased the negative effects of role stress only in the wife and employee roles. This may be related to the high standards of performance women often have for themselves in these specific roles. When these standards are not met, their well being is threatened. A major limitation of this study is that these findings may not apply to women who do not occupy all four of these roles (parent care provider, mother, wife, and employee) simultaneously. Additional limitations include the participation of women who worked part-time, lack of information relative to career stage, and age range of the women and children. Though several limitations did exist, this study is informative in that it highlights the different effects of role centrality on different roles, particularly differences between the employee and the mother roles.

Carlson and Kacmar (2000) examined the effect of one's life role values, or the values an individual holds regarding the work and family domains (as defined by centrality, priority and importance), on the degree of work-family conflict experienced. The study design was quantitative and used surveys as the method of data collection. Surveys were administered to 194 male and 116 female employees from a single department of a state government who were married or had children living at home. About 75% of the participants had children living at home, however the age range of the children was not provided. Moreover, the age range of the study participants was not

specified. The findings of the study indicated that life-role values make a difference in the way work-family role conflict is experienced. Specifically, different sources, levels and outcomes of work-family conflict were influenced by the life role values of individuals, when expressed as work centrality or importance. Specifically, when work was highly central to an individual, demands within the family domain had a stronger impact and individuals experienced more family interference with work. Conversely, when family was highly valued, the antecedents from the work domain were more salient and had a greater influence on work-family conflict. Moreover, when both domains were highly valued, individuals may have had difficulty prioritizing their roles, and job satisfaction was found to be strongly related to life satisfaction. There are limitations to this study, including the single organization sample, the inclusion of both males and females, and the fact that 25% of the participants did not have children. Moreover, the age range and career stage of the individuals was not specified. This study, however, did highlight the significance of the life-role values to understanding one's experience of work-family role conflict, though it did not focus on women specifically.

Summary of Studies on Role Salience

Role salience may be an important contextual factor that can influence a woman's perception of her ability to integrate work and family roles, contributing to feelings of role balance or role conflict. The research reviewed in the area of role salience indicates high role involvement may cause one to be mentally focused on one role while physically involved in the demands of a second role (Frone & Rice, 1987). Moreover, as individuals value one domain more highly than the other, the less valued domain can be a source of conflict and lead to overall dissatisfaction in the ability to integrate the roles (Carlson &

Kacmar, 2000). In addition, as individuals become more involved in a particular role, that role becomes important to their self-image (Carlson & Kacmar) and role centrality can increase the negative effects of role stress in the employee role (Martire, Stephens, & Townsend, 2000) Finally, mutual salience of work and family roles may contribute to higher levels of role conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The research discussed thus far suggests the demands of young children, coupled with being at the mid-career stage (which may be characterized by an increased need for work-family balance), may present a unique challenge for women with these life circumstances. The studies reviewed in the area of role salience did not focus exclusively on women at the mid-career stage with young children. In fact, many of the studies included women without children. Moreover, most of the studies reviewed used a quantitative research design. As discussed, differences in career stages, presence of children, and ages of children could result in different findings relative to work-family role integration.

Studies on Work-Family Borders

Clark (2002b) suggested additional research is needed to address the complexity surrounding how and why role conflict or role balance occurs. She studied how individuals enact their home and work environments to create balance. Clark (2002a) examined how individuals integrate and separate work and family responsibilities through communication between work and family environments. Communication was an important factor in this study because it has been suggested that frequent communication enhances awareness and support of an individual's other-domain responsibilities, thus reducing role conflict. This study used a mixed-method design which included in-depth

interviews with fifteen individuals who were employed full-time and who had significant family responsibilities. The participants were diverse in terms of age, position, career, gender and family situation. Interviewees were asked how they balanced their lives when there was significant conflict between roles. The study also used focus groups with seven individuals with significant concerns related to balancing work and family. Questionnaires were then completed by 179 people, 83 women and 96 men. Most of the respondents were married, with one or two children. The study included those who worked at least 30 hours a week, and the participants worked an average of 44 hours per week. The findings of this study indicated a high level of communication is associated with higher levels of work and family balance. Specifically, communication at work about family was associated with permeability and flexibility of borders; however, communication with family about work was not associated with permeability and flexibility of borders. Communication across borders, however, was not found to be significantly related to role conflict. A major limitation of this study is that the sample did not control for gender, age of the women, age of the children, or career characteristics (such as occupation or career stage).

Lambert, Kass, Piotrowski, and Vodanovich (2006) used the work-family border theory to quantitatively examine the impact of supportive communication and autonomy on work-family balance. They suggested that when work flexibility is high, weak borders may enhance work-family balance; however, when work flexibility is low, a high degree of separation (high border) between the two domains may be preferred to increase work-family balance. Clark (2001) also supported this proposition. The participants in this study included 400 employees of a biotechnology company who were administered surveys with questions related to work-family conflict, participation, and supportive communication,

life satisfaction, work satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The participants included males and females in a variety of occupational positions. The findings of this study demonstrated support for Clark's work-family border theory and indicated a positive relationship between levels of worker autonomy and flexibility, supportive communication and work satisfaction (Clark, 2001). Limitations of this study are that age and characteristics related to children were not controlled.

Summary of Studies on Work-Family Borders

Additional research is needed to address the complexity surrounding how and why role conflict or role balance occurs. Evidence suggests that high levels of communication, job autonomy and flexibility are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and work and family balance and lower levels of work-family conflict. Specifically, recent research according to work-family border theory (Clark, 2001) suggests that when work flexibility is high, weak borders may enhance work-family balance; however, when work flexibility is low, a high degree of separation (high border) between the two domains may be preferred to increase work-family balance. Work-family border theory may help facilitate an understanding of how and why role conflict (or an absence of role conflict) may occur. However, this theory may not completely explain women's experience of work and family role integration; as discussed, role salience may also be an important factor in work-family role integration. Therefore, and as previously proposed, more qualitative studies in this area are needed to deeply examine women's experiences through their own descriptions.

Overall Summary of Work-Family Role Integration Studies

The ability to balance work and family roles can be particularly difficult for women, contributing to feelings of work-family role conflict. Although multiple roles can

enhance women's well being, the role of mother has been found to be the major contributing factor to women's feelings of role strain, particularly when children are of pre-school age. The research discussed thus far has suggested the demands of young children, coupled with being at the mid-career stage (which may be characterized by an increased need for work-family balance), may present a unique challenge for women with these life circumstances. Overall, the studies reviewed in the area of work-family role integration have not focused exclusively on women at the mid-career stage with pre-school age children. Moreover, many of the studies included women without children. Finally, as stated previously, more qualitative studies are needed.

Work-family border theory (Clark, 2001) and role salience are concepts that may help facilitate a deeper understanding of how one experiences the integration of work and family roles. High levels of work satisfaction, for example, may be an important factor in overall positive feelings associated with the existence of multiple roles and feelings of balance. Moreover, work satisfaction is related to one's career choice. The challenge in balancing these roles is further intensified during the mid-career stage (Auster, 2001; Levinson, 1996; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006), which encompasses the Culminating Structure for Early Adulthood, and the Mid-life Transition (Levinson, 1996) that typically occur between the ages of 33-45. The next section discusses the relevant literature pertaining to women's career choices, which includes occupation, career stage (including the mid-career stage), career patterns, and two specific career choice lenses, namely the protean career framework and the kaleidoscope career model.

Studies on Women's Career Choices

There have been some studies that have explored work-family integration for women with young children at the mid-career stage. Few studies, however, have specifically examined the interrelationship between work-family role integration and women's career choices. Following is a brief discussion of relevant research related to the following areas of women's career choices: occupation, career stage (including the mid-career stage), career patterns, and career choice lenses.

Studies on Occupation

There are mixed findings relative to the role of occupation in the ability to integrate work and family roles. Karasek and Theorell (1990) proposed that increased role strain is more likely to exist when occupations have low levels of control combined with high levels of psychological demand and they suggested managerial roles, for example, may be less stressful for women trying to reconcile work-family conflict than other types of jobs, such as administrative occupations. Other studies, however, suggest women who pursue non-traditional occupations will experience more work-family role conflict (Levinson, 1996; O'Connell, Betz, & Kurth, 1989). O'Connell, Betz, and Kurth (1989) examined and compared the work-involvement plans of women pursuing training in non-traditional occupations with those in traditional occupations. The assumption was that women pursuing non-traditional occupations would be more likely than those pursuing traditional occupations to follow a continuous full-time employment model. The study design was quantitative and used surveys to collect data. The study sample included 173 women students of traditional and non-traditional fields from a single university. The women were of college age and did not have children. The results of the study indicated the percentage of women who planned to pursue full-time work (including during the time period when

their children are in pre-school or younger) was higher for those pursuing non-traditional occupations. However, women in both categories were least likely to want to work full-time when their children are of pre-school age. This finding suggests there is limited support for the explanation that occupation influences work and family plans, when children are very young. Women pursuing non-traditional fields, however, may recognize more challenges balancing work and family and greater penalties for working part-time. As a result, though they are invested in full-time work, they are unsure of what they will do, in terms of their careers, when they have pre-school age children. It is important to note that this is an older study which only examined these women's career intentions, not their actual experiences and decisions. Moreover, non-traditional occupations were only characterized by two fields of study in this sample, engineering and veterinary medicine.

Studies on Career Stage

Career stage may influence the experience of work-family role conflict (Bedian, Burke & Moffett, 1988; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Levinson, 1996; Martins, Eddleston, & Veiga, 2002; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Martins et al. (2002) specifically examined the relationship between work-family conflict and career satisfaction in males and females. The methodology for their study involved 975 male and female participants from 100 firms representing 26 industries. Questionnaires that measured work to family spillover, career satisfaction and advancement, gender, age, marital status, and parental status, were administered to the participants. The findings of the study indicated there were gender differences in how work-family conflict impacted career satisfaction. Specifically, work-family conflict negatively affected women's career satisfaction throughout their lives, whereas this negative relationship between work-family conflict and career satisfaction

was only evident for men during a later career stage (age 40 or over). This study also found that the moderating variable of parental status did not have an impact on the relationship between work-family conflict and career satisfaction. The age of the children, however, was not captured in this study. Age could have presumably moderated this relationship, since the family demands associated with young children are very different than those related to the care of older children.

Studies on Mid-Career Stage

The mid-career stage is commonly viewed as the middle stage of one's career (ages 36-45) and has been characterized by a pragmatic view of one's career (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) as well as a time of career transition (Maineiro & Sullivan, 2005, 2006) and time period during which work and life tradeoffs occur (Auster, 2001). Gordon et al. (2002) examined the nature of the mid-life transition for professional women with children, through the lens of mid-life as a period of restructuring and rebalancing and during which women continually assess the relationship between work and non-work. The study design was qualitative and data collection involved in-depth interviews. The sample included thirty-six mid-career women between the ages of 35 and 50 in various successful professional, managerial and executive positions. All of the participants had at least one school age child, though the age range of the children was not specified. The study findings indicated that many women viewed success in terms of ability to engage in a variety of activities, which contributed to a broad view of success at mid-life. Women changed their frameworks, values and standards (against which they evaluated to what extent their life was balanced) at mid-life. These new frameworks create new roles, behaviors, and mental models, conceptualized as *recalibration*. Recalibration happened

for these women when they became more aware and started to accept the multiple roles in their lives and effectively organize those roles. *Internal calibration*, characterized by changing frameworks and standards for evaluating work-life integration, resulted in a more positive self-concept, a redefinition of success, and a new perspective on time and the pace of life. *External calibration*, in contrast, resulted in changes in actual roles and behaviors, demonstrated by women spending more time with family, changing their work strategies, and changing their personal and social interests and relationships. The study also found the mid-life transition resulted in more work and life satisfaction and decreased stress, though there were competing and conflicting demands. The results of this study support the role enhancement perspective; however, it should be noted the age of the women and age of the children may have a substantial impact on mid-life transition. This study indicated that mid-life women had more time, and time was less fragmented as their children grew older, but this sample was not focused on mothers of pre-school age children. Other limitations of this study include the broad sample that incorporated multiple types of occupations and women with older children who no longer lived in the home.

Schneer and Reitman (1995) examined the careers of men and women on similar career paths who had received MBA degrees, through a longitudinal study, as they moved from early to mid-career, focusing on mid-career outcomes. The study used a quantitative research design. Surveys were given to 676 men and women who received MBA degrees from two large Northeastern Universities in 1987 and then again in 1993. Surveys included questions on career paths and demographic questions. The survey specifically contained questions related to employment status, current income, work hours, work experience, employment gaps, primary job responsibility and career satisfaction. Demographic

information included age, gender, marital status, parental status, and spousal employment status. About 88% of the sample was working full-time in the 1987 survey and approximately 79% of the sample was working full-time during the 1993 survey. About 73% of the sample had children during the time of the 1993 survey. About 92% of the women participating in the study were between the ages of 35 and 55. The results of the study indicated the careers of men and women have different characteristics at the mid-career stage. The women in this sample worked fewer hours than did the men at mid-career and did not reach higher than the upper-middle levels of management. Moreover, the study found that, although women tend to be significantly more satisfied than men with their careers in the early stages, as they progress to the mid-career stage, their satisfaction levels are equal to that of men. The limitations of this study include a lack of information regarding career factors, other than education, and inclusion of women without children.

Carr (2002) examined the psychological effects of the strategies used by different cohorts of women to balance work and family demands. She suggested that attempts to manage these dual roles have negative repercussions on career development, such as reduced opportunities for training, less work experience, and fewer promotional opportunities. She further suggested that strategies women used to manage the demands of work and family, such as exiting the labor force, reducing work hours or changing occupations, often have negative consequences to women's psychological well being. The research design was quantitative and included telephone interviews and questionnaires. The sample included women between the ages of 25 and 65 from the Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS) study (a survey of 3,000 adults, 25 and older in 1995). Information relative to occupation and position was not specified. It also was not indicated

whether or not these women had children. The findings of the study indicated the women's age or life stage may influence the relative importance of work and family roles and perspective on those roles. Women of baby boom generation (born between 1944 and 1959, between the ages of 35- 51 at the time of this study) who adjusted their paid employment in response to family demands (including exiting the workforce) evaluated their work lives as less desirable compared to those who did not make such work sacrifices. This was not the case for those in the baby bust cohort (ages 25-34 at the time of this study). This may be attributed to mid-life women (between the ages of 35-51, as defined by this sample) being at a life and career stage where childrearing responsibilities are decreasing and they are free to pursue self-interests. As a result, work accomplishments may be a particularly strong source of self-esteem for this group. A major limitation of this study is that the sample was very vague and does not provide details regarding the occupations of the women who participated. Different occupations may promote different perceptions of ability to integrate work and family roles. Moreover, women today are starting childbearing during later years, so the age group represented in this sample, between the ages of 35 and 51, may have significant family responsibilities in addition to the work demands required of managerial or professional positions.

O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) examined women's career experiences over the life course, using a qualitative, inductive methodology (grounded theory). The sample of participants included 60 women between the ages of 24 and 60, with a mean age of 42. The sample consisted of both married and single women, as well as women with and without children. Almost 50% of the women were at a mid-level position (20% were at a senior level and 17% were at an entry level position). Participants were randomly selected

from four different populations among various graduate and executive programs from a midwestern university, in addition to another population from a women's leadership group in New York. The sample was split into three age cohorts to reflect early, middle and late career stages. The mid-career stage, determined to encompass the age range between 36 and 45, was developed to align with the age range of the culminating life structure for early adulthood (Levinson, 1996). Within this career cohort, the mean age was 41 and 58% were either married or living with a partner. Only 38% of this cohort sample had children, and the ages of the children were not provided. Data was analyzed according to career patterns, (ordered versus emergent), career locus (internal versus external), career context (organizational, societal, and relational), and career beliefs (based on five questions). The findings showed that career stage 2 (the mid-career stage) was characterized by a focus on pragmatic endurance, as indicated by the tendency to operate in production mode and doing whatever needed to get done. Women in the pragmatic endurance stage also had a high relational context and were managing multiple responsibilities (both professionally as well as personally). Moreover, they had a tendency to apply some of the energy they had previously invested in their careers to other areas of their lives. Finally, many in this career stage of pragmatic endurance defined success as personal happiness and fulfillment, but did not always see their careers as the path to success. Limitations of this study were that it included married and single women and that it involved women with and without children. In fact, 62% percent of those at the mid-career stage did not have children and among those who did, the ages of the children were not specified. Finally, 16% of the sample was self-employed, an element which may have contributed to different results than had the sample been limited to those working in large organizations.

Summary of Studies on Mid-Career Stage

Some older studies suggest that women who pursue non-traditional careers will have more challenges attempting to balance work and family roles than men (Levinson, 1996; O'Connell, Betz, & Kurth, 1989; Weitzman, 1994). Other studies do not (Carr, 2002; Gordon et al., 2002). These findings need to be re-examined within the context of the current economic, cultural and social climate. Moreover, research suggests the mid-career stage may influence work and family role integration (Auster, 2001; Carr, 2002; Gordon, et al., 2002; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Schneer & Reitman, 1995). It must be noted, however, that these studies did not focus on mothers with pre-school age children, and this may have contributed to inconsistent findings and conclusions.

Studies on Women's Career Patterns

Just as women experience more challenges in integrating work and family, research suggests that women's career development patterns and outcomes differ distinctly from men's (Kirchmeyer, 1999; Pazy, 1987; Valcour & Tolbert, 2003) and that at the mid-life stage, women may redesign their careers (Cabrera, 2007; O'Neil et al., 2008; Whitmarsh et al., 2007). Moreover, research has indicated that women's careers follow less of a linear path (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). This section briefly discusses studies and findings related to women's career patterns.

Whitmarsh, Brown, Cooper, Hawkins-Rodgers and Wentworth (2007) examined the career paths of women who were in female-dominated careers (i.e, teachers, social workers, paralegals) versus those in gender-neutral careers (i.e. physicians, attorneys, professors) through a qualitative study. Twenty-seven women with and without children

were included in the study. The goal of the study was to understand the issues that women face from initial career decisions through to their current careers, and how women construct their careers to accommodate family time and responsibilities. The study sample included employed women between the ages of 31 and 76 (the majority of the women were between the ages of 41 and 60) at the maintenance stage of their careers (Super, 1990). All women had worked a minimum of seven years full-time in their current careers. The sample included twenty-seven women; ten in female-dominated positions and seventeen in gender-neutral positions. Participants were sampled from universities, schools, and religious affiliations. The study design was qualitative, and the data collection method was face-to-face interviews. Demographic information was also collected that included marital status, age, presence or absence of children, and number of children. Their findings indicated women in gender neutral careers made personal compromises more frequently than did women in female-dominated careers. Moreover, women in gender neutral careers explored varied career options and did not make a decision until later developmental stages. Furthermore, those women in gender neutral careers had higher levels of career self-efficacy than their female dominated career counterparts. Two patterns of career transition emerged from the study: transition from one career to a different career and changes within a career from one position to another position. The results suggested those women working in female dominated careers experienced more intra-career change (moving from one position to another within the same career), whereas those women working in gender neutral careers experienced more inter-career change (transitioning from one career to another). For both groups, integrating work and family demands was challenging. The study is valuable as it qualitatively explores different career patterns;

however, it does not focus on mothers of young children. Another limitation of this study is that it does not include managers or other corporate professionals. Physicians, attorneys, and professors are unique samples and many physicians are likely to be self-employed.

Valcour and Tolbert (2003) have examined gender differences in intra- and inter-organizational mobility through a quantitative examination. The sample for this study included professional and managerial dual career couples, 967 males and 923 females, from seven organizations representing four different economic sectors. The majority (70%) of the sample were employed in a managerial or professional position. Equal proportions of men and women participated in the study and 87% of the sample had at least one child, though the age range of the children included in this study was not specified. The women who participated in the study were at least 30 years of age. The findings of this study suggest intra- and inter-organizational mobility were both influenced by gender and family characteristics. Specifically, women were more likely to move across employers and men were more likely to make job changes within an employer. Moreover, the number of children was found to enhance women's inter-organizational mobility, but weaken women's intra-organizational mobility. The findings also suggest that, for both men and women, moving between organizations reduced earnings, but did not affect how people felt about their careers, in terms of satisfaction. Conversely, job changes within an organization were linked with an increase in earnings, but had a negative effect on perceived career satisfaction. An important outcome of this study was that women seem to have had more negative outcomes when attempting to follow a traditional career pattern, whereas men had more negative outcomes when trying to follow a more protean career pattern. Moreover, the results of this study demonstrated that women with more children had higher levels of

perceived success in work-family integration, which may have been due to boundaryless career patterns that facilitated work and family integration. While this study revealed some interesting findings relative to differences in male and female career patterns, there are some significant limitations regarding the study sample. The age range of the women was not specified, nor was any information provided regarding career stage or age range of the children. Moreover, this was a very broad sample encompassing employed people from manufacturing sectors, healthcare, higher education and utilities. These various industries can have distinct organizational cultures and work environments, creating unique job characteristics for the individual.

Summary of Studies on Women's Career Patterns

Women experience different career patterns and levels of satisfaction than men, and women's careers generally follow less of a linear path. Moreover, those women who do follow a linear path have more negative experiences than men (Kirchmeyer, 1999; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006; Valcour & Tolbert, 2003). Moreover, women may have a broader framework of career satisfaction (Ashforth, 2001; O'Neil, Bilimoria, & Saatcioglu, 2004).

Studies on Career Choice Lenses

There are two major career choice lenses, the protean framework and the kaleidoscope framework, that may be particularly relevant to understanding women's career patterns. There has been limited research focused on these career lenses, with a particular dearth of research in the United States and exclusive to a sample of women with children. This section summarizes the literature related to these career choice lenses. The

mid-career stage plays a significant role in, and may prompt a movement into either of these career management patterns.

Studies on Protean Careers

Hall (1996) suggested the careers of the 21st century would be protean in nature, which reflects a values-driven and self-directed approach to career management (Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth, 2006). Some research suggested protean careers may be beneficial and practical for women (Cabrera, 2009; Hall & Mirvis, 1995). MacDermid, Lee, Buck, and Williams (2001) examined part-time work arrangements among women professionals and managers in an effort to further understand the career implications of these arrangements. The assumption was that part-time work arrangements may help facilitate work-family integration. The sample for this study included eighty-six part-time female mid-career managers and professionals. Women with and without children participated in the study. The majority of the interviewees were married with young children (the average age of the youngest child was 4.8 years), though the age range of the children was not specified. The average number of hours worked was 32. This study used a qualitative research design, which included face-to-face semi-structured interviews with each woman and her spouse, manager, peer and human resources representative. Also, women completed a quantitative survey evaluating their manager's effectiveness.

The results of the MacDermid et al. (2001) study suggested that the reduced work load arrangements of the women in this study were perceived to be successful. The findings also suggested most of the managers and professionals were happy with their arrangements, liked their jobs, and viewed the quality of their performance to be sustained or improved. Moreover, most were satisfied with the career implications of these

arrangements. Those who were not as content had more traditional, hierarchical, frameworks of career success. Those more content focused on their personal development and quality of their work and relationships with co-workers.

MacDermid et al. (2001), however, indicated some factors that distinguished between those who viewed their arrangements to be less successful. Factors associated with perceptions of low success included dissatisfaction with the work, the inability to maintain boundaries around the work, negative perceptions among co-workers, and supportive bosses and corporate cultures. The most significant difference between those who viewed their arrangements as successful and those who did not was related to their personal definitions of career success. Those women in the high net benefit group expressed greater contentment with their tradeoffs and looked at success in broader terms, including the success of their children and overall lives. Moreover, this group of women focused more on the content and process of their jobs, emphasizing learning, personal development, relationships, and enjoyment of the work.

These high net benefit qualities of continuous learning and development that MacDermid et al. (2001) reported are consistent with the protean career framework, as they are internally oriented and personal. In contrast, those women in the low net benefit group were more focused on a traditional model of career success, emphasizing promotions, raises, and job titles. Both groups of women, however, were concerned with career development opportunities. This study is insightful in that it examines outcomes of the traditional versus protean career frameworks, and it also looks at implications for feelings of career success. Research, however, was only focused on part-time workers and

included women without children (though the majority of the sample did have young children).

Valcour and Ladge (2008) examined the relationship between various family and career path characteristics and women's perceptions of career success. The survey sample included 916 employed mothers. The average age of the women was 46 and average age at first birth was 27. The age range of the women, however, was not provided. Fifty-seven percent of the study respondents were employed in professional or managerial occupations and the remaining were employed in administrative, sales, or services positions. The results of the study found the integration of protean and traditional career patterns was related to women's career success. In addition, years since first birth were found to be positively related to subjective career success, suggesting women may be able to engage more in their work as their children get older. Consistent with the protean framework, women can renew, or recreate, their careers during a later career stage. Limitations of this study include lack of information on the age range of the mothers and the children as well as inclusion of different types of occupations.

Cabrera (2009) examined women's career patterns and implications for female retention for organizations through a qualitative study using in depth interviews. She randomly selected 25 participants who voluntarily left the workforce at some time in their career and had since returned to some type of work. The average time out of the workforce was four years. The interviews were open-ended and semi-structured. They consisted of questions related to their career trajectories and included questions about the jobs they had before they left the workforce, why they left, how long they were out of the workforce, the jobs they eventually returned to, and the reasons for returning to these jobs. The age range

of the participants was between 34 and 57 years old. The sample included single women as well as women without children. The ages of the children were not specified. All of the women had previously worked in corporate organizations and had degrees in International Business (they were originally part of a larger study of women graduates from a top-ranked international business school). One of the major findings of the study was that the majority of the women used a protean career orientation when they returned to the workforce after having been out. Most of the women found part-time positions or reduced their work-hours. Consistent with the protean orientation, the women were self-directed in managing their careers and their career decisions were based on their personal values (aligned with their life circumstances). Moreover, they were willing to trade their former careers that allowed them to achieve objective career success (promotion and advancement) for their new careers that enabled them to achieve subjective career success (fulfillment of personal values). A major limitation of this study is that it only focused on women who had re-entered the workforce after being out (an average of 4 years); therefore, by nature of their decision to opt out of the workforce temporarily, they were already engaging in protean careers. There were also limitations related to the sample, which included women without children and single women, and no information was provided regarding the ages of the children (among those who had them).

Studies on Kaleidoscope Careers

According to the kaleidoscope career model (KCM) (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006), there are three factors that influence career decisions: authenticity, balance, and challenge. Authenticity refers to being true to one's values. Balance refers to wanting to successfully integrate one's work and non-work lives. Challenge refers to the desire to experience

career advancement (Cabrera, 2007; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). These three factors may influence women's career patterns, feelings of satisfaction and choices at different career stages.

Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) explored how gender differences influence how careers are enacted. The study qualitatively examined two major career patterns based on the KCM parameters of authenticity, balance, and challenge over the lifespan. The methodology involved a series of in-depth interviews with 52 men and women in various career stages, as well as an online focus group of 27 individuals participating in discussions about their careers. The sample of those who participated in the interviews included 12 men and 40 women in a variety of professional occupations. The age range of the participants was 35 to 70 years. Participants were identified through a variety of resources, including the snowball sampling technique. Interviews involved structured as well as unstructured components. The sample of those who participated in the online focus group was comprised of four women and 23 men between the ages of 25 and 59. This discussion was highly structured. The findings of the study indicated two major career patterns with specific gender differences. An *alpha career pattern* was demonstrated by participants who were very focused on their careers and a *beta career pattern* was shown by participants who made career adjustments to accommodate a balanced family or non-work aspect of their lives. Men tended to follow the alpha career pattern, characterized by a linear pattern of a focus on challenge first, followed by authenticity (emphasizing self), and finally, balance and relationships. Thus, for males, relationships became most important after progress and advancement in their careers occurred. In contrast, women were more likely to follow a beta career pattern, which was characterized by a focus on

challenge first, then balance (which coincided with the time opportunities for advancement became available), and finally authenticity. Thus, gender differences were shown to be significantly evident at mid-career, with men continuing to cultivate their careers and their own needs, while women were making adjustments and compromises to integrate their relationships with careers. While there was significant support for the alpha career pattern for men and likewise the beta career pattern for women, there were a limited number of women pursuing more traditional careers (the alpha pattern), as well as a small number of men engaged in non-linear patterns (beta pattern).

This study is significant, timely and relevant to the area of women's career patterns using the KCM, as it indicates distinct gender differences in the contemporary career contexts of the 21st century. Limitations, however, include a lack of demographic data relative to marital status, presence or absence of children in the household, and ages of the children (which could presumably influence career patterns).

Cabrera (2007) examined patterns of women's career transitions; specifically, reasons why women leave the workplace and how their career motives change over time. This was one of the first empirical studies of the KCM. This quantitative survey sample consisted of 497 women from a top-ranked international business school at various career stages, with about half at the mid-career stage. Two hundred and thirty two of the 497 women (about 47%) had stopped working at some point in their careers. The age range of the women was 26-85 years, with about 46% percent between the ages of 36-45 (which is consistent with the mid-career stage). It was not indicated if these women were mothers, and if so, the age ranges of the children were not provided. The findings of this study provided support both for the three parameters of the KCM (challenge, balance, and

authenticity) and for the KCM beta career pattern women tend to follow. The results demonstrated that many of the women had shifted their focus over time and at the mid-career stage, career focus shifted toward balance. Thus, these findings support the KCM proposition that women start their careers with a focus on challenge and then move toward a focus on balance. A major implication of this study is that organizational structures and cultures are not yet fully supportive of women who attempt to integrate work and family life domains, though findings should be interpreted with caution due to the relatively low survey response rate (25%). A major limitation of Cabrera's (2007) study is that almost 50% of the women in the sample had left the workforce at some point during their careers (though 70% of them had since returned to the workforce). Moreover, this study did not focus exclusively on mothers, and the specific positions of these women were not indicated.

In a follow up study using participants from the same business school, Cabrera (2009) examined women's career patterns and implications for female retention for organizations through a qualitative study using in depth interviews. She randomly selected 25 participants who voluntarily left the workforce at some time in their career and had since returned to some type of work. The average time out of the workforce was four years. The interviews were open-ended and semi-structured. They consisted of questions related to their career trajectories and included questions about the jobs they had before they left the workforce, why they left, how long they were out of the workforce, the jobs to which they eventually returned, and the reasons for returning to these jobs. The age range of the participants was between 34 and 57 years old. The sample included single women as well as women without children. The ages of the children were not specified. As mentioned,

all of the women had previously worked in corporate organizations and had degrees in International Business. One of the major findings of the study (relative to the KCM theory) was that the most of the women had changed their career orientation to obtain more balance between work and non-work aspects of their lives. Since most of the women (according to the age range of the sample) were at the mid-career stage, this finding supported the KCM parameter of balance being most important during the mid-career stage. A major limitation of this study is that it only focused on women who had re-entered the workforce after being out (an average of four years). Moreover, there are also limitations related to the sample. The limitations are that the sample included women without children and single women, and no information was provided regarding the ages of the children (among those who had them). The current study fills this gap by focusing on mid-career mothers of young children.

Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, and Mainiero (2009) examined generational differences in careers using the KCM, specifically the career needs of Baby Boomers and members of Generation X. The goal of the study was to identify differences in career parameter patterns (authenticity, balance, challenge) among these two generations that currently dominate the workforce. Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964, while those in Generation X were born between 1965 and 1983. The methodology involved a web-based survey. The sample included 982 participants (51% were Baby Boomers and 49% were members of Generation X) between the ages of 25 and 70. Fifty-two percent of the sample consisted of women and 48% were men. Participants worked in a wide range of industries and positions. The sample included single and married participants and those with and without children. The results of the study found that members of the Generation X cohort

had a significantly higher desire both for authenticity and balance, compared to Baby Boomers. No significant generation differences, however, were found regarding the KCM parameter of challenge. Though this particular study did not examine KCM patterns over the span of one's career, this study has important implications for the increasing members of Generation X in the workplace and their needs for balance and authenticity. The results of the study also suggest that challenging work is important to both generations in the workplace.

Overall Summary of Studies on Women's Career Choice Lenses

Protean careers and kaleidoscope careers are career choice lenses, or metaphors, that have been used to examine women's career patterns, attitudes, and behaviors. Many of the studies of these non-traditional, non-linear career frameworks have provided insightful contributions to understanding the link between women's career choices and work-family integration, however, the literature is sparse and the samples of these studies are relatively broad. This is consistent with the suggestion that there is a dearth of research focused exclusively on women's contemporary career patterns (Pringle & Mallon, 2003). Additionally, career stage, marital status, parental status and age of children have not been captured in all of the studies thus far reviewed. As presented in this paper, there is clearly a need to delineate how these factors contribute to mid-career women's career choices and work-family integration. Many of the studies presented in the literature review have used a quantitative research design. As a result, there is a lack of qualitative research in the area of work-family integration and career choices. More research projects are needed which allow women to be able to voice their own experiences through their own subjective, socially-constructed knowledge, instead of responding to researchers' objectively based

assumptions of their experiences. The current research is an in-depth study which fills that gap by focusing on qualitatively understanding the experience of work-family role integration among managerial and professional women at the mid-career stage who have young children. It also examines the role of women's career choices (including patterns and attributes) in integrating work and family roles. Chapter 4 discusses the research design of this study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this research is to examine the experience of work-family integration among managerial and professional women at the mid-career stage, who (a) work in organizations and (b) have young children (under the age of six). The goal is to understand how these women, whose jobs are characterized by significant work demands and pressure, manage the dual roles of mother and working professional. This study examined the interrelationship between work-family role integration and career choices for this specific cohort of women. This chapter discusses the research design of this study.

This study used a qualitative research design. According to Creswell (1998), there are several factors involved in determining the appropriate research methodology and design. The first factor is the nature of the research question. Qualitative research studies ask "how" or "what" questions (Creswell, 1998, p. 17). In addition, a qualitative study is used to understand and explore a topic in depth instead of explaining relationships between variables. Finally, in qualitative research, the researcher is focused on understanding a topic from the participant's point of view. Since the purpose of this research was to explore and understand the lived experience of work-family integration, the study met the criteria for a qualitative research design.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest four distinct paradigms are defined according to different assumptions regarding ontology, epistemology, human nature, and methodology. The four paradigms are based on two dimensions. The first dimension is characterized by an emphasis on objective versus subjective views. The second dimension is characterized

by an emphasis on order versus conflict regarding the nature of society. The four distinct paradigms that emerged based on these two dimensions are (a) the *Functionalist Paradigm*, (b) the *Interpretive Paradigm*, (c) the *Radical Humanist Paradigm*, and (d) the *Radical Structuralist Paradigm***.** The unique perspectives associated with each paradigm provide a specific reference through which the social world is viewed. Seeing the world through a particular paradigm refers to viewing the world in a particular way (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The four paradigms thus define four views of the social world which are rooted in distinct meta-theoretical assumptions relative to the nature of science and the world (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

This study is grounded in the interpretive paradigm, which has a subjectivist view of social reality and is focused on regulation and order. Research in the interpretive paradigm is usually naturalistic and descriptive in nature, and it views knowledge as socially constructed. The interpretive paradigm seeks to understand the nature of the world as it is through the perspective of subjective experience (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Moreover, the interpretive paradigm is focused on understanding individual consciousness and subjective knowledge through the viewpoint of the participants. The nature of this research, which is to understand the lived experience of work-family integration, is subjective and constructed by the participants. This study is rooted in the ontological assumption that knowledge is subjective and the epistemological assumption that knowledge is that which is directly experienced. These ontological and epistemological assumptions are consistent with the purpose of this study, which was to understand the work and family integration experience of working mothers.

This study used a phenomenological methodology. The phenomenological methodology was appropriate for this study because it describes the meaning of the lived experiences about a shared concept (Creswell, 1998). The philosophical underpinnings of phenomenological research started with Edmund Husserl. Phenomenological research is rooted in the concept of transcendental phenomenology, which is phenomenology of the world outside of the ego. Husserl was focused on understanding meanings and essences in knowledge. Moustakas (1994), building upon Husserls' concepts, made the following statement regarding phenomenological research:

> The challenge facing the human science researcher is to describe things in themselves, to permit what is before one to enter consciousness and to be understood in its meanings and essences in the light of intuition and self-reflection (p. 27).

The current study is aimed at understanding the participants' conscious awareness (and meaning), through reflection, of the lived experience of the phenomenon of work and family role integration.

This study uses the *Empirical Psychological Phenomenological Research Method* (EPPRM). With the EPPRM, the objective is to examine what an experience means for the participant, through each respondent providing a comprehensive description of it. Then, general meanings are derived through these descriptions, which characterize the essences, or structures, of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The EPPRM is appropriate for this study because it explores the essence of the essential structure of an individual-level experience.

Karlsson (1993) discussed several characteristics of the EPPRM of phenomenological research. He noted the EPPRM is qualitative and descriptive, focuses on a search for meaning, focuses on being as open as possible to the text, emphasizes an inside perspective, is hermeneutical in nature, is concerned with life world experiences, and finally, is focused on consciousness as intentionality, which refers to the participant determining the meaning of her world (Karlsson, 1993). The goal of the EPPRM is to describe the meaning structure of a psychological phenomenon. Hence, descriptive results are produced, which show the relationship between the subject and the object of experience through retrospective descriptions of the experiences of the phenomenon.

The EPPRM can be viewed as a modified Husserlian perspective (Karlsson, 1993); however, when analyzing data it is more concerned with actualities than possibilities. Furthermore, when using the EPPRM, the researcher must engage in a partial phenomenological reduction, which involves a bracketing of theories and hypotheses that could be used to explain the phenomenon. The researcher also brackets the *subject's* attitude regarding the described world (Karlsson, 1993). Furthermore, researchers using the EPPRM do not use hypotheses or models to explain phenomena. Instead, the EPPRM uses an *eidetic induction* through *interpretation* (Karlsson, 1993), which means individual particularities are transformed into essential structures. The EPPRM fits this study because the experience of work-family role integration is a life world experience that is descriptive, individual, and deeply personal. Though examined through the unique viewpoint of each participant, general meaning is derived from this shared experience, contributing to a general, universal, meaning of the experience.

Research Questions

There are three broad research questions for this study.

1. How do women describe and perceive the interrelationship between work-family role integration and their subsequent career choices?
2. How do women describe the experience of work-family role integration and their career choices?
3. What is the essential structure of women's descriptions of their experience in integrating work-family roles and career choices?

Role of the Researcher

The relationship between the researcher and the participants involved in the study is an important component of the phenomenological research design. For the current study, since the researcher has experienced the phenomenon being studied, and in order to avoid bias, the researcher engaged in *epoche,* which means to refrain from perceiving and judging the experiences based on what the researcher has personally experienced (Moustakas, 1994). This is achieved through bracketing and suspending our own attitudes and feelings about the phenomenon in question and looking at data in a fresh and open way (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas states that the process of epoche is rarely achieved perfectly; however, with substantial determination and awareness, one can let go of preconceived ideas and attitudes and be open to new knowledge and truth (Moustakas, 1994).

The researcher's personal experience in integrating work and family roles has been very challenging, heavily influenced by some unique personal and health related circumstances, coupled with the additional role of student in a doctoral program. As a result, the personal bias of the researcher is that each additional role undertaken is directly

related to the experience of more role strain and less success in integrating, or balancing, the roles. However, as noted, the researcher has the rather unique challenge of a third major role of being a student. This has had negative implications on the ability to balance work roles (student and professional) and family roles successfully.

Research Procedures

Site and Participant Selection

A criterion sampling technique was used for this study. Eleven in-depth interviews were conducted with women who met the criteria for participation in this study, resulting in saturation. The participant selection criteria for this study were as follows:

1. The participant must have recently (within three years) given birth to, or adopted, a first child and the child must be under the age of six years.
2. The participant must be employed by an organization in a managerial or professional position.
3. The participant must be between 36 and 45 years of age.
4. The participant must be married.

An additional criterion was that the participant be willing to engage in an interview and allow the researcher to audio-tape the interview.

The snowball sampling technique (Patton, 1990) was used for this study. The technique involves the identification of individuals who meet the research criteria through personal acquaintances and referrals by study participants. Ten of the participants worked and resided in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area and one lived and worked in New York City. The research site was at a quiet off-site location of each participant's choosing.

The setting was free of distractions so the individuals were comfortable in openly expressing their experiences.

Data Collection

The data collection method for this study consisted of in-depth interviews. The study included two interviews for each participant, using a modified Seidman technique (Seidman,1998). Seidman's original technique consists of three interviews: The first interview is focused on the context of the participant's experience, the second interview is for the purpose of allowing the participant to reconstruct the details of the experience, and the third interview is focused on the participant's views of the meaning of the experience. For the purposes of this study, the first two interviews were combined into one interview. The first interview was face-to-face, approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length and focused on the context and details of the experience. A short follow-up interview was then conducted with each participant, over the phone, approximately one to two weeks after the initial interview. The purpose of this follow-up interview was to allow the participants to reflect on the meaning of the experience.

Before the interview, each participant was given an Informed Consent Form, and Institutional Review Board approval was obtained before any data collection. Interviews were tape recorded (with the participants' permission) and notes were captured during the interview. Demographic information including current age, marital status, age the participant had her first child, ages and number of children, as well as information pertaining to occupation and career, were noted to ensure the participant indeed met the criteria for the study. After each interview was completed, it was transcribed by a professional transcriber. Finally, member checking occurred by providing study

participants with their transcripts after data was transcribed, for the purpose of validation. Transcripts were sent to the participants within one week of receiving them from the transcriber. All of the participants responded and most (with the exception of one) confirmed the accuracy of their transcripts. One individual made some minor edits.

A pilot study was conducted with one individual who met the study criteria before proceeding with data collection. The purpose of the pilot study was to obtain feedback on the interview protocol, ensure the correct questions were being asked to address the research problem, and to determine if adequate responses to the questions could be achieved. The pilot participant met the participant selection criteria (outlined in the previous section) and was identified within the researcher's professional network.

Data Verification Procedures

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness relates to how well the researcher can convince audiences that the findings of the study are worthy of attention. Lincoln and Guba suggested that, within the naturalistic paradigm, the criteria appropriate for establishing trustworthiness are truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. Lincoln and Guba proposed four trustworthiness criteria that can be operationalized: (a) Credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability and (d) confirmability. Credibility refers to the probability that credible findings and interpretations will be produced by verifying from more than one source. Transferability refers to the probability the researcher will provide sufficient descriptive data for the reader to determine whether findings may be transferable. Dependability is the qualitative term for what is known as reliability and has to do with consistency in data collection and analysis. Confirmability has to do with integrity of data analysis.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested four techniques for establishing credibility in qualitative research:

1. prolonged engagement
2. persistent observation
3. triangulation
4. peer debriefing

For this study, the techniques of triangulation and peer debriefing were used to establish credibility. Member checking was also used to achieve credibility.

In this study, the sources method of triangulation was used by audio-taping the interview and taking detailed notes during the interview. The sources approach to triangulation suggests that different sources of the same information be used to verify data that has been collected. An additional method of achieving triangulation included the development of a matrix table, which illustrated which interviews were saying the same thing.

Member checking refers to validating the accuracy of the interview transcripts through verifying that data categories, interpretations, and conclusions are from those who participated in the interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking was achieved by providing participants copies of their transcribed data, to allow for any modifications that may have been necessary.

Transferability

For this study, the technique of creating a thick description of the data was used to help enable transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A thick description is a description

that must indicate everything a reviewer may need to know to understand the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This also includes information about the context of the research so that others interested can completely understand it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested a technique known as the *inquiry audit* to achieve dependability. For this technique, the role of the peer reviewer is to examine the entire product, which includes the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations, and confirm it is supported by data and internally coherent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The peer reviewer also ensures the process involving data collection and data analysis is consistently and methodically adhered to. This study followed a process very similar to the inquiry audit (to achieve dependability) though a formal peer review was not used. After the first interview was transcribed and coded by the researcher, it was sent to the reviewer's dissertation advisor along with structural, textural, and textural-structural descriptions--for review and scrutiny. Some minor changes were made to code names as well as to the content and structure of the descriptions. Then, the revised descriptions were sent to another member of the dissertation committee for review, and no further changes were requested. Member checks (as previously discussed) were also used for the purpose of dependability.

Confirmability

Confirmability is important to reduce researcher bias. This was achieved by engaging in an audit trail, which is a detailed record of the study's methods and procedures (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This was similar to the process component of the inquiry audit

discussed above. Triangulation of data (as discussed previously) was also used to establish confirmability.

Data Analysis

According to Karlsson (1993), with the EPPRM, data must be in the form that enables the researcher to go back to the material so that it is analyzable. Moreover, the researcher's cultural and linguistic understanding is the pre-requisite for understanding the subjects' experiences. Finally, with the EPPRM, the researcher must understand the relationship "between the whole and the parts" (Karlsson, 1993, p. 85).

There are two different modes of understanding in the analysis of text using the EPPRM: (a) the researcher's *empathetic* understanding (REU) and (b) the researcher's *interpretive* understanding (RIU) (Karlsson, 1993). The researcher's empathetic understanding involves attempts by the researcher to understand the subject's experience through the text by focusing on the concrete situation as it is described. The researcher's interpretive understanding refers to the researcher's attempt to understand the meaning structure of the text.

Data was analyzed according to the modified Van Kaam method of analysis (Moustakas, 1994). This method is consistent with the EPPRM, as it focuses on individual particularities through essential meaning units and textural and structural descriptions for each participant. It also focuses on essential structures through composite textural-structural descriptions. The steps of this analysis method are outlined below:

1. Listing and Preliminary Grouping
2. Reduction and Elimination
3. Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents

4. Final Identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application: Validation
5. Using the relevant, validated, invariant constituents and themes, construct for each co-researcher an *Individual Textural Description* of the experience. Include verbatim examples from the transcribed interview.
6. Construct for each co-researcher an *Individual Structural Description* of the experience based on the Individual Textural Description and Imaginative Variation.
7. Construct for each research participant a *Textural-Structural Description* of the meanings and essences of the experience, incorporating the invariant constituents and themes.
8. From the Individual Textural Structural Descriptions, develop a *Composite Description* of the meaning and essences of the experience, representing the group as a whole.

After each interview was transcribed, the researcher reviewed the transcript and attached notes from the follow-up interview. After all interviews were completed and transcribed, the researcher coded the transcribed data using Atlas T.I. software. Atlas was used to produce a list of 42 initial codes, which were then reduced and grouped into 29 broader categories of codes, which were then further reduced (throughout the coding process) into 23 categories and finally collapsed into seven themes. Coded text was exported into Microsoft Word for the development of textural, structural, and textural-structural descriptions for each participant (directly after each interview was coded). Finally, a composite textural-structural description was created after all of the eleven textural, structural, and textural-structural descriptions for each participant were

completed. The composite textural-structural description incorporated data from the seven broad themes to represent the experience the group as a whole.

Ethical Considerations

This project presented minimal risk to participants. The interviewees were assured of confidentiality and interviews were only recorded with the written consent of the participants. All identifiable information about the interview and corporation was deleted and all names of individuals and organizations were given pseudonyms. A list of participant names was kept separate from the interview transcripts and the list and transcripts were in separate locations. IRB approval was obtained before data collection. Upon IRB approval, a pilot study was conducted.

Contributions and Benefits of the Study

The significance of this research was to better understand how heterosexual, married mothers of young children integrate multiple roles at the mid-career stage and the implications for career choices. Research in this area may be useful to the following groups and individuals:

- Dual career families with young children.
- Female breadwinners who also shoulder much of the family and home responsibilities.
- Women who choose to work for reasons related to psychological well being and self-esteem.
- Organizations that must focus on the attraction and retention of key talent in a competitive labor market.

Chapters 5 and 6 will present and discuss the results of the study.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS: INDIVIDUAL DESCRIPTIONS

Overview

The purpose of this research is to examine the experience of work-family integration among managerial and professional women at the mid-career stage, who work in organizations and have young children (under the age of six). The goal is to understand how these women, whose jobs are characterized by significant work demands and pressure, manage the dual roles of mother and working professional. There are three broad research questions for this study.

1. How do women describe and perceive the interrelationship between work-family role integration and their subsequent career choices?
2. How do women describe the experience of work-family role integration and their career choices?
3. What is the essential structure of women's descriptions of their experience in integrating work and family roles and career choices?

Data from this study was analyzed according to the Empirical Psychological Phenomenological Research Method (EPPRM). With the EPPRM, the objective is to examine what an experience means for the participant, through each respondent providing a comprehensive description of it. Then, general meanings are derived through these descriptions, which characterize the essences, or structures, of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The EPPRM is appropriate for this study because it explores the essence of the essential structure of an individual level experience and because the experience of work-

family role integration is a life world experience that is descriptive, individual, and deeply personal.

The study results are presented in two chapters: Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. Chapter 5 presents the demographic introduction, textural, structural, and textural-structural description and horizonalization table for each of the eleven participants. For each participant, demographic information was first collected which included current age, marital status, occupation, years of work experience, job title, ages of children, and age the participant had her first child. Following the demographic introductions, textural and structural descriptions were created for each participant and were then combined to create textural-structural descriptions which focused on individual particularities through essential meaning units. Finally, a horizonalization table was presented for each participant, which included statements taken verbatim from the interview transcripts. The table illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes/themes and theoretical construct(s) (as presented in chapter 2).

Finally, using the individual textural-structural descriptions, a composite textural-structural description was created which focused on the essential structure of the experience, representing the group as a whole. The composite textural-structural description, which includes the basic themes of each individual textural-structural description, is presented and discussed in Chapter 6.

Consistent with the modified Van Kaam method of analysis (Moustakas, 1994), the individual textural descriptions include verbatim examples from each transcribed interview. The structural descriptions use the textural descriptions and *imaginative variation* to create a description of the meaning structure of the experience for each

individual. Finally, for each participant, the textural-structural descriptions combined the textural descriptions with the meanings and essences of the experience.

Demographic information was also collected for each participant and is summarized in the table below:

Table 5-1: Participant Demographics

Participant Number and Name	Age	Marital Status	Occupation	Years of Work Experience	Job Title	Age of Child /Children	Age Participant had First Child
P1: Alexandra	36	M	Digital Media/TV	12	Executive Producer	3 months	36
P2: Bethany	36	M	Finance	13	Capital Management Director	2.5 years	34
P3: Calista	39	M	Human Resources	15	Organization Development Manager	5 months	38
P4: Donna	38	M	Human Resources	11	Human Resources Business Leader	4.5 months	37
P5: Emily	37	M	Law	15	VP, Deputy General Counsel	2 years, 10 months; 16 months	34
P6: Fran	38	M	Technology Management	15	Information Officer	5 months	38
P7: Gina	35 (almost 36)	M	Business/Health Care Administration	12	Director of Emergency Medicine Operations	10 months	34
P8: Helen	36	M	Federal Civil Service	12	Foreign Service Officer	3.5 years; 3 months	33
P9: Isabelle	37	M	Government/ Foreign Affairs	13	Foreign Affairs Officer	9 months	37
P10: Jenna	38	M	Federal Civil Service	16	Foreign Service Officer	3 years; 16 months	35
P11: Kolleen	37	M	Higher Education Administration	13	Director, Student Activities and Programs	3.5 years; 1.5 years	33

Note. P = participant

Individual Textural, Structural, and Textural-Structural Descriptions

Participant 1: "Alexandra"

Alexandra is a 36 year-old married mother of a 3 month old child. She is an Executive Producer in the field of Digital Media with 12 years of work experience. She was 36 years old when she had her first child.

Textural description: Alexandra.

The first feelings I had were highly mixed emotions because I was excited to get back to feeling like an adult and interacting with the rest of the world. I think being home felt really isolating, but it was sad at the same time too - to be leaving my daughter. A lot of times I'll look at her and I'll just think it seems so cruel to put something so tiny and helpless in daycare, but you know at the same time I think, well how much maternity leave, like in an ideal world, do you want? Do you want six months, do you want a year? And the answer is kind of like - not really. Maybe next time I would want to see if there's a way to kind of extend my maternity leave a little bit just to make sure that the baby has a little bit of a chance to get a little sturdier before putting her in a strangers hands.

But in terms of integrating the roles, work seems a lot less important to me now than it used to. It's almost impossible to really feel like I'm fully committed and back at work while I'm still up at all hours every night. If my daughter needed me, I would always just sort of opt for my daughter instead, so I think I definitely shifted my priorities a lot. I don't want to miss her milestones and it makes me sad to think that I'm going to miss some of that while she's being taken care of by other people so, yes, that's definitely the hardest part. I'm getting the work done, but I'm definitely not like volunteering for extra assignments, I'm not going out of the way to take more on.

When I'm just with her all day it's more emotionally rewarding, but I don't feel like I'm accomplishing anything, I don't feel like I have anything to show for it. I just feel like I accomplish a lot more with her in day care. It feels like work is almost like an easier task to accomplish than mothering. My husband and I both basically have expanded home responsibilities and now there's a lot less time to kind of lie around and watch movies or do nothing. There's a lot less down time in general. That's I think why I'm not trying to kill myself here at work and because my priorities have shifted, I'm really not trying to take on too much. I'm tired. I feel like I'm definitely doing more at home than I was before.

I just don't know how easy it's going to be to keep sort of striving and wanting promotions. Can you keep getting salary increases without always like looking for promotions? So I don't feel as inclined to, at this stage while I have a young kid or young kids, to really push myself in the career. I mean, God forbid I take on a new role and the hours just become so long and then I'm working 24 hours a day. I think I would just be overextending myself if I were to really push for a higher level at this point. It's definitely put me in kind of a holding pattern when it comes to looking at trying to advance my

career and to really push ahead. I am definitely going to kind of stick where I am until I sort of get through this season of my life.

And now I'm definitely going to try to leave at closer to 4:00 every day because her bedtime is at like 6:00 and my commute is an hour, so I need to get home in time to feed her and give her a bath and get her in bed. My work agreed that I could leave the office early and then I'm going to actually work later at night. So I've kind of had to break up my workday into a day shift and then a night shift after she goes to bed. Work hours and family hours are pretty blended for me. To be fair to both, I always have to be on the Blackberry, always have to be checking email, always have to be sort of making sure I'm not missing anything at work. I don't want to really obviously short change one or the other, so it's turned my hours into this sort of mishmash of work and family all the time, which is fine. It feels more comfortable for me to sort of move seamlessly between them. I feel secure and like I'm on top of work even though maybe I didn't put in a full day during work hours. I'm still getting things done at any time of day or any day of the week, so I think it works for me. It just makes me feel like my bases are covered and I feel a lot calmer that way.

I had the idea of starting my own sort of side media business, which I still will do, but I think I used to really entertain the idea of staying home and doing that venture so that I could be home with the kids. But you can't really do both by yourself. There would be no way to quit an office job and stay home with the kids and do a business. So I decided that the thing I will do is to keep working a career job and then have the website be more of a hobby and keep the kids at daycare because it's the only way I can sort of have it all. It brings to mind this larger notion, the idea of moms wanting to 'have it all' and knowing now that it's not a realistic goal. I think it's just easier to stick with a well paying job where I can still afford childcare. My work has been very accommodating, which makes the integration aspect easier. In the future, I am going to pursue opportunities that will allow for telecommuting or find something that would allow me to only come to an office a couple days a week and work from home the other days, or possibly have a flexible schedule where I'm coming in later and leaving earlier.

I think that I feel really lucky to be able to do both and that I don't think I'd be suited to be a stay-at-home mom and it's not something that I really would want for myself. I enjoy working. I enjoy getting out of the house. I enjoy seeing other people. It allows me to keep my own identity as opposed to just becoming somebody's mom.

Structural description: Alexandra. Alexandra has feelings of strain-based work-family role conflict about returning to work after the completion of her maternity leave. She is excited to enter into a more stimulating environment involving interaction with other adults, yet sad and ambivalent about leaving her daughter in another person's hands. She feels guilty about this, yet she is aware of the reality she needs, and desires, to return

to work. She yearns to reconcile these conflicting feelings, suggesting that next time, she may want to extend the maternity leave a bit longer. She feels this would provide some balance and may help to ease the guilt a bit.

Though Alexandra enjoys work, she feels it is less important to her now than it was before she had her child and she now views her daughter to be her top priority, contributing to feelings of family role salience. She feels satisfaction and ease from her work and enjoys being productive, resulting in a feeling of role enhancement. At the same time, however, she sets boundaries around how much work she will take on in order to achieve balance, being fully aware of the time and energy demands of the mother role. In order to manage the demands of both of these primary roles, Alexandra engages in multi-role structuring.

Alexandra wonders about the implications of these boundaries on her career advancement, realizing to progress often means more work and longer hours and more time away from her family. A value of relationalism facilitates the conscious decision to not advance her career at this present time in order to achieve balance and to avoid an adverse impact on her family. She structures her daily schedule to accommodate the needs of her family. However she feels she needs to compensate for this arrangement by working later at night and staying available even when not at work, thus lowering the boundary separation, when needed. She finds comfort in low boundary separation and this helps ease the guilt about needing to leave work early.

Alexandra thinks about another career option, self-employment, and wonders if the protean path may help in achieving balance and integrating work and family more optimally. She seems to desire this protean career path, but considers that the start-up

costs of such a venture would not allow her to afford childcare. Moreover, she becomes aware of the need for full-time childcare, and some degree of high boundary separation, to allow her to focus on work and have a feeling of balance between work and family and a feeling of role enhancement. From a pragmatic perspective, Alexandra feels fortunate to have a good job that is lucrative and flexible; however, she considers future career choices with more protean characteristics. She has become aware her work role also satisfies her needs for social interaction and a sense of professional identity, also contributing to role enhancement.

Textural-structural description of Alexandra's experience of integrating work and family roles. Alexandra has feelings of work-family role conflict about returning to work after the completion of her maternity leave. She is excited to enter into a more stimulating environment involving interaction with other adults, yet sad and ambivalent about leaving her daughter in another person's hands.

> The first feelings I had were highly mixed emotions because I was excited to get back to feeling like an adult and interacting with the rest of the world. I think being home felt really isolating, but it was sad at the same time too - to be leaving my daughter.

She feels guilty about this, yet she is aware of the reality that she needs, and desires, to return to work.

> A lot of times I'll look at her and I'll just think it seems so cruel to put something so tiny and helpless in daycare, but you know at the same time I think, well how much maternity leave, like in an ideal world, do you want? Do you want six months, do you want a year? And the answer is kind of like - not really.

She yearns to reconcile these conflicting feelings, suggesting that next time, she may want to extend the maternity leave a bit longer. She feels this would provide some balance and may help to ease the guilt a bit.

> Maybe next time I would want to see if there's a way to kind of extend my maternity leave a little bit just to make sure that the baby has a little bit of a chance to get a little sturdier before putting her in a strangers hands.

Though Alexandra enjoys work, she believes it is less important to her now than it was before she had her child and she now views her daughter to be her top priority contributing to feelings of family role salience.

> But in terms of integrating the roles, work seems a lot less important to me now than it used to. It's almost impossible to really feel like I'm fully committed and back at work while I'm still up at all hours every night. If my daughter needed me, I would always just sort of opt for my daughter instead, so I think I definitely shifted my priorities a lot. I don't want to miss her milestones and it makes me sad to think that I'm going to miss some of that while she's being taken care of by other people so, yes, that's definitely the hardest part. I'm getting the work done, but I'm definitely not like volunteering for extra assignments, I'm not going out of the way to take more on.

Alexandra is very emotionally connected to her role as a mother; however, she also feels satisfaction and ease from her work role. These feelings further intensify strain-based work-family role conflict.

> When I'm just with her all day it's more emotionally rewarding, but I don't feel like I'm accomplishing anything, I don't feel like I have anything to show for it. I just feel like I accomplish a lot more with her in day care. It feels like work is almost like an easier task to accomplish than mothering.

At the same time, however, she sets boundaries around how much work she will take on in order to achieve balance, being fully aware of the time and energy demands of the mother role and she involves her husband in the responsibility of household tasks.

> My husband and I both basically have expanded home responsibilities and now there's a lot less time to kind of lie around and watch movies or do nothing. There's a lot less down time in general. That's I think why I'm not trying to kill myself here at work and because my priorities have shifted, I'm really not trying to take on too much. I'm tired. I feel like I'm definitely doing more at home than I was before.

She wonders about the implications of these boundaries on her career advancement, realizing that to progress often means more work and longer hours and more time away from her family. A value of relationalism facilitates the conscious decision to not advance her career at this present time, in order to achieve balance and to avoid an adverse impact on her family.

> I just don't know how easy it's going to be to keep sort of striving and wanting promotions. Can you keep getting salary increases without always like looking for promotions? So I don't feel as inclined to, at this stage while I have a young kid or young kids, to really push myself in the career. I mean, God forbid I take on a new role and the hours just become so long and then I'm working 24 hours a day. I think I would just be overextending myself if I were to really push for a higher level at this point. It's definitely put me in kind of a holding pattern when it comes to looking at trying to advance my career and to really push ahead. I am definitely going to kind of stick where I am until I sort of get through this season of my life.

Alexandra has structured her daily schedule to accommodate the needs of her family. However she feels she needs to compensate for this arrangement by working later at night and staying available even when not at work, thus lowering the boundary separation, when needed.

> And now I'm definitely going to try to leave at closer to 4:00 every day because her bedtime is at like 6:00 and my commute is an hour, so I need to get home in time to feed her and give her a bath and get her in bed. My work agreed that I could leave the office early and then I'm going to actually work later at night. So I've kind of had to break up my workday into a day shift and then a night shift after she goes to bed. Work hours and family hours are pretty blended for me. To be fair to both, I always have to be on the Blackberry, always have to be checking email, always have to be sort of making sure I'm not missing anything at work. I don't want to really obviously short change one or the other, so it's turned my hours into this sort of mishmash of work and family all the time, which is fine.

She finds comfort in low boundary separation and this process helps ease feelings of work-family role conflict that emerge when she needs to leave work early.

> It feels more comfortable for me to sort of move seamlessly between them. I feel secure and like I'm on top of work even though maybe I didn't put in a full day during work hours. I'm still getting things done at any time of day or any day of the

> week, so I think it works for me. It just makes me feel like my bases are covered and I feel a lot calmer that way.

Alexandra thinks about another career option, self-employment, and wonders if the protean path may help in achieving balance and integrating work and family more optimally.

> I had the idea of starting my own sort of side media business, which I still will do, but I think I used to really entertain the idea of staying home and doing that venture so that I could be home with the kids.

She seems to desire this protean career path, but considers that the start-up costs of such a venture would not allow her to afford childcare. "But you can't really do both by yourself. There would be no way to quit an office job and stay home with the kids and do a business." Moreover, she becomes aware of the need for full-time childcare, and some degree of high boundary separation, to allow her to focus on work and have a feeling of balance between work and family and a feeling of role enhancement.

> So I decided that the thing I will do is to keep working a career job and then have the website be more of a hobby and keep the kids at daycare because it's the only way I can sort of have it all. It brings to mind this larger notion, the idea of moms wanting to 'have it all' and knowing now that it's not a realistic goal.

From a pragmatic perspective, Alexandra feels fortunate to have a good job that is lucrative and flexible; however, she considers future career choices with more protean characteristics.

> I think it's just easier to stick with a well paying job where I can still afford childcare. My work has been very accommodating, which makes the integration aspect easier. In the future, I am going to pursue opportunities that will allow for telecommuting or find something that would allow me to only come to an office a couple days a week and work from home the other days, or possibly have a flexible schedule where I'm coming in later and leaving earlier.

She has become aware that her work role also satisfies her needs for social interaction and a sense of professional identity, also contributing to role enhancement.

> I think that I feel really lucky to be able to do both and that I don't think I'd be suited to be a stay-at-home mom and it's not something that I really would want for myself. I enjoy working. I enjoy getting out of the house. I enjoy seeing other people. It allows me to keep my own identity as opposed to just becoming somebody's mom.

Horizonalization: Alexandra. The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Alexandra's interview. The table below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-2

Participant 1 (Alexandra): Horizonalization

CODE	ALEXANDRA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Work-Family Role Conflict	"The first feelings I had were highly mixed emotions because I was excited to get back to feeling like an adult and interacting with the rest of the world. I think being home felt really isolating, but it was sad at the same time too - to be leaving my daughter." (Strain-Based)	Work-Family Integration
Family Role Salience	"But in terms of integrating the roles, work seems a lot less important to me now than it used to. " "If my daughter needed me, I would always just sort of opt for my daughter instead, so I think I definitely shifted my priorities a lot. I don't want to miss her milestones and it makes me sad to think that I'm going to miss some of that while she's being taken care of by other people."	Work-Family Integration
Role Enhancement	"I think that I feel really lucky to be able to do both and that I don't think I'd be suited to be a stay-at-home mom and it's not something that I really would want for myself."	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage
Low Boundary Separation	"My work agreed that I could leave the office early and then I'm going to actually work later at night. So I've kind of had to break up my workday into a day shift and then a night shift after she goes to bed. Work hours and family hours are pretty blended for me. To be fair to	Work-Family Integration

CODE	ALEXANDRA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	both, I always have to be on the Blackberry, always have to be checking email, always have to be sort of making sure I'm not missing anything at work. I don't want to really obviously short change one or the other, so it's turned my hours into this sort of mishmash of work and family all the time, which is fine." "It feels more comfortable for me to sort of move seamlessly between them. I feel secure and like I'm on top of work even though maybe I didn't put in a full day during work hours. I'm still getting things done at any time of day or any day of the week, so I think it works for me. It just makes me feel like my bases are covered and I feel a lot calmer that way."	
High Boundary Separation	"So I decided that the thing I will do is to keep working a career job and then have the website be more of a hobby and keep the kids at daycare because it's the only way I can sort of have it all."	Work-Family Integration
Relationalism	"In the future, I am going to pursue opportunities that will allow for telecommuting or find something that would allow me to only come to an office a couple days a week and work from home the other days, or possibly have a flexible schedule where I'm coming in later and leaving earlier."	Career Choice/Mid-Career Stage
Protean	"I had the idea of starting my own sort of side media business, which I still will do, but I think I used to really entertain the idea of staying home and doing that venture so that I could be home with the kids."	Career Choice
Balance	"Maybe next time I would want to see if there's a way to kind of extend my maternity leave a little bit just to make sure that the baby has a little bit of a chance to get a little sturdier before putting her in a strangers hands."	Career Choice
Pragmatic	"I think it's just easier to stick with a well paying job where I can still afford childcare. (Career)	Mid-Career Stage/Career Choice

CODE	ALEXANDRA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Flexibility	"My work has been very accommodating, which makes the integration aspect easier." (Environment)	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage

Participant 2: "Bethany"

Bethany is a 36 year-old married mother of a two and a half year old child. She is a Capital Management Director in the field of Finance with 13 years of work experience. She was 34 years old when she had her first child.

Textural description: Bethany.

I feel I don't know how to be a professional anymore. I have been feeling like I've been kind of behind. I can manage my hours in the office, but I could not manage all of my responsibilities and my deliverables. Even though I'm not necessarily telling people, you know, I limit my hours. But I'm not saying to people, okay, I'm going to work until midnight or something like that, but things will still get done. It will get done within my own amount of time, so that's the challenging part of it. So I think my role as a mother, as a result, has limited my potential to decide what I would have done in my work role, but it's all back to a time thing.

Those things I could be doing and won't be because my first priority is still being the role of a mother. If, you know, daycare calls me at 10:00 a.m. it's like, you've got to go and I go even on a day when I have probably important meetings that I would not skip even if I was sick. But now, I will. I mean, there's no other choice. To some extent, yes, I will call my husband and say, hey, you have to do it this time; I really can't. But, that is a limit that I will go only beyond very, very, very slight chances. So, unless like, I was meeting with the CFO or something, I'm the first one to make it work, while the hours of my husband are a little bit, you know, more to his own.

It does affect my career. I won't say I'm like very, very unhappy, I won't say that. But, in fact, my career aspiration probably does that and to some extent it's my choice. I mean, I could have been more aggressive, but then I'm trying to kind of manage it to my own satisfaction outside work and within work. I've already been taking care of a lot more things. As a result, you have to take care of yourself even though you feel like crap. It's basically fitting another ten tasks into the daily list and shrinking it and making it more efficient for all the other tasks, so that you have time to manage it. You know, at some point, you have to set some examples such that you know you just can't be always working. You know, care about your own stuff and take care of others. I have to say, I'm staying more in the status quo than I might have otherwise if I did not have the kid. My

working hours have decreased and I delegate more and sometimes I just have to let go. And I would be less inclined to talk and give comments about other people because of my own condition that I'm aware of. I definitely will be less wanting to be visible at work than might be otherwise. So, I think the impact to the career is to shorten the career - shorten the career to accommodate my role as a mother. But, I do have to accommodate a limit to that extent in terms of time out of work.

My career experience is positive to my family role, I think, just because of the exposure. I met people and I could learn even about this daycare, for example, through my career. So, I definitely think the career experience is a positive role. I think overall it's positive. I definitely, if I had to choose it, would choose my handling my career and family at the same time. My work environment makes it easier. They, you know, gave me the flexibility. That's another consideration of my picking my job at this point or continuing my current job at this point. I think it's definitely not easy and really highly depends on the working environment.

Structural description: Bethany. Bethany expresses feelings of being incapable of performing in her work role to the degree she is accustomed to, which results in some expression of time-based work-family role conflict. Though she can control her office hours, she cannot control deadlines or the volume of work. As a result, she must attend to work tasks outside of the office schedule, resulting in some degree of low boundary separation. She purposely does not draw attention to this fact. Instead, she works diligently and pragmatically to get her work done during her personal hours. She feels her role as a mother has limited her freedom of choice in the way she would otherwise organize her time spent on work tasks.

Bethany is aware of the many work-related activities she could participate in to benefit her career; however, her family role salience and relationalism pull her away from pursuing such activities. She feels the needs of her child are more important than even the most critical work tasks or meetings. Only on rare occasions of critical importance will she call on her husband to handle a need related to her child, as she feels a strong inclination to take on this responsibility.

Bethany is fully aware of the impact of her family role salience on her career, but realizes the tradeoff is her own conscious choice and not something imposed on her. A desire for balance allows her to feel comfortable with choosing this tradeoff. She realizes that in order to manage all of the roles, she must be efficient with daily tasks. This results in a pragmatic approach to her work role, as she is aware some things may not get done or will need to get done by others. Her attitude about this is pragmatic and she embraces the status quo to achieve a feeling of balance. She is also aware of the need to care for herself, whether or not she feels like doing so, in order to have the stamina to attend to her other roles. While she realizes that engaging in her own self-care is necessary, she is more focused on her primary competing roles as a professional and a mother, and she engages in multi-role structuring.

Overall, Bethany feels managing the dual roles of being a professional and mother has been a positive experience, contributing to a feeling of role enhancement. She expresses that, if she had the choice, she would continue to engage in both roles. The flexibility of her work environment has facilitated ease in work-family integration, which influences her pragmatic decision to remain in her current job and organization.

Textural-structural description of Bethany's experience of integrating work and family roles. Bethany expresses feelings of being incapable of performing in her work role to the degree she is accustomed, which results in some expression of time-based work-family role conflict. "I feel I don't know how to be a professional anymore. I have been feeling like I've been kind of behind." Though she can control her office hours, she cannot control deadlines or the volume of work. "I can manage my hours in the office, but I could not manage all of my responsibilities and my deliverables." As a result, she must attend to

work tasks outside of the office schedule, resulting in some degree of low boundary separation. She purposely does not draw attention to this fact. Instead, she works diligently and pragmatically to get her work done during her personal hours.

> Even though I'm not necessarily telling people, you know, I limit my hours. But I'm not saying to people, okay, I'm going to work until midnight or something like that, but things will still get done. It will get done within my own amount of time, so that's the challenging part of it.

Bethany feels her role as a mother has limited her freedom of choice in the way she would otherwise organize her time spent on work tasks. "So, I think my role as a mother, as a result, has limited my potential to decide what I would have done in my work role, but it's all back to a time thing." Bethany is aware of the many work-related activities she could participate in to benefit her career; however, her family role salience and relationalism pull her away from pursuing such activities. "Those things I could be doing and won't be because my first priority is still being the role of a mother." She feels the needs of her child are more important than even the most critical work tasks or meetings.

> If, you know, daycare calls me at 10:00 a.m. it's like, you've got to go and I go even on a day when I have probably important meetings that I would not skip even if I was sick. But now, I will. I mean, there's no other choice.

Only on rare occasions of critical importance will she call on her husband to handle a need related to her child, as she feels a strong inclination to take on this responsibility.

> To some extent, yes, I will call my husband and say, hey, you have to do it this time; I really can't. But, that is a limit that I will go only beyond very, very, very slight chances. So, unless like, I was meeting with the CFO or something, I'm the first one to make it work, while the hours of my husband are a little bit, you know, more to his own.

Bethany is fully aware of the impact of her family role salience on her career. She realizes, pragmatically, that the tradeoff is her own conscious choice and not something

imposed on her. “It does affect my career. I won’t say I’m like very, very unhappy, I won’t say that. But, in fact, my career aspiration probably does get impacted and to some extent it’s my choice.” A desire for balance allows her to feel comfortable with choosing this tradeoff. “I mean, I could have been more aggressive, but then I’m trying to kind of manage it to my own satisfaction outside work and within work.” She realizes that, in order to manage all of the roles, she must be efficient with daily tasks.

> I’ve already been taking care of a lot more things. As a result, you have to take care of yourself even though you feel like crap. It’s basically fitting another ten tasks into the daily list and shrinking it and making it more efficient for all the other tasks, so that you have time to manage it.

This results in a pragmatic approach to her work role, as she is aware some things may not get done or will need to get done by others. Her attitude about this is pragmatic and she embraces the status quo to achieve a feeling of balance.

> I have to say, I’m staying more in the status quo than I might have otherwise if I did not have the kid. I delegate more and sometimes I just have to let go. And I would be less inclined to talk and give comments about other people because of my own condition that I’m aware of. I definitely will be less wanting to be visible at work than might be otherwise.

Bethany is also aware of the need to care for herself, whether or not she feels like doing so, in order to have the stamina to attend to her other roles. “You know, at some point, you have to set some examples such that, you know, you just can’t be always working. You know, care about your own stuff and take care of others.” While she realizes that engaging in her own self-care is necessary, she is more focused on her primary competing roles as a professional and a mother, and she engages in multi-role structuring.

> So, I think the impact to the career is to shorten the career - shorten the career to accommodate my role as a mother. But, I do have to accommodate a limit to that extent in terms of time out of work.

Overall, Bethany feels that managing the dual roles of being a professional and mother has been a positive experience, contributing to feeling of role enhancement.

> My career experience is positive to my family role, I think, just because of the exposure. I met people and I could learn even about this daycare, for example, through my career. So, I definitely think the career experience is a positive role. I think overall it's positive.

She expresses that, if she had the choice, she would continue to engage in both roles. "I definitely would not, if I had to choose it, I would choose my handling my career and family at the same time." The flexibility of her work environment has facilitated ease in work-family integration, which influences her pragmatic decision to remain in her current job and organization.

> My work environment makes it easier. They, you know, gave me the flexibility. That's another consideration of my picking my job at this point or continuing my current job at this point. I think it's definitely not easy and really highly depends on the working environment.

Horizonalization: Bethany. The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Bethany's interview. The chart below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-3

Participant 2 (Bethany): Horizonalization

CODE	BETHANY'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Work-Family Role Conflict	"So, I think my role as a mother, as a result, has limited my potential to decide what I would have done in my work role, but it's all back to a time thing." (Time-Based)	Work-Family Integration
Family Role Salience	"If, you know, daycare calls me at 10:00 a.m. it's like, you've got to go and I go even on a day when I have probably important meetings that I would not skip even if I was sick. But now, I will. I mean, there's no other choice."	Work-Family Integration

CODE	BETHANY'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Role Enhancement	"My career experience is positive to my family role, I think, just because of the exposure. I met people and I could learn even about this daycare, for example, through my career. So, I definitely think the career experience is a positive role. I think overall it's positive."	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage
Low Boundary Separation	"Things will still get done. It will get done within my own amount of time."	Work-Family Integration
Multi-Role Structuring	"So, I think the impact to the career is to shorten the career - shorten the career to accommodate my role as a mother. But, I do have to accommodate a limit to that extent in terms of time out of work."	Work-Family Integration
Relationalism	"It does affect my career. I won't say I'm like very, very unhappy, I won't say that. But, in fact, my career aspiration probably does get impacted and to some extent it's my choice."	Career Choice/Mid-Career Stage
Balance	"I mean, I could have been more aggressive, but then I'm trying to kind of manage it to my own satisfaction outside work and within work."	Career Choice
Flexibility	"My work environment makes it easier. They, you know, gave me the flexibility. (Environment)	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage
Pragmatic	"Even though I'm not necessarily telling people, you know, I limit my hours. But I'm not saying to people, okay, I'm going to work until midnight or something like that, but things will still get done. It will get done within my own amount of time, so that's the challenging part of it." (Job) "I have to say, I'm staying more in the status quo than I might have otherwise if I did not have the kid. I delegate more and sometimes I just have to let go." (Job) "It's basically fitting another ten tasks into the daily list and shrinking it and making it more efficient for all the other tasks, so that you have time to manage it." (Job)	Mid-Career Stage/Career Choice

CODE	BETHANY'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	That's another consideration of my picking my job at this point or continuing my current job at this point." (Career)	

Participant 3: "Calista"

Calista is a 39 year-old married mother of a five month old child. She is an Organization Development Manager in the field of Human Resources with 15 years of work experience. She was 38 years old when she had her first child.

Textural description: Calista.

When I first came back, what I did was I worked part-time for a couple of weeks because, for me, you know, that transition was a big one. Prior to the birth of my son, I worked a lot of hours, so, it was a big change for me to have to be home at a certain time, to not be able to work those hours. I knew I had to come back to work and I just started to get really antsy, so I came back a little bit early, did the part-time thing and that really worked for me. So, what I did was to work part-time and then have just a couple of days when I'm not working and I could concentrate again on my son and kind of make that transition. So, kind of the same thing and what worked well for me was also what was kind of the most stressful, you know, just being at work, being away from home. It was kind of overwhelming because, all of a sudden, you not only have the need to catch up on work and get back into the swing of doing work, but now you have all these responsibilities at home. It was just that I was very used to having a couple of hours to do some work before meetings started. So now all of a sudden I'm getting to work and running to a meeting and I'm like, whoa, this is really weird. You know, your priority is your family, so you can't get to work as early. I was really struggling with not getting to work on time, so that was really the hardest thing.

I was able to basically not do any work, but at the same point, I didn't know what was going on. I didn't know what I was going to come back to and again, I knew I had to come back eventually, so it was sort of that, you know, I want to see what I'm coming back to. Even though it was nice to be away from work and do something different, for me it was like, what's that new routine going to look like? How am I going to balance all these things? What's going to happen when I only have eight hours during the day to do work when I'm used to doing ten or eleven? What happens to that two or three hours of work? How does it get done? Does it get done? Initially, it was just very chaotic. I suddenly had that many more things to get done in less time. So I really, you know, had to figure out what was most important to get done [chuckles], let go of other things, and just concentrate and not let things feel overwhelming or chaotic and not try to do too many things at one time. I had to be extra structured and schedule driven. There is really no time for myself

anymore, but I am not looking for self-time. I am just trying to get through each day. Not being able to put a lot of extra time into things at the moment makes me think that it might hamper my ability to take on new projects, to get that visibility within the organization, to move up or do those things.

I mean, I really do feel that family comes first and maybe my thoughts of my career or the thoughts of my future career isn't quite what I probably thought it was a couple of years ago. So, if a job requires me to put in a lot of extra time or a lot of extra hours, that's going to be much more difficult for me at least right now with a baby. Now, I see some coworkers doing that, but I don't think I'm right now willing to do that and those people are working all hours of the night. They're kind of burning the candle at both ends in order to find the time to put into work and get the job done. And I don't think right now I'm willing to do that. At a later time, maybe. I think I have more experience, life experiences and career experiences to pull from, so I think having been able to develop my career, there's some stability there. I've been with the company for a number of years; I've been in my role for a couple of years. All of those things provide a level of stability so that I can concentrate on family, so there's a comfort level there. There's a network of friends or people that I can pull on. And, again, having been with the company as long as I have, you know, that really helps.

I have a different view of other mothers. It used to be very different when I had experience and didn't have children. I used to be called upon to do some extra projects or extra work and would be looked at as someone who could put in the extra hours because I didn't have family. So, I think now being a mother, I have a whole different view of other people in the workplace who are mothers. So, I think that's the biggest thing. And again, a little bit more compassion, understanding for others around me, people with kids and families and what that's like, what people are going through, from a whole new perspective and understanding. And again, a new level of understanding of work-life balance and not asking myself or my team to put in crazy hours to try to get something done. You know, really thinking about, 'does it really need to get done?' and 'can it wait until tomorrow?' and really a whole different focus on priorities so that you're not killing yourself to try to get something done. I try to make sure I'm home early so I can spend time with my son before he goes to bed. That's been a real huge difference because, again, I was used to working late hours, so I would stay at work and maybe I wouldn't leave until 6:00 or 7:00. Now, I'm leaving no later than 3:00 so I can be home by 4:00, I can pick up my son and be with him for a couple of hours before he goes to bed and I'm really trying to continue that. I mean, I try to be in the office only when I need to be and then do everything else from home or make sure that I'm home. I don't want to be a mother who comes home after the kid has gone to bed, at least initially or for as much as possible. Work now needs to fit into family.

I elected to be a 'hoteler', so that's played a huge change. So, I try to come into the office only a couple days a week. I set up most of my meetings for those days and again, even on those days, I'm coming in later and leaving earlier, so that's been a huge change. I like it a lot because you're prioritizing and not having to get up and drive to work. You're not having to totally get dressed and ready and makeup and hair and the whole deal and drive to work, which for me is about an hour commute, maybe 45 minutes. You know,

eliminating that is a gift of time. But I'm still getting the same amount of work done. So, I just think it's a constant readjusting of your schedule and a balancing act. So, as different things happen, you're figuring out how to get it all done in 24 hours or in the time that you have. I foresee needing to find more hours in the day to put in more work [Chuckles]. So, whether that means less sleep or, again, restructuring things that are happening to try to get another hour or two hours in, I see that as a real possibility. You know, already I see that the emails are early and late evening and maybe that's what I have to do to get those couple of hours in. Right now, I haven't had to do that, so, I feel really lucky. But I see that on the horizon, more things to balance.

No matter how much you think about it and no matter how many people you talk to, it was really a surprise as to how different it is. I never really understood until I actually had my son. And again, I'm a person who plans, reads the books, talks to a lot of people and I thought I had done everything, but it was still a big adjustment to have another person in the house. And it's still a big adjustment; every time you go through a different stage, it's a whole different adjustment. So, it was very interesting how that just sort of happened. And I've had some comments from friends and family about that, 'Wow, you're just falling right into the motherhood role' and things are just happening. And my husband said that I'm adjusting to less sleep, having to do more in less time, the multitasking, like I've always done it, but I haven't. And to some extent, on the outside, it appears seamless to friends and family. Inside it's like whoa this is really different, but it's inherent in knowing what has to get done.

Structural description: Calista. Calista discusses her transition back to work at the end of her maternity leave, describing the transition as challenging. Realizing the change was a big one for her, she prefers to ease into it gradually by returning to work earlier to give herself more time to adapt to her new routine. Initially, she chooses to separate her roles of mother and working professional as much as possible by working part-time so she can fully concentrate on each role. Though this process of high boundary separation and multi-role structuring enables her to successfully make the transition back to work, it also contributes to feelings of work-family role conflict, specifically, family interfering with work. Her feelings of family role salience intensify this conflict for her, as she is accustomed to putting in long hours to get her job done.

Calista describes her experience of being on maternity leave as full of uncertainty regarding what she would be returning to, from a work perspective. Though she enjoys

being able to focus on her son without having to worry about work, the feeling of not knowing if she would be able to balance the roles contributes to her desire to return to work early and test the waters. As she realizes the amount of work she has exceeds the number of hours she can work any given day, she takes a pragmatic perspective by prioritizing her tasks. She realizes this pragmatic approach may impact her career development and advancement. Her family role salience enables her to willingly accept this tradeoff and her focus on relationalism guides her career choices. Despite the tradeoffs she must make to accommodate her career and family roles, she expresses feelings of role enhancement. These positive feelings are further influenced by the support and stability that has been cultivated as result of her being well established in her career.

Calista describes how her own personal experience of motherhood has enabled her to become acutely aware of the challenges other mothers face. This changes her perspective and requires that she approach work-life balance issues with more empathy and compassion. She realizes her own values of family role salience and balance must be in alignment with the expectations she has of others, particularly those on her team.

Calista's work-life balance process is positively influenced by her protean career choices, specifically around her work schedule and location. Nevertheless, she realizes that to maintain the balance over time, she may need to restructure her day to add a few more work hours without sacrificing time devoted to her family. Calista reflects on her experience of recent motherhood, expressing her surprise at the remarkable difference between her expectations and the reality. She describes the process as instinctual, while at the same time, a process requiring significant learning and adjustment.

Textural-structural description of Calista's experience of integrating work and family roles. Calista describes her transition back to work at the end of her maternity leave, expressing that the transition was challenging.

> When I first came back, what I did was I worked part-time for a couple of weeks because, for me, you know, that transition was a big one. Prior to the birth of my son, I worked a lot of hours, so, it was a big change for me to have to be home at a certain time, to not be able to work those hours.

Realizing that the change was a big one for her, she prefers to ease into it gradually by returning to work earlier to give herself more time to adapt to her new routine. "I knew I had to come back to work and I just started to get really antsy, so I came back a little bit early, did the part-time thing and that really worked for me." Initially, she chooses to separate her roles of mother and working professional as much as possible, by working part-time, so she can fully concentrate on each role. "So, what I did was to work part-time and then have just a couple of days when I'm not working and I could concentrate again on my son and kind of make that transition." Though this process of high boundary separation and multi-role structuring enables her to successfully make the transition back to work, it also contributes to feelings of work-family role conflict, specifically, family interfering with work.

> So, kind of the same thing and what worked well for me was also what was kind of the most stressful, you know, just being at work, being away from home. It was kind of overwhelming because, all of a sudden, you not only have the need to catch up on work and get back into the swing of doing work, but now you have all these responsibilities at home. It was just that I was very used to having a couple of hours to do some work before meetings started. So now all of a sudden I'm getting to work and running to a meeting and I'm like, whoa, this is really weird.

Calista's feelings of family role salience intensify this conflict for her, as she is accustomed to putting in long hours to get her job done. "You know, your priority is your

family, so you can't get to work as early. I was really struggling with not getting to work on time, so that was really the hardest thing."

Calista describes her experience of being on maternity leave as full of uncertainty regarding what she would be returning to, from a work perspective.

> I was able to basically not do any work, but at the same point, I didn't know what was going on. I didn't know what I was going to come back to and again, I knew I had to come back eventually, so it was sort of that, you know, I want to see what I'm coming back to.

Though she enjoys being able to focus on her son without having to worry about work, the feeling of not knowing if she would be able to balance the roles contributes to her desire to return to work early and test the waters.

> Even though it was nice to be away from work and do something different, for me it was like, what's that new routine going to look like? How am I going to balance all these things? What's going to happen when I only have eight hours during the day to do work when I'm used to doing ten or eleven? What happens to that two or three hours of work? How does it get done? Does it get done?

As she realizes the amount of work she has exceeds the number of hours she can work any given day, Calista takes a pragmatic perspective by prioritizing her tasks.

> Initially, it was just very chaotic. I suddenly had that many more things to get done in less time. So I really, you know, had to figure out what was most important to get done [chuckles], let go of other things, and just concentrate and not let things feel overwhelming or chaotic and not try to do too many things at one time. I had to be extra structured and schedule driven. There is really no time for myself anymore, but I am not looking for self-time. I am just trying to get through each day.

She realizes this pragmatic approach may impact her career development and advancement.

> Not being able to put a lot of extra time into things at the moment makes me think that it might hamper my ability to take on new projects, to get that visibility within the organization, to move up or do those things.

Calista's family role salience enables her to willingly accept this tradeoff and her focus on relationalism guides her career choices.

> I mean, I really do feel that family comes first and maybe my thoughts of my career or the thoughts of my future career isn't quite what I probably thought it was a couple of years ago. So, if a job requires me to put in a lot of extra time or a lot of extra hours, that's going to be much more difficult for me at least right now with a baby. Now, I see some coworkers doing that, but I don't think I'm right now willing to do that and those people are working all hours of the night. They're kind of burning the candle at both ends in order to find the time to put into work and get the job done. And I don't think right now I'm willing to do that. At a later time, maybe.

Despite the tradeoffs she must make to accommodate her career and family roles, Calista expresses feelings of role enhancement. These positive feelings are further influenced by the support and stability that has been cultivated as result of her being well established in her career.

> I think I have more experience, life experiences and career experiences to pull from, so I think having been able to develop my career, there's some stability there. I've been with the company for a number of years; I've been in my role for a couple of years. All of those things provide a level of stability so that I can concentrate on family, so there's a comfort level there. There's a network of friends or people that I can pull on. And, again, having been with the company as long as I have, you know, that really helps.

Calista describes how her own personal experience of motherhood has enabled her to become acutely aware of the challenges other mothers face.

> I have a different view of other mothers. It used to be very different when I had experience and didn't have children. I used to be called upon to do some extra projects or extra work and would be looked at as someone who could put in the extra hours because I didn't have a family. So, I think now being a mother, I have a whole different view of other people in the workplace who are mothers. So, I think that's the biggest thing.

This changes her perspective and requires she approach work-life balance issues with more empathy and compassion. "And again, a little bit more compassion, understanding for others around me, people with kids and families and what that's like,

what people are going through, from a whole new perspective and understanding."

Calista realizes her own values of family role salience and balance must be in alignment with the expectations she has of others, particularly those on her team.

> And again, a new level of understanding of work-life balance and not asking myself or my team to put in crazy hours to try to get something done. You know, really thinking about, 'does it really need to get done?' and 'can it wait until tomorrow?' and really a whole different focus on priorities so that you're not killing yourself to try to get something done. I try to make sure I'm home early so I can spend time with my son before he goes to bed. That's been a real huge difference because, again, I was used to working late hours, so I would stay at work and maybe I wouldn't leave until 6:00 or 7:00. Now, I'm leaving no later than 3:00 so I can be home by 4:00, I can pick up my son and be with him for a couple of hours before he goes to bed and I'm really trying to continue that. I mean, I try to be in the office only when I need to be and then do everything else from home or make sure that I'm home. I don't want to be a mother who comes home after the kid has gone to bed, at least initially or for as much as possible. Work now needs to fit into family.

Calista's work-life balance process is positively influenced by her protean career choices, specifically around her work schedule and location.

> I elected to be a 'hoteler', so that's played a huge change. So, I try to come into the office only a couple days a week. I set up most of my meetings for those days and again, even on those days, I'm coming in later and leaving earlier, so that's been a huge change. I like it a lot because you're prioritizing and not having to get up and drive to work. You're not having to totally get dressed and ready and makeup and hair and the whole deal and drive to work, which for me is about an hour commute, maybe 45 minutes. You know, eliminating that is a gift of time. But I'm still getting the same amount of work done.

Nevertheless, Calista realizes that to maintain the balance over time, she may need to restructure her day to add a few more work hours without sacrificing time devoted to her family.

> So, I just think it's a constant readjusting of your schedule and a balancing act. So, as different things happen, you're figuring out how to get it all done in 24 hours or in the time that you have. I foresee needing to find more hours in the day to put in more work [Chuckles]. So, whether that means less sleep or, again, restructuring things that are happening to try to get another hour or two hours in, I see that as a real possibility. You know, already I see that the emails are early and late evening

> and maybe that's what I have to do to get those couple of hours in. Right now, I haven't had to do that, so, I feel really lucky. But I see that on the horizon, more things to balance.

Calista reflects on her experience of recent motherhood, expressing her surprise at the remarkable difference between her expectations and the reality.

> No matter how much you think about it and no matter how many people you talk to, it was really a surprise as to how different it is. I never really understood until I actually had my son. And again, I'm a person who plans, reads the books, talks to a lot of people and I thought I had done everything, but it was still a big adjustment to have another person in the house.

Calista describes the integration process as instinctual, while at the same time, a process requiring significant learning and adjustment.

> And it's still a big adjustment; every time you go through a different stage, it's a whole different adjustment. So, it was very interesting how that just sort of happened. And I've had some comments from friends and family about that, 'Wow, you're just falling right into the motherhood role' and things are just happening. And my husband said that I'm adjusting to less sleep, having to do more in less time, the multitasking, like I've always done it, but I haven't. And to some extent, on the outside, it appears seamless to friends and family. Inside it's like whoa this is really different, but it's inherent in knowing what has to get done.

Horizonalization: Calista. The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Calista's interview. The chart below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-4

Participant 3 (Calista): Horizonalization

CODE	CALISTA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

CODE	CALISTA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Work-Family Role Conflict	"So, kind of the same thing and what worked well for me was also what was kind of the most stressful, you know, just being at work, being away from home. It was kind of overwhelming because, all of a sudden, you not only have the need to catch up on work and get back into the swing of doing work, but now you have all these responsibilities at home. It was just that I was very used to having a couple of hours to do some work before meetings started. So now all of a sudden I'm getting to work and running to a meeting and I'm like, whoa, this is really weird." (Time-Based; Strain- Based)	Work-Family Integration
Family Role Salience	"I mean, I really do feel that family comes first and maybe my thoughts of my career or the thoughts of my future career isn't quite what I probably thought it was a couple of years ago."	Work-Family Integration
Role Enhancement	"I think I have more experience, life experiences and career experiences to pull from, so I think having been able to develop my career, there's some stability there."	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage
High Boundary Separation	"So, what I did was to work part-time and then have just a couple of days when I'm not working and I could concentrate again on my son and kind of make that transition."	Work-Family Integration
Multi-Role Structuring	"I foresee needing to find more hours in the day to put in more work [Chuckles]. So, whether that means less sleep or, again, restructuring things that are happening to try to get another hour or two hours in, I see that as a real possibility. You know, already I see that the emails are early and late evening and maybe that's what I have to do to get those couple of hours in."	Work-Family Integration
Relationalism	"So, if a job requires me to put in a lot of extra time or a lot of extra hours, that's going to be much more difficult for me at least right now with a baby. Now, I see some coworkers doing that, but I don't think I'm right now willing to do that and those people are working all hours of the night. They're kind of burning the	Career Choice/Mid-Career Stage

CODE	CALISTA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	candle at both ends in order to find the time to put into work and get the job done. And I don't think right now I'm willing to do that. At a later time, maybe."	
Protean	"I elected to be a 'hoteler', so that's played a huge change. So, I try to come into the office only a couple days a week. I set up most of my meetings for those days and again, even on those days, I'm coming in later and leaving earlier, so that's been a huge change. I like it a lot because you're prioritizing and not having to get up and drive to work. You're not having to totally get dressed and ready and makeup and hair and the whole deal and drive to work, which for me is about an hour commute, maybe 45 minutes. You know, eliminating that is a gift of time. But I'm still getting the same amount of work done." (Adaptability)	Career Choice
Balance	"I try to make sure I'm home early so I can spend time with my son before he goes to bed. That's been a real huge difference because, again, I was used to working late hours, so I would stay at work and maybe I wouldn't leave until 6:00 or 7:00. Now, I'm leaving no later than 3:00 so I can be home by 4:00, I can pick up my son and be with him for a couple of hours before he goes to bed and I'm really trying to continue that."	Career Choice
Career Establishment	"I've been with the company for a number of years; I've been in my role for a couple of years. All of those things provide a level of stability so that I can concentrate on family, so there's a comfort level there." (Stability) "There's a network of friends or people that I can pull on. And, again, having been with the company as long as I have, you know, that really helps" (Support)	Mid-Career Stage
Pragmatic	"Initially, it was just very chaotic. I suddenly had that many more things to get done in less time. So I really, you know, had to figure out what was most important to get done [chuckles], let go of other things, and just	Mid-Career Stage/Career Choice

CODE	CALISTA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	concentrate and not let things feel overwhelming or chaotic and not try to do too many things at one time. I had to be extra structured and schedule driven. There is really no time for myself anymore, but I am not looking for self-time. I am just trying to get through each day." (Job)	
Uncertainty	"Even though it was nice to be away from work and do something different, for me it was like, what's that new routine going to look like? How am I going to balance all these things? What's going to happen when I only have eight hours during the day to do work when I'm used to doing ten or eleven? What happens to that two or three hours of work? How does it get done? Does it get done?"	Work-Family Integration

Participant 4: "Donna"

Donna is a 38 year-old married mother of a four and a half month old child. She is a Human Resources Business Leader in the field of Human Resources with 11 years of work experience. She was 37 years old when she had her first child.

Textural description: Donna.

All of a sudden, you've brought this child and this life into this world and you're completely fascinated and in love. I think the separation was probably hard because, all of a sudden, after three-and-a-half months, I am now being separated for the 8-plus hours that I'm at work and she's at day care. So, that's probably the hardest part. I remember that I actually had anxiety prior to coming back in the office because I knew I was going back. Then, as the day got closer, I started having anxiety like: 'How am I going to come back?' And it was all different, mixed emotions because it was, 'How am I going to come back and still be the performer that I was prior to having my child and prior to going out on leave?'

But, I knew for my sanity, for my career moving forward and for the good of my child to be social with other kids at the day care, it was best all around for me to come back. Because I think the hard part is that I spent three-and-a-half months with her and it was just her and me and she was my little buddy, so I was used to having her around all the time. So, it was kind of different to come back and sit in front of the computer and not have to, every second of the day, look over to see what she's doing. So, I think in that

sense it was really good. It was good that I got a break from her and she got a break from me. I had family and friends that were able to give her feedings, so it wasn't this pressure that she had to be attached to me all the time so I think that also helped. The child had a routine; she was pretty easy going, and the day care that we found we could trust in that she was going to be in good hands. She transitioned really well into day care, so that allowed me to transition and be able to be successful and come back to the workplace. Within a day or two I literally felt like myself back in July when I left for leave.

(My boss and I) had exchanged a couple of emails prior to me physically coming into the office and she said, 'we'll just ease back into it, so if you want to schedule a transition meeting Monday that's fine. If you want to wait until Tuesday to transition, that's fine too.' So, it was very easy. So, the Monday prior to the Monday that I returned to work, I actually dropped her off part-time so I could prepare myself for that actual experience of having to drop her off and then having to go and do stuff afterwards. So, it was good for me to be apart from her and then when the day rolled around, it wasn't such a shock to my system to be able to drop her off and then come to work. So, I think that really helped too because I wasn't as emotional. My management was so understanding and so flexible in that they openly communicated to me, 'Your child is your priority, we absolutely understand, if ever there's any time that you need to be away from your work space, absolutely." I was offered the flexibility of working from home and doing teleconferences from wherever, so there was no expectation to be in the office for eight hours a day. So, I think that's really helpful and knowing that we do have that flexible environment in the work place and that my management supports it. It put my mind at ease coming back to work, that I don't have to be 100 percent in my chair to do my work. Flexibility is key. I think in this day and age we have Blackberry's and laptops and we have cell phones and I can get on the Blackberry or get on the phone or turn the laptop on and send that email if I need to and that's kind of nice. So, I think we're really, really lucky in that we're raising a family in 2010 where we have the luxury of remote capabilities and communicating. So, I think it helps me balance being a mother and being a professional woman coming back into the workplace.

I found that I've been able to do my job more efficiently. So, I think I've been able to manage my time better knowing that when 5:00 o'clock hits I've got to get out the door. So, between 8:00 and 5:00, I've been able to manage my time so much better. I've been able to be so much more efficient with work that I'm actually probably delivering the same results that I was delivering that 10 plus hours before. So, whatever I need to get done because I have that 5:00 pm bell that's in the back of my head that's going to go off. And if it means that I get back to my customer the next day with an answer that can wait then that's kind of what it is. I have tasks and assignments that I can manage according to my schedule and I think it's okay if I don't get back to my clients until the next day. I'm sure there are going to be times when things are going to come up where I may need to get on the computer after she goes to bed. I'm probably okay with that if I need to but, again, she would take priority. Whatever tasks that I don't accomplish before 5:00 pm, I am willing to get back on the computer after 10:00 pm or after she goes to bed and finish up a couple more tasks so that I meet deadline. So that I can still be successful in the workplace without having to completely blow off a deadline or something like that.

For a while there it was always the goal is to move up. So, here I am 11 years into my role within my job function and all I knew was to go for the next thing, the next job of greater responsibility. Now, we often think of that as moving up but, in the last few years, I think I've opened my mind a little bit more in that sometimes sideways movement is just as good as upward movement. So, I've done that and I've been in that frame of mind for 11 years to either move up or move sideways or do something different that will enhance my learning within the HR portfolio. Now that we are responsible for molding the mind and the life of a human being, that prioritizes our career. So for me, the priority has shifted. Maybe it's not the next promotion that I'm seeking now, but the next safe, comfortable role so that I'm able to manage leaving on time to spend time with my family. Since I became a mother and now that my child is the most important thing, I am okay with currently staying in a job that I'm comfortable in just so that I can balance my time a little bit better. So, recently I've talked myself into staying in a safer role within my career and not putting that pressure on myself to do the next thing. I think I'm okay with staying in my current role for the next year, for the next two years, and not feeling the need of having to take on a different role. So, just playing it safe and being comfortable in that I can kind of know what to expect in an 8-hour day, Monday through Friday, even January through December. So that makes me able to manage my work and life a little bit better without going crazy. So, it's being okay with being good at your job and being comfortable and not having to look for the next thing that is a challenge. That's how it is for now. So, I might need to turn down a traveling assignment and that's just an example of one of the things that I think I may need to adjust in my career, so that I'm able to maintain my routine and my schedule with my family and with my child and being a mother and balancing being a mother and being a working professional. But, as I grow in my career, I need to be focused on how to maintain work-life balance, while at the same time, dealing with the changing dynamics in my work (boss, customers, etc).

I feel that we have to interact with her for her own goodness and development. We feel that we need to bond with her and be in that space in that moment with her and hang out with her and give her that 100 percent undivided attention. When she gets home from day care we have to spend those two hours that she's awake with her so she recognizes us and she knows that we're mom and dad. I feel that I just have to turn certain things off at a certain time so that I feel that I'm giving her 100 percent of my attention. So, its setting times for certain things and knowing that between 8:00 to 5:00 it's work, between 5:00 to 7:00 it's time with our child, 7:00 to 10:30 it's time for me and my husband and then between 10:30 and 11:30 it's time with our child. So it's prioritizing, but it's also for me, setting up different times in the day where I do different things. And really immersing yourself in whatever you're focusing on at that particular point of the day, in other words work or family. Now it works for me. Some people can balance their little gadgets and checking Blackberry and spending time with their kids. My husband and I kind of have an agreement that we leave the Blackberry in the car the second the car goes into the garage. So, we don't take the Blackberry inside the house. We don't check Blackberry after 5:00 pm and it's worked really well. I'm sure there's going to be times when it's not 100 percent perfect where I can shut it off at 5:00 pm, but I think the compartmentalizing has helped me so far. It's setting those boundaries. So setting boundaries and leaving the

gadgets in the car has helped us to be in the moment. So, I think the whole mindset of not getting worked up, kind of rolling with it, but then also falling into a routine and a schedule has really helped me to be successful in balancing work and family, and balancing life and work. I have been sucked into a routine which, again, prior to being a mother, I don't think I would have been comfortable with it. So, I think that has changed me. I think that's made me have to be more organized. Yes, it's been different, but it's been good. We are part of an interesting age group and younger mothers may have a totally different experience.

Structural description: Donna. Donna discusses her feelings upon separating from her daughter at the end of her maternity leave, describing the experience as difficult. She experiences feelings of work-family role conflict shortly before her return to work and expresses concerns about her ability to perform in her work role. She also realizes, however, that returning to work would result in feelings of role enhancement. A strong network of family and friends, a trusted childcare provider, and an established routine further enabled her successful transition back into her work role, which further contributed to role enhancement.

Flexibility in her transition schedule and work hours also contributes to Donna's feelings of ease upon returning to work and a flexible work environment also contributes to her feelings of balance. She describes the positive effect of her pragmatic approach to her work, as her more efficient schedule allows her to feel more balance in her work and family life. Though her family role salience allows her to place parameters around her work hours, she pragmatically attends to work tasks after hours, when needed, so that she does not compromise success in her work role.

Donna has a protean perspective regarding her career goals, emphasizing learning as the most important outcome. Her family role salience, however, prioritizes her career choices. Her value of relationalism further guides her career choices and her desire for balance enables her to feel comfortable in choosing to maintain the status quo.

Adaptability and a protean mindset enable her to anticipate potential future challenges in integrating work and family.

Donna's feeling of family role salience also governs how she structures her work and family roles. She feels a strong need to immerse herself in her family role without interruption from work, which results in high boundary separation and role balance. The strategies of high boundary separation and role balance also help her to create an effective routine for her work and family life, intensifying role enhancement.

Textural-structural description of Donna's experience of integrating work and family roles. Donna discusses her feelings upon separating from her daughter at the end of her maternity leave, describing the experience as difficult.

> All of a sudden, you've brought this child and this life into this world and you're completely fascinated and in love. I think the separation was probably hard because, all of a sudden, after three-and-a-half months, I am now being separated for the 8-plus hours that I'm at work and she's at day care. So, that's probably the hardest part.

She experiences feelings of work-family role conflict shortly before her return to work and expresses concerns about her ability to perform in her work role.

> I remember that I actually had anxiety prior to coming back in the office because I knew I was going back. Then, as the day got closer, I started having anxiety like: 'How am I going to come back?' And it was all different, mixed emotions because it was, 'How am I going to come back and still be the performer that I was prior to having my child and prior to going out on leave?'

Donna also realizes, however, that returning to work would result in feeling role enhancement.

> But, I knew for my sanity, for my career moving forward and for the good of my child to be social with other kids at the day care, it was best all around for me to come back. Because I think the hard part is that I spent three-and-a-half months with her and it was just her and me and she was my little buddy, so I was used to having her around all the time. So, it was kind of different to come back and sit in front of the computer and not have to, every second of the day, look over to see

> what she's doing. So, I think in that sense it was really good. It was good that I got a break from her and she got a break from me.

A strong network of family and friends, a trusted childcare provider, and an established routine further enabled her successful transition back into her work role, which further contributed to role enhancement.

> I had family and friends that were able to give her feedings, so it wasn't this pressure that she had to be attached to me all the time so I think that also helped. The child had a routine; she was pretty easy going, and the day care that we found we could trust in that she was going to be in good hands. She transitioned really well into day care, so that allowed me to transition and be able to be successful and come back to the workplace. Within a day or two I literally felt like myself back in July when I left for leave.

Flexibility in her transition schedule and work hours also contributes to Donna's feelings of ease upon returning to work.

> (My boss and I) had exchanged a couple of emails prior to me physically coming into the office and she said, 'we'll just ease back into it, so if you want to schedule a transition meeting Monday that's fine. If you want to wait until Tuesday to transition, that's fine too.' So, it was very easy. So, the Monday prior to the Monday that I returned to work, I actually dropped her off part-time so I could prepare myself for that actual experience of having to drop her off and then having to go and do stuff afterwards. So, it was good for me to be apart from her and then when the day rolled around, it wasn't such a shock to my system to be able to drop her off and then come to work. So, I think that really helped too because I wasn't as emotional.

A flexible work environment also contributes to Donna's feelings of balance.

> My management was so understanding and so flexible in that they openly communicated to me, 'Your child is your priority, we absolutely understand, if ever there's any time that you need to be away from your work space, absolutely.' I was offered the flexibility of working from home and doing teleconferences from wherever, so there was no expectation to be in the office for eight hours a day. So, I think that's really helpful and knowing that we do have that flexible environment in the work place and that my management supports it. It put my mind at ease coming back to work, that I don't have to be 100 percent in my chair to do my work. Flexibility is key. I think in this day and age we have Blackberry's and laptops and we have cell phones and I can get on the Blackberry or get on the phone or turn the laptop on and send that email if I need to and that's kind of nice. So, I think we're really, really lucky in that we're raising a family in 2010 where

> we have the luxury of remote capabilities and communicating. So, I think it helps me balance being a mother and being a professional woman coming back into the workplace.

Donna describes the positive effect of her pragmatic approach to her work, as her more efficient schedule allows her to feel more balance in her work and family life.

> I found that I've been able to do my job more efficiently. So, I think I've been able to manage my time better knowing that when 5:00 o'clock hits I've got to get out the door. So, between 8:00 and 5:00, I've been able to manage my time so much better. I've been able to be so much more efficient with work that I'm actually probably delivering the same results that I was delivering that 10 plus hours before. So, whatever I need to get done because I have that 5:00 pm bell that's in the back of my head that's going to go off. And if it means that I get back to my customer the next day with an answer that can wait then that's kind of what it is. I have tasks and assignments that I can manage according to my schedule and I think it's okay if I don't get back to my clients until the next day.

Though her family role salience allows her to place parameters around her work hours, she pragmatically attends to work tasks after hours, when needed, so she does not compromise success in her work role.

> I'm sure there are going to be times when things are going to come up where I may need to get on the computer after she goes to bed. I'm probably okay with that if I need to but, again, she would take priority. Whatever tasks that I don't accomplish before 5:00 pm, I am willing to get back on the computer after 10:00 pm or after she goes to bed and finish up a couple more tasks so that I meet deadline. So that I can still be successful in the workplace without having to completely blow off a deadline or something like that.

Donna has a protean perspective regarding her career goals, emphasizing learning as the most important outcome.

> For a while there it was always the goal is to move up. So, here I am 11 years into my role within my job function and all I knew was to go for the next thing, the next job of greater responsibility. Now, we often think of that as moving up but, in the last few years, I think I've opened my mind a little bit more in that sometimes sideways movement is just as good as upward movement. So, I've done that and I've been in that frame of mind for 11 years to either move up or move sideways or do something different that will enhance my learning within the HR portfolio.

Her family role salience, however, prioritizes her career choices.

> Now that we are responsible for molding the mind and the life of a human being, it prioritizes our career. So for me, the priority has shifted. Maybe it's not the next promotion that I'm seeking now, but the next safe, comfortable role so that I'm able to manage leaving on time to spend time with my family.

Donna's value of relationalism further guides her career choices and her desire for balance enables her to feel comfortable in choosing to maintain the status quo.

> Since I became a mother and now that my child is the most important thing, I am okay with currently staying in a job that I'm comfortable in just so that I can balance my time a little bit better. So, recently I've talked myself into staying in a safer role within my career and not putting that pressure on myself to do the next thing. I think I'm okay with staying in my current role for the next year, for the next two years, and not feeling the need of having to take on a different role. So, just playing it safe and being comfortable in that I can kind of know what to expect in an 8-hour day, Monday through Friday, even January through December. So that makes me able to manage my work and life a little bit better without going crazy. So, it's being okay with being good at your job and comfortable in your job and not having to look for the next thing that is a challenge. That's how it is for now. So, I might need to turn down a traveling assignment and that's just an example of one of the things that I think I may need to adjust in my career, so that I'm able to maintain my routine and my schedule with my family and with my child and being a mother and balancing being a mother and being a working professional.

Adaptability and a protean mindset enable her to anticipate potential future challenges in integrating work and family. "But, as I grow in my career, I need to be focused on how to maintain work-life balance, while at the same time, dealing with the changing dynamics in my work (boss, customers, etc)."

Donna's feeling of family role salience also governs how she structures her work and family roles.

> I feel that we have to interact with her for her own goodness and development. We feel that we need to bond with her and be in that space in that moment with her and hang out with her and give her that 100 percent undivided attention. When she gets home from day care we have to spend those two hours that she's awake with her so she recognizes us and she knows that we're mom and dad. I feel that I just have to turn certain things off at a certain time so that I feel that I'm giving her 100 percent of my attention.

She feels a strong need to immerse herself in her family role without interruption from work, which results in high boundary separation and role balance.

> So, its setting times for certain things and knowing that between 8:00 to 5:00 it's work, between 5:00 to 7:00 it's time with our child, 7:00 to 10:30 it's time for me and my husband and then between 10:30 and 11:30 it's time with our child. So it's prioritizing, but it's also for me, setting up different times in the day where I do different things. And really immersing yourself in whatever you're focusing on at that particular point of the day, in other words work or family. Now it works for me. Some people can balance their little gadgets and checking Blackberry and spending time with their kids. My husband and I kind of have an agreement that we leave the Blackberry in the car the second the car goes into the garage. So, we don't take the Blackberry inside the house. We don't check Blackberry after 5:00 pm and it's worked really well. I'm sure there's going to be times when it's not 100 percent perfect where I can shut it off at 5:00 pm, but I think the compartmentalizing has helped me so far. It's setting those boundaries.

The strategies of high boundary separation and role balance also help Donna to create an effective routine for her work and family life, intensifying role enhancement.

> So setting boundaries and leaving the gadgets in the car has helped us to be in the moment. So, I think the whole mindset of not getting worked up, kind of rolling with it, but then also falling into a routine and a schedule has really helped me to be successful in balancing work and family, and balancing life and work. I have been sucked into a routine which, again, prior to being a mother, I don't think I would have been comfortable with it. So, I think that has changed me. I think that's made me have to be more organized. Yes, it's been different, but it's been good. We are part of an interesting age group and younger mothers may have a totally different experience.

Horizonalization: Donna. The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Donna's interview. The chart below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-5

Participant 4 (Donna): Horizonalization

CODE	DONNA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Work-Family Role Conflict	"I remember that I actually had anxiety prior to coming back in the office because I knew I	Work-Family Integration

CODE	DONNA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	was going back. Then, as the day got closer, I started having anxiety like: 'How am I going to come back?' And it was all different, mixed emotions because it was, 'How am I going to come back and still be the performer that I was prior to having my child and prior to going out on leave?'" (Strain-Based)	
Family Role Salience	"I'm sure there are going to be times when things are going to come up where I may need to get on the computer after she goes to bed. I'm probably okay with that if I need to but, again, she would take priority."	Work-Family Integration
Role Enhancement	"But, I knew for my sanity, for my career moving forward and for the good of my child to be social with other kids at the day care, it was best all around for me to come back. So, it was kind of different to come back and sit in front of the computer and not have to, every second of the day, look over to see what she's doing. So, I think in that sense it was really good. It was good that I got a break from her and she got a break from me."	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage
Trust	"I had family and friends that were able to give her feedings, so it wasn't this pressure that she had to be attached to me all the time so I think that also helped. The child had a routine; she was pretty easy going, and the day care that we found we could trust in that she was going to be in good hands."	Work-Family Integration
High Boundary Separation	"And really immersing yourself in whatever you're focusing on at that particular point of the day, in other words work or family. Now it works for me. Some people can balance their little gadgets and checking Blackberry and spending time with their kids. My husband and I kind of have an agreement that we leave the Blackberry in the car the second the car goes into the garage. So, we don't take the Blackberry inside the house. We don't check Blackberry after 5:00 pm and it's worked really well. I'm sure there's going to be times when it's not 100 percent perfect where I can	Work-Family Integration

CODE	DONNA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	shut it off at 5:00 pm, but I think the compartmentalizing has helped me so far. It's setting those boundaries."	
Role Balance	"So, its setting times for certain things and knowing that between 8:00 to 5:00 it's work, between 5:00 to 7:00 it's time with our child, 7:00 to 10:30 it's time for me and my husband and then between 10:30 and 11:30 it's time with our child. So it's prioritizing, but it's also for me, setting up different times in the day where I do different things."	Work-Family Integration
Relationalism	"Maybe it's not the next promotion that I'm seeking now, but the next safe, comfortable role so that I'm able to manage leaving on time to spend time with my family."	Career Choice/Mid-Career Stage
Protean	"For a while there it was always the goal is to move up. So, here I am 11 years into my role within my job function and all I knew was to go for the next thing, the next job of greater responsibility. Now, we often think of that as moving up but, in the last few years, I think I've opened my mind a little bit more in that sometimes sideways movement is just as good as upward movement. So, I've done that and I've been in that frame of mind for 11 years to either move up or move sideways or do something different that will enhance my learning within the HR portfolio."	Career Choice
Balance	"So, I think we're really, really lucky in that we're raising a family in 2010 where we have the luxury of remote capabilities and communicating. So, I think it helps me balance being a mother and being a professional woman coming back into the workplace."	Career Choice
Flexibility	"My management was so understanding and so flexible in that they openly communicated to me, 'Your child is your priority, we absolutely understand, if ever there's any time that you need to be away from your work space, absolutely.' I was offered the flexibility of working from home and doing teleconferences from wherever, so there was no expectation to	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage

CODE	DONNA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	be in the office for eight hours a day. So, I think that's really helpful and knowing that we do have that flexible environment in the work place and that my management supports it." (Environment)	
Pragmatic	"I found that I've been able to do my job more efficiently. So, I think I've been able to manage my time better knowing that when 5:00 o'clock hits I've got to get out the door. So, between 8:00 and 5:00, I've been able to manage my time so much better. I've been able to be so much more efficient with work that I'm actually probably delivering the same results that I was delivering that 10 plus hours before. So, whatever I need to get done because I have that 5:00 pm bell that's in the back of my head that's going to go off." (Job)	Mid-Career Stage/Career Choice

Participant 5: "Emily"

Emily is a 37 year-old married mother of two children, ages 3 and 16 months. She is a VP, Deputy General Counsel in the Legal field with 15 years of work experience. She was 34 years old when she had her first child

Textural description: Emily.

I never let myself feel guilty about wanting to work or having to work and leaving my daughter at home. We had a live-in nanny, so I felt like she was safe at home, and it really wasn't too bad of a transition. That's been a major thing, to be able to afford that just to make this work and home work in a way that's enough balance that we both can deal with it. The easiest part was knowing that she was cared for at home and having a boss that was really flexible. We have a pretty flexible working situation, everybody does, but now I've been here for five-and-a-half years, so it's worked out. I think having a boss that's flexible has also been key. Even though bosses can drive you crazy, you have to put it all in perspective: My commute is 15 to 20 minutes and there's no traffic and I have complete autonomy and flexibility. So, all of that has helped to make all this work. I like my life! I am very happy! I have no complaints. As you know, it took me a long time to get here.

And then it's just two lives; having to be 100 percent at work and 100 percent at home. There were times when I would literally call my husband and say 'I can't do this. I can't remember what I have to do at work, versus what I have to do at home and I'm not

getting things done' and when you add the kid element I just think it gets tenfold more difficult… And you can't really go back to where you were, so it's frustrating. But having a supportive and encouraging husband and a boss that understands makes a really big difference.

Mainly it's just time. I put a lot more time into it before. It's become increasingly demanding for a variety of reasons. When you get more senior and you have more responsibilities, when you have people reporting to you, and when you have more knowledge than other people, all of that stuff adds stressors and time demands on you. And you have a Blackberry that you never get to put down and so you have to learn to balance that. I struggled when I had kids, at first, when I was constantly on my Blackberry. Now, I go home and when I leave here, it could be three hours or it could be an hour, I don't look at my Blackberry. I don't answer my phone. That's my time with my kids. The *constant* demands to be 100 percent both at home and at work are exhausting. I could use a leave of absence to just chill.

I think that having confidence in who you are and what you do at work definitely impacts your ability to be a wife and a mom and it also probably emphasizes what I want to make sure my kids learn. They need to make goals and achieve those goals and they should feel like the world is their oyster and that they can do whatever they set their minds to and there are no limits. And all the women's lib stuff we've all heard, but not just for my daughter, I mean for my son too. But it's also given me, by interacting with other families that have kids and seeing trials and tribulations that everybody goes through, a perspective where you come into the office and you're like okay, so someone did something, big deal! It's definitely a shift in perspective. Sometimes you lose that perspective, but for the most part, I think it infiltrates most of your thinking. I apply a much more real-world analysis with less emotion. This is a company and you don't need to add emotion to it. The drama factor I have completely eliminated from my life and I try to do that at work.

I changed my work schedule. I don't feel guilty about it and I have adjusted and learned how to be more efficient in less time. Sometimes there isn't any more efficiency to squeeze out, it just is what it is and there are only so many hours in a day. In the future, my new schedule shift working from 8:00 until 3:30 and then going to the gym will probably be working from 8:00 until 3:30 and going home and dealing with the kids. But I've definitely been thinking about that because there's a woman in our department who has two kids, and she's slowly shifted her schedule all over. She's part-time, but she still keeps shifting her schedule based on age of kids, so that will definitely have to happen.

I don't take on big roles anymore. I take on what I think is a little bit more than I can handle and try to delegate better and try to find ways to train other people to help. I have completely stopped networking, which is terrible. I just don't care. I'm so exhausted and I'm spread so thin between being a mom and being a professional, I just don't have the energy to schmooze. If the content of the networking event is what I want to be at, I will go and listen, but I won't talk to anybody and then I'll leave. I'm much more careful with my time and who I spend it with and how I spend it. I just told my friends the other day, 'I have to really like you to give up my night with my kids to come and see you.' What I care

about more changes. I'd rather sit with my daughter and read her a book at night than answer email. So it's just reprioritization. But when I'm here, I try to be efficient and thorough, and I don't just let things go. I mean, if I needed to do something I would stay later or I would deal with it at home. I probably wouldn't forgo putting my kids to bed, but I would do it right afterwards, whatever I needed to get done.

Structural description: Emily. Emily discusses her feelings upon returning to work after the completion of her maternity leave, describing the transition as fairly easy, in large part, due to high quality childcare in her home. Her level of comfort and confidence in her child's caregiver mitigated any feelings of guilt she may have had in returning to work. She feels fortunate to be able to afford such a resource and is fully aware of the positive impact the childcare arrangement has on her ability to balance work and family in a way that works for her. She focuses on the positive aspects of her work role and describes feelings of satisfaction and role enhancement related to her flexible work environment and being well established in her job and organization.

To balance her career and family role salience, Emily engages in multi-role structuring, choosing to focus primarily on these two roles. Despite her best efforts, however, she experiences some work-family role conflict, due to the heavy time and energy demands of both of these roles. The positive psychological support she receives from her spouse and manager, however, helps to mitigate these feelings and contribute to her overall feelings of mid-career satisfaction and role enhancement.

Emily describes her feelings of work-family role conflict as primarily time-based and heavily impacted by her level of seniority and responsibility. Through multi-role structuring and high boundary separation, she creates a structure that allows her to focus on her children exclusively, for a few hours every evening without interruption. She realizes, however, that the price she pays for her diligent devotion to both of her roles is exhaustion.

Despite the feelings of exhaustion, Emily focuses on the role-enhancing aspects of being a mother and a professional. She describes these benefits as her ability to be a positive role model for her children and the perspective to view work and life events with a less emotional and more pragmatic attitude. Her pragmatic approach also allows her to make changes to her work schedule, without guilt, to facilitate feelings of work and family balance.

Emily realizes, however, that what works today may not work as well as her children get older and involved in more activities and she is prepared to be adaptable to future schedule changes. These protean characteristics are reflected in both the logistical and more substantive aspects of her career. Her family role salience ultimately guides her career choices and pragmatic approach to her work.

Textural-structural description of Emily's experience of integrating work and family roles. Emily discusses her feelings upon returning to work after the completion of her maternity leave, describing the transition as fairly easy, in large part, due to high quality childcare in her home. Her level of comfort and confidence in her child's caregiver mitigates any feelings of guilt that she may have had in returning to work.

> I never let myself feel guilty about wanting to work or having to work and leaving my daughter at home. We had a live-in nanny, so I felt like she was safe at home and it really wasn't too bad of a transition.

Emily feels fortunate to be able to afford such a resource and is fully aware of the positive impact the childcare arrangement has on her ability to balance work and family in a way that works for her.

> That's been a major thing, to be able to afford that just to make this work and home work in a way that's enough balance that we both can deal with it. The easiest part was knowing that she was cared for at home and having a boss that was really flexible.

She focuses on the positive aspects of her work role and describes feelings of satisfaction and role enhancement related to her flexible work environment and being well established in her job and organization.

> We have a pretty flexible working situation, everybody does, but now I've been here for five-and-a-half years, so it's worked out. I think having a boss that's flexible has also been key. Even though bosses can drive you crazy, you have to put it all in perspective: My commute is 15 to 20 minutes and there's no traffic and I have complete autonomy and flexibility. So, all of that has helped to make all this work. I like my life! I am very happy! I have no complaints. As you know, it took me a long time to get here.

To balance her career and family role salience, Emily engages in multi-role structuring, choosing to focus primarily on these two roles. "And then it's just two lives; having to be 100 percent at work and 100 percent at home." Despite her best efforts, however, she experiences some work-family role conflict, due to the heavy time and energy demands of both of these roles.

> There were times when I would literally call my husband and say 'I can't do this. I can't remember what I have to do at work, versus what I have to do at home and I'm not getting things done' and when you add the kid element I just think it gets tenfold more difficult. And you can't really go back to where you were, so it's frustrating.

The positive psychological support she receives from her spouse and manager, however, helps to mitigate these feelings and contribute to her overall feelings of mid-career satisfaction and role enhancement. "But having a supportive and encouraging husband and a boss that understands makes a really big difference."

Emily describes her feelings of work-family role conflict as primarily time-based and heavily impacted by her level of seniority and responsibility.

> Mainly it's just time. I put a lot more time into it before. It's become increasingly demanding for a variety of reasons. When you get more senior and you have more responsibilities, when you have people reporting to you, and when you have more

> knowledge than other people, all of that stuff adds stressors and time demands on you. And you have a Blackberry that you never get to put down and so you have to learn to balance that.

Through multi-role structuring and high boundary separation, she creates a structure that allows her to focus on her children exclusively, for a few hours every evening without interruption.

> I struggled when I had kids, at first, when I was constantly on my Blackberry. Now, I go home and when I leave here, it could three hours or it could be an hour, I don't look at my Blackberry. I don't answer my phone. That's my time with my kids.

Emily realizes, however, that the price she pays for her diligent devotion to both of her roles is exhaustion. "The *constant* demands to be 100 percent both at home and at work are exhausting. I could use a leave of absence to just chill."

Despite the feelings of exhaustion, Emily focuses on the role-enhancing aspects of being a mother and a professional. "I think that having confidence in who you are and what you do at work definitely impacts your ability to be a wife and a mom and it also probably emphasizes what I want to make sure my kids learn." She describes these benefits as her ability to be a positive role model for her children and the perspective to view work and life events with a less emotional and more pragmatic attitude.

> They need to make goals and achieve those goals and they should feel like the world is their oyster and that they can do whatever they set their minds to and there are no limits. And all the women's lib stuff we've all heard, but not just for my daughter, I mean for my son too. But it's also given me, by interacting with other families that have kids and seeing trials and tribulations that everybody goes through, a perspective where you come into the office and you're like okay, so someone did something, big deal! It's definitely a shift in perspective. Sometimes you lose that perspective, but for the most part, I think it infiltrates most of your thinking. I apply a much more real-world analysis with less emotion. This is a company and you don't need to add emotion to it. The drama factor I have completely eliminated from my life and I try to do that at work.

Emily's pragmatic approach also allows her to make changes to her work schedule, without guilt, to facilitate feelings of work and family balance.

> I changed my work schedule. I don't feel guilty about it and I have adjusted and learned how to be more efficient in less time. Sometimes there isn't any more efficiency to squeeze out, it just is what it is and there are only so many hours in a day.

She realizes, however, that what works today may not work as well as her children get older and involved in more activities and she is prepared to be adaptable to future schedule changes.

> In the future, my new schedule shift working from 8:00 until 3:30 and then going to the gym will probably be working from 8:00 until 3:30 and going home and dealing with the kids. But I've definitely been thinking about that because there's a woman in our department who has to two kids and she's slowly shifted her schedule all over. She's part-time, but she still keeps shifting her schedule based on age of kids, so that will definitely have to happen.

These protean characteristics of her career are reflected in both the logistical and more substantive aspects of her career.

> I don't take on big roles anymore. I take on what I think is a little bit more than I can handle and try to delegate better and try to find ways to train other people to help. I have completely stopped networking, which is terrible. I just don't care. I'm so exhausted and I'm spread so thin between being a mom and being a professional, I just don't have the energy to schmooze. If the content of the networking event is what I want to be at, I will go and listen, but I won't talk to anybody and then I'll leave.

Emily's family role salience ultimately guides her career choices and pragmatic approach to her work.

> I'm much more careful with my time and who I spend it with and how I spend it. I just told my friends the other day, 'I have to really like you to give up my night with my kids to come and see you.' What I care about more changes. I'd rather sit with my daughter and read her a book at night than answer email. So it's just reprioritization. But when I'm here, I try to be efficient and thorough and I don't just let things go. I mean, if I needed to do something I would stay later or I would deal with it at home. I probably wouldn't forgo putting my kids to bed, but I would do it right afterwards, whatever I needed to get done.

Horizonalization: Emily. The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Emily's interview. The chart below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-6

Participant 5 (Emily): Horizonalization

CODE	EMILY'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Work-Family Role Conflict (Time- Based)	"There were times when I would literally call my husband and say 'I can't do this. I can't remember what I have to do at work, versus what I have to do at home and I'm not getting things done' and when you add the kid element I just think it gets tenfold more difficult. It's a biological change in your system, as well as sort of the physical demands on you and the emotional, so all of those components together. And you can't really go back to where you were, so it's frustrating." (strain-based) "Mainly it's just time. I put a lot more time into it before. It's become increasingly demanding for a variety of reasons. When you get more senior and you have more responsibilities, when you have people reporting to you, and when you have more knowledge than other people, all of that stuff adds stressors and time demands on you. And you have a Blackberry that you never get to put down and so you have to learn to balance that." (Time-Based)	Work-Family Integration
Family Role Salience	"I'm much more careful with my time and who I spend it with and how I spend it. I just told my friends the other day, 'I have to really like you to give up my night with my kids to come and see you.' What I care about more changes. I'd rather sit with my daughter and read her a book at night than answer email. So it's just reprioritization."	Work-Family Integration
Spouse Support	"But having a supportive and encouraging	Work-Family

CODE	EMILY'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	husband … makes a really big difference."	Integration
Role Enhancement	"I think that having confidence in who you are and what you do at work definitely impacts your ability to be a wife and a mom and it also probably emphasizes what I want to make sure my kids learn."	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage
High Boundary Separation	"I struggled when I had kids, at first, when I was constantly on my Blackberry. Now, I go home and when I leave here, it could three hours or it could be an hour, I don't look at my Blackberry. I don't answer my phone. That's my time with my kids."	Work-Family Integration
Multi-Role Structuring	"And then it's just two lives; having to be 100 percent at work and 100 percent at home."	Work-Family Integration
Trust	"We had a live-in nanny, so I felt like she was safe at home and it really wasn't too bad of a transition."	Work-Family Integration
Protean	"In the future, my new schedule shift working from 8:00 until 3:30 and then going to the gym will probably be working from 8:00 until 3:30 and going home and dealing with the kids. But I've definitely been thinking about that because there's a woman in our department who has to two kids and she's slowly shifted her schedule all over. She's part-time, but she still keeps shifting her schedule based on age of kids, so that will definitely have to happen." (Adaptability)	Career Choice
Relationalism	"I don't take on big roles anymore. I take on what I think is a little bit more than I can handle and try to delegate better and try to find ways to train other people to help."	Career Choice/Mid-Career Stage
Balance	"That's been a major thing, to be able to afford that just to make this work and home work in a way that's enough balance that we both can deal with it."	Career Choice
Career Establishment	"We have a pretty flexible working situation, everybody does, but now I've been here for five-and-a-half years, so it's worked out. (Ease)	Mid-Career Stage
Flexibility	I think having a boss that's flexible has also	Mid-Career

CODE	EMILY'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	been key. Even though bosses can drive you crazy, you have to put it all in perspective: My commute is 15 to 20 minutes and there's no traffic and I have complete autonomy and flexibility. So, all of that has helped to make all this work." (Environment)	Stage/Work-Family Integration
Satisfaction	I like my life! I am very happy! I have no complaints. As you know, it took me a long time to get here."	Mid-Career Stage
Pragmatic	"I changed my work schedule. I don't feel guilty about it and I have adjusted and learned how to be more efficient in less time. Sometimes there isn't any more efficiency to squeeze out, it just is what it is and there are only so many hours in a day." (Job)	Mid-Career Stage/Career Choice

Participant 6: "Fran"

Fran is a 38 year-old married mother of a five month old child. She is an Information Officer in the field of Technology Management with 15 years of work experience. She was 38 years old when she had her first child.

***Textural description: Fran*.**

I think the most important thing for me, when I was going back to work, was having a day-care person who I felt that I trusted, so that I could actually go back to work and actually be at ease when I was working. So, I could perform my job in the manner in which they were expecting me to as I did before I left work. I feel like we did our homework on the front end, so that it was easier for me to go back to work knowing that I had someone there. The first couple of days I checked in with her two or three times a day and then after the first week I didn't call anymore during the day to check in, because I knew he was being well taken care of. When I was on maternity leave, I got involved in a New Moms group that was offered by the hospital and the relationships that I've made there with other working professionals have provided a support for us as we all return to work. Everybody emails a couple times a week to check in on each other and it's a real sense of community, which definitely helped the situation of going back to work.

I didn't want to set a precedence up front that I was going to be one of those moms who wasn't at work all the time or always had a sick child or something like that. So, when I did call (my boss) and tell him I was going to be late, I assured him that my husband and I were going to take turns in this role so that it wouldn't always be me going and I wouldn't always be missing work. My husband is an active participant in the work-family balancing process and together we have an organized process and a shared schedule. So, we had a shared responsibility at home and that, hopefully, it would be some time again before I was going to have to take time off of work to do that. It was tough. I felt bad because I'm not typically one who misses work just for an excuse here or there.

I'm in at 7:00 am every morning and I leave at 4:00 pm every afternoon, because now I get my work done between those periods of time and I want to go home. Your priorities have kind of shifted from being a full-time professional to being a part-time professional and a part-time mom. Maybe, actually, a full-time mom and a part-time professional is probably a better way to state it because that is now your priority because I have something more than my husband at home. I have a baby and getting home to and seeing that baby is more important to me than staying late. Work can wait. I mean, if there is a specific item that they need then I will try to bend, but as a constant that's no longer something I'm interested in doing. So, on Fridays, I work from home and I have since I started this job four years ago. But I've just applied for a new type of program that they're offering where you work 9 hours a day for 9 days and then you get a day off, so that I can have more time to balance. Depending on if we have additional children or not, I may look for more home-based work that would provide me more time so that I'm not spending time in the car commuting back and forth to work. That would give me more time with my family.

So, my career differences now are more around my aspirations within my career. I am no longer looking to have the job that's going to continue to climb the ladder and the reason is because I understand that the demands on those types of roles are more than I'm willing to put in. The demand at home to me is greater than the demand at work, so I don't want to put myself in a position where I have to be placed in that kind of a role. So, I'm looking at either staying in a similar role to what I have now or branching out into different roles. But again, not in a higher frame but kind of in the same type of area where I'm not going to have the pressure of having additional hours and additional responsibilities and additional stress that comes with those responsibilities placed on me when I'm trying to keep my stress level at an even keel level. I feel like you still have to grow and if I'm not going to grow by taking on additional responsibilities up the ladder, I'd rather grow by learning new things across.

So, as a manager you see things one way, but now that you're a mother you have different instincts that are coming through and sometimes you may be a little more understanding of specific situations that come up in the workplace. You definitely have a different sense about you in the way that you're doing your work. I find that I'm more patient in my role today than I was before and maybe that's because of my experience now as a mother and having to have patience with my child.

There are more bonds now in relationships that I have built in the workplace with other working professionals who are mothers because now I have not only a relationship with them as a colleague, but I also have the role of being a mother in common with them and it's brought me closer to some of those colleagues. So, as my mother role has kind of come in and having mothers in client roles, I feel like my negotiation skills are a little bit better because we actually have a bond outside of just being colleagues. Also, a closer bond with my own mother and with my sister and brother and their spouses because we can share experiences and ideas and everything that comes along with that role.

Structural description: Fran. Fran discusses her feelings upon returning to work after the completion of her maternity leave, describing the experience as fairly easy. She attributes her feelings of ease and a successful transition back to work to the establishment of a trusted childcare provider, which was the result of her own diligent and thorough research on childcare options. She further attributes her feelings of comfort in returning to work to the establishment of a strong support group of other working mothers. This group of women also provides a strong sense of community and relationships, which contribute to Fran's feeling of role enhancement.

Fran feels a strong need to communicate to her manager that she is committed to her work role. Her career role salience results in feelings of discomfort when she needs to inform her manager she must attend to her child and miss work, but the support of her spouse helps her to balance the demands of work and family. However, she takes a pragmatic perspective regarding her work because her family role salience is stronger. She strives to achieve a balance between her work and family roles through seeking out a different work schedule that will allow her more focused family time.

Fran's value of relationalism influences her future career goals. Her pragmatic approach to her work role influences her protean career mindset. She describes how the experience of motherhood has enabled her to have a different perspective on situations in her work role, resulting in more patience and empathy. Her new attitude also positively

influences her work relationships, both with colleagues and clients, which contributes to feelings of role enhancement.

Textural-structural description of Fran's experience of integrating work and family roles. Fran discusses her feelings upon returning to work after the completion of her maternity leave, describing the experience as fairly easy. She attributes her feelings of ease and a successful transition back to work to the establishment of a trusted childcare provider, which was the result of her own diligent and thorough research on childcare options.

> I think the most important thing for me, when I was going back to work, was having a day-care person who I felt that I trusted, so that I could actually go back to work and actually be at ease when I was working. So, I could perform my job in the manner in which they were expecting me to as I did before I left work. I feel like we did our homework on the front end, so that it was easier for me to go back to work knowing that I had someone there. The first couple of days I checked in with her two or three times a day and then after the first week I didn't call anymore during the day to check in, because I knew he was being well taken care of.

She further attributes her feelings of comfort in returning to work to the establishment of a strong support group of other working mothers. This group of women also provides a strong sense of community and relationships, which contribute to Fran's feeling of role enhancement.

> When I was on maternity leave, I got involved in a New Moms group that was offered by the hospital and the relationships that I've made there with other working professionals have provided a support for us as we all return to work. Everybody emails a couple times a week to check in on each other and it's a real sense of community, which definitely helped the situation of going back to work.

Fran feels a strong need to communicate to her manager that she is committed to her work role. "I didn't want to set a precedence up front that I was going to be one of those moms who wasn't at work all the time or always had a sick child or something like that." Her career role salience results in feelings of discomfort when she needs to inform

her manager that she must attend to her child and miss work, but the support of her spouse helps her to balance the demands of work and family.

> So, when I did call (my boss) and tell him I was going to be late, I assured him that my husband and I were going to take turns in this role so that it wouldn't always be me going and I wouldn't always be missing work. My husband is an active participant in the work-family balancing process and together we have an organized process and a shared schedule. So, we had a shared responsibility at home and that, hopefully, it would be some time again before I was going to have to take time off of work to do that. It was tough. I felt bad because I'm not typically one who misses work just for an excuse here or there.

However, she takes a pragmatic perspective regarding her work because her family role salience is stronger.

> I'm in at 7:00 am every morning and I leave at 4:00 pm every afternoon, because now I get my work done between those periods of time and I want to go home. Your priorities have kind of shifted from being a full-time professional to being a part-time professional and a part-time mom. Maybe, actually, a full-time mom and a part-time professional is probably a better way to state it because that is now your priority because I have something more than my husband at home. I have a baby and getting home to and seeing that baby is more important to me than staying late. Work can wait. I mean, if there is a specific item that they need then I will try to bend, but as a constant that's no longer something I'm interested in doing.

Fran strives to achieve a balance between her work and family roles through seeking out a different work schedule that will allow her more focused family time.

> So, on Fridays, I work from home and I have since I started this job four years ago. But I've just applied for a new type of program that they're offering where you work 9 hours a day for 9 days and then you get a day off, so that I can have more time to balance.

Her value of relationalism influences her future career goals.

> Depending on if we have additional children or not, I may look for more home-based work that would provide me more time so that I'm not spending time in the car commuting back and forth to work. That would give me more time with my family.

Fran's pragmatic approach to her work role influences her protean career mindset.

> So, my career differences now are more around my aspirations within my career. I am no longer looking to have the job that's going to continue to climb the ladder and the reason is because I understand that the demands on those types of roles are more than I'm willing to put in. The demand at home to me is greater than the demand at work, so I don't want to put myself in a position where I have to be placed in that kind of a role. So, I'm looking at either staying in a similar role to what I have now or branching out into different roles. But again, not in a higher frame but kind of in the same type of area where I'm not going to have the pressure of having additional hours and additional responsibilities and additional stress that comes with those responsibilities placed on me when I'm trying to keep my stress level at an even keel level. I feel like you still have to grow and if I'm not going to grow by taking on additional responsibilities up the ladder, I'd rather grow by learning new things across.

Fran describes how the experience of motherhood has enabled her to have a different perspective on situations in her work role, resulting in more patience and empathy.

> So, as a manager you see things one way, but now that you're a mother you have different instincts that are coming through and sometimes you may be a little more understanding of specific situations that come up in the workplace. You definitely have a different sense about you in the way that you're doing your work. I find that I'm more patient in my role today than I was before and maybe that's because of my experience now as a mother and having to have patient with my child.

Her new attitude also positively influences her work and family relationships, which contributes to feelings of role enhancement.

> There are more bonds now in relationships that I have built in the workplace with other working professionals who are mothers because now I have not only a relationship with them as a colleague, but I also have the role of being a mother in common with them and it's brought me closer to some of those colleagues. So, as my mother role has kind of come in and having mothers in client roles, I feel like my negotiation skills are a little bit better because we actually have a bond outside of just being colleagues. Also, a closer bond with my own mother and with my sister and brother and their spouses because we can share experiences and ideas and everything that comes along with that role.

Horizonalization: Fran. The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Fran's interview. The chart below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-7

Participant 6 (Fran): Horizonalization

CODE	FRAN'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Career Role Salience	"I didn't want to set a precedence up front that I was going to be one of those moms who wasn't at work all the time or always had a sick child or something like that." "It was tough. I felt bad because I'm not typically one who misses work just for an excuse here or there."	Work-Family Integration
Family Role Salience	"Your priorities have kind of shifted from being a full-time professional to being a part-time professional and a part-time mom. Maybe, actually, a full-time mom and a part-time professional is probably a better way to state it because that is now your priority because I have something more than my husband at home. I have a baby and getting home to and seeing that baby is more important to me than staying late."	Work-Family Integration
Role Enhancement	"There are more bonds now in relationships that I have built in the workplace with other working professionals who are mothers because now I have not only a relationship with them as a colleague, but I also have the role of being a mother in common with them and it's brought me closer to some of those colleagues. So, as my mother role has kind of come in and having mothers in client roles, I feel like my negotiation skills are a little bit better because we actually have a bond outside of just being colleagues. Also, a closer bond with my own mother and with my sister and brother and their spouses because we can share experiences and ideas and everything that comes along with that role." (Expanded Frame of Reference)	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage
Trust	"I think the most important thing for me, when I was going back to work, was having a day-care person who I felt that I trusted, so that I could actually go back to work and actually be at ease when I was working. So, I could	Work-Family Integration

CODE	FRAN'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	perform my job in the manner in which they were expecting me to as I did before I left work."	
Spouse Support	"So, we had a shared responsibility at home and that, hopefully, it would be some time again before I was going to have to take time off of work to do that."	Work-Family Integration
Relationalism	"Depending on if we have additional children or not, I may look for more home-based work that would provide me more time so that I'm not spending time in the car commuting back and forth to work. That would give me more time with my family."	Career Choice/Mid-Career Stage
Protean	I feel like you still have to grow and if I'm not going to grow by taking on additional responsibilities up the ladder, I'd rather grow by learning new things across."	Career Choice
Balance	"Work can wait. I mean, if there is a specific item that they need then I will try to bend, but as a constant that's no longer something I'm interested in doing."	Career Choice
Pragmatic	"I'm in at 7:00 am every morning and I leave at 4:00 pm every afternoon, because now I get my work done between those periods of time and I want to go home." (Job)	Mid-Career Stage/Career Choice

Participant 7: "Gina"

Gina is a (almost) 36 year-old married mother of a ten month old child. She is a Director of Emergency Medicine Operations in the field of Health Care Administration with 12 years of work experience. She was 34 years old when she had her first child.

Textural description: Gina.

I didn't cry my first day back or anything like that. I love my child, and I missed him certainly, but I like to be doing something. Like, all the time I like to keep busy and so for me it was great! It was almost a relief to be going back to work after having been home so much. In a lot of respects, it was a good experience to come back to because I like to

keep busy and it was tough being home all the time. Other people might say that their most difficult moment was leaving their child, but we have a day care and we visited it and he'd even been in it for a few hours. They actually allowed him to come in for a half day just to get transitioned and then we actually had an arrangement for the day care to take him on the days that I was working. I also had access to my email while I was home, so the easiest part was really kind of jumping back into work. In many ways it was like I hadn't left, so it was easy from that standpoint. I recognize that flexibility is necessary so, yes, so that's the biggest change in becoming a mother. I want to practice what I preach, but I do like that I have a little bit of that flexibility. I think from that standpoint it makes it easier. I'm not a micromanager. I don't like management and I don't want to be micromanaged. This is the first job where I almost feel like I've got that freedom.

I don't feel like I'm neglecting him in terms of not being here all the time. I feel guilty for not feeling guilty about leaving him. I hate to say it, but, there's a slight bit of relief. He's a work out. It's hard being with him all day long. I actually really like that he has day care to go to. That said, when I do pick him up, whatever the case may be, I'm always really happy to see him. It's always exciting to hear what his day has been like. He's treated very well, he's loved very much and I want him to grow up knowing that his mother has a career and lived her life too. I want him to have that healthy respect that mommies *and* daddies can work. There's that part of me that is glad that I have my career and have a life outside of the home and I respect anybody that stays at home, but it's just not me. I would get bored.

I feel like my job is equally important and he knows it so my husband doesn't push me on it. He's known all along, when we got married, that my intention was always to work. I wasn't going to be a stay-at-home mother because I really like working and I've gotten all these degrees and this education and this experience and I don't want to put it to waste. And more than that, I just really enjoy it and I want to be able to do it. I'm definitely lucky that I've got a husband who accepts me for who I am and understands that work is so important to me. He may roll his eyes, call me a crack-berry, get frustrated with me absolutely at times, but he does support me. He does understand it and he does do his best to help me achieve it and to help us work around things as we need to. I'm thankful for that flexibility.

In many ways, it hasn't changed who I am in my career. People will often tell you, 'Oh, you never know how somebody is going to change when they become a mother and for all you know you might not even be interested in your career anymore', but I'm still as much of a workaholic as I ever was. In theory, I don't have to be a workaholic. I could probably work less and be okay, but I just like to work. I actually define that a lot as to who I am. But, as much as work is super important to me, when push comes to shove my child does come first. I love being a professional, but I also love being a mother. So as a mother, you know that motherhood ultimately does come first. But, motherhood is just one piece of who I am. My career is another piece, a major piece. It affects how you're seen; it affects how you see the world and your job and what's important. Yes, it's important to me to be a good mother, absolutely it is, but it's maybe even just a bit more important that I'm

seen as a good manager and a good administrator. I'm very proud of what I do. That respect is there and that feels good because I have worked so hard to do it, to get here.

I just struggle between wanting to come home and be a parent and stay at work and finish whatever I'm in the middle of because that's just who I am. So, it's tough to do that. I feel bad when I need to drop my son at day care when he might be sick, but I also get annoyed when day care calls. But the cumulative effect of being out of the office is very stressful and I need to weigh the two against each other. So, my work dynamics compete with the need to be with my son and pick him up from daycare. I will work a straight day and if I'm in the middle of something, I have a very hard time just stopping and that hasn't really changed, but sometimes it has to. So, there are physically times I've had to stop myself because I have to go, so that's definitely a change and that's a mental shift that's sometimes hard for me to do. About 50 percent of the time it will win out either way and actually maybe it's more like 80/20. A lot of times I will end up staying later than I need to. I have added one more dimension into my already busy schedule and so something has got to give and that's an everyday process trying to work out what's going to give.

You could look at my career and you could almost argue that I've had multiple careers. But, I feel like my career and all these multiple things that I've done have actually led me to my current work role and my current career. The marketing, the resume strategy and staffing and the accounting, all of that together has influenced kind of where I wanted to go. I fell into this role, but it's absolutely perfect for my background and all of the things that I have done up to this point in my career, so that's how I look at it. A lot of variety, a lot of different people, a lot of things and I like to think that it's helped. It's put me where I am today and gives me some insight and makes it a little easier. There's been a lot of angst, a lot of things along the way, but I can't really regret any of them because each one of them has led me to the next thing. I anticipate there will be waves in my work life and in my personal life too for that matter, so I try to keep that in mind.

Structural description: Gina. Gina discusses her return to work after her maternity leave and describes the experience as positive. Returning to work contributes to feelings of role enhancement, as she enjoys getting out of the house and being busy with other things. She describes her transition back to work as smooth and without worry. This feeling of ease is heavily influenced by an established and trusted childcare arrangement, a supportive spouse, and a flexible transition schedule back to work. Moreover, her flexible work environment and the flexibility of her job have a positive impact on her family role.

Gina expresses feelings of role enhancement as a result of having multiple roles and she is very self-aware she would not be happy without her work role. She expresses

feelings of career role salience as she describes her intention to work even before her child was born and the support of her spouse is a significant contributing factor to the Gina's ability to succeed in her work role. Though she is aware of the intensity of her career role salience and its influence on her identity, she also expresses feelings of family role salience. She describes her career role salience, however, as comprising a bigger part of her identity. Performing well in her career role contributes to feelings of satisfaction.

The strength of both her career and family role salience contributes to Gina's feelings of work-family role conflict. A preference for high boundary separation further intensifies her desire to immerse herself in her work role, which also exacerbates feelings of work-family role conflict. Gina discusses the protean nature of the variety of work roles that have comprised her overall career, describing the process as very satisfying and positive. Her protean career mindset also enables her to have an adaptable perspective toward her work and her life.

Textural-structural description of Gina's experience of integrating work and family roles. Gina discusses her return to work after her maternity leave and describes the experience as positive.

> I didn't cry my first day back or anything like that. I love my child and I missed him certainly, but I like to be doing something. Like, all the time I like to keep busy and so for me it was great!

Returning to work contributes to feelings of role enhancement, as she enjoys getting out of the house and being busy with other things.

> It was almost a relief to be going back to work after having been home so much. In a lot of respects, it was a good experience to come back to because I like to keep busy and it was tough being home <u>all</u> the time.

Gina describes her transition back to work as smooth and without worry. This feeling of ease is heavily influenced by an established and trusted childcare arrangement and a flexible transition schedule back to work.

> Other people might say that their most difficult moment was leaving their child, but we have a day care and we visited it and he'd even been in it for a few hours. They actually allowed him to come in for a half day just to get transitioned and then we actually had an arrangement for the day care to take him on the days that I was working. I also had access to my email while I was home, so the easiest part was really kind of jumping back into work. In many ways it was like I hadn't left, so it was easy from that standpoint.

Moreover, her flexible work environment and the flexibility of her job have a positive impact on her family role.

> I recognize that flexibility is necessary so, yes, so that's the biggest change in becoming a mother. I want to practice what I preach, but I do like that I have a little bit of that flexibility. I think from that standpoint it makes it easier. I'm not a micromanager. I don't like management and I don't want to be micromanaged. This is the first job where I almost feel like I've got that freedom.

Gina expresses feelings of role enhancement as a result of having multiple roles and she is very self-aware she would not be happy without her work role.

> I don't feel like I'm neglecting him in terms of not being here all the time. I feel guilty for not feeling guilty about leaving him. I hate to say it, but, there's a slight bit of relief. He's a work out. It's hard being with him all day long. I actually really like that he has day care to go to. That said, when I do pick him up, whatever the case may be, I'm always really happy to see him. It's always exciting to hear what his day has been like. He's treated very well, he's loved very much and I want him to grow up knowing that his mother has a career and lived her life too. I want him to have that healthy respect that mommies *and* daddies can work. There's that part of me that is glad that I have my career and have a life outside of the home and I respect anybody that stays at home, but it's just not me. I would get bored.

Gina expresses feelings of career role salience as she describes her intention to work even before her child was born and the support of her spouse is a significant contributing factor to her ability to succeed in her work role.

> I feel like my job is equally important and he knows it so my husband doesn't push me on it. He's known all along, when we got married, that my intension was always to work. I wasn't going to be a stay-at-home mother because I really like working and I've gotten all these degrees and this education and this experience and I don't want to put it to waste. And more than that, I just really enjoy it and I want to be able to do it. I'm definitely lucky that I've got a husband who accepts me for who I am and understands that work is so important to me. He may roll his eyes, call me a crack-berry, get frustrated with me absolutely at times, but he does support me. He does understand it and he does do his best to help me achieve it and to help us work around things as we need to. I'm thankful for that flexibility.

Though she is aware of the intensity of her career role salience and its influence on her identity, Gina also expresses feelings of family role salience.

> In many ways, it hasn't changed who I am in my career. People will often tell you, 'Oh, you never know how somebody is going to change when they become a mother and for all you know you might not even be interested in your career anymore', but I'm still as much of a workaholic as I ever was. In theory, I don't have to be a workaholic. I could probably work less and be okay, but I just like to work. I actually define that a lot as to who I am. But, as much as work is super important to me, when push comes to shove my child does come first. I love being a professional, but I also love being a mother. So as a mother, you know that motherhood ultimately does come first.

Gina describes her career role salience, however, as comprising a bigger part of her identity. Performing well in her career role contributes to feelings of satisfaction.

> But, motherhood is just one piece of who I am. My career is another piece, a major piece. It affects how you're seen; it affects how you see the world and your job and what's important. Yes, it's important to me to be a good mother, absolutely it is, but it's maybe even just a bit more important that I'm seen as a good manager and a good administrator. I'm very proud of what I do. That respect is there and that feels good because I have worked so hard to do it, to get here.

The strength of both her career and family role salience contributes to feelings of work-family role conflict.

> I just struggle between wanting to come home and be a parent and stay at work and finish whatever I'm in the middle of because that's just who I am. So, it's tough to do that. I feel bad when I need to drop my son at day care when he might be sick, but I also get annoyed when day care calls. But the cumulative effect of being out of the office is very stressful and I need to weigh the two against each other. So,

> my work dynamics compete with the need to be with my son and pick him up from daycare.

A preference for high boundary separation further intensifies Gina's desire to immerse herself in her work role, which also exacerbates feelings of work-family role conflict.

> I will work a straight day and if I'm in the middle of something, I have a very hard time just stopping and that hasn't really changed, but sometimes it has to. So, there are physically times I've had to stop myself because I have to go, so that's definitely a change and that's a mental shift that's sometimes hard for me to do. About 50 percent of the time it will win out either way and actually maybe it's more like 80/20. A lot of times I will end up staying later than I need to. I have added one more dimension into my already busy schedule and so something has got to give and that's an everyday process trying to work out what's going to give.

Gina discusses the protean nature of the variety of work roles that have comprised her overall career, describing the process as very satisfying and positive.

> You could look at my career and you could almost argue that I've had multiple careers. But, I feel like my career and all these multiple things that I've done have actually led me to my current work role and my current career. The marketing, the resume strategy and staffing and the accounting, all of that together has influenced kind of where I wanted to go. I fell into this role, but it's absolutely perfect for my background and all of the things that I have done up to this point in my career, so that's how I look at it. A lot of variety, a lot of different people, a lot of things and I like to think that it's helped. It's put me where I am today and gives me some insight and makes it a little easier.

Gina's protean career mindset also enables her to have an adaptable perspective toward her work and her life.

> There's been a lot of angst, a lot of things along the way, but I can't really regret any of them because each one of them has led me to the next thing. I anticipate there will be waves in my work life and in my personal life too for that matter, so I try to keep that in mind.

Horizonalization: Gina. The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Gina's interview. The chart below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-8

Participant 7 (Gina): Horizonalization

CODE	GINA' S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Work-Family Role Conflict	"I just struggle between wanting to come home and be a parent and stay at work and finish whatever I'm in the middle of because that's just who I am. So, it's tough to do that. I feel bad when I need to drop my son at day care when he might be sick, but I also get annoyed when day care calls. But the cumulative effect of being out of the office is very stressful and I need to weigh the two against each other. So, my work dynamics compete with the need to be with my son and pick him up from daycare." (strain-based) "A lot of times I will end up staying later than I need to. I have added one more dimension into my already busy schedule and so something has got to give and that's an everyday process trying to work out what's going to give." (Time-Based)	Work-Family Integration
Career Role Salience	"In theory, I don't have to be a workaholic. I could probably work less and be okay, but I just like to work. I actually define that a lot as to who I am." "Yes, it's important to me to be a good mother, absolutely it is, but it's maybe even just a bit more important that I'm seen as a good manager and a good administrator." "But, motherhood is just one piece of who I am. My career is another piece, a major piece. It affects how you're seen; it affects how you see the world and your job and what's important."	Work-Family Integration
Family Role Salience	"But, as much as work is super important to me, when push comes to shove my child does come first. I love being a professional, but I also love being a mother. So as a mother, you know that motherhood ultimately does come first."	Work-Family Integration

CODE	GINA' S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Role Enhancement	"I didn't cry my first day back or anything like that. I love my child and I missed him certainly, but I like to be doing something. Like, all the time I like to keep busy and so for me it was great!" (Personal Gratification)	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage
Trust	"Other people might say that their most difficult moment was leaving their child, but we have a day care and we visited it and he'd even been in it for a few hours. They actually allowed him to come in for a half day just to get transitioned and then we actually had an arrangement for the day care to take him on the days that I was working."	Work-Family Integration
Spouse Support	"I'm definitely lucky that I've got a husband who accepts me for who I am and understands that work is so important to me. He may roll his eyes, call me a crack-berry, get frustrated with me absolutely at times, but he does support me. He does understand it and he does do his best to help me achieve it and to help us work around things as we need to. I'm thankful for that flexibility."	Work-Family Integration
High Boundary Separation	"I will work a straight day and if I'm in the middle of something, I have a very hard time just stopping and that hasn't really changed, but sometimes it has to. So, there are physically times I've had to stop myself because I have to go, so that's definitely a change and that's a mental shift that's sometimes hard for me to do."	Work-Family Integration
Protean	"You could look at my career and you could almost argue that I've had multiple careers. But, I feel like my career and all these multiple things that I've done have actually led me to my current work role and my current career. The marketing, the resume strategy and staffing and the accounting, all of that together has influenced kind of where I wanted to go." (Self-Awareness)	Career Choice
Flexibility	"I do like that I have a little bit of that flexibility. I think from that standpoint it makes it easier. I'm not a micromanager. I don't like management and I don't want to be	Mid-Career Stage/Work-Family Integration

CODE	GINA' S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	micromanaged. (Environment) This is the first job where I almost feel like I've got that freedom." (Job)	
Satisfaction	"I'm very proud of what I do. That respect is there and that feels good because I have worked so hard to do it, to get here."	Mid-Career Stage

Participant 8: "Helen"

Helen is a 36 year-old married mother of two children, ages three and a half and 3 months. She is a Foreign Service Officer in the field of Federal Civil Service with 12 years of work experience. She was 33 years old when she had her first child.

Textural description: Helen.

One of the interesting things about the Foreign Service is that the dividing line between your professional and your personal life is blurred pretty quickly. The transition back to work was easy because everyone was a surrogate family because you're removed from everybody else. In fact, they gave me a new office just so I could shut the door and nurse and things like that. I got lots of time off. The embassy community was very small and it was a very supportive environment. There's a lot in place to encourage everything that you need to have a happy, healthy family life.

I think about what it would have been like if I had my kids younger and I probably would have thrown myself into the mom role. I had been working for so long, so that role was really comfortable to me and being a mother was not. So, in a way, I kind of wanted to go back to work with the first one because the mommy thing wasn't clicking. It wasn't intuitive. I didn't feel natural at it. I didn't feel gifted at it, and there was a lot of comfort in my professional identity and not so much in my mommy identity because my professional identity was established before I had my kids. So, going back on some level was a little bit of a relief. The cognitive load was more taxing to be a mom than it was to be a professional. For both of our kids, we have a nanny that works full-time and we have somebody else that cleans. So, all of those typical domestic things that I think become very taxing and you've got to figure out how to do are easier when you've got domestic staff to take some of that role for you.

Before, I felt very comfortable working a 70 hour work week. I loved the job. So, the identity that I had before children is that I felt very comfortable just working a lot and I got a lot done. I felt like I could throw all my time there and that's kind of where I wanted

to spend my time and now I feel like that's not an option. I feel a lot less comfortable spending a lot of time at work, so I have to be careful. And now I don't think I could be anywhere as professionally successful as I was at that point. My trajectory was much different. And it all comes back to time, what you have the time and energy to do and also the shift in priorities. Doing those things that were of moderate importance to work now have almost no importance. If it doesn't need to be done, then I think those are the things I would be comfortable cutting out. So, I guess primarily it is how much time and energy I would give to the job then versus now. I used to love little things. I used to love to clean and I like organizing. Now…forget it! I think that even though I enjoy it, I don't enjoy it enough to cut something that's more important.

We now have to make different choices about where we choose to go. We go out and we bid and we try to find our next role, so I find that I'm choosing different roles. For example, the job that I'm going to take next, the one that we're coming back to D.C. for, is shift work. So, it's a 24/7 office, but I chose it because each shift will only be 8 hours and I will not be pressured internally or externally to work for 12 hours a day. In the future, we will choose countries based on what kind of schools they've got. So, I'm finding that I choose different jobs and I'm less ambitious. I'm not as concerned about 'will I make Ambassador or not?' And for people with families that's not important. You join the Foreign Service so you can live that lifestyle, not to be an Ambassador. So, I'm finding that shift is taking place. I'm less ambitious and a little less aggressive. I think it's probably healthier too. I feel like the way I look at life now is a bit more holistic and not through the myopic perspective of 'This is my identity, this is everything.' Yes, it's probably healthier.

I guess there's a bit of a conflict there that I want to do it all. I want to be a great mom, a great professional, a great everything and I don't think that's doable in the long term. I think if I wasn't a working mom our life would be difficult because I would have to clip coupons and I would have to do all of those cost-saving measures. We're a lot more comfortable, but when we come back to the States, we're going to bring our nanny with us. If I wasn't working, that would not be an option. So, I think the financial comfort of having two incomes is huge and because I'm not with the kids all day I feel like when I'm with them I'm a better mom anyway. It's nice to have those dual roles where I don't exhaust myself in one of them. So, for me, working works. Otherwise, I think I'd be a lousy mom and a lousy domestic goddess. One way that being a mom has really helped my job is that when I say no, that means no and we're not going to have an argument at the window and I'm not going to feel bad. It's kind of like with kids. I don't negotiate with a two year old about bedtime the same way that I don't negotiate with an applicant about a decision that I've made. So, in a way that has been really helpful. It's also been really helpful at drawing boundaries. Time becomes the most precious commodity and I feel that I got better at managing mine. Now, I like the routine that has become part of my life as well, so that's been helpful and it makes my life feel a little bit more grounded and normalized. I'm finding a lot of peace and comfort in the routines in my life because the girl's have routines. My husband and I have kind of a nice relationship now and maybe those extreme differences in parenting are complementing each other now because we play very different roles for our girls and I'm beginning to appreciate different things about him

now. Though getting married later and having kids later provided some challenges to our marriage, those challenges were offset by the additional financial resources.

I'm surprised at how organized I feel like I need to be in order to be a successful parent and a successful professional and at how much time is needed to organize the whole family. I am also surprised that we have reverted to traditional gender roles. I am surprised that the things I used to really enjoy, like splitting a bottle of wine with my husband, are now just off the table. I am surprised at how different things bubble up as a parent that if I had chosen to go as a non-parent through this life, I wouldn't have had to deal with. It's just interesting. I don't think I'd give it up. I just don't know how I could have prepared for it. You just kind of deal with it as it comes up. I have had to develop my own strategies to cope. I am focused on how to make the reality work and letting go of the ideal and it has taken a while to let it all go. So, all of these things about adjusting to life in the United States are going to be a challenge. So, we have to be even better about time, money, how we organize and how we prioritize. All of that stuff has to be a little bit more thoughtful.

Structural description: Helen. Helen describes the influence of her unique professional environment, characterized by low boundary separation, on her transition back to work after the birth of her child. She describes the experience as very positive and the working environment as very flexible and supportive. Her career role salience influences her desire to return to work. She feels more efficacy and ease in her career role as compared to her family role. She also enjoys being able to offload certain undesirable tasks associated with the family role to a childcare provider. All of these factors contribute to an overall feeling of role enhancement.

Though Helen's career role salience influenced her desire to work long hours and immerse herself in her work role, after the birth of her child, her value of relationalism limits her ability to continue that practice. Her desire for balance now tempers her career role salience, resulting in a more pragmatic attitude towards her work. Her balanced approach manifests itself in a process of multi-role structuring.

Feelings of relationalism and a desire for balance guide Helen's future career choices. Though she experiences some feelings of work-family role conflict, she chooses

to focus instead on the role-enhancing effects of her competing roles. Feelings of role enhancement are heavily influenced by full-time childcare, financial security, and variety in her life.

Helen also experiences the role-enhancing effects of her mother role on her work role, her overall quality of life, and her relationship with her spouse. She reflects on her experience of integrating her career and family roles and describes unanticipated feelings and outcomes, which stimulates the need for a different approach and attitude to managing her roles. Her adaptable attitude enables her to proactively prepare for an upcoming change in her work and family life.

Textural-structural description of Helen's experience of integrating work and family roles. Helen describes the influence of her unique professional environment, characterized by low boundary separation, on her transition back to work after the birth of her child.

> One of the interesting things about the Foreign Service is that the dividing line between your professional and your personal life is blurred pretty quickly. The transition back to work was easy because everyone was a surrogate family because you're removed from everybody else.

She describes the experience as very positive and the working environment as very flexible and supportive.

> In fact, they gave me a new office just so I could shut the door and nurse and things like that. I got lots of time off. The embassy community was very small and it was a very supportive environment. There's a lot in place to encourage everything that you need to have a happy, healthy family life.

Helen's career role salience influences her desire to return to work.

> I think about what it would have been like if I had my kids younger and I probably would have thrown myself into the mom role. I had been working for so long, so that role was really comfortable to me and being a mother was not. So, in a way, I kind of wanted to go back to work with the first one because the mommy thing

> wasn't clicking. It wasn't intuitive. I didn't feel natural at it. I didn't feel gifted at it, and there was a lot of comfort in my professional identity and not so much in my mommy identity because my professional identity was established before I had my kids. So, going back on some level was a little bit of a relief.

She feels more efficacy and ease in her career role as compared to her family role. "The cognitive load was more taxing to be a mom than it was to be a professional." She also enjoys being able to offload certain undesirable tasks associated with the family role to a childcare provider. "For both of our kids, we have a nanny that works full-time and we have somebody else that cleans." All of these factors contribute to an overall feeling of role enhancement. "So, all of those typical domestic things that I think become very taxing and you've got to figure out how to do are easier when you've got domestic staff to take some of that role for you."

Though her career role salience influenced her desire to work long hours and immerse herself in her work role, after the birth of her child, Helen's value of relationalism limits her ability to continue that practice.

> Before, I felt very comfortable working a 70 hour work week. I loved the job. So, the identity that I had before children is that I felt very comfortable just working a lot and I got a lot done. I felt like I could throw all my time there and that's kind of where I wanted to spend my time and now I feel like that's not an option.

Her desire for balance now tempers her career role salience, resulting in a more pragmatic attitude towards her work.

> I feel a lot less comfortable spending a lot of time at work, so I have to be careful. And now I don't think I could be anywhere as professionally successful as I was at that point. My trajectory was much different. And it all comes back to time, what you have the time and energy to do and also the shift in priorities. Doing those things that were of moderate importance to work now have almost no importance. If it doesn't need to be done, then I think those are the things I would be comfortable cutting out. So, I guess primarily it is how much time and energy I would give to the job then versus now.

Her balanced approach manifests itself in a process of multi-role structuring. "I used to love little things. I used to love to clean and I like organizing. Now…forget it! I think that even though I enjoy it, I don't enjoy it enough to cut something that's more important."

Feelings of relationalism and a desire for balance guide Helen's future career choices.

> We now have to make different choices about where we choose to go. We go out and we bid and we try to find our next role, so I find that I'm choosing different roles. For example, the job that I'm going to take next, the one that we're coming back to D.C. for, is shift work. So, it's a 24/7 office, but I chose it because each shift will only be 8 hours and I will not be pressured internally or externally to work for 12 hours a day. In the future, we will choose countries based on what kind of schools they've got. So, I'm finding that I choose different jobs and I'm less ambitious. I'm not as concerned about 'will I make Ambassador or not?' And for people with families that's not important. You join the Foreign Service so you can live that lifestyle, not to be an Ambassador. So, I'm finding that shift is taking place. I'm less ambitious and a little less aggressive. I think it's probably healthier too. I feel like the way I look at life now is a bit more holistic and not through the myopic perspective of 'This is my identity, this is everything.' Yes, it's probably healthier.

Though Helen experiences some feelings of work-family role conflict, she chooses to focus instead on the role-enhancing effects of her competing roles.

> I guess there's a bit of a conflict there that I want to do it all. I want to be a great mom, a great professional, a great everything and I don't think that's doable in the long term. I think if I wasn't a working mom our life would be difficult because I would have to clip coupons and I would have to do all of those cost-saving measures.

Feelings of role enhancement are heavily influenced by full-time childcare, financial security, and variety in her life.

> We're a lot more comfortable, but when we come back to the States, we're going to bring our nanny with us. If I wasn't working, that would not be an option. So, I think the financial comfort of having two incomes is huge and because I'm not with the kids all day I feel like when I'm with them I'm a better mom anyway. It's nice to have those dual roles where I don't exhaust myself in one of them. So, for me,

> working works. Otherwise, I think I'd be a lousy mom and a lousy domestic goddess.

Helen also experiences the role-enhancing effects of her mother role on her work role, her overall quality of life, and her relationship with her spouse.

> One way that being a mom has really helped my job is that when I say no, that means no and we're not going to have an argument at the window and I'm not going to feel bad. It's kind of like with kids. I don't negotiate with a two year old about bedtime the same way that I don't negotiate with an applicant about a decision that I've made. So, in a way that has been really helpful. It's also been really helpful at drawing boundaries. Time becomes the most precious commodity and I feel that I got better at managing mine. Now, I like the routine that has become part of my life as well, so that's been helpful and it makes my life feel a little bit more grounded and normalized. I'm finding a lot of peace and comfort in the routines in my life because the girl's have routines. My husband and I have kind of a nice relationship now and maybe those extreme differences in parenting are complementing each other now because we play very different roles for our girls and I'm beginning to appreciate different things about him now. Though getting married later and having kids later provided some challenges to our marriage, those challenges were offset by the additional financial resources.

Helen reflects on her experience of integrating her career and family roles and describes unanticipated feelings and outcomes, which stimulates the need for a different approach and attitude to managing her roles.

> I'm surprised at how organized I feel like I need to be in order to be a successful parent and a successful professional and at how much time is needed to organize the whole family. I am also surprised that we have reverted to traditional gender roles. I am surprised that the things I used to really enjoy, like splitting a bottle of wine with my husband, are now just off the table. I am surprised at how different things bubble up as a parent that if I had chosen to go as a non-parent through this life, I wouldn't have had to deal with. It's just interesting. I don't think I'd give it up. I just don't know how I could have prepared for it. You just kind of deal with it as it comes up. I have had to develop my own strategies to cope. I am focused on how to make the reality work and letting go of the ideal and it has taken a while to let it all go.

Her adaptable attitude enables her to proactively prepare for an upcoming change in her work and family life.

So, all of these things about adjusting to life in the United States are going to be a challenge. So, we have to be even better about time, money, how we organize and how we prioritize. All of that stuff has to be a little bit more thoughtful.

Horizonalization: Helen. The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Helen's interview. The chart below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-9

Participant 8 (Helen): Horizonalization

CODE	HELEN'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Work-Family Role Conflict	"I guess there's a bit of a conflict there that I want to do it all. I want to be a great mom, a great professional, a great everything and I don't think that's doable in the long term." (Strain-Based)	Work-Family Integration
Career Role Salience	"I had been working for so long, so that role was really comfortable to me and being a mother was not. So, in a way, I kind of wanted to go back to work with the first one because the mommy thing wasn't clicking. It wasn't intuitive. I didn't feel natural at it. I didn't feel gifted at it, and there was a lot of comfort in my professional identity and not so much in my mommy identity because my professional identity was established before I had my kids. So, going back on some level was a little bit of a relief."	Work-Family Integration
Role Enhancement	"The cognitive load was more taxing to be a mom than it was to be a professional." (Reduced Role Strain) "For both of our kids, we have a nanny that works full-time and we have somebody else that cleans." (Additional Income) "So, all of those typical domestic things that I think become very taxing and you've got to figure out how to do are easier when you've got domestic staff to take some of that role for	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage

CODE	HELEN'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	you." (Additional Income) "We're a lot more comfortable, but when we come back to the States, we're going to bring our nanny with us. If I wasn't working, that would not be an option. So, I think the financial comfort of having two incomes is huge and because I'm not with the kids all day I feel like when I'm with them I'm a better mom anyway." (Additional Income) "One way that being a mom has really helped my job is that when I say no, that means no and we're not going to have an argument at the window and I'm not going to feel bad. It's kind of like with kids. I don't negotiate with a two year old about bedtime the same way that I don't negotiate with an applicant about a decision that I've made. So, in a way that has been really helpful. It's also been really helpful at drawing boundaries." (Expanded Frame of Reference)	
Multi-Role Structuring	"I used to love little things. I used to love to clean and I like organizing. Now…forget it! I think that even though I enjoy it, I don't enjoy it enough to cut something that's more important."	Work-Family Integration
Low Boundary Separation	"One of the interesting things about the Foreign Service is that the dividing line between your professional and your personal life is blurred pretty quickly. The transition back to work was easy because everyone was a surrogate family because you're removed from everybody else."	Work-Family Integration
Balance	"I feel a lot less comfortable spending a lot of time at work, so I have to be careful. And now I don't think I could be anywhere as professionally successful as I was at that point. My trajectory was much different. And it all comes back to time, what you have the time and energy to do and also the shift in priorities."	Career Choice
Relationalism	"We now have to make different choices about	Career

CODE	HELEN'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	where we choose to go. We go out and we bid and we try to find our next role, so I find that I'm choosing different roles. For example, the job that I'm going to take next, the one that we're coming back to D.C. for, is shift work. So, it's a 24/7 office, but I chose it because each shift will only be 8 hours and I will not be pressured internally or externally to work for 12 hours a day. In the future, we will choose countries based on what kind of schools they've got. So, I'm finding that I choose different jobs and I'm less ambitious."	Choice/Mid-Career Stage
Flexibility	"In fact, they gave me a new office just so I could shut the door and nurse and things like that. I got lots of time off. The embassy community was very small and it was a very supportive environment. There's a lot in place to encourage everything that you need to have a happy, healthy family life." (Environment)	Mid-Career Stage/Work-Family Integration
Pragmatic	"Doing those things that were of moderate importance to work now have almost no importance. If it doesn't need to be done, then I think those are the things I would be comfortable cutting out. So, I guess primarily it is how much time and energy I would give to the job then versus now." (Job)	Mid-Career Stage/Career Choice

Participant 9: "Isabelle"

Isabelle is a 37 year-old married mother of a nine month old child. She is a Foreign Affairs Officer in the field of Government/Foreign Affairs with 13 years of work experience. She was 37 years old when she had her first child.

Textural description: Isabelle.

I had a lot of anxiety, but when I actually did go back it was so much easier when he was home with her. I still felt kind of like I had one foot at home and then going back to the office wasn't as difficult as I had anticipated because I knew my office really well. I knew my job so well that I didn't feel as much stress as I think some other women feel. The first six weeks were actually easier at first and then it got a little bit more difficult just

in terms of physical exhaustion and mommy guilt. So, the first four weeks he was home made the transition remarkably easier than I thought it would be and I recommend that to all my female friends who have kids. It's so much easier if your husband can stay home after you go back to work. Taking five months was considered a luxury at the State Department for maternity leave, although more and more women are doing it. But if I could have taken off a year I'd still be at home with my daughter right now. There was so much dread involved with going back to work. When I actually got there, I felt relieved knowing that I wasn't a horrible mom just because I was back at work. It was also a little relieving at first to feel like I wasn't responsible 24 hours a day for an infant. In some ways it was kind of liberating at first because I was like, 'Wow, here I'm doing an eight hour chunk of time at work and I really enjoy the intellectual stimulation.' It's really important to me to be stimulated and to have interesting work and to work around gifted and talented people who are interested in tackling some of the biggest foreign policy issues and working in public service and that extends into other parts of my life. I think it's really important to give back and I feel like I'm able to do that through my work.

I was going to work and things were getting much busier at work and I was no longer having any sort of flexible hours in terms of the telework, which I had been doing one day a week. That all kind of compounded and I started feeling extremely miserable. I think the cause of it was a lot of sleep deprivation and then the guilt started seeping in definitely. They started giving me other projects because they knew I was very capable. So very quickly I went from feeling , 'Oh this wasn't as bad as I thought it would be', to 'this is stressful, I'm tired, I'm not getting enough rest and I want to either find something else or I want to telework more permanently.' But it also made me kind of question everything I was doing and ask, 'Is this the right career for me?' This is very high profile, very high pressure and once I started getting more tired and the sleep deprivation started adding up, I started feeling guilty that I wanted to be spending more time with my daughter. The guilt definitely started creeping in slowly like, 'Is the T.V. on too much at day care? They're starting to let her on the floor. Her hands look filthy when I pick her up. Would it be better if I stayed home with her? Should my husband stay home with her?' And then this dialogue just starts running in your head that was hard to shut off for me. 'How can I carve out more time for her? Is telework really the right thing or should I try to scale my job back to 32 hours a week and take one day off a week and just have it be totally dedicated to her?' Yes, that's kind of a constant dialogue and a narrative going on in my head. I went from feeling very secure at the beginning to once she started going to daycare. Again, I think she's getting very high quality care there, but anything that's not me or my husband isn't 100 percent how we would want to take care of her during the day. So, a lot of conflict, a lot of conflicted feelings of, 'Am I doing the right thing for her?'

My husband does very well as well and he's younger than me and I'm more established in my career, so I think I also feel a little bit more pressure. The fact that I am pretty senior in my career and established and the breadwinner (not to say my husband doesn't make a very respectable salary, but in terms of me making quite a bit more than he does at this point), it's made me feel like the protector of the family. I feel like I'm in the traditional male role right now. It's not like I can just say I'll be a stay-at-home mom. I just need to be happy and make the best of what we have and feel very fortunate that we

have two really interesting, great jobs and a very healthy child and can see her as much as possible. I appreciate having had my daughter more since we waited until we were older. I can really focus on her without feeling like I missed out on anything I have achieved a lot already, whereas I would have felt held back if I had my daughter younger. Financial security also helps. I think if I stayed home full-time, I would feel guilty because I would be thinking about not contributing to her college account and we can't borrow money from retirement, so it's incumbent upon me to provide for our retirement. So I'm okay. I think I'm definitely making the right choice.

I'm seen as a subject matter expert and the go-to person for a lot of people. So, I think people were very relieved to have me back and that made it feel like it was worthwhile for me to be there so that made it easier as well. I was feeling like, 'Okay, I'm actually contributing to this organization in a really important way.' It made it feel worthwhile and that my time wasn't wasted. But the easiest part, at first, was when my husband was staying home and also going back to a job that I knew very well and that I felt like I excelled at and that I was recognized for. I think that made it a lot easier. I think if I was in a much more pressure-cooker situation where I had to prove myself or I was still on the way up, I think that would be horrific. I can't imagine being in another woman's shoes who felt like she wasn't as established and respected. That stress I think could just break you. I felt really fortunate because I was so established and I had a lot of tools in my back pocket where I'm able to leverage to get what I want. I was saying, 'Hey, I can go to any other job, people want me in X, Y or Z office, give me telework or I'll find it elsewhere.' It came to the point where I was that blunt and I was able to get what I wanted in that office. I felt fortunate, despite all that stress, to know that I had options. I didn't feel trapped and I think if I didn't feel that way, I would have been even more miserable in that situation. I think I'm very satisfied at work right now and my work role is an aspect of my life that I'm very pleased with. I feel really fortunate that I'm established at this point.

I have to say for being a woman in my position, I am very fortunate and I feel like I have carved that out for myself and really advocated for myself. I've been able to leave every day between 5:00 and 5:30. I do feel lucky compared to 90 percent of my colleagues because I do have a lot of flexibility. I'm not working long hours and I do have telework, so that's really great. The vast majority of my coworkers have much longer hours than I do. I have always set very strong red lines as to what hours I was willing to do once I found out I was pregnant. I was able to stick with them and part of that was because my job allowed it. I decided a long time ago, even before I met my husband and got married, that work-life balance was key to me, incredibly important to me. I saw that nobody is going to hand that to you and that you had to be your own advocate for that. So, having had kids later has been very beneficial in the sense that it has given me confidence in my career because I have proven myself. If I was younger, I would have had to make harder career choices because I would not have had the clout to draw boundaries. So, I very much made it important that I'm able to leave at a reasonable hour and to see my family as much as possible and have dinner every night with my daughter and husband. That's incredibly important to me and if somebody needs me to stay late, it better be for an incredibly important reason! I know plenty of other people like me who do establish strong boundaries and seem to enjoy a personal life a lot more. People who are a bit more

balanced. I've sought those people out as role models and kind of tried to follow in their footsteps. That's always key to me. I don't ever see myself straying from that at this point, especially at this point in my career.

I started applying for different jobs throughout the department and some of them were promotions. And I was already second from the top in terms of grades, but I was like, well, why not try? I think I was just kind of bored at one point because when I got back to work we were at a lull. I had thought being a working mom was going to be so difficult and because I was in a lull I was like, 'this is so easy, I can do this, let's go for a new challenge.' I think I got to the point where my job that I was in was very family friendly, very - plan-a-wedding-get-pregnant-have-a-baby friendly, but once I got back, I started feeling like I don't know how much longer I can do this. I'm bored. At the very same time that they approved my teleworking, I was getting interviews for promotions. That was incredibly difficult. I can say I didn't sleep for five nights straight after I had an interview for the position I'm in now. I didn't think I did that well, but I was okay with it because it sounded much more stressful and lot more responsibility. I would have to have a Blackberry, which I had shunned forever because I saw Blackberries as a ball and chain and people were working at night and I refused to do that because my family came first. So, I went through this very stressful period because the content of the work sounded really interesting. The promotion was in a [schematic] area on peace and security issues for the whole State Department and that sounded really challenging and something that I could really sink my teeth into and really do a lot. It also opened lots of doors in other agencies and if my husband and I didn't want to stay in D.C. forever, it would probably be a great way to get a position with a different agency that has a presence throughout the rest of the country.

I started thinking this could be really great, but at the same time it's probably not the right time. We want another baby. We don't want to wait too long. I'm 37 and I don't want to risk not having a second child, so I should probably just stay where I am. I felt like I was going to be a horrible mom that I was going to be on my Blackberry, that I would be chained and I'd have to do weekend work and that it would be so much more of a commitment. It was a more regular State Department type job, if you will, and I felt like I had the plum job. It wasn't a 15, but it was a 14, and it was reliable and I was making really good money and I had great hours and I had just gotten teleworking. I was thinking, 'Oh my gosh, am I an idiot for giving this up? I mean, questioning myself constantly. There was an ongoing dialogue in my head about whether or not I made the right choice. Some of my working mom friends said, 'Oh, you have a good gig, don't rock the boat. If you want to have another kid, it's a great job to have a kid in and then your career can take off later. Why don't you just plateau for a few years?' That really resonated with me.

I was really terrified of the impact that additional pressure would have on my family. Because there was this known job that was cushiony and I had made it cushy. The reality is that if somebody went into it now they would find it a steep learning curve. It's not exactly as though I could do it in my sleep, but I'd been doing it for so long and I feel like it was a natural fit for my skill set that it was no longer hard for me to do. I was very scared to leave that as a new mom and take on a new challenge. In the end, I'm glad I did,

but I was well aware that it could have gone completely differently. So, it was a bit of a risk, a calculated risk that could have been a bad choice even with the additional pay and the additional status. All that kind of stuff was less important to me. Actually, the decision matrix where I looked at the difference in pay between the promotion and the hours I'd be at work and I calculated it in a worst-case scenario, I would actually be making less money because I'd be working more hours even at a higher salary. I was feeling like that's not worth it to me. I needed to make sure I had enough energy for my daughter. The deal was off if I couldn't telework in the new job. That was my red line. If they were not going to let me do that then I was not going to accept the job. Telework is more important to me because my mom is moving out here and she is going to watch my daughter for a day and I'll be able to stay at home and work and see her over lunch. She won't be in day care for nine or ten hours. She'll be at home for the eight hours that I'm working.

So, everything fell into place. I got a promotion and I'm working on issues that are really challenging me. My old job was boring and in the long run, I know that I will appreciate this new and more challenging job even though it is harder now. So, I am ok with powering through for now even though things are not yet in perfect balance. I'm tired, but my days go by faster. So, I feel like from the time I drop off my daughter to until I pick her up, it goes by faster than just kind of sitting there twiddling my thumbs or surfing the internet looking for baby clothes on my lunch hour because there's really nothing going on. I'm sure there will be days that I will miss being able to do that, but I feel like I'm contributing and I'm not going to work just to collect a paycheck. I really am contributing and I'm learning new things. So, ultimately, this is more rewarding. I'm considered a 'manager' and I'm a senior employee because of my position. But I'm not directly supervising people at this point, which for me was a very deliberate choice given my family because that probably would have put more demands on my work life and on my home life that I wasn't willing to do.

My husband and I also talk about relocating to a city that has much shorter commutes because I think the commute is a time suck and it totally increases our stress levels. And I think stress affects children if they see their parents stressed out, so sometimes we talk about moving to a medium size city. The trade off, of course, is you'd probably be taking a pay cut and also the challenging content of the work is something we think about too. We'd like to have a second child and hopefully they can walk to school and have some space to play, but at the same time mommy and daddy won't be schlepping around, one-and-a- half-hour commutes each way. So, those are kind of the plans for the future, of trying to really maximize our family enjoyment without completely sacrificing our professional enjoyment. Family definitely comes first for both my husband and I, but that's not to say that it's not important to us to really enjoy our careers. I feel really fortunate that I have a very enlightened husband who does more than half of the housework and does all the laundry. I still love to cook, but he cleans up all the dishes and he gets our daughter ready every morning, gets her dressed, gets her fed while I'm getting ready. I can't imagine not feeling like a team player and I just feel really fortunate that I'm getting so much help from such a great partner.

Structural description: Isabelle. Isabelle discusses her return to work after the completion of her maternity leave, describing the experience as characterized by feelings of anxiety, but the support of her spouse and career establishment help to minimize the impact of the stress. Feelings of work-family role conflict, however, start to surface shortly after the first month. Despite having the benefit of a generous maternity leave, Isabelle's family role salience contributes to the desire for a longer maternity leave to spend more time with her daughter before returning back to work. Though she finds the return to work disconcerting, feelings of role enhancement emerge as a result of newfound freedom and stimulation from her work. She further enjoys and values the role-enhancing effects from the interesting nature of her work and interesting colleagues, as well as the philanthropic nature of her work.

Feelings of fatigue, guilt, and a sense of being overwhelmed, however, contribute to Isabelle's intense questioning of her choices and result in her feeling of work-family role conflict. Despite these conflicting feelings, she realizes she must reconcile the dual roles because letting go of her work role is not a viable option. Her career role salience helps her to embrace the dual roles, choosing to instead focus on the role-enhancing effects of both of her roles.

Being well established in her career (in addition to the support of her spouse), helped to make Isabelle's initial transition back to work smooth, which resulted in a feeling of satisfaction. Isabelle has also worked hard to create a structure of balance in her work role, which, coupled with having developed her career before starting her family, contributed to feelings of ease. She takes pride in creating the high boundary separation

needed to maintain this balance and she is committed to continuing this practice at this stage in her career.

Shortly after her return to work, however, Isabelle begins to think about pursuing a new challenge in her career. The potential demands of a new challenge, including the possibility of less high boundary separation, start to trigger more feelings of work-family role conflict. The challenge is very appealing because of the interesting subject matter of the work. The new position is also aligned with her protean career perspective, as it opens up several future career options for her as a result of new learning and more diverse connections.

Feelings of work-family role conflict and relationalism continue to compete with feelings of excitement about a new challenge. The decision to take the challenge is very difficult, but Isabelle's strong desire to maintain balance and her value of relationalism help her to firmly establish and articulate the stipulations needed to accept the new position. When she finally makes the decision, she is at peace with it and she enjoys the new challenge and the protean nature of her new work. The absence of supervisory work aligns with her value of relationalism.

Isabelle's desire for both balance and challenge in her career continue to influence her future career choices. These needs are influenced by feelings of both family and career role salience. The support of her spouse is an important factor in her ability to fulfill both of these areas of her life.

Textural-structural description of Isabelle's experience of integrating work and family roles. Isabelle discusses her return to work after the completion of her maternity

leave, describing the experience as characterized by feelings of anxiety, but the support of her spouse and career establishment help to minimize the impact of the stress.

> I had a lot of anxiety, but when I actually did go back it was so much easier when he was home with her. I still felt kind of like I had one foot at home and then going back to the office wasn't as difficult as I had anticipated because I knew my office really well. I knew my job so well that I didn't feel as much stress as I think some other women feel.

Feelings of work-family role conflict, however, start to surface shortly after the first month.

> The first six weeks were actually easier at first and then it got a little bit more difficult just in terms of physical exhaustion and mommy guilt. So, the first four weeks he was home made the transition remarkably easier than I thought it would be and I recommend that to all my female friends who have kids. It's so much easier if your husband can stay home after you go back to work.

Despite having the benefit of a generous maternity leave, Isabelle's family role salience contributes to the desire for a longer maternity leave to spend more time with her daughter before returning back to work.

> Taking five months was considered a luxury at the State Department for maternity leave, although more and more women are doing it. But if I could have taken off a year I'd still be at home with my daughter right now.

Though Isabelle finds the return to work disconcerting, feelings of role enhancement emerge as a result of newfound freedom and stimulation from her work.

> There was so much dread involved with going back to work. When I actually got there, I felt relieved knowing that I wasn't a horrible mom just because I was back at work. It was also a little relieving at first to feel like I wasn't responsible 24 hours a day for an infant. In some ways it was kind of liberating at first because I was like, 'Wow, here I'm doing an eight hour chunk of time at work and I really enjoy the intellectual stimulation.'

Isabelle further enjoys and values the role-enhancing effects from the interesting nature of her work and interesting colleagues, as well as the philanthropic nature of her work.

> It's really important to me to be stimulated and to have interesting work and to work around gifted and talented people who are interested in tackling some of the biggest foreign policy issues and working in public service and that extends into other parts of my life. I think it's really important to give back and I feel like I'm able to do that through my work.

Feelings of fatigue, guilt, and a sense of being overwhelmed, however, contribute to intense questioning of her choices and result in work-family role conflict.

> I was going to work and things were getting much busier at work and I was no longer having any sort of flexible hours in terms of the telework, which I had been doing one day a week. That all kind of compounded and I started feeling extremely miserable. I think the cause of it was a lot of sleep deprivation and then the guilt started seeping in definitely. They started giving me other projects because they knew I was very capable. So very quickly I went from feeling , 'Oh this wasn't as bad as I thought it would be', to 'this is stressful, I'm tired, I'm not getting enough rest and I want to either find something else or I want to telework more permanently.' But it also made me kind of question everything I was doing and ask, 'Is this the right career for me?' This is very high profile, very high pressure and once I started getting more tired and the sleep deprivation started adding up, I started feeling guilty that I wanted to be spending more time with my daughter. The guilt definitely started creeping in slowly like, 'Is the T.V. on too much at day care? They're starting to let her on the floor. Her hands look filthy when I pick her up. Would it be better if I stayed home with her? Should my husband stay home with her?' And then this dialogue just starts running in your head that was hard to shut off for me. 'How can I carve out more time for her? Is telework really the right thing or should I try to scale my job back to 32 hours a week and take one day off a week and just have it be totally dedicated to her?' Yes, that's kind of a constant dialogue and a narrative going on in my head. I went from feeling very secure at the beginning to once she started going to daycare. Again, I think she's getting very high quality care there, but anything that's not me or my husband isn't 100 percent how we would want to take care of her during the day. So, a lot of conflict, a lot of conflicted feelings of, 'Am I doing the right thing for her?'

Despite these conflicting feelings, Isabelle realizes she must reconcile the dual roles because letting go of her work role is not a viable option.

> My husband does very well as well and he's younger than me and I'm more established in my career, so I think I also feel a little bit more pressure. The fact that I am pretty senior in my career and established and the breadwinner (not to say my husband doesn't make a very respectable salary, but in terms of me making quite a bit more than he does at this point), it's made me feel like the protector of the family. I feel like I'm in the traditional male role right now. It's not like I can just say I'll be a stay-at-home mom.

Her career role salience helps her to embrace the dual roles, choosing to instead focus on the role-enhancing effects of both of her roles.

> I just need to be happy and make the best of what we have and feel very fortunate that we have two really interesting, great jobs and a very healthy child and can see her as much as possible. I appreciate having had my daughter more since we waited until we were older. I can really focus on her without feeling like I missed out on anything I have achieved a lot already, whereas I would have felt held back if I had my daughter younger. Financial security also helps. I think if I stayed home full-time, I would feel guilty because I would be thinking about not contributing to her college account and we can't borrow money from retirement, so it's incumbent upon me to provide for our retirement. So I'm okay. I think I'm definitely making the right choice.

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Isabelle has also worked hard to create a structure of balance in her work role, which, coupled with having developed her career before starting her family, contributed to feelings of ease.

> I have to say for being a woman in my position, I am very fortunate and I feel like I have carved that out for myself and really advocated for myself. I've been able to leave every day between 5:00 and 5:30. I do feel lucky compared to 90 percent of my colleagues because I do have a lot of flexibility. I'm not working long hours and I do have telework, so that's really great. The vast majority of my coworkers have much longer hours than I do. I have always set very strong red lines as to what hours I was willing to do once I found out I was pregnant. I was able to stick with them and part of that was because my job allowed it. I decided a long time ago, even before I met my husband and got married, that work-life balance was key to me, incredibly important to me. I saw that nobody is going to hand that to you and that you had to be your own advocate for that. So, having had kids later has been very beneficial in the sense that it has given me confidence in my career because I have proven myself. If I was younger, I would have had to make harder career choices because I would not have had the clout to draw boundaries.

Isabelle takes pride in creating the high boundary separation needed to maintain this balance and she is committed to continuing this practice at this stage in her career.

> So, I very much made it important that I'm able to leave at a reasonable hour and to see my family as much as possible and have dinner every night with my daughter and husband. That's incredibly important to me and if somebody needs me to stay late, it better be for an incredibly important reason! I know plenty of other people like me who do establish strong boundaries and seem to enjoy a personal life a lot more. People who are a bit more balanced. I've sought those people out as role models and kind of tried to follow in their footsteps. That's always key to me. I don't ever see myself straying from that at this point, especially at this point in my career.

Shortly after her return to work, however, Isabelle begins to think about pursuing a new challenge in her career.

> I started applying for different jobs throughout the department and some of them were promotions. And I was already second from the top in terms of grades, but I was like, well, why not try? I think I was just kind of bored at one point because when I got back to work we were at a lull. I had thought being a working mom was going to be so difficult and because I was in a lull I was like, 'this is so easy, I can do this, let's go for a new challenge.' I think I got to the point where my job that I was in was very family friendly, very - plan-a-wedding-get-pregnant-have-a-baby

> friendly, but once I got back, I started feeling like I don't know how much longer I can do this. I'm bored.

The potential demands of a new challenge, including the possibility of less high boundary separation, start to trigger more feelings of work-family role conflict.

> The very same time that they approved my teleworking, I was getting interviews for promotions. That was incredibly difficult. I can say I didn't sleep for five nights straight after I had an interview for the position I'm in now. I didn't think I did that well, but I was okay with it because it sounded much more stressful and lot more responsibility. I would have to have a Blackberry, which I had shunned forever because I saw Blackberries as a ball and chain and people were working at night and I refused to do that because my family came first. So, I went through this very stressful period because the content of the work sounded really interesting.

The challenge is very appealing to Isabelle because of the interesting subject matter of the work. "The promotion was in a [schematic] area on peace and security issues for the whole State Department and that sounded really challenging and something that I could really sink my teeth into and really do a lot." The new position is also aligned with her protean career perspective, as it opens up several future career options for her as a result of new learning and more diverse connections.

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Feelings of work-family role conflict and relationalism continue to compete with feelings of excitement about a new challenge.

> I started thinking this could be really great, but at the same time it's probably not the right time. We want another baby. We don't want to wait too long. I'm 37 and I don't want to risk not having a second child, so I should probably just stay where I am. I felt like I was going to be a horrible mom that I was going to be on my Blackberry, that I would be chained and I'd have to do weekend work and that it would be so much more of a commitment. It was a more regular State Department type job, if you will, and I felt like I had the plum job. It wasn't a 15, but it was a 14, and it was reliable and I was making really good money and I had great hours and I had just gotten teleworking. I was thinking, 'Oh my gosh, am I an idiot for giving this up? I mean, questioning myself constantly. There was an ongoing

> dialogue in my head about whether or not I made the right choice. Some of my working mom friends said, 'Oh, you have a good gig, don't rock the boat. If you want to have another kid, it's a great job to have a kid in and then your career can take off later. Why don't you just plateau for a few years?' That really resonated with me.

The decision to take the challenge is very difficult, but Isabelle's strong desire to maintain balance and her value of relationalism help her to firmly establish and articulate the stipulations needed to accept the new position.

> I was really terrified of the impact that additional pressure would have on my family. Because there was this known job that was cushiony and I had made it cushy. The reality is that if somebody went into it now they would find it a steep learning curve. It's not exactly as though I could do it in my sleep, but I'd been doing it for so long and I feel like it was a natural fit for my skill set that it was no longer hard for me to do. I was very scared to leave that as a new mom and take on a new challenge. In the end, I'm glad I did, but I was well aware that it could have gone completely differently. So, it was a bit of a risk, a calculated risk that could have been a bad choice even with the additional pay and the additional status. All that kind of stuff was less important to me. Actually, the decision matrix where I looked at the difference in pay between the promotion and the hours I'd be at work and I calculated it in a worst-case scenario, I would actually be making less money because I'd be working more hours even at a higher salary. I was feeling like that's not worth it to me. I needed to make sure I had enough energy for my daughter. The deal was off if I couldn't telework in the new job. That was my red line. If they were not going to let me do that then I was not going to accept the job. Telework is more important to me because my mom is moving out here and she is going to watch my daughter for a day and I'll be able to stay at home and work and see her over lunch. She won't be in day care for nine or ten hours. She'll be at home for the eight hours that I'm working.

When Isabelle's finally makes the decision, she is at peace with it and she enjoys the new challenge and the protean nature of her new work.

> So, everything fell into place. I got a promotion and I'm working on issues that are really challenging me. My old job was boring and in the long run, I know that I will appreciate this new and more challenging job even though it is harder now. So, I am ok with powering through for now even though things are not yet in perfect balance. I'm tired, but my days go by faster. So, I feel like from the time I drop off my daughter to until I pick her up, it goes by faster than just kind of sitting there twiddling my thumbs or surfing the internet looking for baby clothes on my lunch hour because there's really nothing going on. I'm sure there will be days that I will miss being able to do that, but I feel like I'm contributing and I'm not going to

> work just to collect a paycheck. I really am contributing and I'm learning new things. So, ultimately, this is more rewarding.

The absence of supervisory work aligns with her value of relationalism.

> I'm considered a 'manager' and I'm a senior employee because of my position. But I'm not directly supervising people at this point, which for me was a very deliberate choice given my family because that probably would have put more demands on my work life and on my home life that I wasn't willing to do.

Her desire for both balance and challenge in her career continue to influence her future career choices.

> My husband and I also talk about relocating to a city that has much shorter commutes because I think the commute is a time suck and it totally increases our stress levels. And I think stress affects children if they see their parents stressed out, so sometimes we talk about moving to a medium size city. The trade off, of course, is you'd probably be taking a pay cut and also the challenging content of the work is something we think about too. We'd like to have a second child and hopefully they can walk to school and have some space to play, but at the same time mommy and daddy won't be schlepping around, one-and-a- half-hour commutes each way. So, those are kind of the plans for the future, of trying to really maximize our family enjoyment without completely sacrificing our professional enjoyment.

These needs are influenced by feelings of both family and career role salience. "Family definitely comes first for both my husband and I, but that's not to say that it's not important to us to really enjoy our careers." The support of her spouse is an important factor in Isabelle's ability to fulfill both of these areas of her life.

> I feel really fortunate that I have a very enlightened husband who does more than half of the housework and does all the laundry. I still love to cook, but he cleans up all the dishes and he gets our daughter ready every morning, gets her dressed, gets her fed while I'm getting ready. I can't imagine not feeling like a team player and I just feel really fortunate that I'm getting so much help from such a great partner.

Horizonalization: Isabelle. The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Isabelle's interview. The chart below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-10

Participant 9 (Isabelle): Horizonalization

CODE	ISABELLE'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Work-Family Role Conflict	They started giving me other projects because they knew I was very capable. So very quickly I went from feeling , 'Oh this wasn't as bad as I thought it would be', to 'this is stressful, I'm tired, I'm not getting enough rest and I want to either find something else or I want to telework more permanently.' (Time-Based; Work Interfering with Family) "But it also made me kind of question everything I was doing and ask, 'Is this the right career for me?' This is very high profile, very high pressure and once I started getting more tired and the sleep deprivation started adding up, I started feeling guilty that I wanted to be spending more time with my daughter." (Strain-Based; Work Interfering with Family)	Work-Family Integration
Career Role Salience	"The fact that I am pretty senior in my career and established and the breadwinner (not to say my husband doesn't make a very respectable salary, but in terms of me making quite a bit more than he does at this point), it's made me feel like the protector of the family. I feel like I'm in the traditional male role right now. It's not like I can just say I'll be a stay-at-home mom."	Work-Family Integration
Family Role Salience	"Family definitely comes first for both my husband and I, but that's not to say that it's not important to us to really enjoy our careers."	
Role Enhancement	"There was so much dread involved with going back to work. When I actually got there, I felt relieved knowing that I wasn't a horrible mom just because I was back at work." (Expanded Frame of Reference) "It was also a little relieving at first to feel like I wasn't responsible 24 hours a day for an infant." (Reduced Role Strain) "In some ways it was kind of liberating at first	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage

CODE	ISABELLE'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	because I was like, 'Wow, here I'm doing an eight hour chunk of time at work and I really enjoy the intellectual stimulation.'" (Personal Gratification) "It's really important to me to be stimulated and to have interesting work and to work around gifted and talented people who are interested in tackling some of the biggest foreign policy issues and working in public service and that extends into other parts of my life."(Expanded Frame of Reference) "I think it's really important to give back and I feel like I'm able to do that through my work." (Personal Gratification) "Financial security also helps. I think if I stayed home full-time, I would feel guilty because I would be thinking about not contributing to her college account and we can't borrow money from retirement, so it's incumbent upon me to provide for our retirement. So I'm okay. I think I'm definitely making the right choice." (Additional Income) "I appreciate having had my daughter more since we waited until we were older. I can really focus on her without feeling like I missed out on anything. I have achieved a lot already, whereas I would have felt held back if I had my daughter younger."	
High Boundary Separation	"So, I very much made it important that I'm able to leave at a reasonable hour and to see my family as much as possible and have dinner every night with my daughter and husband. That's incredibly important to me and if somebody needs me to stay late, it better be for an incredibly important reason! I know plenty of other people like me who do establish strong boundaries and seem to enjoy a personal life a lot more."	Work-Family Integration
Spouse Support	"I feel really fortunate that I have a very	Work-Family

CODE	ISABELLE'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	enlightened husband who does more than half of the housework and does all the laundry. I still love to cook, but he cleans up all the dishes and he gets our daughter ready every morning, gets her dressed, gets her fed while I'm getting ready. I can't imagine not feeling like a team player and I just feel really fortunate that I'm getting so much help from such a great partner."	Integration
Balance	"I have to say for being a woman in my position, I am very fortunate and I feel like I have carved that out for myself and really advocated for myself. I've been able to leave every day between 5:00 and 5:30. I do feel lucky compared to 90 percent of my colleagues because I do have a lot of flexibility. I'm not working long hours and I do have telework, so that's really great."	Career Choice
Challenge	"So, everything fell into place. I got a promotion and I'm working on issues that are really challenging me. My old job was boring and in the long run, I know that I will appreciate this new and more challenging job even though it is harder now. So, I am ok with powering through for now even though things are not yet in perfect balance. I'm tired, but my days go by faster. So, I feel like from the time I drop off my daughter to until I pick her up, it goes by faster than just kind of sitting there twiddling my thumbs or surfing the internet looking for baby clothes on my lunch hour because there's really nothing going on."	Career Choice
Protean	"It also opened lots of doors in other agencies and if my husband and I didn't want to stay in D.C. forever, it would probably be a great way to get a position with a different agency that has a presence throughout the rest of the country." (Adaptability)	Career Choice
Relationalism	"I'm considered a 'manager' and I'm a senior employee because of my position. But I'm not directly supervising people at this point, which for me was a very deliberate choice given my family because that probably would have put more demands on my work life and on my	Career Choice/Mid-Career Stage

CODE	ISABELLE'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	home life that I wasn't willing to do."	
Career Establishment	"I think that made it a lot easier. I think if I was in a much more pressure-cooker situation where I had to prove myself or I was still on the way up, I think that would be horrific." (Ease) I can't imagine being in another woman's shoes who felt like she wasn't as established and respected. That stress I think could just break you. I felt fortunate, despite all that stress, to know that I had options. I didn't feel trapped and I think if I didn't feel that way, I would have been even more miserable in that situation. (Resources) "So, having had kids later has been very beneficial in the sense that it has given me confidence in my career because I have proven myself. If I was younger, I would have had to make harder career choices because I would not have had the clout to draw boundaries." (Ease)	Mid-Career Stage
Satisfaction	"I think I'm very satisfied at work right now and my work role is an aspect of my life that I'm very pleased with. I feel really fortunate that I'm established at this point."	Mid-Career Stage

Participant 10: "Jenna"

Jenna is a 38 year-old married mother of two children, ages three years and 16 months. She is a Foreign Service Officer in the field of Federal Civil Service with 16 years of work experience. She was 35 years old when she had her first child.

Textural description: Jenna.

It just so happened that my son was born just at the end of my last assignment and that my next assignment was going to begin about a year later and I was going to have to learn Spanish. So, four months after the birth of my son, I didn't actually have to put a suit

back on and go into the office every day. I went to the Training Center and took Spanish for four hours a day and studied for two to three hours a day and my son was at the daycare facility right on campus, so I could go see him any time I wanted during the day. So, it was a really nice transition because I could see him whenever I needed to or whenever I wanted to. The easiest part of it was that I had a lot of flexibility and my time was my own. I had four months with him instead of three months before I had to do anything. I had the three months maternity leave and then I had that month of what we call Home Leave, that transition period between when you would start your training and your next assignment. The way our training is structured for foreign language training, you have two hours of class and then two hours of lab time and lunch. So, there were only like two or three hours during the day when I couldn't go see him if I needed to or if anything happened I was a phone call away. I am incredibly lucky that during my first tour my child wasn't born until the last two months that I was there. Otherwise, if I had had my son immediately upon joining the service, especially as a first child, I might not have had the focus or the available resources to really be able to get tenure and to be successful at this.

I went back to work and my son stayed home with a full-time nanny and I found that transition very difficult. I needed more time. I felt like he was just starting to become his own person and not just sort of a baby and I was missing that. So, emotionally, I seriously considered maybe doing a reduced work schedule or something else so that I could spend more time with him, but ultimately that didn't work out for us financially. So, it was very difficult the second time. I was back to an 8 to 5 kind of job, which for me meant really leaving the house at 7:00 and getting home at 6:00. So, I would spend maybe two or three minutes with him, if he was awake before I left in the morning, and maybe an hour with him at night when I got home. That was the only time during the week, Monday through Friday that I got to really spend with him, so it was very difficult.

I have an undergraduate degree in anthropology and I knew I wasn't going to be Indiana Jones and I knew I didn't want to teach so that was sort of a just-wanted-to- learn-it kind of degree. I spent about ten years trying to figure out what I wanted to do when I grew up. And I would get a job and be very good at it and in about two or three years I would get bored because I'd reach the highest level I could get to with an undergraduate degree. Once I learned how to do it then I wanted to go learn how to do something else because that's really what drives me, is that learning how to do something. In late 2004, I sat down with a life coach and did a lot of internal discussions with myself, a lot of self-study to figure out what I wanted to do because I felt like I was wasting my time by not focusing on something. That's where I rediscovered a career in the Foreign Service, which meant my learning curve changes every two to three years radically. We're in a different country, we're in a different language and different work environment and I love it! I'm really, really good at it. It's a passion for me and it took me ten years to find it. I feel like I spent a lot of my adult life kind of spinning my wheels and by the time I finally figured out what I wanted to do professionally and discovered my passion, I had this conflict. Because I love my job, but the most important thing to me is to be a good mom. My kids are very important, so how do I figure out how I'm going to be good at this thing I finally love to do and be a good mom at the same time and that's been a big conflict for me.

And it changed the amount of time I invested in my job, which professionally has had an impact and will continue to do so. Luckily, as you become higher up in the ranks the demands on your time change a bit. So, it's a little more flexible now that I'm five years into my career than it was certainly in the first couple of years where I had receptions and engagements I had to participate in two or three nights every week. Well, that isn't sustainable if the only time I see my kids during the week is an hour or two before bedtime. So, I think if I had had my child right at the very beginning, I would have found a different job because the job that I had I couldn't be successful at and continue to do it. And now it's just continuing all the time to decide where the balance point is. And if I've gone too far past where I can feel good about the work that I'm doing, then I need to do something different no matter how much I love it because it's just not the highest priority. It's completely difficult, something I struggle with all the time because I take a lot of pride in the work that I do and I think it's really important to do it well and do it right. So, when I hit the point where that's not happening anymore and I can't take pride in the work that I'm doing, I'm going to have to find a different kind of job to do or a different way to participate because I can't be less of a mom to get that sort of professional reward. That's just not a trade off I'm willing to make. Once that happened, that was the commitment I made to my children and to myself as a mom. If something had to give, that was the first stop and that's just the way it is…for me anyway.

A list comes out saying, 'these are the 400 jobs available all over the world' and you turn in the six or seven that you're most interested in and you interview for those jobs. So, it's like trying to find a new job every couple of years. Well, at first it was: 'Does my husband have an Internet connection for his job and can we take the dog?' Well now it's a lot more complicated. Now it's not just that, but, 'Are we living in a house or an apartment? Do my kids have a yard? What are the schools like? Are we going to be living overseas? Can they handle the transition?' So for this job in particular, the choices we make about where we go are all based on what kinds of services and family life are going to be available. Then, 'What kind of professional job is there? Who would I be working with? What are my responsibilities?' If I want to be Ambassador, these are the steps I need to take in a career path that's going to lead me there. If I want to make sure that my family is taken care of all the way along and that I get to live with my family (they're not living in D.C. while I'm in Afghanistan or Iraq or somewhere where you can't take your family with you), then there's a different career path that I need to take and I need to make that decision. That decision was made when my first son was born, that that was no longer going to be how I was going to pursue the jobs that I would apply for. For some kids, it's a successful way of life and other kids never adjust. If they're ultimately not going to be happy, then once again we need to look at doing something different whether that means coming to D.C. or it's just going to be a different job. It's really going to depend on whether or not my kids can manage the transitions and if their definition of home becomes the people that are their family or the places they live. If they can't emotionally cope with that kind of change then I need a different job and only time will tell. So if (my children) turn out not to be the kind of people that can cope with that or integrate it, if it damages them so that they can't function in other areas, then I need a different job professionally.

And if that means I am 40 years old and starting over in a different career, then that's what that means and that's the risk we took when we made the decision to have kids and have this kind of job and this kind of lifestyle. One of the things that they encourage you to do is come back and do what they call a tour in D.C. So, you come back and do a stateside based assignment where you get to know how the Department functions out of D.C. So, if we came back and did that, I would probably go back to school and get a graduate degree either in consular law or law. I would get a law degree so that I could perhaps do a career in law having to do with citizenship and consular affairs, which would be based on kind of what I do now or crisis management. If it turns out that we come back to D.C. and they don't want to go again, I've got somewhere else to go professionally. I'm going to try and see what kind of options I really have. And if it doesn't work out it doesn't work out and now that I've had a taste of doing something I love, I'm not going to settle for spinning time. If I'm just going to spin my wheels, then I'm going to do it with my kids. But if I'm going to do a job, it's not going to be just to pay for my vacation somewhere. It's going to be a real job and doing something else I care about.

When you join the Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer, the first three years of your career you're going through a tenure process where you're basically proving that you have the skill set and the aptitude for functioning in those kinds of environments. Not just living in them, but being a successful professional in those environments as well. So, it's really a big testing period and you go in front of a tenure committee and you have three opportunities to gain tenure in the first five years of your career. And if you aren't tenured, you can't be a Foreign Service Officer and you separate from the Department of State, so there's a lot of pressure to perform during that time period. There are a lot of unpaid opportunities to excel for what are called junior or entry level officers. There are receptions at the Ambassador's residence and they meet another ten people there to shake hands and talk to people. So, you've worked an 8 to 10 hour day and now you're keeping your suit on and putting your business cards in your pocketbook and you go do that for another two hours later that night. I am incredibly lucky that during my first tour my child wasn't born until the last two months that I was there, so I had almost that entire two years to take advantage of those kinds of things. So, I would say the biggest change was that I had two years to get it figured out. Otherwise, if I had had my son immediately upon joining the service, especially as a first child, I might not have had the focus or the available resources to really be able to get tenure and to be successful at this. I started in '06 and then my son was born in '08 and if I hadn't had that, I probably would not have been able to maintain the balance that I have so far. I finally had a feel for where you went to get stuff done, so I could make much more efficient use of the time that I had, which didn't exist before. Because there are a lot of unknowns the first time you serve overseas in trying to just function and then live and manage a relationship with your family back home. If we had gone into it just starting right then with the birth of my son, I probably wouldn't still be doing the job I'm doing right now without that sort of learning curve that I got to have.

When we arrive in San Salvador at the end of May, I go back to work full-time but now I've got professional help again full-time. So, I don't have to do laundry anymore and I've got someone to help me with meals and things like that so that the time I get to spend

with my kids, I get to just play and do great things with them and I'm not trying to do all the other parts of managing a family. One of the incredible benefits of working overseas is that you can afford domestic help, which I can't afford to do living in the United States. But overseas I can afford to have someone clean my house and I can afford to have a full-time nanny take care of my kids all day. I can afford to pay for a nanny and for my son to go to daycare and have those kinds of financial resources that are not available to me here. When I go back into training next week, my kids will be in daycare all day, so even when I do have a little bit of time, that's my time again that I can control, which I really don't control as much when it's me and my kids all day because it's really their time. I would say the transition between those two, the integration of having someone to help me professionally and doing it by myself (just my husband and I while my husband continues to work full-time) is a hard transition definitely and it requires a lot of reorganizing how you think about things, which is great, but it's just different. How you think about it is different and how you prepare yourself for your day is just different. We're both really focused on our roles as parents and in maintaining a professional way of life so that gives us less time to focus on each other. So I would say being a mom has taken away from my role as a wife…for sure. I would say the hardest part is recognizing how much I changed personally. Not just my perspective, but my identity as a person. It's different now and so recognizing those changes in myself and in how I'm different because of my experience as a mom and as a professional. I just have to be really aware of that because that changes all the time, the priorities that we have for our family and the way that we organize ourselves so that our family functions well.

Structural description: Jenna. Jenna discusses her return to work after the birth of her first child, describing the timing of the birth as very convenient. She describes the transition as smooth due to the attributes of her job that gave her flexibility and balance, in addition to having established herself in her role. She describes the transition back to work after her second child, however, as much more challenging and she expresses feelings of work-family role conflict.

Jenna describes her passion for learning and her process of career discovery. Her career pattern has protean characteristics. Her value of authenticity drives her to introspective self-analysis, which confirms her love of learning and change. Her high levels of efficacy and purpose in her new career sustain her passion and align with her authenticity. After the birth of her child, however, she experiences work-family role conflict, because she has strong feelings of family role salience.

This conflict stimulates Jenna to decrease the amount of time and energy she spends in her work role, in an effort to create balance. Being well established in her career allows her to create this balance, and she knows she would not be able to achieve this if she were at an earlier stage in her career. Her value of relationalism guides her future career choices. Jenna's desire for authenticity in her work role coupled with family role salience produces intense feelings of work-family role conflict. Ultimately, her family role salience carries more weight in the reconciliation process.

Relationalism provides the criteria to make decisions about specific work assignments she selects, as well as serving as a guide for potential career change. Her protean career perspective allows her to anticipate, prepare for, and ultimately embrace potential future career change. Her value of authenticity helps her to set the stipulations needed for another acceptable career.

Jenna reflects upon the time and sacrifices that enabled her to achieve her current career status. Her ability to achieve a sense of balance in her work role is influenced by having developed her career before starting her family. Jenna also experiences feelings of role enhancement, which are very influenced by being able to afford full-time domestic help and other financial resources she would otherwise not have if she did not work.

Though Jenna describes the transition between periods of time when she has professional help, and then does not, as difficult, she demonstrates adaptability in handling the changes. Multi-role structuring allows her to focus on her most salient roles. She reflects on her experience of integrating her career and family roles and describes the challenges and opportunities related to the dynamic nature of her roles and circumstances.

Textural-structural description of Jenna's experience of integrating work and family roles. Jenna discusses her return to work after the birth of her first child, describing the timing of the birth as very convenient.

> It just so happened that my son was born just at the end of my last assignment and that my next assignment was going to begin about a year later and I was going to have to learn Spanish. So, four months after the birth of my son, I didn't actually have to put a suit back on and go into the office every day. I went to the Training Center and took Spanish for four hours a day and studied for two to three hours a day and my son was at the daycare facility right on campus, so I could go see him any time I wanted during the day.

She describes the transition as smooth due to the attributes of her job that gave her flexibility and balance, in addition to having established herself in her role.

> So, it was a really nice transition because I could see him whenever I needed to or whenever I wanted to. The easiest part of it was that I had a lot of flexibility and my time was my own. I had four months with him instead of three months before I had to do anything. I had the three months maternity leave and then I had that month of what we call Home Leave, that transition period between when you would start your training and your next assignment. The way our training is structured for foreign language training, you have two hours of class and then two hours of lab time and lunch. So, there were only like two or three hours during the day when I couldn't go see him if I needed to or if anything happened I was a phone call away. I am incredibly lucky that during my first tour my child wasn't born until the last two months that I was there. Otherwise, if I had had my son immediately upon joining the service, especially as a first child, I might not have had the focus or the available resources to really be able to get tenure and to be successful at this.

Jenna describes the transition back to work after her second child, however, as much more challenging and she expresses feelings of work-family role conflict.

> I went back to work and my son stayed home with a full-time nanny and I found that transition very difficult. I needed more time. I felt like he was just starting to become his own person and not just sort of a baby and I was missing that. So, emotionally, I seriously considered maybe doing a reduced work schedule or something else so that I could spend more time with him, but ultimately that didn't work out for us financially. So, it was very difficult the second time. I was back to an 8 to 5 kind of job, which for me meant really leaving the house at 7:00 and getting home at 6:00. So, I would spend maybe two or three minutes with him, if he was awake before I left in the morning, and maybe an hour with him at night

> when I got home. That was the only time during the week, Monday through Friday that I got to really spend with him, so it was very difficult.

Jenna describes her passion for learning and her process of career discovery.

> I have an undergraduate degree in anthropology and I knew I wasn't going to be Indiana Jones and I knew I didn't want to teach so that was sort of a just-wanted-to-learn-it kind of degree. I spent about ten years trying to figure out what I wanted to do when I grew up.

Her career pattern has protean characteristics.

> And I would get a job and be very good at it and in about two or three years I would get bored because I'd reach the highest level I could get to with an undergraduate degree. Once I learned how to do it then I wanted to go learn how to do something else because that's really what drives me, is that learning how to do something.

Her value of authenticity drives her to introspective self-analysis, which confirms her love of learning and change.

> In late 2004, I sat down with a life coach and did a lot of internal discussions with myself, a lot of self-study to figure out what I wanted to do because I felt like I was wasting my time by not focusing on something. That's where I rediscovered a career in the Foreign Service, which meant my learning curve changes every two to three years radically. We're in a different country, we're in a different language and different work environment and I love it!

Her high levels of efficacy and purpose in her new career sustain her passion and align with her authenticity. "I'm really, really good at it. It's a passion for me and it took me ten years to find it." After the birth of her child, however, Jenna experiences work-family role conflict, because she has strong feelings of family role salience.

> I feel like I spent a lot of my adult life kind of spinning my wheels and by the time I finally figured out what I wanted to do professionally and discovered my passion, I had this conflict. Because I love my job, but the most important thing to me is to be a good mom. My kids are very important, so how do I figure out how I'm going to be good at this thing I finally love to do and be a good mom at the same time and that's been a big conflict for me.

This conflict stimulates her to decrease the amount of time and energy she spends in her work role, in an effort to create balance. "And it changed the amount of time I invested in my job, which professionally has had an impact and will continue to do so." Being well established in her career allows her to create this balance, and she knows she would not be able to achieve this if she were at an earlier stage in her career.

> Luckily, as you become higher up in the ranks the demands on your time change a bit. So, it's a little more flexible now that I'm five years into my career than it was certainly in the first couple of years where I had receptions and engagements I had to participate in two or three nights every week. Well, that isn't sustainable if the only time I see my kids during the week is an hour or two before bedtime. So, I think if I had had my child right at the very beginning, I would have found a different job because the job that I had I couldn't be successful at and continue to do it.

Her value of relationalism guides her future career choices.

> And now it's just continuing all the time to decide where the balance point is. And if I've gone too far past where I can feel good about the work that I'm doing, I need to do something different no matter how much I love it because it's just not the highest priority.

Jenna's desire for authenticity in her work role, coupled with family role salience, produces intense feelings of work-family role conflict. "It's completely difficult, something I struggle with all the time because I take a lot of pride in the work that I do and I think it's really important to do it well and do it right." Ultimately, her family role salience carries more weight in the reconciliation process.

> So, when I hit the point where that's not happening anymore and I can't take pride in the work that I'm doing, I'm going to have to find a different kind of job to do or a different way to participate because I can't be less of a mom to get that sort of professional reward. That's just not a trade off I'm willing to make. Once that happened, that was the commitment I made to my children and to myself as a mom. If something had to give, that was the first stop and that's just the way it is…for me anyway.

Relationalism provides the criteria to make decisions about specific work assignments that Jenna selects, as well as serving as a guide for a potential career change.

> A list comes out saying, 'these are the 400 jobs available all over the world' and you turn in the six or seven that you're most interested in and you interview for those jobs. So, it's like trying to find a new job every couple of years. Well, at first it was: 'Does my husband have an Internet connection for his job and can we take the dog?' Well now it's a lot more complicated. Now it's not just that, but, 'Are we living in a house or an apartment? Do my kids have a yard? What are the schools like? Are we going to be living overseas? Can they handle the transition?' So for this job in particular, the choices we make about where we go are all based on what kinds of services and family life are going to be available. Then, 'What kind of professional job is there? Who would I be working with? What are my responsibilities?' If I want to be Ambassador, these are the steps I need to take in a career path that's going to lead me there. If I want to make sure that my family is taken care of all the way along and that I get to live with my family (they're not living in D.C. while I'm in Afghanistan or Iraq or somewhere where you can't take your family with you), then there's a different career path that I need to take and I need to make that decision. That decision was made when my first son was born, that that was no longer going to be how I was going to pursue the jobs that I would apply for. For some kids, it's a successful way of life and other kids never adjust. If they're ultimately not going to be happy, then once again we need to look at doing something different whether that means coming to D.C. or it's just going to be a different job. It's really going to depend on whether or not my kids can manage the transitions and if their definition of home becomes the people that are their family or the places they live. If they can't emotionally cope with that kind of change then I need a different job and only time will tell. So if (my children) turn out not to be the kind of people that can cope with that or integrate it, if it damages them so that they can't function in other areas, then I need a different job professionally.

Jenna's protean career perspective allows her to anticipate, prepare for, and ultimately embrace potential future career change.

> And if that means I am 40 years old and starting over in a different career, then that's what that means and that's the risk we took when we made the decision to have kids and have this kind of job and this kind of lifestyle. One of the things that they encourage you to do is come back and do what they call a tour in D.C. So, you come back and do a stateside based assignment where you get to know how the Department functions out of D.C. So, if we came back and did that, I would probably go back to school and get a graduate degree either in consular law or law. I would get a law degree so that I could perhaps do a career in law having to do with citizenship and consular affairs, which would be based on kind of what I do now or crisis management. If it turns out that we come back to D.C. and they don't

> want to go again, I've got somewhere else to go professionally. I'm going to try and see what kind of options I really have.

Her value of authenticity helps her to set the stipulations needed for another acceptable career.

> And if it doesn't work out it doesn't work out and now that I've had a taste of doing something I love, I'm not going to settle for spinning time. If I'm just going to spin my wheels, then I'm going to do it with my kids. But if I'm going to do a job, it's not going to be just to pay for my vacation somewhere. It's going to be a real job and doing something else I care about.

Jenna reflects upon the time and sacrifices that enabled her to achieve her current career status.

> When you join the Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer, the first three years of your career you're going through a tenure process where you're basically proving that you have the skill set and the aptitude for functioning in those kinds of environments. Not just living in them, but being a successful professional in those environments as well. So, it's really a big testing period and you go in front of a tenure committee and you have three opportunities to gain tenure in the first five years of your career. And if you aren't tenured, you can't be a Foreign Service Officer and you separate from the Department of State, so there's a lot of pressure to perform during that time period. There are a lot of unpaid opportunities to excel for what are called junior or entry level officers. There are receptions at the Ambassador's residence and they meet another ten people there to shake hands and talk to people. So, you've worked an 8 to 10 hour day and now you're keeping your suit on and putting your business cards in your pocketbook and you go do that for another two hours later that night.

Her ability to achieve a sense of balance in her work role is influenced by having developed her career before starting her family.

> I started in '06 and then my son was born in '08 and if I hadn't had that, I probably would not have been able to maintain the balance that I have so far. I finally had a feel for where you went to get stuff done, so I could make much more efficient use of the time that I had, which didn't exist before. Because there are a lot of unknowns the first time you serve overseas in trying to just function and then live and manage a relationship with your family back home. If we had gone into it just starting right then with the birth of my son, I probably wouldn't still be doing the job I'm doing right now without that sort of learning curve that I got to have.

Jenna also experiences feelings of role enhancement, which are very influenced by being able to afford full-time domestic help and other financial resources that she would otherwise not have if she did not work.

> When we arrive in [another country] at the end of May, I go back to work full-time but now I've got professional help again full-time. So, I don't have to do laundry anymore and I've got someone to help me with meals and things like that so that the time I get to spend with my kids, I get to just play and do great things with them and I'm not trying to do all the other parts of managing a family. One of the incredible benefits of working overseas is that you can afford domestic help, which I can't afford to do living in the United States. But overseas I can afford to have someone clean my house and I can afford to have a full-time nanny take care of my kids all day. I can afford to pay for a nanny and for my son to go to daycare and have those kinds of financial resources that are not available to me here. When I go back into training next week, my kids will be in daycare all day, so even when I do have a little bit of time, that's my time again that I can control, which I really don't control as much when it's me and my kids all day because it's really their time.

Though she describes the transition (between periods of time when she has professional help and then does not) as difficult, Jenna demonstrates adaptability in handling the changes.

> I would say the transition between those two, the integration of having someone to help me professionally and doing it by myself (just my husband and I while my husband continues to work full-time) is a hard transition definitely and it requires a lot of reorganizing how you think about things, which is great, but it's just different. How you think about it is different and how you prepare yourself for your day is just different.

Multi-role structuring allows her to focus on her most salient roles.

> We're both really focused on our roles as parents and in maintaining a professional way of life so that gives us less time to focus on each other. So I would say being a mom has taken away from my role as a wife…for sure.

Jenna reflects on her experience of integrating her career and family roles and describes the challenges and opportunities related to the dynamic nature of her roles and circumstances.

> I would say the hardest part is recognizing how much I changed personally. Not just my perspective, but my identity as a person. It's different now and so recognizing those changes in myself and in how I'm different because of my experience as a mom and as a professional. I just have to be really aware of that because that changes all the time, the priorities that we have for our family and the way that we organize ourselves so that our family functions well.

Horizonalization: Jenna. The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Jenna's interview. The chart below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-11

Participant 10 (Jenna): Horizonalization

CODE	JENNA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Work-Family Role Conflict	"[It] was very difficult the second time. I was back to an 8 to 5 kind of job, which for me meant really leaving the house at 7:00 and getting home at 6:00. So, I would spend maybe two or three minutes with him, if he was awake before I left in the morning, and maybe an hour with him at night when I got home. That was the only time during the week, Monday through Friday that I got to really spend with him, so it was very difficult." (Time-Based; Work Interfering with Family) "I feel like I spent a lot of my adult life kind of spinning my wheels and by the time I finally figured out what I wanted to do professionally and discovered my passion, I had this conflict. Because I love my job, but the most important thing to me is to be a good mom. My kids are very important, so how do I figure out how I'm going to be good at this thing I finally love to do and be a good mom at the same time and that's been a big conflict for me." (Strain-Based)	Work-Family Integration
Family Role Salience	"I love my job, but the most important thing to me is to be a good mom"	Work-Family Integration
Role Enhancement	"When we arrive in [another country] at the end of May, I go back to work full-time but	Work-Family Integration/Mid-

CODE	JENNA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	now I've got professional help again full-time. So, I don't have to do laundry anymore and I've got someone to help me with meals and things like that so that the time I get to spend with my kids, I get to just play and do great things with them and I'm not trying to do all the other parts of managing a family." (Additional Income; Reduced Role Strain)	Career Stage
Multi-Role Structuring	"We're both really focused on our roles as parents and in maintaining a professional way of life so that gives us less time to focus on each other. So I would say being a mom has taken away from my role as a wife…for sure."	Work-Family Integration
Balance	"And it changed the amount of time I invested in my job, which professionally has had an impact and will continue to do so." "I started in '06 and then my son was born in '08 and if I hadn't had that, I probably would not have been able to maintain the balance that I have so far. I finally had a feel for where you went to get stuff done, so I could make much more efficient use of the time that I had, which didn't exist before."	Career Choice
Authenticity	In late 2004, I sat down with a life coach and did a lot of internal discussions with myself, a lot of self-study to figure out what I wanted to do." "I'm really, really good at it. It's a passion for me and it took me ten years to find it." "I take a lot of pride in the work that I do and I think it's really important to do it well and do it right." "And if it doesn't work out it doesn't work out and now that I've had a taste of doing something I love, I'm not going to settle for spinning time. If I'm just going to spin my wheels, then I'm going to do it with my kids. But if I'm going to do a job, it's not going to be just to pay for my vacation somewhere. It's going to be a real job and doing something else	Career Choice

CODE	JENNA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	I care about."	
Protean	"I have an undergraduate degree in anthropology and I knew I wasn't going to be Indiana Jones and I knew I didn't want to teach so that was sort of a just-wanted-to- learn-it kind of degree. I spent about ten years trying to figure out what I wanted to do when I grew up." (Self-Awareness) "And I would get a job and be very good at it and in about two or three years I would get bored because I'd reach the highest level I could get to with an undergraduate degree. Once I learned how to do it then I wanted to go learn how to do something else because that's really what drives me, is that learning how to do something." (Self-Awareness) "In late 2004, I sat down with a life coach and did a lot of internal discussions with myself, a lot of self-study to figure out what I wanted to do because I felt like I was wasting my time by not focusing on something. That's where I rediscovered a career in the Foreign Service, which meant my learning curve changes every two to three years radically. We're in a different country, we're in a different language and different work environment and I love it!" (Self-Awareness) "And if that means I am 40 years old and starting over in a different career, then that's what that means and that's the risk we took when we made the decision to have kids and have this kind of job and this kind of lifestyle." (Adaptability) "If it turns out that we come back to D.C. and they don't want to go again, I've got somewhere else to go professionally. I'm going to try and see what kind of options I really have." (Adaptability)	Career Choice
Relationalism	"Well, at first it was: 'Does my husband have	Career

CODE	JENNA'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	an Internet connection for his job and can we take the dog?' Well now it's a lot more complicated. Now it's not just that, but, 'Are we living in a house or an apartment? Do my kids have a yard? What are the schools like? Are we going to be living overseas? Can they handle the transition?' So for this job in particular, the choices we make about where we go are all based on what kinds of services and family life are going to be available"	Choice/Mid-Career Stage
Flexibility	"So, it was a really nice transition because I could see him whenever I needed to or whenever I wanted to. The easiest part of it was that I had a lot of flexibility and my time was my own." (Job)	Mid-Career Stage/Work-Family Integration
Career Establishment	"Luckily, as you become higher up in the ranks the demands on your time change a bit. So, it's a little more flexible now that I'm five years into my career than it was certainly in the first couple of years where I had receptions and engagements I had to participate in two or three nights every week. Well, that isn't sustainable if the only time I see my kids during the week is an hour or two before bedtime. So, I think if I had had my child right at the very beginning, I would have found a different job because the job that I had I couldn't be successful at and continue to do it." (Ease)	Mid-Career Stage

Participant 11: "Kolleen"

Kolleen is a 37 year-old married mother of two children, ages three and a half and 18 months. She is a Director of Student Activities and Programs in the field of Higher Education Administration with 13 years of work experience. She was 33 years old when she had her first child.

Textural description: Kolleen.

My boss at that time was extremely receptive and willing to work with me, so I slowly came back. So, my first week back I only came back one day, then the second week back I came back two days, still getting the emails and integrating myself. I was so welcomed both from my staff and from my boss and I just didn't jump into the deep end of the pool. The phased-in approach was huge and I didn't know what I needed because I never did this before. So, it wasn't kind of this shock to the system. So, that was helpful and I can't imagine not doing that. That would have been quite the shock to the system, so that was the nice part of it. My staff was very respectful and didn't bother me my whole maternity leave and that was kind of strange too because I'm like, 'You don't need me, what, are you sure?' It was strange and when I got back, they really did do a great job and it gave me the reassurance when I went out with my second. I think I value it a little bit more now that I don't take it for granted as much because of how blessed I've been here. Because it is a family here and I was extremely supported both when I was away and when I came back and it wasn't like, 'Oh, she's home with the kids.' Everyone was like 'Okay, great!' I'm not going to lie, I was kind of looking forward to coming back because nobody ever tells you how incredibly hard it is. Motherhood, lack of sleep and also that transition from working and being wanted and needed to all of a sudden no contact with the outside world.

There was a lot of like: 'Should I be doing this? Should I not be doing this?' It was a very confusing time because he wasn't sleeping through the night and I was still trying to be professional and it was challenging, it really was. It's a lot more than I ever expected, so it was hard. I'm not going to lie, it was very, very hard. I was feeling a little bit of push and pull because it's exciting to talk to adults again and using your brain for something other than Sesame Street, but should I be home? What am I missing? Hearing stories from like, 'Well, he did this today' and I'm like [sigh] 'I'll never know that or see that.' Maybe confused isn't the right word, but maybe conflicted, maybe that is better. I've worked really hard for my career and to get to this position and it took me awhile. It really took me a while to finally figure out that. I do enjoy working, but I think in the long run I'm actually a better mom because I work. It took a long time and I don't want to say that I've come to terms with it, but maybe more of an acceptance. Because in those times that I'm home with them all day long I'm like, 'Oh my God, when am I going back to work?' I appreciate the time I do have with them, but coming to terms with that was a long time coming because I don't have any role models that way. My mom didn't work. I have friends who work and we support each other that way, but it's also the different type of work because a lot of the women I know who work are teachers so to me that's a different genre. When I first went back, I don't think they expected me to go back after my daughter because they thought with two, 'Oh, you're going to stay home, right?' I'm like, 'Who's paying my mortgage?' I even said to my father-in-law, 'Why don't you ask (my husband) if he works?' Well, he's supposed to. Wow!! Really! Good to know.

You've got to get up and get yourself ready, get them ready, get out the door, and still be able to talk to people and keep both worlds going because it's constant, it never ends. The best piece of advice I ever got was, when you're at work, be at work, and when you're at home, be at home. And try, if you can, keeping both worlds as separate as possible. So, when I turn the key for the door here, I'm here and I felt that it helped me.

You still get the phone calls and you still get things like that, but if my mind is in that place it helped me be a better worker. And then when I'm home, hopefully be a better mother. So, opening my front door, okay, mommy mode, and Blackberry goes away. It helped me mentally get through it, though not necessarily the physical aspects of motherhood and getting things done, but getting my mind in the right place. It helped, not all the time, but it definitely assisted more than anything else. Its quality and not quantity, so when I'm with them, I'm with them. There's nothing else. The T.V. is not on. I am as fully engaged as I can be with them in the time I get with them. When I'm here, I'm here. I won't call it a box, but keeping me where I'm at helps and I have to say, I'm blessed that I don't have to take work home. It's not that type of job where I'm doing it on the train. Yes, sometimes I do it on the train but that's it. I don't bring work home. Everyone's job is so different sometimes, that you have to blend them or you work from home. I can't imagine, but if that's what you need to do that's what you do. I think that's what's worked for me and kids. I'm proud of where I work and what my position is and the status that it holds and I'm proud to be a mom too, so the dual factors but it's interesting. It just seems like we're so kid-centered, but can there be a balance? I say the word integration because they're not silos and the minute you think they can be silos you won't be successful at either one. I won't say they're symbiotic, but they have to blend somewhere or else you're not human.

At first it was a necessity and now I've come to realize that there are some days I don't always love it, but more often than not I've worked hard to get here and can you have it all? I don't even know if this is having it all, but trying to balance it and doing it the best you can and making it work. So, I would say try and figure that out because that's a constant. We always joke around that if we ever won the lottery, would I stop working and I'm like, I don't know, maybe. But, it would never be like I don't want to not work, if I didn't have the choice. So, I think just that constant struggle and some days it's easier and some days it's harder than ever and trying to make it work. I'll just say for me what usually loses out is self, because you want to be there for them. Then, the house and the cleaning and then all this other stuff and here and trying to answer the 4,000 questions. Then, saying 'Oh my God, what about me?' All I want to do is get a manicure, it was like my goal for the week. And I literally looked at my schedule and I was like, it's not going to happen. Then, my husband was like, 'Well, just go after you come home from work' and then I was like, 'Well, then I won't see the kids and that's not an option.' That doesn't cross my mind to say 'Time out, mommy time', but I know I should do it more but I don't. I don't know if it's shopping or working out or whatever, it just always seems beyond secondary. It's like third, fourth, fifth, sixth down the road because I think a little bit the guilt. I'm spending technically more time here and I maybe see them an hour to an hour and a half a day, maybe. So, that does break my heart, but trying to stay focused. So, really, if I don't get the laundry done…I don't care. It just puts things into perspective so much more and that what I used to think was important is really not a big deal. Or, what used to get me so bent out of shape is not that important.

I definitely appreciate the fact I have a job (especially in this lovely economy) and that they've been willing to work with me. My daughter was extremely sick when she was first born. I was on maternity leave, but my boss called once and I didn't get back to her

for two days. She was like, 'Just take care of your family' and that makes me more motivated to be here because they understand that I don't pull the kid card all the time. But, it keeps me motivated because of the appreciation and I have to say the word generous with that because they don't have to be. I know that out there in this world they can make it hard and hellish and you know make me run screaming the other way and they don't, but it makes me more motivated to do my job better and to be supportive and to do the best job I can. I don't take it for granted. The paycheck has a little bit more value now because my paycheck covers our mortgage and if that's not coming in that's kind of huge. Yes, that's a big deal. I never thought of it that way but yes, it's a pretty big deal. It's not just a paycheck, I get value out of it. I feel like I do a pretty good job, a little bit of the status. I did work for 13-plus years before they ever came into this world and I just wasn't willing to give it up and if that makes me selfish, okay. There are some people in my family that would say that and I'm slowly coming to terms with that, but I do get some joy out of this, I do. I think I feel blessed for that because I think I'd lose my mind if I had to do this and it was something I hated. This job is not more important than family, but it does help me at least provide for them. Oh, my gosh, yes.

And I think I've become more efficient, I think you have to become more efficient. It's not that you want to be, but that all right, let's go, this is the way it's going to happen. Where before, I'd get to it when I get to it. So, being smart about it, so if on my way walking to the train I could stop at the Post Office and the library…let's do it. I'm more compassionate definitely. I think I always was more compassionate, but I think I'm definitely more sensitive. So, I think it's helped versus hindered if anything else. I think sometimes it is a challenge when I can't be here and I have to call out because someone is sick or whatever, but I think it has definitely helped me here. I think it's definitely helped if anything or just enhanced what I've done before or in the past. I've taken some of my work skills and I attack things here the way I attack them at home. I think it makes you extremely vulnerable and it taps into every fear you've ever had, every emotion you didn't know you had, things you never thought you could feel. You have no time to plan and you have to rely on gut or instinct.

If I were ever to move on or move from here, it would be completely different because my priorities would be different. Because now they're young, but I do want to wind up back on the island and so it won't be so much about the job as it will be more about location or hours, whereas before I didn't think about that. This is a career jump, where maybe my next thing might be lateral, just because of location and the importance of going to my son's baseball game or what have you. So, it won't be so much about me moving up and onward as much as just staying at the same level, which is fine with me. I think right now my career is where it's at and I know I would need further education to even move up, kids or no kids, I'm where I like to be. Would I like new challenges? Sure, but I might not be able to take some because of the kids and I'm okay with that. If I were to move onto the next step, I'll look at a job differently because of them and I'd probably look at jobs I never would have looked at because of them. So, it's broadened my perspective of what my career means and it might be more about a job than my career, which is okay. But, if I can make them both work I don't care about the jump. Money? Maybe. Because you still need that, you still need to pay the bills, but I wouldn't get so

caught up in the status. I would say in the next two to three years I have to make a job move. I love what I do, but I just need it to be closer because once my son is in school, I would love to be closer. That would definitely change our dynamic, because one or both of us won't be commuting for one and one or both of us will be able to spend more time with them and probably have a different daycare. If you were to talk to me in two years, it would probably be in a different place and who knows what kind of job title. I think the dynamics would definitely change then, but right now I don't see anything foreseeable but you never know.

I told him I hope what he remembers is that every weekend we have pancakes, mommy is home and mommy is dressing him and making both of them as happy as possible while I can. I hope too by working I can give them things that I wouldn't be able to if I wasn't working. Like, we can go to Sesame Place, we can go to Dutch Wonderland and I don't have to worry about being able to afford this. One of the perks I have if I stay here is they can go to this College for free. Regardless of where I work, there's always beyond the paycheck, other benefits. Hopefully, I get to expose them to some of the culture and to some art shows and the plays we're doing and our lectures. I think that would be kind of cool to see that I'm not just sitting here bored out of my mind not doing anything, but I'm making a difference.

***Structural description: Kolleen*.** Kolleen discusses the experience of returning to work after the end of her maternity leave and highlights the support and flexibility she received from her boss and work team. Being well established in her job and organization helps her to appreciate the support she receives from her team. She describes the role-enhancing effect of her job, focusing on the stimulation and satisfaction she gets from her work, and her positive and supportive work relationships. Shortly after her return to work, however, she starts to experience feelings of work-family role conflict. Though the feelings of work-family role conflict are not completely reconciled, being established in her career helps Kolleen to feel a sense of stability. She accepts her decision to work and she chooses to focus on the additional role-enhancing aspects of her job, such as enjoyment and better performance in her mother role. Kolleen describes the difficult process involved in working through the feelings of work-family role conflict and being comfortable with her choice to work.

Feelings of work-family role conflict also stimulate the need for, and facilitate the process of, high boundary separation. However, feelings of role enhancement are sustained through recognizing the need for balance between work and family roles. Kolleen focuses her energy on achieving balance between her work and family roles. Despite the feelings of acceptance and achievement of balance, feelings of work-family role conflict still sometimes emerge. Her process of multi-role structuring helps her to handle the dual roles, but it does come with a sacrifice of her own well being.

Kolleen appreciates the positive aspects of her work role and has an overall attitude characterized by feelings of role enhancement, while still expressing a feeling of family role salience. She discusses the role-enhancing effects of having dual roles, such as increased efficiency, a pragmatic attitude, greater empathy, the ability to transfer skills between both domains, and a change in perspective. The participant ponders her future career trajectory and feelings of relationalism guide her career choices. Her career perspective has protean characteristics, as she considers lateral movement for future career options. Kolleen, overall, feels very satisfied with her career.

Though she desires challenge in her career, feelings of relationalism ultimately temper that need as Kolleen considers the effect of such a career choice on the well being of her family. Through her own learning process (cultivated by the meta-competencies of identity and adaptability), Kolleen's protean career attitude helps her to focus on the criteria most salient to her. These include financial security, convenient location, and the ability to achieve an optimal level of balance. Kolleen thinks about the impact of her work role on her children and expresses feelings of optimism regarding the role-enhancing

effects of her dual roles, as she describes the perks and benefits they will receive as a result of her work.

Textural-structural description of Kolleen's experience of integrating work and family roles. Kolleen discusses the experience of returning to work after the end of her maternity leave and highlights the support and flexibility she received from her boss and work team.

> My boss at that time was extremely receptive and willing to work with me, so I slowly came back. So, my first week back I only came back one day, then the second week back I came back two days, still getting the emails and integrating myself. I was so welcomed both from my staff and from my boss and I just didn't jump into the deep end of the pool. The phased-in approach was huge and I didn't know what I needed because I never did this before. So, it wasn't kind of this shock to the system. So, that was helpful and I can't imagine not doing that. That would have been quite the shock to the system, so that was the nice part of it. My staff was very respectful and didn't bother me my whole maternity leave and that was kind of strange too because I'm like, 'You don't need me, what, are you sure?' It was strange and when I got back, they really did do a great job and it gave me the reassurance when I went out with my second.

Being well established in her job and organization helps her to appreciate the support she receives from her team.

> I think I value it a little bit more now that I don't take it for granted as much because of how blessed I've been here. Because it is a family here and I was extremely supported both when I was away and when I came back and it wasn't like, 'Oh, she's home with the kids.' Everyone was like 'Okay, great!'

She describes the role-enhancing effect of her job, focusing on the stimulation and satisfaction she gets from her work, and her positive and supportive work relationships.

> I'm not going to lie, I was kind of looking forward to coming back because nobody ever tells you how incredibly hard it is. Motherhood, lack of sleep and also that transition from working and being wanted and needed to all of a sudden no contact with the outside world.

Shortly after her return to work, however, Kolleen starts to experience feelings of work-family role conflict.

> There was a lot of like: 'Should I be doing this? Should I not be doing this?' It was a very confusing time because he wasn't sleeping through the night and I was still trying to be professional and it was challenging, it really was. It's a lot more than I ever expected, so it was hard. I'm not going to lie, it was very, very hard. I was feeling a little bit of push and pull because it's exciting to talk to adults again and using your brain for something other than Sesame Street, but should I be home? What am I missing? Hearing stories from like, 'Well, he did this today' and I'm like [sigh] 'I'll never know that or see that.' Maybe confused isn't the right word, but maybe conflicted, maybe that is better.

Though the feelings of work-family role conflict are not completely reconciled, being established in her career helps Kolleen to feel a sense of stability. She accepts her decision to work and she chooses to focus on the additional role-enhancing aspects of her job, such as enjoyment and better performance in her mother role.

> I've worked really hard for my career and to get to this position and it took me awhile. It really took me a while to finally figure out that. I do enjoy working, but I think in the long run I'm actually a better mom because I work.

Kolleen describes the difficult process involved in working through the feelings of work-family role conflict and being comfortable with her choice to work.

> It took a long time and I don't want to say that I've come to terms with it, but maybe more of an acceptance. Because in those times that I'm home with them all day long I'm like, 'Oh my God, when am I going back to work?' I appreciate the time I do have with them, but coming to terms with that was a long time coming because I don't have any role models that way. My mom didn't work. I have friends who work and we support each other that way, but it's also the different type of work because a lot of the women I know who work are teachers so to me that's a different genre. When I first went back, I don't think they expected me to go back after my daughter because they thought with two, 'Oh, you're going to stay home, right?' I'm like, 'Who's paying my mortgage?' I even said to my father-in-law, 'Why don't you ask (my husband) if he works?' Well, he's supposed to. Wow!! Really! Good to know.

Feelings of work-family role conflict also stimulate the need for and facilitate the process of high boundary separation.

> You've got to get up and get yourself ready, get them ready, get out the door, and still be able to talk to people and keep both worlds going because it's constant, it never ends. The best piece of advice I ever got was, when you're at work, be at

> work, and when you're at home, be at home. And try, if you can, keeping both worlds as separate as possible. So, when I turn the key for the door here, I'm here and I felt that it helped me. You still get the phone calls and you still get things like that, but if my mind is in that place it helped me be a better worker. And then when I'm home, hopefully be a better mother. So, opening my front door, okay, mommy mode, and Blackberry goes away. It helped me mentally get through it, though not necessarily the physical aspects of motherhood and getting things done, but getting my mind in the right place. It helped, not all the time, but it definitely assisted more than anything else. Its quality and not quantity, so when I'm with them, I'm with them. There's nothing else. The T.V. is not on. I am as fully engaged as I can be with them in the time I get with them. When I'm here, I'm here. I won't call it a box, but keeping me where I'm at helps and I have to say, I'm blessed that I don't have to take work home. It's not that type of job where I'm doing it on the train. Yes, sometimes I do it on the train but that's it. I don't bring work home. Everyone's job is so different sometimes, that you have to blend them or you work from home. I can't imagine, but if that's what you need to do that's what you do. I think that's what's worked for me and the kids.

However, feelings of role enhancement are sustained through recognizing the need for balance between work and family roles.

> I'm proud of where I work and what my position is and the status that it holds and I'm proud to be a mom too, so the dual factors but it's interesting. It just seems like we're so kid-centered, but can there be a balance? I say the word integration because they're not silos and the minute you think they can be silos you won't be successful at either one. I won't say they're symbiotic, but they have to blend somewhere or else you're not human.

Kolleen focuses her energy on achieving balance between her work and family roles.

> At first it was a necessity and now I've come to realize that there are some days I don't always love it, but more often than not I've worked hard to get here and can you have it all? I don't even know if this is having it all, but trying to balance it and doing it the best you can and making it work. So, I would say try and figure that out because that's a constant.

Despite the feelings of acceptance and achievement of balance, feelings of work-family role conflict still sometimes emerge for Kolleen.

> We always joke around that if we ever won the lottery, would I stop working and I'm like, I don't know, maybe. But, it would never be like I don't want to not work,

> if I didn't have the choice. So, I think just that constant struggle and some days it's easier and some days it's harder than ever and trying to make it work.

Her process of multi-role structuring helps her to handle the dual roles, but it does come with some sacrifice of her own well being.

> I'll just say for me what usually loses out is self, because you want to be there for them. Then, the house and the cleaning and then all this other stuff and here and trying to answer the 4,000 questions. Then, saying 'Oh my God, what about me?' All I want to do is get a manicure, it was like my goal for the week. And I literally looked at my schedule and I was like, it's not going to happen. Then, my husband was like, 'Well, just go after you come home from work' and then I was like, 'Well, then I won't see the kids and that's not an option.' That doesn't cross my mind to say 'Time out, mommy time', but I know I should do it more but I don't. I don't know if it's shopping or working out or whatever, it just always seems beyond secondary. It's like third, fourth, fifth, sixth down the road because I think a little bit the guilt. I'm spending technically more time here and I maybe see them an hour to an hour and a half a day, maybe. So, that does break my heart, but trying to stay focused. So, really, if I don't get the laundry done…I don't care. It just puts things into perspective so much more and that what I used to think was important is really not a big deal. Or, what used to get me so bent out of shape is not that important.

Kolleen appreciates the positive aspects of her work role and has an overall attitude characterized by feelings of role enhancement, while still expressing a feeling of family role salience.

> I definitely appreciate the fact I have a job (especially in this lovely economy) and that they've been willing to work with me. My daughter was extremely sick when she was first born. I was on maternity leave, but my boss called once and I didn't get back to her for two days. She was like, 'Just take care of your family' and that makes me more motivated to be here because they understand that I don't pull the kid card all the time. But, it keeps me motivated because of the appreciation and I have to say the word generous with that because they don't have to be. I know that out there in this world they can make it hard and hellish and you know make me run screaming the other way and they don't, but it makes me more motivated to do my job better and to be supportive and to do the best job I can. I don't take it for granted. The paycheck has a little bit more value now because my paycheck covers our mortgage and if that's not coming in that's kind of huge. Yes, that's a big deal. I never thought of it that way but yes, it's a pretty big deal. It's not just a paycheck, I get value out of it. I feel like I do a pretty good job, a little bit of the status. I did work for 13-plus years before they ever came into this world and I just wasn't willing to give it up and if that makes me selfish, okay. There are some people in

> my family that would say that and I'm slowly coming to terms with that, but I do get some joy out of this, I do. I think I feel blessed for that because I think I'd lose my mind if I had to do this and it was something I hated. This job is not more important than family, but it does help me at least provide for them. Oh, my gosh, yes.

Kolleen discusses the role-enhancing effects of having dual roles, such as increased efficiency, a pragmatic attitude, greater empathy, the ability to transfer skills between both domains, and a change in perspective.

> And I think I've become more efficient, I think you have to become more efficient. It's not that you want to be, but that all right, let's go, this is the way it's going to happen. Where before, I'd get to it when I got to it. So, being smart about it, so if on my way walking to the train I could stop at the Post Office and the library…let's do it. I'm more compassionate definitely. I think I always was more compassionate, but I think I'm definitely more sensitive. So, I think it's helped versus hindered if anything else. I think sometimes it is a challenge when I can't be here and I have to call out because someone is sick or whatever, but I think it has definitely helped me here. I think it's definitely helped if anything or just enhanced what I've done before or in the past. I've taken some of my work skills and I attack things here the way I attack them at home. I think it makes you extremely vulnerable and it taps into every fear you've ever had, every emotion you didn't know you had, things you never thought you could feel. You have no time to plan and you have to rely on gut or instinct.

Kolleen ponders her future career trajectory and feelings of relationalism guide her career choices.

> If I were ever to move on or move from here, it would be completely different because my priorities would be different. Because now they're young, but I do want to wind up back on the island and so it won't be so much about the job as it will be more about location or hours, whereas before I didn't think about that.

Her career perspective has protean characteristics, as she considers lateral movement for future career options.

> This is a career jump, where maybe my next thing might be lateral, just because of location and the importance of going to my son's baseball game or what have you. So, it won't be so much about me moving up and onward as much as just staying at the same level, which is fine with me.

Kolleen, overall, feels very satisfied with her career. "I think right now my career is where it's at and I know I would need further education to even move up, kids or no kids, I'm where I like to be." Though she desires challenge in her career, feelings of relationalism ultimately temper that need as she considers the effect of such a career choice on the well being of her family.

> Would I like new challenges? Sure, but I might not be able to take some because of the kids and I'm okay with that. If I were to move onto the next step, I'll look at a job differently because of them and I'd probably look at jobs I never would have looked at because of them. So, it's broadened my perspective of what my career means and it might be more about a job than my career, which is okay.

Through her own learning process (cultivated by the meta-competencies of identity and adaptability), Kolleen's protean career attitude helps her to focus on the criteria most salient to her. These include financial security, convenient location, and the ability to achieve an optimal level of balance.

> But, if I can make them both work I don't care about the jump. Money? Maybe. Because you still need that, you still need to pay the bills, but I wouldn't get so caught up in the status. I would say in the next two to three years I have to make a job move. I love what I do, but I just need it to be closer because once my son is in school, I would love to be closer. That would definitely change our dynamic, because one or both of us won't be commuting for one and one or both of us will be able to spend more time with them and probably have a different daycare. If you were to talk to me in two years, it would probably be in a different place and who knows what kind of job title. I think the dynamics would definitely change then, but right now I don't see anything foreseeable but you never know.

Kolleen thinks about the impact of her work role on her children and expresses feelings of optimism regarding the role-enhancing effects of her dual roles, as she describes the perks and benefits they will receive as a result of her work.

> I told him I hope what he remembers is that every weekend we have pancakes, mommy is home and mommy is dressing him and making both of them as happy as possible while I can. I hope too by working I can give them things that I wouldn't be able to if I wasn't working. Like, we can go to Sesame Place, we can go to Dutch Wonderland and I don't have to worry about being able to afford this. One

of the perks I have if I stay here is they can go to this College for free. Regardless of where I work, there's always beyond the paycheck, other benefits. Hopefully, I get to expose them to some of the culture and to some art shows and the plays we're doing and our lectures. I think that would be kind of cool to see that I'm not just sitting here bored out of my mind not doing anything, but I'm making a difference.

***Horizonalization: Kolleen*.** The following statements were taken verbatim from the transcript of Kolleen's interview. The chart below illustrates the linkage between the statements, codes, and theoretical construct (as presented in chapter 2).

Table 5-12

Participant 11 (Kolleen): Horizonalization

CODE	KOLLEEN'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
Work-Family Role Conflict	I was feeling a little bit of push and pull because it's exciting to talk to adults again and using your brain for something other than Sesame Street, but should I be home? What am I missing? Hearing stories from like, 'Well, he did this today' and I'm like [sigh] 'I'll never know that or see that.' Maybe confused isn't the right word, but maybe conflicted, maybe that is better." (Strain-Based) "You've got to get up and get yourself ready, get them ready, get out the door, and still be able to talk to people and keep both worlds going because it's constant, it never ends." (Time-Based)	Work-Family Integration
Family Role Salience	"This job is not more important than family, but it does help me at least provide for them."	Work-Family Integration
Role Enhancement	"I'm not going to lie, I was kind of looking forward to coming back because nobody ever tells you how incredibly hard it is. Motherhood, lack of sleep and also that transition from working and being wanted and needed to all of a sudden no contact with the outside world." (Reduced Role Strain) "I do enjoy working, but I think in the long run	Work-Family Integration/Mid-Career Stage

CODE	KOLLEEN'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	I'm actually a better mom because I work." (Reduced Role Strain) "I'm more compassionate definitely. I think I always was more compassionate, but I think I'm definitely more sensitive. So, I think it's helped versus hindered if anything else" (Increased Self-Complexity) "I think it's definitely helped if anything or just enhanced what I've done before or in the past. I've taken some of my work skills and I attack things here the way I attack them at home." (Expanded Frame of Reference) "I hope too by working I can give them things that I wouldn't be able to if I wasn't working. Like, we can go to Sesame Place, we can go to Dutch Wonderland and I don't have to worry about being able to afford this." (Additional Income) "One of the perks I have if I stay here is they can go to this College for free. Regardless of where I work, there's always beyond the paycheck, other benefits. Hopefully, I get to expose them to some of the culture and to some art shows and the plays we're doing and our lectures." (Additional Income; Expanded Frame of Reference)	
Multi-Role Structuring	"I'll just say for me what usually loses out is self, because you want to be there for them. Then, the house and the cleaning and then all this other stuff and here and trying to answer the 4,000 questions. Then, saying 'Oh my God, what about me?' All I want to do is get a manicure, it was like my goal for the week. And I literally looked at my schedule and I was like, it's not going to happen. Then, my husband was like, 'Well, just go after you come home from work' and then I was like, 'Well, then I won't see the kids and that's not an option.' That doesn't cross my mind to say 'Time out, mommy time', but I know I should	Work-Family Integration

CODE	KOLLEEN'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	do it more but I don't."	
Balance	"I don't even know if this is having it all, but trying to balance it and doing it the best you can and making it work. So, I would say try and figure that out because that's a constant."	Career Choice
High Boundary Separation	"The best piece of advice I ever got was, when you're at work, be at work, and when you're at home, be at home. And try, if you can, keeping both worlds as separate as possible."	Work-Family Integration
Protean	"This is a career jump, where maybe my next thing might be lateral, just because of location and the importance of going to my son's baseball game or what have you. So, it won't be so much about me moving up and onward as much as just staying at the same level, which is fine with me." (Adaptability)	Career Choice
Relationalism	"Would I like new challenges? Sure, but I might not be able to take some because of the kids and I'm okay with that. If I were to move onto the next step, I'll look at a job differently because of them and I'd probably look at jobs I never would have looked at because of them."	Career Choice/Mid-Career Stage
Flexibility	"My boss at that time was extremely receptive and willing to work with me, so I slowly came back. So, my first week back I only came back one day, then the second week back I came back two days, still getting the emails and integrating myself. I was so welcomed both from my staff and from my boss and I just didn't jump into the deep end of the pool." (Environment)	Mid-Career Stage/Work-Family Integration
Career Establishment	"I think I value it a little bit more now that I don't take it for granted as much because of how blessed I've been here. Because it is a family here and I was extremely supported both when I was away and when I came back" (Support) "I've worked really hard for my career and to get to this position and it took me awhile. It really took me a while to finally figure out that." (Stability)	Mid-Career Stage
Satisfaction	"I think right now my career is where it's at	Mid-Career

CODE	KOLLEEN'S STATEMENT(S)	THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT
	and I know I would need further education to even move up, kids or no kids, I'm where I like to be."	Stage
Pragmatic	"And I think I've become more efficient, I think you have to become more efficient. It's not that you want to be, but that all right, let's go, this is the way it's going to happen. Where before, I'd get to it when I got to it." (Job)	Mid-Career Stage/Career Choice

Summary

Chapter 5 presented the demographic introduction, individual textural, structural, textural-structural descriptions and horizonalization (for each of the eleven participants) of the experience of work-family role integration. This data illustrates the first component of the study results, which focused on individual particularities through essential meaning units. The second component of the study results is represented through a composite textural-structural description, which was created from the individual textural-structural descriptions and focused on the essential structure of the experience, representing the group as a whole. The composite textural-structural description, which includes the basic themes illustrated throughout the individual textural-structural descriptions, is presented and discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS: COMPOSITE TEXTURAL-STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION AND THEMES

Overview

The purpose of this research is to examine the experience of work-family integration among managerial and professional women at the mid-career stage, who work in organizations and have young children (under the age of six). The goal is to understand how these women, whose jobs are characterized by significant work demands and pressure, manage the dual roles of mother and working professional.

Chapter 5 presented the demographic introduction, textural, structural, and textural-structural description and horizonalization tables for each of the eleven participants. First, for each participant, demographic information was collected including current age, marital status, occupation, years of work experience, job title, ages of children, and age the participant had her first child. Following the demographic introductions, textural and structural descriptions were created for each participant and were then combined to create textural-structural descriptions, which focused on individual particularities through essential meaning units. Finally, a horizonalization table was presented for each participant. The table included statements taken verbatim from the interview transcripts, and it illustrated the linkage between the statements, codes/themes and theoretical construct(s) (as presented in chapter 2).

Chapter 6 presents the composite textural-structural description, which includes the basic themes that emerged among the textural-structural descriptions of the eleven participants. The composite textural-structural description was created from the individual textural-structural descriptions and focused on the essential structure and meaning of the

experience, representing the group as a whole. Though this experience was examined first through the unique viewpoint of each individual, general meaning can be derived from this shared experience, contributing to a general, universal, meaning.

This final step in the analysis process is consistent with the modified Van Kaam method of analysis (Moustakas, 1994) and the EPPRM, as it focuses on essential structures through a composite textural-structural description. During initial coding of each transcript, general themes emerged through a grouping and collapsing of codes, which were then incorporated into the textural-structural descriptions for each of the eleven participants. The composite textural-structural description is presented through the discussion of seven general themes that emerged from the individual textural-structural descriptions. The composite textural-structural description combines textural data and structural elements from all of the eleven participants to discuss the overall meaning of the experience of work-family integration, representing the group of participants as a whole.

Theme 1: Work-Family Role Conflict

Most of the participants (with the exception of one person) expressed some form of work-family role conflict as part of the experience of integrating work and family roles. Work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The feelings of work-family role conflict described among the participants were grouped into three major categories: *strain-based, time-based,* and *work-to-family.* Examples illustrating each of the three categories are written below. All examples are drawn from the researcher's interviews with the 11 participants of this study.

Theme 1: Work-Family Role Conflict - Strain-Based

Strain-based role-conflict involves the tension that occurs as a result of involvement in multiple roles and occurs when the strain in one role negatively impacts performance in another role. The expression of strain-based work-family role conflict was experienced in the form of strong contradictory emotions about the process of integrating work and family roles. Several of the participants expressed a deep desire to immerse themselves in their work roles, but also a strong desire to fully engage in their mother roles. These conflicting emotions manifested in feelings of stress, anxiety, confusion, and guilt.

Alexandra describes the confusing emotions she felt when she first returned to work after the completion of her maternity leave.

> The first feelings I had were highly mixed emotions because I was excited to get back to feeling like an adult and interacting with the rest of the world. I think being home felt really isolating, but it was sad at the same time too - to be leaving my daughter.

Kolleen describes similar conflicting feelings when she returned to work.

> I was feeling a little bit of push and pull because it's exciting to talk to adults again and using your brain for something other than Sesame Street, but should I be home? What am I missing? Hearing stories from like, 'Well, he did this today' and I'm like [sigh] 'I'll never know that or see that.' Maybe confused isn't the right word, but maybe conflicted, maybe that is better.

Strain-based work-family role conflict was also experienced in the form of anxiety about the ability to perform in both roles, as described by Donna.

> I remember that I actually had anxiety prior to coming back in the office because I knew I was going back. Then, as the day got closer, I started having anxiety like: 'How am I going to come back?' And it was all different, mixed emotions because it was, 'How am I going to come back and still be the performer that I was prior to having my child and prior to going out on leave?'

Emily describes a similar feeling of strain through uncertainty regarding her ability to perform in her work and family roles to the levels she expects of herself.

> There were times when I would literally call my husband and say 'I can't do this. I can't remember what I have to do at work, versus what I have to do at home and I'm not getting things done' and when you add the kid element I just think it gets tenfold more difficult. It's a biological change in your system, as well as sort of the physical demands on you and the emotional, so all of those components together. And you can't really go back to where you were, so it's frustrating.

For other participants, the feeling of strain-based role conflict is experienced as a general 'push and pull' between work and family demands, on an emotional level, described as feelings of stress or guilt. Gina describes her feelings of stress.

> I just struggle between wanting to come home and be a parent and stay at work and finish whatever I'm in the middle of because that's just who I am. So, it's tough to do that. I feel bad when I need to drop my son at day care when he might be sick, but I also get annoyed when day care calls. But the cumulative effect of being out of the office is very stressful and I need to weigh the two against each other. So, my work dynamics compete with the need to be with my son and pick him up from daycare.

Helen and Kolleen describe the strain associated with having high personal standards for performance in work and family roles and deciding where the tradeoff will be, knowing something will need to be sacrificed. For Helen and Kolleen, that question still remains to be answered. "I guess there's a bit of a conflict there that I want to do it all. I want to be a great mom, a great professional, a great everything and I don't think that's doable in the long term." (Helen)

> I feel like I spent a lot of my adult life kind of spinning my wheels and by the time I finally figured out what I wanted to do professionally and discovered my passion, I had this conflict. Because I love my job, but the most important thing to me is to be a good mom. My kids are very important, so how do I figure out how I'm going to be good at this thing I finally love to do and be a good mom at the same time and that's been a big conflict for me. (Kolleen)

Theme 1: Work-Family Role Conflict - Time-Based

Time-based conflict suggests multiple roles can compete for a person's time. The expression of time-based work-family role conflict was experienced as a challenge in the

ability to respond to the time demands of both roles. “You’ve got to get up and get yourself ready, get them ready, get out the door, and still be able to talk to people and keep both worlds going because it’s constant, it never ends” (Kolleen).

This time-based conflict was described by several of the participants as having a negative impact on their ability to perform in their work role. “So, I think my role as a mother, as a result, has limited my potential to decide what I would have done in my work role, but it’s all back to a time thing” (Bethany). Calista describes her feelings around managing the time requirements of both roles.

> It was kind of overwhelming because, all of a sudden, you not only have the need to catch up on work and get back into the swing of doing work, but now you have all these responsibilities at home. It was just that I was very used to having a couple of hours to do some work before meetings started. So now all of a sudden I’m getting to work and running to a meeting and I’m like, whoa, this is really weird.

Gina also struggles with the time demands of both roles.

> A lot of times I will end up staying later than I need to. I have added one more dimension into my already busy schedule and so something has got to give and that’s an everyday process trying to work out what’s going to give.

Emily also struggles with the time requirements of both roles, but also discusses the factor of increasing responsibilities in her work role as a result of reaching a higher level of position.

> Mainly it’s just time. I put a lot more time into it before. It’s become increasingly demanding for a variety of reasons. When you get more senior and you have more responsibilities, when you have people reporting to you, and when you have more knowledge than other people, all of that stuff adds stressors and time demands on you. And you have a Blackberry that you never get to put down and so you have to learn to balance that.

Jenna describes her experience in returning to work after the birth of her second child, when the time requirements of her work role were particularly intense. “So, it was

very difficult the second time. I was back to an 8 to 5 kind of job, which for me meant really leaving the house at 7:00 and getting home at 6:00."

Theme 1: Work-Family Role Conflict - Work-to-Family

Work-to-family conflict occurs when work responsibilities hinder the ability to attend to family responsibilities (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lee, 1994). Several of the participants experienced work-family role conflict in the specific form of work-to-family conflict, or work interfering with family. Isabelle describes her experience of her workload increasing to the point of interference with her family responsibilities:

> They started giving me other projects because they knew I was very capable. So very quickly I went from feeling , 'Oh this wasn't as bad as I thought it would be', to 'this is stressful, I'm tired, I'm not getting enough rest and I want to either find something else or I want to telework more permanently.'
>
> But it also made me kind of question everything I was doing and ask, 'Is this the right for me?' This is very high profile, very high pressure and once I started getting more tired and the sleep deprivation started adding up, I started feeling guilty that I wanted to be spending more time with my daughter.

Jenna describes a time period when the demands of her work required that she sacrifice time with her child.

> So, I would spend maybe two or three minutes with him, if he was awake before I left in the morning, and maybe an hour with him at night when I got home. That was the only time during the week, Monday through Friday that I got to really spend with him, so it was very difficult.

Table 6-1

Work –Family Role Conflict

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category
P1	"The first feelings I had were highly mixed emotions because I was excited to get back to feeling like an adult and interacting with the rest of the world. I think being home felt really isolating, but it was sad at the	Strain-Based

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category
	same time too - to be leaving my daughter."	
P2	"So, I think my role as a mother, as a result, has limited my potential to decide what I would have done in my work role, but it's all back to a time thing."	Time-Based
P3	"So, kind of the same thing and what worked well for me was also what was kind of the most stressful, you know, just being at work, being away from home."	Strain-Based
	"It was kind of overwhelming because, all of a sudden, you not only have the need to catch up on work and get back into the swing of doing work, but now you have all these responsibilities at home. It was just that I was very used to having a couple of hours to do some work before meetings started. So now all of a sudden I'm getting to work and running to a meeting and I'm like, whoa, this is really weird."	Time-Based
P4	"I remember that I actually had anxiety prior to coming back in the office because I knew I was going back. Then, as the day got closer, I started having anxiety like: 'How am I going to come back?' And it was all different, mixed emotions because it was, 'How am I going to come back and still be the performer that I was prior to having my child and prior to going out on leave?'"	Strain-Based
P5	"There were times when I would literally call my husband and say 'I can't do this. I can't remember what I have to do at work, versus what I have to do at home and I'm not getting things done' and when you add the kid element I just think it gets tenfold more difficult. It's a biological change in your system, as well as sort of the physical demands on you and the emotional, so all of those components together. And you	Strain-Based

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category
	can't really go back to where you were, so it's frustrating."	
	"Mainly it's just time. I put a lot more time into it before. It's become increasingly demanding for a variety of reasons. When you get more senior and you have more responsibilities, when you have people reporting to you, and when you have more knowledge than other people, all of that stuff adds stressors and time demands on you. And you have a Blackberry that you never get to put down and so you have to learn to balance that."	Time-Based
P6	N/A	N/A
P7	"I just struggle between wanting to come home and be a parent and stay at work and finish whatever I'm in the middle of because that's just who I am. So, it's tough to do that. I feel bad when I need to drop my son at day care when he might be sick, but I also get annoyed when day care calls. But the cumulative effect of being out of the office is very stressful and I need to weigh the two against each other. So, my work dynamics compete with the need to be with my son and pick him up from daycare."	Strain-Based
	"A lot of times I will end up staying later than I need to. I have added one more dimension into my already busy schedule and so something has got to give and that's an everyday process trying to work out what's going to give."	Time-Based
P8	"I guess there's a bit of a conflict there that I want to do it all. I want to be a great mom, a great professional, a great everything and I don't think that's doable in the long term."	Strain-Based

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category
P9	"They started giving me other projects because they knew I was very capable. So very quickly I went from feeling , 'Oh this wasn't as bad as I thought it would be', to 'this is stressful, I'm tired, I'm not getting enough rest and I want to either find something else or I want to telework more permanently.'"	Time-Based Work-to-Family
	"But it also made me kind of question everything I was doing and ask, 'Is this the right career for me?' This is very high profile, very high pressure and once I started getting more tired and the sleep deprivation started adding up, I started feeling guilty that I wanted to be spending more time with my daughter."	Strain-Based Work-to-Family
P10	"So, it was very difficult the second time. I was back to an 8 to 5 kind of job, which for me meant really leaving the house at 7:00 and getting home at 6:00. So, I would spend maybe two or three minutes with him, if he was awake before I left in the morning and maybe an hour with him at night when I got home. That was the only time during the week, Monday through Friday that I got to really spend with him, so it was very difficult"	Time-Based Work- to- Family
	"I feel like I spent a lot of my adult life kind of spinning my wheels and by the time I finally figured out what I wanted to do professionally and discovered my passion, I had this conflict. Because I love my job, but the most important thing to me is to be a good mom. My kids are very important, so how do I figure out how I'm going to be good at this thing I finally love to do and be a good mom at the same time and that's been a big conflict for me."	Strain-Based

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category
P11	I was feeling a little bit of push and pull because it's exciting to talk to adults again and using your brain for something other than Sesame Street, but should I be home? What am I missing? Hearing stories from like, 'Well, he did this today' and I'm like [sigh] 'I'll never know that or see that.' Maybe confused isn't the right word, but maybe conflicted, maybe that is better."	Strain-Based
	"You've got to get up and get yourself ready, get them ready, get out the door, and still be able to talk to people and keep both worlds going because it's constant, it never ends."	Time-Based

Note. P = participant

Theme 2: Role Enhancement

All of the participants expressed an overall feeling of role enhancement as part of the experience of integrating work and family roles, though there were different factors that contributed to this feeling. Barnett and Hyde (2001) suggested that multiple roles are beneficial for women and can often produce feelings of role enhancement. This suggests multiple roles enhance psychological well being by providing opportunities for social integration, mastery, and social and personal recognition (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001) and reduce role strain (Amatea & Fong, 1991). Statements related to role enhancement that were described among the participants were grouped into the following major categories: *Reduced Role Strain, Expanded Frame of Reference, Additional Income, Trust and Support,* and *Personal Gratification.* Examples of each category are provided below and are drawn from the researcher's interviews with the 11 participants.

Theme 2: Role Enhancement - Reduced Role Strain

Seven of the participants described a sense of reduced role strain, particularly from the mother role, as an important factor in their overall feelings of role enhancement. Within the context of role enhancement in this study, the reduction of role strain refers specifically to the ability to offload or share some of the tasks associated with the mother role, which occurs when the work role also exists.

Alexandra discusses her feelings upon returning back to work. “I think that I feel really lucky to be able to do both and that I don’t think I’d be suited to be a stay-at-home mom and it’s not something that I really would want for myself.” Helen shares a similar perspective and self-awareness about her preference in participating in both roles. “It’s nice to have those dual roles where I don’t exhaust myself in one of them. So, for me, working works. Otherwise, I think I’d be a lousy mom and a lousy domestic goddess.”

Enhanced role engagement and an increase in energy level are also the result of reduced role strain. “I do enjoy working, but I think in the long run I’m actually a better mom because I work” (Kolleen). “Because I’m not with the kids all day I feel like when I’m with them I’m a better mom anyway” (Helen).

Several of the participants describe the relief that they felt, through their work, in getting a break from the mother role. Isabelle states, “It was also a little relieving at first to feel like I wasn’t responsible 24 hours a day for an infant.” Kolleen shares a similar reaction, as she states, “I’m not going to lie, I was kind of looking forward to coming back because nobody ever tells you how incredibly hard it is.” Helen found the mother role required more energy than her work role. “The cognitive load was more taxing to be a mom than it was to be a professional.” Other participants also express feelings of relief upon returning to work, realizing they welcomed a break from the mother role:

> So, it was kind of different to come back and sit in front of the computer and not have to, every second of the day, look over to see what she's doing. So, I think in that sense it was really good. It was good that I got a break from her and she got a break from me. (Donna)

> It was almost a relief to be going back to work after having been home so much. In a lot of respects, it was a good experience to come back to because I like to keep busy and it was tough being home all the time." (Gina). Gina further elaborates, "I don't feel like I'm neglecting him in terms of not being here all the time. I hate to say it, but, there's a slight bit of relief. He's a work out. It's hard being with him all day long. I actually really like that he has day care to go to.

In addition to getting a break from the mother role, others expressed feelings of reduced role strain from the household chores and other elements of their family role that are typically associated with the mother role. "So, all of those typical domestic things that I think become very taxing, and you've got to figure out how to do are easier when you've got domestic staff to take some of that role for you." (Helen)

> So, I don't have to do laundry anymore and I've got someone to help me with meals and things like that so that the time I get to spend with my kids, I get to just play and do great things with them and I'm not trying to do all the other parts of managing a family. (Jenna)

Theme 2: Role Enhancement - Expanded Frame of Reference

Seven of the participants experienced feelings of role enhancement from engaging in multiple roles as a result of an expanded frame of reference, which enabled them to apply the knowledge and experience gained from one role to enhance another role.

> It's really important to me to be stimulated and to have interesting work and to work around gifted and talented people who are interested in tackling some of the biggest foreign policy issues and working in public service and that extends into other parts of my life. (Isabelle)

The wider frame of reference was cultivated through the work roles of many of these women, as many of their work experiences and challenges were able to be applied to their mother roles, which included instilling a broader perspective in their children. "I think

that having confidence in who you are and what you do at work definitely impacts your ability to be a wife and a mom and it also probably emphasizes what I want to make sure my kids learn" (Emily). "I think it's definitely helped if anything or just enhanced what I've done before or in the past. I've taken some of my work skills and I attack things here the way I attack them at home" (Kolleen). "He's treated very well, he's loved very much and I want him to grow up knowing that his mother has a career and lived her life too. I want him to have that healthy respect that mommies *and* daddies can work." (Gina)

For others, the enlarged frame of reference was developed through their mothering roles, as many of their parenting experiences and challenges were able to be applied to their professional and other personal roles.

> There are more bonds now in relationships that I have built in the workplace with other working professionals who are mothers because now I have not only a relationship with them as a colleague, but I also have the role of being a mother in common with them and it's brought me closer to some of those colleagues. So, as my mother role has kind of come in and having mothers in client roles, I feel like my negotiation skills are a little bit better because we actually have a bond outside of just being colleagues. Also, a closer bond with my own mother and with my sister and brother and their spouses because we can share experiences and ideas and everything that comes along with that role. (Fran)

> One way that being a mom has really helped my job is that when I say no, that means no and we're not going to have an argument at the window and I'm not going to feel bad. It's kind of like with kids. I don't negotiate with a two year old about bedtime the same way that I don't negotiate with an applicant about a decision that I've made. So, in a way that has been really helpful. It's also been really helpful at drawing boundaries. (Helen)

Theme 2: Role Enhancement - Additional Income

Four of the participants experienced feelings of role enhancement from the additional income that came with their work roles. The additional income served as a factor in buffering the demands of managing their dual roles, through the ability to obtain childcare and household support, as well as increased freedom in purchasing ability or a

more relaxed household budget. Several of the participants discussed the role of additional income in their ability to hire high quality childcare or other domestic help. Helen uses her additional income for domestic and childcare support. "For both of our kids, we have a nanny that works full-time and we have somebody else that cleans." Kolleen mentions a unique benefit available to her as an employee of a large University. "One of the perks I have if I stay here is they can go to this college for free." Several of the other participants talk about their lives being more comfortable and less worrisome as a result of having additional income.

> Financial security also helps. I think if I stayed home full-time, I would feel guilty because I would be thinking about not contributing to her college account and we can't borrow money from retirement, so it's incumbent upon me to provide for our retirement. So I'm okay. I think I'm definitely making the right choice. (Isabelle)

> I hope too by working I can give them things that I wouldn't be able to if I wasn't working. Like, we can go to Sesame Place, we can go to Dutch Wonderland and I don't have to worry about being able to afford this. (Kolleen)

Theme 2: Role Enhancement - Trust and Support

Four of the participants specifically discussed the positive impact of high quality trusted childcare and/or the support of their spouses on the ability to successfully engage in their work roles. Finding a daycare, nanny or other family resource they could trust helped many of the women integrate back into their work roles with relative ease. "We had a live-in nanny, so I felt like she was safe at home and it really wasn't too bad of a transition." (Emily)

> I had family and friends that were able to give her feedings, so it wasn't this pressure that she had to be attached to me all the time so I think that also helped. The child had a routine; she was pretty easy going, and the day care that we found we could trust in that she was going to be in good hands. (Donna)

> I think the most important thing for me, when I was going back to work, was having a day-care person who I felt that I trusted, so that I could actually go back to

> work and actually be at ease when I was working. So, I could perform my job in the manner in which they were expecting me to as I did before I left work. (Fran)

Gina further elaborates on the process and the outcome of finding a reliable and trusted provider for her child.

> Other people might say that their most difficult moment was leaving their child, but we have a day care and we visited it and he'd even been in it for a few hours. They actually allowed him to come in for a half day just to get transitioned and then we actually had an arrangement for the day care to take him on the days that I was working.

Several of the women also discussed the supportive role of their spouse in being able to successfully integrate their work into their lives after children. This support often took the form of encouragement and acceptance of these women's work roles. "But having a supportive and encouraging husband … makes a really big difference." (Emily). Gina counts her blessings with regard to her husband's support of her career.

> I'm definitely lucky that I've got a husband who accepts me for who I am and understands that work is so important to me. He may roll his eyes, call me a crack-berry, get frustrated with me absolutely at times, but he does support me. He does understand it and he does do his best to help me achieve it and to help us work around things as we need to. I'm thankful for that flexibility.

Fran experienced support through her spouse's active involvement in the parent role. When she needed to miss a day of work due to her son being sick, she relied on her husband's ability to help out the next time. "So, we had a shared responsibility at home and that, hopefully, it would be some time again before I was going to have to take time off of work to do that." (Fran)

Theme 2: Role Enhancement - Personal Gratification

Finally, a few participants discussed the role-enhancing effects of their work roles based upon a sense of personal gratification. A sense of personal gratification was achieved by opportunities for success and mastery or personal satisfaction from their work.

"But I like to be doing something. Like, all the time I like to keep busy and so for me it was great!" (Gina). "In some ways it was kind of liberating at first because I was like, 'Wow, here I'm doing an eight hour chunk of time at work and I really enjoy the intellectual stimulation'" (Isabelle). "I think it's really important to give back and I feel like I'm able to do that through my work" (Isabelle). "There's that part of me that is glad that I have my career and have a life outside of the home and I respect anybody that stays at home, but it's just not me. I would get bored." (Gina)

Table 6-2

Role Enhancement

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category
P1	"I think that I feel really lucky to be able to do both and that I don't think I'd be suited to be a stay-at-home mom and it's not something that I really would want for myself."	Reduced Role Strain
P2	"My career experience is positive to my family role, I think, just because of the exposure. I met people and I could learn even about this daycare, for example, through my career. So, I definitely think the career experience is a positive role. I think overall it's positive."	Personal Satisfaction
P3	"I think I have more experience, life experiences and career experiences to pull from, so I think having been able to develop my career, there' some stability there."	Expanded Frame of Reference
P4	"But, I knew for my sanity, for my career moving forward and for the good of my child to be social with other kids at the day care, it was best all around for me to come back."	
	So, it was kind of different to come back and sit in front of the computer and not have to, every second of the day, look over to see what	Reduced Role Strain

	she's doing. So, I think in that sense it was really good. It was good that I got a break from her and she got a break from me."	
	"I had family and friends that were able to give her feedings, so it wasn't this pressure that she had to be attached to me all the time so I think that also helped. The child had a routine; she was pretty easy going, and the day care that we found we could trust in that she was going to be in good hands."	Trust and Support
P5	"I think that having confidence in who you are and what you do at work definitely impacts your ability to be a wife and a mom and it also probably emphasizes what I want to make sure my kids learn."	Expanded Frame of Reference
	"That's been a major thing, to be able to afford that just to make this work and home work in a way that's enough balance that we both can deal with it."	Additional Income
	"But having a supportive and encouraging husband … makes a really big difference."	Trust and Support
	"We had a live-in nanny, so I felt like she was safe at home and it really wasn't too bad of a transition."	Trust and Support
P6	"There are more bonds now in relationships that I have built in the workplace with other working professionals who are mothers because now I have not only a relationship with them as a colleague, but I also have the role of being a mother in common with them and it's brought me closer to some of those colleagues. So, as my mother role has kind of come in and having mothers in client roles, I feel like my negotiation skills are a little bit better because we actually have a bond outside of just being colleagues. Also, a closer bond with my own mother and with my sister and brother and their spouses because we can share experiences and ideas and everything that comes along with that role."	Expanded Frame of Reference

	"I think the most important thing for me, when I was going back to work, was having a day-care person who I felt that I trusted, so that I could actually go back to work and actually be at ease when I was working. So, I could perform my job in the manner in which they were expecting me to as I did before I left work."	Trust and Support
	"So, we had a shared responsibility at home and that, hopefully, it would be some time again before I was going to have to take time off of work to do that."	Trust and Support
P7	"I didn't cry my first day back or anything like that. I love my child and I missed him certainly, but I like to be doing something. Like, all the time I like to keep busy and so for me it was great!"	Personal Gratification
	"It was almost a relief to be going back to work after having been home so much. In a lot of respects, it was a good experience to come back to because I like to keep busy and it was tough being home <u>all</u> the time."	Reduced Role Strain
	"I don't feel like I'm neglecting him in terms of not being here all the time. I hate to say it, but, there's a slight bit of relief. He's a work out. It's hard being with him all day long. I actually really like that he has day care to go to."	Reduced Role Strain
	"He's treated very well, he's loved very much and I want him to grow up knowing that his mother has a career and lived her life too. I want him to have that healthy respect that mommies *and* daddies can work."	Expanded Frame of Reference
	"There's that part of me that is glad that I have my career and have a life outside of the home and I respect anybody that stays at home, but it's just not me. I would get bored."	Personal Gratification
	"Other people might say that their most	

	difficult moment was leaving their child, but we have a day care and we visited it and he'd even been in it for a few hours. They actually allowed him to come in for a half day just to get transitioned and then we actually had an arrangement for the day care to take him on the days that I was working."	Trust and Support
	"I'm definitely lucky that I've got a husband who accepts me for who I am and understands that work is so important to me. He may roll his eyes, call me a crack-berry, get frustrated with me absolutely at times, but he does support me. He does understand it and he does do his best to help me achieve it and to help us work around things as we need to. I'm thankful for that flexibility."	Trust and Support
P8	"The cognitive load was more taxing to be a mom than it was to be a professional."	Reduced Role Strain
	"For both of our kids, we have a nanny that works full-time and we have somebody else that cleans."	Additional Income
	"So, all of those typical domestic things that I think become very taxing and you've got to figure out how to do are easier when you've got domestic staff to take some of that role for you."	Reduced Role Strain
	"Because I'm not with the kids all day I feel like when I'm with them I'm a better mom anyway."	Reduced Role Strain
	"It's nice to have those dual roles where I don't exhaust myself in one of them. So, for me, working works. Otherwise, I think I'd be a lousy mom and a lousy domestic goddess."	Reduced Role Strain
	"One way that being a mom has really helped my job is that when I say no, that means no and we're not going to have an argument at the window and I'm not going to feel bad. It's kind of like with kids. I don't negotiate with a	Expanded Frame of Reference

	two year old about bedtime the same way that I don't negotiate with an applicant about a decision that I've made. So, in a way that has been really helpful. It's also been really helpful at drawing boundaries."	
P9	"There was so much dread involved with going back to work. When I actually got there, I felt relieved knowing that I wasn't a horrible mom just because I was back at work."	Expanded Frame of Reference
	"It was also a little relieving at first to feel like I wasn't responsible 24 hours a day for an infant."	Reduced Role Strain
	"In some ways it was kind of liberating at first because I was like, 'Wow, here I'm doing an eight hour chunk of time at work and I really enjoy the intellectual stimulation.'"	Personal Gratification
	"It's really important to me to be stimulated and to have interesting work and to work around gifted and talented people who are interested in tackling some of the biggest foreign policy issues and working in public service and that extends into other parts of my life."	Expanded Frame of Reference
	"I think it's really important to give back and I feel like I'm able to do that through my work."	Personal Gratification
	"Financial security also helps. I think if I stayed home full-time, I would feel guilty because I would be thinking about not contributing to her college account and we can't borrow money from retirement, so it's incumbent upon me to provide for our retirement. So I'm okay. I think I'm definitely making the right choice."	Additional Income
P10	"So, I don't have to do laundry anymore and I've got someone to help me with meals and things like that so that the time I get to spend with my kids, I get to just play and do great things with them and I'm not trying to do all the other parts of managing a family."	Reduced Role Strain

P11	"I'm not going to lie, I was kind of looking forward to coming back because nobody ever tells you how incredibly hard it is."	Reduced Role Strain
	"I do enjoy working, but I think in the long run I'm actually a better mom because I work."	Reduced Role Strain
	"I think it's definitely helped if anything or just enhanced what I've done before or in the past. I've taken some of my work skills and I attack things here the way I attack them at home"	Expanded Frame of Reference
	"One of the perks I have if I stay here is they can go to this College for free."	Additional Income
	"Regardless of where I work, there's always beyond the paycheck, other benefits. Hopefully, I get to expose them to some of the culture and to some art shows and the plays we're doing and our lectures"	Expanded Frame of Reference
	"I hope too by working I can give them things that I wouldn't be able to if I wasn't working. Like, we can go to Sesame Place, we can go to Dutch Wonderland and I don't have to worry about being able to afford this."	Additional Income

Note. P = participant

Theme 3: Role Salience

Role Salience refers to the importance of a role to one's self-image (Cook, 1994; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000). Role salience influenced each of the participants' experience of integrating work and family roles. Role salience is an important factor in how one integrates work and family roles because it serves to influence which role activities to engage. Moreover, role salience may influence how one organizes work and family roles. Role salience was expressed in different ways and included the following categories (with respect to engagement and organization of work and family roles): *Family Role Salience,*

Career Role Salience, *Multi-Role Structuring* and *Role Balance.* Examples of each category are provided below from the researcher's interviews with the study's 11 participants. All of the participants, with the exception of one individual (Helen), expressed family role salience; however, three of the ten women who expressed family role salience also expressed career role salience (Fran, Gina & Isabelle). One participant expressed career role salience without family role salience (Helen).

Theme 3: Role Salience - Family Role Salience

Ten women described feelings of family role salience in the process of integrating their career and family roles, emphasizing that their children and families take first priority. The work role becomes secondary in terms of importance. "But in terms of integrating the roles, work seems a lot less important to me now than it used to" (Alexandra). "I love my job, but the most important thing to me is to be a good mom" (Jenna).

> If my daughter needed me, I would always just sort of opt for my daughter instead, so I think I definitely shifted my priorities a lot. I don't want to miss her milestones and it makes me sad to think that I'm going to miss some of that while she's being taken care of by other people. (Alexandra)

> But, as much as work is super important to me, when push comes to shove my child does come first. I love being a professional, but I also love being a mother. So as a mother, you know that motherhood ultimately does come first. (Gina)

"Family definitely comes first for both my husband and I, but that's not to say that it's not important to us to really enjoy our careers." (Isabelle).

For those with family role salience, the needs of the children come first and work sometimes suffers the consequences.

> If, you know, daycare calls me at 10:00 a.m. it's like, you've got to go and I go even on a day when I have probably important meetings that I would not skip even if I was sick. But now, I will. I mean, there's no other choice. (Bethany)

> I'm sure there are going to be times when things are going to come up where I may need to get on the computer after she goes to bed. I'm probably okay with that if I need to but, again, she would take priority. (Donna)

> Your priorities have kind of shifted from being a full-time professional to being a part-time professional and a part-time mom. Maybe, actually, a full-time mom and a part-time professional is probably a better way to state it because that is now your priority because I have something more than my husband at home. I have a baby and getting home to and seeing that baby is more important to me than staying late. (Fran)

For others, the career as a whole becomes diminished in significance. "I mean, I really do feel that family comes first and maybe my thoughts of my career or the thoughts of my future career isn't quite what I probably thought it was a couple of years ago" (Calista). "Now that we are responsible for molding the mind and the life of a human being, it prioritizes our career. So for me, the priority has shifted" (Donna). Jenna discussed her unwillingness to make family tradeoffs for her career and that her career would need to adjust to her family needs.

> So, when I hit the point where that's not happening anymore and I can't take pride in the work that I'm doing, I'm going to have to find a different kind of job to do or a different way to participate because I can't be less of a mom to get that sort of professional reward. That's just not a trade off I'm willing to make. Once that happened, that was the commitment I made to my children and to myself as a mom. If something had to give, that was the first stop and that's just the way it is…for me anyway.

Emily expresses family role salience through the value of quality, focused time with her children.

> I'm much more careful with my time and who I spend it with and how I spend it. I just told my friends the other day, 'I have to really like you to give up my night with my kids to come and see you.' What I care about more changes. I'd rather sit with my daughter and read her a book at night than answer email. So it's just reprioritization.

Theme 3: Role Salience - Career Role Salience

Four of the eleven participants described feelings of career role salience; however, three of the four (Fran, Gina & Isabelle) also shared feelings of family role salience. One participant (Helen) expressed career role salience without family role salience. There were different factors that influenced these feelings of career role salience for each of the participants.

Fran always had a very conscientious attitude toward work, which continued after she returned to work after the completion of her maternity leave. Fran did not want others, particularly her boss, to perceive any lack of commitment to her work role as a result of her new role as a mother.

> I didn't want to set a precedence up front that I was going to be one of those moms who wasn't at work all the time or always had a sick child or something like that. It was tough. I felt bad because I'm not typically one who misses work just for an excuse here or there. (Fran)

Gina's career role salience is directly influenced by her love and enjoyment of her work role. "In theory, I don't have to be a workaholic. I could probably work less and be okay, but I just like to work. I actually define that a lot as to who I am."

Helen describes her feelings of unease in her family role and comfort in her work role, which produces feelings of career role salience.

> I had been working for so long, so that role was really comfortable to me and being a mother was not. So, in a way, I kind of wanted to go back to work with the first one because the mommy thing wasn't clicking. It wasn't intuitive. I didn't feel natural at it. I didn't feel gifted at it, and there was a lot of comfort in my professional identity and not so much in my mommy identity because my professional identity was established before I had my kids. So, going back on some level was a little bit of a relief.

Isabelle expresses career role salience, as influenced by her role as the breadwinner for the family.

> The fact that I am pretty senior in my career and established and the breadwinner (not to say my husband doesn't make a very respectable salary, but in terms of me making quite a bit more than he does at this point), it's made me feel like the protector of the family. I feel like I'm in the traditional male role right now. It's not like I can just say I'll be a stay-at-home mom.

Theme 3: Role Salience – Multi-Role Structuring

Six of the eleven participants organized their roles according to the process of multi-role structuring (Graham et al., 2004). For many of the participants, only focusing on the most salient roles of being a mother and working professional is a conscious choice. Helen and Emily share their perspectives on planning to focus on only work and family. "I used to love little things. I used to love to clean and I like organizing. Now…forget it! I think that even though I enjoy it, I don't enjoy it enough to cut something that's more important" (Helen). "And then it's just two lives; having to be 100 percent at work and 100 percent at home" (Emily).

Jenna describes her choice to put her role as a wife on the back burner to accommodate the roles of mother and working professional.

> We're both really focused on our roles as parents and in maintaining a professional way of life so that gives us less time to focus on each other. So I would say being a mom has taken away from my role as a wife…for sure.

Calista also makes deliberate choices regarding the structure of her work and family roles and she continues to contemplate future changes needed to accommodate both roles.

> I foresee needing to find more hours in the day to put in more work [Chuckles]. So, whether that means less sleep or, again, restructuring things that are happening to try to get another hour or two hours in, I see that as a real possibility. You know, already I see that the emails are early and late evening and maybe that's what I have to do to get those couple of hours in.

For Kolleen, focusing on only the most salient roles of being a mother and working professional is more of a consequence of not being able to do it all and having to eliminate some other roles and activities from her life.

> I'll just say for me what usually loses out is self, because you want to be there for them. Then, the house and the cleaning and then all this other stuff and here and trying to answer the 4,000 questions. Then, saying 'Oh my God, what about me?' All I want to do is get a manicure, it was like my goal for the week. And I literally looked at my schedule and I was like, it's not going to happen. Then, my husband was like, 'Well, just go after you come home from work' and then I was like, 'Well, then I won't see the kids and that's not an option.' That doesn't cross my mind to say 'Time out, mommy time', but I know I should do it more but I don't.

Theme 3: Role Salience - Role Balance

One participant (Donna) organized her roles through the process of balancing her roles (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) as a mother, wife, and working professional. She describes her process.

> So, its setting times for certain things and knowing that between 8:00 to 5:00 it's work, between 5:00 to 7:00 it's time with our child, 7:00 to 10:30 it's time for me and my husband and then between 10:30 and 11:30 it's time with our child. So it's prioritizing, but it's also for me, setting up different times in the day where I do different things.

Table 6-3

Role Salience

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category
P1	"But in terms of integrating the roles, work seems a lot less important to me now than it used to. "	Family Role Salience
	"If my daughter needed me, I would always just sort of opt for my daughter instead, so I think I definitely shifted my priorities a lot. I don't want to miss her milestones and it makes me sad to think that I'm going to miss some of that while	Family Role Salience

	she's being taken care of by other people."	
P2	"If, you know, daycare calls me at 10:00 a.m. it's like, you've got to go and I go even on a day when I have probably important meetings that I would not skip even if I was sick. But now, I will. I mean, there's no other choice."	Family Role Salience
	"So, I think the impact to the career is to shorten the career - shorten the career to accommodate my role as a mother. But, I do have to accommodate a limit to that extent in terms of time out of work."	Multi-Role Structuring
P3	"I mean, I really do feel that family comes first and maybe my thoughts of my career or the thoughts of my future career isn't quite what I probably thought it was a couple of years ago."	Family Role Salience
	"I foresee needing to find more hours in the day to put in more work [Chuckles]. So, whether that means less sleep or, again, restructuring things that are happening to try to get another hour or two hours in, I see that as a real possibility. You know, already I see that the emails are early and late evening and maybe that's what I have to do to get those couple of hours in."	Multi-Role Structuring
P4	I'm sure there are going to be times when things are going to come up where I may need to get on the computer after she goes to bed. I'm probably okay with that if I need to but, again, she would take priority."	Family Role Salience
	"Now that we are responsible for molding the mind and the life of a human being, it prioritizes our career. So for me, the priority has shifted."	Family Role Salience
	"So, its setting times for certain things and knowing that between 8:00 to 5:00 it's work, between 5:00 to 7:00 it's time with our child, 7:00 to 10:30 it's time for me and my husband and then between 10:30 and 11:30 it's time with our child. So it's prioritizing, but it's also for me, setting up different times in the day where I do different things."	Role Balance

P5	"I'm much more careful with my time and who I spend it with and how I spend it. I just told my friends the other day, 'I have to really like you to give up my night with my kids to come and see you.' What I care about more changes. I'd rather sit with my daughter and read her a book at night than answer email. So it's just reprioritization."	Family Role Salience
	"And then it's just two lives; having to be 100 percent at work and 100 percent at home."	Multi-Role Structuring
P6	"I didn't want to set a precedence up front that I was going to be one of those moms who wasn't at work all the time or always had a sick child or something like that."	Career Role Salience
	"It was tough. I felt bad because I'm not typically one who misses work just for an excuse here or there."	Career Role Salience
	"Your priorities have kind of shifted from being a full-time professional to being a part-time professional and a part-time mom. Maybe, actually, a full-time mom and a part-time professional is probably a better way to state it because that is now your priority because I have something more than my husband at home. I have a baby and getting home to and seeing that baby is more important to me than staying late."	Family Role Salience
P7	"In theory, I don't have to be a workaholic. I could probably work less and be okay, but I just like to work. I actually define that a lot as to who I am."	Career Role Salience
	"Yes, it's important to me to be a good mother, absolutely it is, but it's maybe even just a bit more important that I'm seen as a good manager and a good administrator."	Career Role Salience
	"But, as much as work is super important to me, when push comes to shove my child does come first. I love being a professional, but I also love being a mother. So as a mother, you know that motherhood ultimately does come first."	Family Role Salience

P8	"I had been working for so long, so that role was really comfortable to me and being a mother was not. So, in a way, I kind of wanted to go back to work with the first one because the mommy thing wasn't clicking. It wasn't intuitive. I didn't feel natural at it. I didn't feel gifted at it, and there was a lot of comfort in my professional identity and not so much in my mommy identity because my professional identity was established before I had my kids. So, going back on some level was a little bit of a relief."	Career Role Salience
	"I used to love little things. I used to love to clean and I like organizing. Now…forget it! I think that even though I enjoy it, I don't enjoy it enough to cut something that's more important."	Multi-Role Structuring
P9	"The fact that I am pretty senior in my career and established and the breadwinner (not to say my husband doesn't make a very respectable salary, but in terms of me making quite a bit more than he does at this point), it's made me feel like the protector of the family. I feel like I'm in the traditional male role right now. It's not like I can just say I'll be a stay-at-home mom."	Career Role Salience
	"Family definitely comes first for both my husband and I, but that's not to say that it's not important to us to really enjoy our careers."	Family Role Salience
P10	"I love my job, but the most important thing to me is to be a good mom"	Family Role Salience
	"So, when I hit the point where that's not happening anymore and I can't take pride in the work that I'm doing, I'm going to have to find a different kind of job to do or a different way to participate because I can't be less of a mom to get that sort of professional reward. That's just not a trade off I'm willing to make. Once that happened, that was the commitment I made to my children and to myself as a mom. If something had to give, that was the first stop and that's just the way it is…for me anyway."	Family Role Salience

	"We're both really focused on our roles as parents and in maintaining a professional way of life so that gives us less time to focus on each other. So I would say being a mom has taken away from my role as a wife…for sure."	Multi-Role Structuring
P11	"This job is not more important than family, but it does help me at least provide for them."	Family Role Salience
	I'll just say for me what usually loses out is self, because you want to be there for them. Then, the house and the cleaning and then all this other stuff and here and trying to answer the 4,000 questions. Then, saying 'Oh my God, what about me?' All I want to do is get a manicure, it was like my goal for the week. And I literally looked at my schedule and I was like, it's not going to happen. Then, my husband was like, 'Well, just go after you come home from work' and then I was like, 'Well, then I won't see the kids and that's not an option.' That doesn't cross my mind to say 'Time out, mommy time', but I know I should do it more but I don't."	Multi-Role Structuring

Note. P = participant

Theme 4: Work-Family Borders

Nine of the eleven of the participants shared thoughts or ideas around how their ability to construct work and family borders influenced their experience of integrating work and family roles. Work-family border theory (Clark, 2001) was developed to address how individuals integrate work and family domains and the borders, or boundaries (Ashforth, 2001) that exist between these two spheres. For example, for some individuals, the transitions between the two spheres are minimal, whereas for others, the contrast between the spheres is more pronounced (Ashforth, 2001; Clark, 2001). Participant statements related to work-family borders were grouped into two categories: *High Boundary Separation* and *Low Boundary Separation*. Examples drawn from the researcher's interviews with the study's 11 participants are provided below.

Theme 4: Work-Family Borders - High Boundary Separation

Of the nine study participants that expressed ideas related to work and family borders, seven enacted their work and family borders through the process of high boundary separation. For many of the participants, this happened through a conscious decision to compartmentalize work and family activities, so that only one was happening at a time. Calista achieved this through a part-time transition schedule back to work after the completion of her maternity leave. "So, what I did was to work part-time and then have just a couple of days when I'm not working and I could concentrate again on my son and kind of make that transition." Isabelle limits late hours in the office to enjoy focused family time in the evenings.

> So, I very much made it important that I'm able to leave at a reasonable hour and to see my family as much as possible and have dinner every night with my daughter and husband. That's incredibly important to me and if somebody needs me to stay late, it better be for an incredibly important reason! I know plenty of other people like me who do establish strong boundaries and seem to enjoy a personal life a lot more.

Kolleen describes her philosophy of mentally shifting gears from work to family. "The best piece of advice I ever got was, when you're at work, be at work, and when you're at home, be at home. And try, if you can, keeping both worlds as separate as possible."

> Donna and Emily describe their processes of setting boundaries with technology.
>
> And really immersing yourself in whatever you're focusing on at that particular point of the day, in other words work or family. Now it works for me. Some people can balance their little gadgets and checking Blackberry and spending time with their kids. My husband and I kind of have an agreement that we leave the Blackberry in the car the second the car goes into the garage. So, we don't take the Blackberry inside the house. We don't check Blackberry after 5:00 pm and it's worked really well. I'm sure there's going to be times when it's not 100 percent

> perfect where I can shut it off at 5:00 pm, but I think the compartmentalizing has helped me so far. It's setting those boundaries. (Donna)
>
> I struggled when I had kids, at first, when I was constantly on my Blackberry. Now, I go home and when I leave here, it could be three hours or it could be an hour, I don't look at my Blackberry. I don't answer my phone. That's my time with my kids. (Emily)

Theme 4: Work-Family Borders - Low Boundary Separation

Three of the participants enacted their work and family borders through the process of low boundary separation (Alexandra also shared ideas related to high boundary separation). Bethany describes her challenge in getting her work done within office hours and frequently brings work home to integrate into family time. "Things will still get done. It will get done within my own amount of time."

Alexandra describes her process of blending work and family.

> It feels more comfortable for me to sort of move seamlessly between them. I feel secure and like I'm on top of work even though maybe I didn't put in a full day during work hours. I'm still getting things done at any time of day or any day of the week, so I think it works for me. It just makes me feel like my bases are covered and I feel a lot calmer that way.

Technology helps Alexandra achieve this.

> Work hours and family hours are pretty blended for me. To be fair to both, I always have to be on the Blackberry, always have to be checking email, always have to be sort of making sure I'm not missing anything at work. I don't want to really obviously short change one or the other, so it's turned my hours into this sort of mishmash of work and family all the time, which is fine.

Helen describes the interconnectedness of her work and family domains as a result of her unique working environment with the Foreign Service.

> One of the interesting things about the Foreign Service is that the dividing line between your professional and your personal life is blurred pretty quickly. The transition back to work was easy because everyone was a surrogate family because you're removed from everybody else.

Table 6-4

Work Family Borders

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category
P1	"Work hours and family hours are pretty blended for me. To be fair to both, I always have to be on the Blackberry, always have to be checking email, always have to be sort of making sure I'm not missing anything at work. I don't want to really obviously short change one or the other, so it's turned my hours into this sort of mishmash of work and family all the time, which is fine."	Low Boundary Separation
	"It feels more comfortable for me to sort of move seamlessly between them. I feel secure and like I'm on top of work even though maybe I didn't put in a full day during work hours. I'm still getting things done at any time of day or any day of the week, so I think it works for me. It just makes me feel like my bases are covered and I feel a lot calmer that way."	Low Boundary Separation
	"So I decided that the thing I will do is to keep working a career job and then have the website be more of a hobby and keep the kids at daycare because it's the only way I can sort of have it all."	High Boundary Separation
P2	"Things will still get done. It will get done within my own amount of time."	Low Boundary Separation
P3	"So, what I did was to work part-time and then have just a couple of days when I'm not working and I could concentrate again on my son and kind of make that transition."	High Boundary Separation
P4	"And really immersing yourself in whatever you're focusing on at that particular point of the day, in other words work or family. Now it works for me. Some people can balance their little gadgets and checking Blackberry and spending time with their kids. My husband and I kind of have an agreement that we leave the Blackberry in the car the second the car goes into the garage. So, we don't take the Blackberry inside the house. We don't check Blackberry	High Boundary Separation

	after 5:00 pm and it's worked really well. I'm sure there's going to be times when it's not 100 percent perfect where I can shut it off at 5:00 pm, but I think the compartmentalizing has helped me so far. It's setting those boundaries."	
P5	"I struggled when I had kids, at first, when I was constantly on my Blackberry. Now, I go home and when I leave here, it could three hours or it could be an hour, I don't look at my Blackberry. I don't answer my phone. That's my time with my kids."	High Boundary Separation
P6	N/A	N/A
P7	"I will work a straight day and if I'm in the middle of something, I have a very hard time just stopping and that hasn't really changed, but sometimes it has to. So, there are physically times I've had to stop myself because I have to go, so that's definitely a change and that's a mental shift that's sometimes hard for me to do."	High Boundary Separation
P8	"One of the interesting things about the Foreign Service is that the dividing line between your professional and your personal life is blurred pretty quickly. The transition back to work was easy because everyone was a surrogate family because you're removed from everybody else."	Low Boundary Separation
P9	"So, I very much made it important that I'm able to leave at a reasonable hour and to see my family as much as possible and have dinner every night with my daughter and husband. That's incredibly important to me and if somebody needs me to stay late, it better be for an incredibly important reason! I know plenty of other people like me who do establish strong boundaries and seem to enjoy a personal life a lot more."	High Boundary Separation
P10	N/A	N/A
P11	"The best piece of advice I ever got was, when you're at work, be at work, and when you're at home, be at home. And try, if you can, keeping both worlds as separate as possible."	High Boundary Separation

Note. P = participant

Theme 5: Mid-Career Characteristics

All 11 of the study participants were selected based upon a specific age criteria (36 to 45 years) that corresponds to the mid-career stage (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). All of the women in this study shared characteristics of their careers that were consistent with being at the mid-career stage. Specific ideas that emerged from this study that were aligned with the mid-career stage included a *Pragmatic Perspective, Flexibility, Satisfaction,* and *Career Establishment.* Below are examples of each idea as illustrated by the researcher's interviews with the study's 11 participants.

Theme 5: Mid-Career Characteristics - Pragmatic Perspective.

Eight of the participants expressed a desire or inclination to approach their work or careers from a pragmatic perspective. For most of the participants, this pragmatic approach was applied to their current roles, reflecting a focus on doing whatever they needed to do to get critical things done. Several accomplished this through efficient processes for managing their schedules and tasks. "It's basically fitting another ten tasks into the daily list and shrinking it and making it more efficient for all the other tasks, so that you have time to manage it" (Bethany).

> I found that I've been able to do my job more efficiently. So, I think I've been able to manage my time better knowing that when 5:00 o'clock hits I've got to get out the door. So, between 8:00 and 5:00, I've been able to manage my time so much better. I've been able to be so much more efficient with work that I'm actually probably delivering the same results that I was delivering that 10 plus hours before. So, whatever I need to get done because I have that 5:00 pm bell that's in the back of my head that's going to go off. (Donna)

> Initially, it was just very chaotic. I suddenly had that many more things to get done in less time. So I really, you know, had to figure out what was most important to get done [chuckles], let go of other things, and just concentrate and not let things feel overwhelming or chaotic and not try to do too many things at one time. I had to be extra structured and schedule driven. There is really no time for myself anymore,

> but I am not looking for self-time. I am just trying to get through each day. (Calista)

> And I think I've become more efficient, I think you have to become more efficient. It's not that you want to be, but that all right, let's go, this is the way it's going to happen. Where before, I'd get to it when I got to it. (Kolleen)

For a few of the participants, a change in the work schedule or a limit to hours in the office facilitated the need to be more efficient. "Even though I'm not necessarily telling people, you know, I limit my hours. But I'm not saying to people, okay, I'm going to work until midnight or something like that, but things will still get done" (Bethany). "I'm in at 7:00 am every morning and I leave at 4:00 pm every afternoon, because now I get my work done between those periods of time and I want to go home" (Fran).

> I changed my work schedule. I don't feel guilty about it and I have adjusted and learned how to be more efficient in less time. Sometimes there isn't any more efficiency to squeeze out, it just is what it is and there are only so many hours in a day. (Emily)

> Whatever tasks that I don't accomplish before 5:00 pm, I am willing to get back on the computer after 10:00 pm or after she goes to bed and finish up a couple more tasks so that I meet deadline. So that I can still be successful in the workplace without having to completely blow off a deadline or something like that. (Donna)

For some of the participants, this pragmatic perspective of their jobs takes the form of eliminating or limiting unnecessary or less valued tasks from their schedules: "I have to say, I'm staying more in the status quo than I might have otherwise if I did not have the kid. I delegate more and sometimes I just have to let go" (Bethany).

> Not being able to put a lot of extra time into things at the moment makes me think that it might hamper my ability to take on new projects, to get that visibility within the organization, to move up or do those things. (Calista)

> I have completely stopped networking, which is terrible. I just don't care. I'm so exhausted and I'm spread so thin between being a mom and being a professional, I just don't have the energy to schmooze. If the content of the networking event is what I want to be at, I will go and listen, but I won't talk to anybody and then I'll leave. (Emily)

> Doing those things that were of moderate importance to work now have almost no importance. If it doesn't need to be done, then I think those are the things I would be comfortable cutting out. So, I guess primarily it is how much time and energy I would give to the job then versus now. (Helen)

Theme 5: Mid-Career Characteristics - Flexibility

Eight of the participants expressed the value of and need for flexibility in their work roles, which has a favorable impact on the ability to integrate work and family. In most cases, this flexibility is experienced through a family-friendly work environment or culture. " My work has been very accommodating, which makes the integration aspect easier" (Alexandra). Jenna describes her experience upon returning to work after the birth of her first child. "So, it was a really nice transition because I could see him whenever I needed to or whenever I wanted to. The easiest part of it was that I had a lot of flexibility and my time was my own." Others describe the ease created by encouraging and accommodating work environments or policies.

> My work environment makes it easier. They, you know, gave me the flexibility. That's another consideration of my picking my job at this point or continuing my current job at this point. I think it's definitely not easy and really highly depends on the working environment. (Bethany)

> I was offered the flexibility of working from home and doing teleconferences from wherever, so there was no expectation to be in the office for eight hours a day. (Donna)

> In fact, they gave me a new office just so I could shut the door and nurse and things like that. I got lots of time off. The embassy community was very small and it was a very supportive environment. There's a lot in place to encourage everything that you need to have a happy, healthy family life. (Helen)

Several of the participants described the role of their managers in supporting flexibility. "So, I think that's really helpful and knowing that we do have that flexible environment in the work place and that my management supports it." (Donna)

> I think having a boss that's flexible has also been key. Even though bosses can drive you crazy, you have to put it all in perspective: My commute is 15 to 20 minutes and there's no traffic and I have complete autonomy and flexibility. So, all of that has helped to make all this work. (Emily)
>
> I do like that I have a little bit of that flexibility. I think from that standpoint it makes it easier. I'm not a micromanager. I don't like management and I don't want to be micromanaged. This is the first job where I almost feel like I've got that freedom. (Gina)
>
> My boss at that time was extremely receptive and willing to work with me, so I slowly came back. So, my first week back I only came back one day, then the second week back I came back two days, still getting the emails and integrating myself. I was so welcomed both from my staff and from my boss and I just didn't jump into the deep end of the pool. (Kolleen)

Theme 5: Mid-Career Characteristics - Satisfaction

Despite the stress and challenges associated with integrating work and family, four of the participants expressed being very satisfied with their lives at this stage in their careers. Emily shares her satisfaction with her career and life. "I like my life! I am very happy! I have no complaints. As you know, it took me a long time to get here." Gina, Isabelle and Kolleen describe feelings of satisfaction with their careers at this point in time. "I'm very proud of what I do. That respect is there and that feels good because I have worked so hard to do it, to get here" (Gina). "I think I'm very satisfied at work right now and my work role is an aspect of my life that I'm very pleased with" (Isabelle). "I think right now my career is where it's at and I know I would need further education to even move up, kids or no kids, I'm where I like to be" (Kolleen).

Theme 5: Mid-Career Characteristics - Career Establishment

Five of the participants expressed ideas related to the benefits of being at a stage in their careers where they are well established through tenure and/or work experience, which contributes to feelings of ease and stability in navigating work and family roles. Calista

describes feelings of support and stability as a result of her career establishment, which allow her to focus on her family role.

> I've been with the company for a number of years; I've been in my role for a couple of years. All of those things provide a level of stability so that I can concentrate on family, so there's a comfort level there. There's a network of friends or people that I can pull on. And, again, having been with the company as long as I have, you know, that really helps.

Kolleen describes a similar sentiment of feeling enhanced support and stability that came with being established in her career. "I've worked really hard for my career and to get to this position and it took me awhile."

> I think I value it a little bit more now that I don't take it for granted as much because of how blessed I've been here. Because it is a family here and I was extremely supported both when I was away and when I came back. (Kolleen)

Several other participants shared feelings of ease in navigating career and family that came as a result of waiting to have their kids after they had established themselves professionally and gained the necessary experience to be successful in their careers. "We have a pretty flexible working situation, everybody does, but now I've been here for five-and-a-half years, so it's worked out" (Emily). "I think that made it a lot easier. I think if I was in a much more pressure-cooker situation where I had to prove myself or I was still on the way up, I think that would be horrific" (Isabelle).

Jenna describes the value of the experience that she was able to obtain before starting her family.

> Luckily, as you become higher up in the ranks the demands on your time change a bit. So, it's a little more flexible now that I'm five years into my career than it was certainly in the first couple of years where I had receptions and engagements I had to participate in two or three nights every week. Well, that isn't sustainable if the only time I see my kids during the week is an hour or two before bedtime. So, I think if I had had my child right at the very beginning, I would have found a different job because the job that I had I couldn't be successful at and continue to do it.

> And if you aren't tenured, you can't be a Foreign Service Officer and you separate from the Department of State, so there's a lot of pressure to perform during that time period. There are a lot of unpaid opportunities to excel for what are called junior or entry level officers. I am incredibly lucky that during my first tour my child wasn't born until the last two months that I was there, so I had almost that entire two years to take advantage of those kinds of things.

Isabelle further describes her thoughts related to having additional resources and options as a result of her career establishment.

> I can't imagine being in another woman's shoes who felt like she wasn't as established and respected. That stress I think could just break you. I felt fortunate, despite all that stress, to know that I had options. I didn't feel trapped and I think if I didn't feel that way, I would have been even more miserable in that situation.

> So, having had kids later has been very beneficial in the sense that it has given me confidence in my career because I have proven myself. If I was younger, I would have had to make harder career choices because I would not have had the clout to draw boundaries.

Table 6-5

Mid-Career Characteristics

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category
P1	"I think it's just easier to stick with a well paying job where I can still afford childcare.	Pragmatic
	"My work has been very accommodating, which makes the integration aspect easier."	Flexibility
P2	"My work environment makes it easier. They, you know, gave me the flexibility. That's another consideration of my picking my job at this point or continuing my current job at this point. I think it's definitely not easy and really highly depends on the working environment."	Flexibility
	"Even though I'm not necessarily telling people, you know, I limit my hours. But I'm not saying to people, okay, I'm going to work until midnight or something like that, but things will	Pragmatic

	still get done."	
	"I have to say, I'm staying more in the status quo than I might have otherwise if I did not have the kid. I delegate more and sometimes I just have to let go."	Pragmatic
	"It's basically fitting another ten tasks into the daily list and shrinking it and making it more efficient for all the other tasks, so that you have time to manage it."	Pragmatic
P3	"I've been with the company for a number of years; I've been in my role for a couple of years. All of those things provide a level of stability so that I can concentrate on family, so there's a comfort level there. There's a network of friends or people that I can pull on. And, again, having been with the company as long as I have, you know, that really helps."	Career Establishment
	"Initially, it was just very chaotic. I suddenly had that many more things to get done in less time. So I really, you know, had to figure out what was most important to get done [chuckles], let go of other things, and just concentrate and not let things feel overwhelming or chaotic and not try to do too many things at one time. I had to be extra structured and schedule driven. There is really no time for myself anymore, but I am not looking for self-time. I am just trying to get through each day."	Pragmatic
	"Not being able to put a lot of extra time into things at the moment makes me think that it might hamper my ability to take on new projects, to get that visibility within the organization, to move up or do those things."	Pragmatic
P4	"My management was so understanding and so flexible in that they openly communicated to me, 'Your child is your priority, we absolutely understand, if ever there's any time that you need to be away from your work space, absolutely.' I was offered the flexibility of working from home and doing teleconferences	Flexibility

	from wherever, so there was no expectation to be in the office for eight hours a day. So, I think that's really helpful and knowing that we do have that flexible environment in the work place and that my management supports it."	
	"I found that I've been able to do my job more efficiently. So, I think I've been able to manage my time better knowing that when 5:00 o'clock hits I've got to get out the door. So, between 8:00 and 5:00, I've been able to manage my time so much better. I've been able to be so much more efficient with work that I'm actually probably delivering the same results that I was delivering that 10 plus hours before. So, whatever I need to get done because I have that 5:00 pm bell that's in the back of my head that's going to go off."	Pragmatic
	"Whatever tasks that I don't accomplish before 5:00 pm, I am willing to get back on the computer after 10:00 pm or after she goes to bed and finish up a couple more tasks so that I meet deadline. So that I can still be successful in the workplace without having to completely blow off a deadline or something like that."	Pragmatic
P5	"We have a pretty flexible working situation, everybody does, but now I've been here for five-and-a-half years, so it's worked out."	Career Establishment
	I think having a boss that's flexible has also been key. Even though bosses can drive you crazy, you have to put it all in perspective: My commute is 15 to 20 minutes and there's no traffic and I have complete autonomy and flexibility. So, all of that has helped to make all this work.	Flexibility
	"I like my life! I am very happy! I have no complaints. As you know, it took me a long time to get here."	Satisfaction
	"I changed my work schedule. I don't feel guilty about it and I have adjusted and learned how to be more efficient in less time.	Pragmatic

	Sometimes there isn't any more efficiency to squeeze out, it just is what it is and there are only so many hours in a day."	
	"I have completely stopped networking, which is terrible. I just don't care. I'm so exhausted and I'm spread so thin between being a mom and being a professional, I just don't have the energy to schmooze. If the content of the networking event is what I want to be at, I will go and listen, but I won't talk to anybody and then I'll leave."	Pragmatic
P6	"I'm in at 7:00 am every morning and I leave at 4:00 pm every afternoon, because now I get my work done between those periods of time and I want to go home."	Pragmatic
P7	"I do like that I have a little bit of that flexibility. I think from that standpoint it makes it easier. I'm not a micromanager. I don't like management and I don't want to be micromanaged. This is the first job where I almost feel like I've got that freedom."	Flexibility
	"I'm very proud of what I do. That respect is there and that feels good because I have worked so hard to do it, to get here."	Satisfaction
P8	"In fact, they gave me a new office just so I could shut the door and nurse and things like that. I got lots of time off. The embassy community was very small and it was a very supportive environment. There's a lot in place to encourage everything that you need to have a happy, healthy family life."	Flexibility
	"Doing those things that were of moderate importance to work now have almost no importance. If it doesn't need to be done, then I think those are the things I would be comfortable cutting out. So, I guess primarily it is how much time and energy I would give to the job then versus now."	Pragmatic
P9	"I think that made it a lot easier. I think if I was in a much more pressure-cooker situation where I had to prove myself or I was still on the way up, I think that would be horrific.	Career Establishment
	"I can't imagine being in another woman's shoes	Career Establishment

	who felt like she wasn't as established and respected. That stress I think could just break you. I felt fortunate, despite all that stress, to know that I had options. I didn't feel trapped and I think if I didn't feel that way, I would have been even more miserable in that situation."	
	"I think I'm very satisfied at work right now and my work role is an aspect of my life that I'm very pleased with. I feel really fortunate that I'm established at this point."	Satisfaction
	"So, having had kids later has been very beneficial in the sense that it has given me confidence in my career because I have proven myself. If I was younger, I would have had to make harder career choices because I would not have had the clout to draw boundaries."	Career Establishment
P10	"So, it was a really nice transition because I could see him whenever I needed to or whenever I wanted to. The easiest part of it was that I had a lot of flexibility and my time was my own."	Flexibility
	"Luckily, as you become higher up in the ranks the demands on your time change a bit. So, it's a little more flexible now that I'm five years into my career than it was certainly in the first couple of years where I had receptions and engagements I had to participate in two or three nights every week. Well, that isn't sustainable if the only time I see my kids during the week is an hour or two before bedtime. So, I think if I had had my child right at the very beginning, I would have found a different job because the job that I had I couldn't be successful at and continue to do it."	Career Establishment
	"And if you aren't tenured, you can't be a Foreign Service Officer and you separate from the Department of State, so there's a lot of pressure to perform during that time period. There are a lot of unpaid opportunities to excel for what are called junior or entry level officers. I am incredibly lucky that during my first tour	Career Establishment

	my child wasn't born until the last two months that I was there, so I had almost that entire two years to take advantage of those kinds of things."	
P11	"My boss at that time was extremely receptive and willing to work with me, so I slowly came back."	Flexibility
	"So, my first week back I only came back one day, then the second week back I came back two days, still getting the emails and integrating myself. I was so welcomed both from my staff and from my boss and I just didn't jump into the deep end of the pool."	Flexibility
	"I think I value it a little bit more now that I don't take it for granted as much because of how blessed I've been here. Because it is a family here and I was extremely supported both when I was away and when I came back"	Career Establishment
	"I've worked really hard for my career and to get to this position and it took me awhile. It really took me a while to finally figure out that."	Career Establishment
	"I think right now my career is where it's at and I know I would need further education to even move up, kids or no kids, I'm where I like to be."	Satisfaction
	"And I think I've become more efficient, I think you have to become more efficient. It's not that you want to be, but that all right, let's go, this is the way it's going to happen. Where before, I'd get to it when I got to it."	Pragmatic

Note. P = participant

Theme 6: Kaleidoscope Careers

Most of the study participants, with the exception of one, expressed ideas or thoughts about their careers that were aligned with the kaleidoscope career model, which is a relational career framework based upon individuals creating and re-creating their careers

on their own terms, defined by one's changing values, life choices, and parameters at different points in time (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). Statements related to the kaleidoscope career model were grouped into four categories: *Relationalism, Balance, Challenge,* and *Authenticity*. Examples of each category appear below with exerpts drawn from the researcher's interviews with the study's 11 participants.

Theme 6: Kaleidoscope Careers - Relationalism

Relationalism emphasizes how a career action will impact the needs of family, children, and other important relationships in these women's lives at any given point in time (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). All but one of the participants (Gina) expressed ideas related to relationalism. Jenna describes her thought process around how she made decisions about particular jobs to pursue within her career in the Foreign Service.

> Well, at first it was: 'Does my husband have an Internet connection for his job and can we take the dog?' Well now it's a lot more complicated. Now it's not just that, but, 'Are we living in a house or an apartment? Do my kids have a yard? What are the schools like? Are we going to be living overseas? Can they handle the transition?' So for this job in particular, the choices we make about where we go are all based on what kinds of services and family life are going to be available.

> For some kids, it's a successful way of life and other kids never adjust. If they're ultimately not going to be happy, then once again we need to look at doing something different whether that means coming to D.C. or it's just going to be a different job. It's really going to depend on whether or not my kids can manage the transitions and if their definition of home becomes the people that are their family or the places they live.

For many of the participants, relationalism influenced the desire for upward mobility in their careers. "It does affect my career. I won't say I'm like very, very unhappy, I won't say that. But, in fact, my career aspiration probably does get impacted and to some extent it's my choice" (Bethany). The pursuit of a promotion or higher level position is no longer the goal at this point in time in their lives. "Maybe it's not the next

promotion that I'm seeking now, but the next safe, comfortable role so that I'm able to manage leaving on time to spend time with my family" (Donna).

> So, my career differences now are more around my aspirations within my career. I am no longer looking to have the job that's going to continue to climb the ladder and the reason is because I understand that the demands on those types of roles are more than I'm willing to put in. The demand at home to me is greater than the demand at work, so I don't want to put myself in a position where I have to be placed in that kind of a role….So, I'm looking at either staying in a similar role to what I have now or branching out into different roles. (Fran)

Several participants contemplate staying at the same position level for a period of time. "I think I'm okay with staying in my current role for the next year, for the next two years, and not feeling the need of having to take on a different role" (Donna).

> This is a career jump, where maybe my next thing might be lateral, just because of location and the importance of going to my son's baseball game or what have you. So, it won't be so much about me moving up and onward as much as just staying at the same level, which is fine with me. (Kolleen)

For others, the value of relationism influenced the career through the pursuit of more family-friendly work or positions that were better able to accommodate a flexible schedule.

> In the future, I am going to pursue opportunities that will allow for telecommuting or find something that would allow me to only come to an office a couple days a week and work from home the other days, or possibly have a flexible schedule where I'm coming in later and leaving earlier. (Alexandra)

Alexandra also contemplates an entrepreneurial venture so that she can spend more time with her family.

> I had the idea of starting my own sort of side media business, which I still will do, but I think I used to really entertain the idea of staying home and doing that venture so that I could be home with the kids.

Kolleen considers the work schedule and location as important factors in her next position.

> If I were ever to move on or move from here, it would be completely different because my priorities would be different. Because now they're young, but I do want to wind up back on the island and so it won't be so much about the job as it will be more about location or hours, whereas before I didn't think about that.

Isabelle considers a new position, only with the stipulation that she would be able to work from home. "The deal was off if I couldn't telework in the new job. That was my red line. If they were not going to let me do that then I was not going to accept the job." She further discussed her value of a flexible schedule.

> Telework is more important to me because my mom is moving out here and she is going to watch my daughter for a day and I'll be able to stay at home and work and see her over lunch. She won't be in day care for nine or ten hours. She'll be at home for the eight hours that I'm working. (Isabelle)

Helen considers her work schedule as an important factor in her decision regarding her next assignment in the Foreign Service.

> We now have to make different choices about where we choose to go. We go out and we bid and we try to find our next role, so I find that I'm choosing different roles. For example, the job that I'm going to take next, the one that we're coming back to D.C. for, is shift work. So, it's a 24/7 office, but I chose it because each shift will only be 8 hours and I will not be pressured internally or externally to work for 12 hours a day.

For several of the other participants, their value of relationalism is evident through the choices they make within their current positions. These decisions involve how much additional work to accommodate and how and when to leave work behind to respond to family needs. "I don't take on big roles anymore. I take on what I think is a little bit more than I can handle and try to delegate better and try to find ways to train other people to help" (Emily).

> Before, I felt very comfortable working a 70 hour work week. I loved the job. So, the identity that I had before children is that I felt very comfortable just working a lot and I got a lot done. I felt like I could throw all my time there and that's kind of where I wanted to spend my time and now I feel like that's not an option. (Helen)

Theme 6: Kaleidoscope Careers - Balance

The pursuit of balance is one of the factors in the kaleidoscope career model that influences career decisions. Balance refers to a state of equilibrium and of wanting to successfully integrate work and non-work lives. All of the participants, with the exception of one person (Gina), shared thoughts or ideas related to the need or desire for balance. Alexandra reflects back upon her return to work after the completion of her maternity leave and considers a more balanced approach.

> Maybe next time I would want to see if there's a way to kind of extend my maternity leave a little bit just to make sure that the baby has a little bit of a chance to get a little sturdier before putting her in a strangers hands.

Several of the participants strive to achieve balance through modifications to their work schedules.

> I changed my work schedule. I don't feel guilty about it and I have adjusted and learned how to be more efficient in less time. Sometimes there isn't any more efficiency to squeeze out, it just is what it is and there are only so many hours in a day. (Emily)

> So, on Fridays, I work from home and I have since I started this job four years ago. But I've just applied for a new type of program that they're offering where you work 9 hours a day for 9 days and then you get a day off, so that I can have more time to balance. (Fran)

> I have to say for being a woman in my position, I am very fortunate and I feel like I have carved that out for myself and really advocated for myself. I've been able to leave every day between 5:00 and 5:30. I'm not working long hours and I do have telework, so that's really great. (Isabelle)

For others, a sense of balance is achieved through turning away extra work or special assignments or not being as available to the employer or clients. "Work can wait. I mean, if there is a specific item that they need then I will try to bend, but as a constant that's no longer something I'm interested in doing" (Fran). "And it changed the amount of

time I invested in my job, which professionally has had an impact and will continue to do so" (Jenna).

> And if it means that I get back to my customer the next day with an answer that can wait then that's kind of what it is. I have tasks and assignments that I can manage according to my schedule and I think it's okay if I don't get back to my clients until the next day. (Donna)

> So, I might need to turn down a traveling assignment …so that I'm able to maintain my routine and my schedule with my family and with my child and being a mother and balancing being a mother and being a working professional. (Donna)

Finally, for some of the participants, the pursuit of balance is more of a mindset, rather than characterized by a set of certain behaviors. Helen and Kolleen describe their perspectives with regard to balance.

> You join the Foreign Service so you can live that lifestyle, not to be an Ambassador. So, I'm finding that shift is taking place. I'm less ambitious and a little less aggressive. I think it's probably healthier too. I feel like the way I look at life now is a bit more holistic and not through the myopic perspective of 'This is my identity, this is everything.' Yes, it's probably healthier. (Helen)

> It just seems like we're so kid-centered, but can there be a balance? I say the word integration because they're not silos and the minute you think they can be silos you won't be successful at either one. I won't say they're symbiotic, but they have to blend somewhere or else you're not human. (Kolleen)

Isabelle and Kolleen share their philosophies on purposefully making balance a goal in work-family life.

> I decided a long time ago, even before I met my husband and got married, that work-life balance was key to me, incredibly important to me. I saw that nobody is going to hand that to you and that you had to be your own advocate for that. (Isabelle)

> People who are a bit more balanced. I've sought those people out as role models and kind of tried to follow in their footsteps. That's always key to me. I don't ever see myself straying from that at this point, especially at this point in my career. (Isabelle)

> I don't even know if this is having it all, but trying to balance it and doing it the best you can and making it work. So, I would say try and figure that out because that's a constant. (Kolleen)

Theme 6: Kaleidoscope Careers - Challenge

The quest for challenge is another factor in the kaleidoscope career model that influences career decisions. Challenge refers to the desire to learn, grow, and experience stimulation and career advancement (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). Only one of the study participants (Isabelle) was focused on challenge at the time of the interview (though this participant also expressed her desire for balance). Isabelle describes her pursuit of a challenge as she considered a promotion shortly after the birth of her first child and returning to work.

> I started applying for different jobs throughout the department and some of them were promotions. And I was already second from the top in terms of grades, but I was like, well, why not try? I think I was just kind of bored at one point because when I got back to work we were at a lull. I had thought being a working mom was going to be so difficult and because I was in a lull I was like, 'this is so easy, I can do this, let's go for a new challenge.' I think I got to the point where my job that I was in was very family friendly, very - plan-a-wedding-get-pregnant-have-a-baby friendly, but once I got back, I started feeling like I don't know how much longer I can do this. I'm bored.
>
> The promotion was in a [schematic] area on peace and security issues for the whole State Department and that sounded really challenging and something that I could really sink my teeth into and really do a lot.

For Isabelle, though balance is important, a challenge becomes the more desirable goal. She willingly makes a tradeoff with balance to pursue the challenge and she is satisfied with this decision.

> So, everything fell into place. I got a promotion and I'm working on issues that are really challenging me. My old job was boring and in the long run, I know that I will appreciate this new and more challenging job even though it is harder now. So, I am ok with powering through for now even though things are not yet in perfect balance. I'm tired, but my days go by faster.

Theme 6: Kaleidoscope Careers - Authenticity

The need for authenticity is another component of the kaleidoscope career model that influences career decisions. Authenticity refers to being true to one's values and alignment between values and behaviors (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). Only one of the study participants (Jenna) was focused on authenticity at the time of the interview (though this participant also expressed her desire for balance). Jenna describes her value of authenticity with respect to her work as she reflects upon her career and considers her future career trajectory. For Jenna, the goal of pursuing her passion started with a process of serious and reflective self-discovery. "In late 2004, I sat down with a life coach and did a lot of internal discussions with myself, a lot of self-study to figure out what I wanted to do." Through her discovery process, she found alignment between her talents, preferences, and values and a career with the Foreign Service. "I'm really, really good at it. It's a passion for me and it took me ten years to find it." Her career is more than just a job or a means to an end; rather, is a reflection of her values. "I take a lot of pride in the work that I do and I think it's really important to do it well and do it right." Though balance is also important to Jenna, she refuses to compromise her work, or engage in work that she does not enjoy, even to achieve balance.

> And if it doesn't work out it doesn't work out and now that I've had a taste of doing something I love, I'm not going to settle for spinning time. If I'm just going to spin my wheels, then I'm going to do it with my kids. But if I'm going to do a job, it's not going to be just to pay for my vacation somewhere. It's going to be a real job and doing something else I care about.

Table 6-6

Kaleidoscope Careers

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category

P1	"In the future, I am going to pursue opportunities that will allow for telecommuting or find something that would allow me to only come to an office a couple days a week and work from home the other days, or possibly have a flexible schedule where I'm coming in later and leaving earlier."	Relationalism
	"I had the idea of starting my own sort of side media business, which I still will do, but I think I used to really entertain the idea of staying home and doing that venture so that I could be home with the kids."	Relationalism
	"Maybe next time I would want to see if there's a way to kind of extend my maternity leave a little bit just to make sure that the baby has a little bit of a chance to get a little sturdier before putting her in a strangers hands."	Balance
P2	"It does affect my career. I won't say I'm like very, very unhappy, I won't say that. But, in fact, my career aspiration probably does get impacted and to some extent it's my choice."	Relationalism
	"I mean, I could have been more aggressive, but then I'm trying to kind of manage it to my own satisfaction outside work and within work."	Balance
P3	"So, if a job requires me to put in a lot of extra time or a lot of extra hours, that's going to be much more difficult for me at least right now with a baby. Now, I see some coworkers doing that, but I don't think I'm right now willing to do that and those people are working all hours of the night. They're kind of burning the candle at both ends in order to find the time to put into work and get the job done. And I don't think right now I'm willing to do that. At a later time, maybe."	Relationalism
	"I try to make sure I'm home early so I can spend time with my son before he goes to bed. That's been a real huge difference because, again, I was used to working late hours, so I	Balance

	would stay at work and maybe I wouldn't leave until 6:00 or 7:00. Now, I'm leaving no later than 3:00 so I can be home by 4:00, I can pick up my son and be with him for a couple of hours before he goes to bed and I'm really trying to continue that."	
P4	"Maybe it's not the next promotion that I'm seeking now, but the next safe, comfortable role so that I'm able to manage leaving on time to spend time with my family."	Relationalism
	"I think I'm okay with staying in my current role for the next year, for the next two years, and not feeling the need of having to take on a different role."	Relationalism
	"So, I think we're really, really lucky in that we're raising a family in 2010 where we have the luxury of remote capabilities and communicating. So, I think it helps me balance being a mother and being a professional woman coming back into the workplace."	Balance
	"And if it means that I get back to my customer the next day with an answer that can wait then that's kind of what it is. I have tasks and assignments that I can manage according to my schedule and I think it's okay if I don't get back to my clients until the next day."	Balance
	"So, I might need to turn down a traveling assignment …so that I'm able to maintain my routine and my schedule with my family and with my child and being a mother and balancing being a mother and being a working professional."	Balance
P5	"I don't take on big roles anymore. I take on what I think is a little bit more than I can handle and try to delegate better and try to find ways to train other people to help."	Relationalism
	"That's been a major thing, to be able to afford that just to make this work and home work in a way that's enough balance that we both can deal with it."	Balance

	"I changed my work schedule. I don't feel guilty about it and I have adjusted and learned how to be more efficient in less time. Sometimes there isn't any more efficiency to squeeze out, it just is what it is and there are only so many hours in a day."	Balance
P6	"Depending on if we have additional children or not, I may look for more home-based work that would provide me more time so that I'm not spending time in the car commuting back and forth to work. That would give me more time with my family."	Relationalism
	"So, my career differences now are more around my aspirations within my career. I am no longer looking to have the job that's going to continue to climb the ladder and the reason is because I understand that the demands on those types of roles are more than I'm willing to put in. The demand at home to me is greater than the demand at work, so I don't want to put myself in a position where I have to be placed in that kind of a role….So, I'm looking at either staying in a similar role to what I have now or branching out into different roles."	Relationalism
	"Work can wait. I mean, if there is a specific item that they need then I will try to bend, but as a constant that's no longer something I'm interested in doing."	Balance
	"So, on Fridays, I work from home and I have since I started this job four years ago. But I've just applied for a new type of program that they're offering where you work 9 hours a day for 9 days and then you get a day off, so that I can have more time to balance."	Balance
P7	N/A	N/A
P8	"Before, I felt very comfortable working a 70 hour work week. I loved the job. So, the identity that I had before children is that I felt very comfortable just working a lot and I got a lot done. I felt like I could throw all my time there and that's kind of where I wanted to spend my time and now I feel like that's not an option."	Relationalism

	"We now have to make different choices about where we choose to go. We go out and we bid and we try to find our next role, so I find that I'm choosing different roles. For example, the job that I'm going to take next, the one that we're coming back to D.C. for, is shift work. So, it's a 24/7 office, but I chose it because each shift will only be 8 hours and I will not be pressured internally or externally to work for 12 hours a day. In the future, we will choose countries based on what kind of schools they've got. So, I'm finding that I choose different jobs and I'm less ambitious."	Relationalism
	"I feel a lot less comfortable spending a lot of time at work, so I have to be careful. And now I don't think I could be anywhere as professionally successful as I was at that point. My trajectory was much different. And it all comes back to time, what you have the time and energy to do and also the shift in priorities."	Balance
	"You join the Foreign Service so you can live that lifestyle, not to be an Ambassador. So, I'm finding that shift is taking place. I'm less ambitious and a little less aggressive. I think it's probably healthier too. I feel like the way I look at life now is a bit more holistic and not through the myopic perspective of 'This is my identity, this is everything.' Yes, it's probably healthier."	Balance
P9	"The deal was off if I couldn't telework in the new job. That was my red line. If they were not going to let me do that then I was not going to accept the job."	Relationalism
	"Telework is more important to me because my mom is moving out here and she is going to watch my daughter for a day and I'll be able to stay at home and work and see her over lunch. She won't be in day care for nine or ten hours. She'll be at home for the eight hours that I'm working."	Relationalism
	"I'm considered a 'manager' and I'm a senior	Relationalism

	employee because of my position. But I'm not directly supervising people at this point, which for me was a very deliberate choice given my family because that probably would have put more demands on my work life and on my home life that I wasn't willing to do."	
	"The promotion was in a [schematic] area on peace and security issues for the whole State Department and that sounded really challenging and something that I could really sink my teeth into and really do a lot."	Challenge
	"So, everything fell into place. I got a promotion and I'm working on issues that are really challenging me. My old job was boring and in the long run, I know that I will appreciate this new and more challenging job even though it is harder now. So, I am ok with powering through for now even though things are not yet in perfect balance. I'm tired, but my days go by faster.	Challenge
	I have to say for being a woman in my position, I am very fortunate and I feel like I have carved that out for myself and really advocated for myself. I've been able to leave every day between 5:00 and 5:30. I'm not working long hours and I do have telework, so that's really great."	Balance
	"I decided a long time ago, even before I met my husband and got married, that work-life balance was key to me, incredibly important to me. I saw that nobody is going to hand that to you and that you had to be your own advocate for that."	Balance
	"People who are a bit more balanced. I've sought those people out as role models and kind of tried to follow in their footsteps. That's always key to me. I don't ever see myself straying from that at this point, especially at this point in my career."	Balance
P10	"Well, at first it was: 'Does my husband have an Internet connection for his job and can we take the dog?' Well now it's a lot more complicated.	Relationalism

	Now it's not just that, but, 'Are we living in a house or an apartment? Do my kids have a yard? What are the schools like? Are we going to be living overseas? Can they handle the transition?' So for this job in particular, the choices we make about where we go are all based on what kinds of services and family life are going to be available"	
	"For some kids, it's a successful way of life and other kids never adjust. If they're ultimately not going to be happy, then once again we need to look at doing something different whether that means coming to D.C. or it's just going to be a different job. It's really going to depend on whether or not my kids can manage the transitions and if their definition of home becomes the people that are their family or the places they live."	Relationalism
	"And it changed the amount of time I invested in my job, which professionally has had an impact and will continue to do so."	Balance
	"In late 2004, I sat down with a life coach and did a lot of internal discussions with myself, a lot of self-study to figure out what I wanted to do."	Authenticity
	"I'm really, really good at it. It's a passion for me and it took me ten years to find it."	Authenticity
	"I take a lot of pride in the work that I do and I think it's really important to do it well and do it right."	Authenticity
	"And if it doesn't work out it doesn't work out and now that I've had a taste of doing something I love, I'm not going to settle for spinning time. If I'm just going to spin my wheels, then I'm going to do it with my kids. But if I'm going to do a job, it's not going to be just to pay for my vacation somewhere. It's going to be a real job and doing something else I care about."	Authenticity
P11	"If I were ever to move on or move from here, it would be completely different because my priorities would be different. Because now	Relationalism

they're young, but I do want to wind up back on the island and so it won't be so much about the job as it will be more about location or hours, whereas before I didn't think about that."	
"This is a career jump, where maybe my next thing might be lateral, just because of location and the importance of going to my son's baseball game or what have you. So, it won't be so much about me moving up and onward as much as just staying at the same level, which is fine with me."	Relationalism
"Would I like new challenges? Sure, but I might not be able to take some because of the kids and I'm okay with that. If I were to move onto the next step, I'll look at a job differently because of them and I'd probably look at jobs I never would have looked at because of them."	Relationalism
"It just seems like we're so kid-centered, but can there be a balance? I say the word integration because they're not silos and the minute you think they can be silos you won't be successful at either one. I won't say they're symbiotic, but they have to blend somewhere or else you're not human."	Balance
"I don't even know if this is having it all, but trying to balance it and doing it the best you can and making it work. So, I would say try and figure that out because that's a constant."	Balance

Note. P = participant

Theme 7: Protean Careers

Most of the study participants, with the exception of two, expressed ideas or thoughts about their careers that were aligned with the Protean Career orientation (Hall, 1996), which requires the ability and willingness to engage in continuous learning and also is cultivated by the development of the meta-competencies of identity and adaptability. Statements reflecting a protean career orientation were grouped into two categories:

Adaptability, and *Self-Awareness.* Examples of each category, drawn from the researcher's interview with the 11 participants of the study, are provided below.

Theme 7: Protean Careers - Adaptability

Adaptability in the protean context refers to being open to new work or task conditions and self-directed in one's learning process. (Hall, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995). Eight of the participants shared thoughts or ideas related to adaptability. Donna realizes that being adaptable to change, without sacrificing her work-life balance, is an important goal and future consideration. "But, as I grow in my career, I need to be focused on how to maintain work-life balance, while at the same time, dealing with the changing dynamics in my work (boss, customers, etc)."

Alexandra discussed her future vision of starting her own business in an effort to create more career options for herself. "I had the idea of starting my own sort of side media business, which I still will do." Isabelle, Jenna and Kolleen share a similar mindset with respect to being flexible about their careers and consider alternative career options. Isabelle describes the potential positive outcomes associated with a recent career change.

> It also opened lots of doors in other agencies and if my husband and I didn't want to stay in D.C. forever, it would probably be a great way to get a position with a different agency that has a presence throughout the rest of the country.

Others, such as Jenna, have an open-minded attitude regarding their future career trajectories.

> And if that means I am 40 years old and starting over in a different career, then that's what that means and that's the risk we took when we made the decision to have kids and have this kind of job and this kind of lifestyle. (Jenna)

> One of the things that they encourage you to do is come back and do what they call a tour in D.C. So, you come back and do a stateside based assignment where you get to know how the Department functions out of D.C. So, if we came back and did that, I would probably go back to school and get a graduate degree either in

> consular law or law. I would get a law degree so that I could perhaps do a career in law having to do with citizenship and consular affairs, which would be based on kind of what I do now or crisis management. If it turns out that we come back to D.C. and they don't want to go again, I've got somewhere else to go professionally. I'm going to try and see what kind of options I really have. (Jenna)

For a few of the other participants, being open to new work conditions is demonstrated through the initiation of very different ways of getting work done. Calista discussed her transition from having an office to using space in her office only when needed. This change requires her to approach her work in a very different manner than she was accustomed to, while still maintaining high standards for performance.

> I elected to be a 'hoteler', so that's played a huge change. So, I try to come into the office only a couple days a week. I set up most of my meetings for those days and again, even on those days, I'm coming in later and leaving earlier, so that's been a huge change. I like it a lot because you're prioritizing and not having to get up and drive to work. You're not having to totally get dressed and ready and makeup and hair and the whole deal and drive to work, which for me is about an hour commute, maybe 45 minutes. You know, eliminating that is a gift of time. But I'm still getting the same amount of work done.

Emily remains open to changes in her schedule that she anticipates in the near future.

> In the future, my new schedule shift working from 8:00 until 3:30 and then going to the gym will probably be working from 8:00 until 3:30 and going home and dealing with the kids. But I've definitely been thinking about that because there's a woman in our department who has to two kids and she's slowly shifted her schedule all over. She's part-time, but she still keeps shifting her schedule based on age of kids, so that will definitely have to happen.

Gina shares how her mindset of adaptability served her career in a very positive way, through engagement in a variety of jobs and industries, leading to outcomes that she never anticipated. "I fell into this role, but it's absolutely perfect for my background and all of the things that I have done up to this point in my career, so that's how I look at it" (Gina). "There's been a lot of angst, a lot of things along the way, but I can't really regret

any of them because each one of them has led me to the next thing." Gina remains flexible regarding her career. "I anticipate there will be waves in my work life and in my personal life too for that matter, so I try to keep that in mind."

Theme 7: Protean Careers - Self-Awareness

Awareness in the protean context refers to coming to a new awareness about one's self (Hall, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995). Five of the participants shared thoughts or ideas related to increased awareness. Each individual's process of awareness contributed to a unique learning experience and/or outcome.

For Fran, the idea that she would prefer to learn and grow in her career through the pursuit of lateral jobs or assignments expanded her options for career development. "I feel like you still have to grow and if I'm not going to grow by taking on additional responsibilities up the ladder, I'd rather grow by learning new things across" (Fran). Kolleen also gains awareness about the meaning of a career for her personally, which enables her to consider a wider range of options for the future. "So, it's broadened my perspective of what my career means and it might be more about a job than my career, which is okay."

Gina reflects on her career history and, through retrospective analysis, realizes that all of her different career experiences have expanded her sense of who she is and of what she wanted to do.

> You could look at my career and you could almost argue that I've had multiple careers. But, I feel like my career and all these multiple things that I've done have actually led me to my current work role and my current career. The marketing, the resume strategy and staffing and the accounting, all of that together has influenced kind of where I wanted to go.

At the same time, the experience has given Gina more clarity about the role of work in her life. "A lot of variety, a lot of different people, a lot of things and I like to think that it's helped. It's put me where I am today and gives me some insight and makes it a little easier."

Isabelle reflects on a recent career change that resulted from a promotion and describes her process of becoming aware of her need for continuous learning, change, and contribution. "I feel like I'm contributing and I'm not going to work just to collect a paycheck. I really am contributing and I'm learning new things. So, ultimately, this is more rewarding."

Finally, Jenna describes her process of career discovery and awareness of her need for learning and change, leading to a fulfilling and rewarding career decision.

> I have an undergraduate degree in anthropology and I knew I wasn't going to be Indiana Jones and I knew I didn't want to teach so that was sort of a just-wanted-to-learn-it kind of degree. I spent about ten years trying to figure out what I wanted to do when I grew up.
>
> And I would get a job and be very good at it and in about two or three years I would get bored because I'd reach the highest level I could get to with an undergraduate degree. Once I learned how to do it then I wanted to go learn how to do something else because that's really what drives me, is that learning how to do something.
>
> In late 2004, I sat down with a life coach and did a lot of internal discussions with myself, a lot of self-study to figure out what I wanted to do because I felt like I was wasting my time by not focusing on something. That's where I rediscovered a career in the Foreign Service, which meant my learning curve changes every two to three years radically. We're in a different country, we're in a different language and different work environment and I love it!

Table 6-7

Protean Careers

Participant	Meaning Unit (s)	Category

P1	"I had the idea of starting my own sort of side media business, which I still will do."	Adaptability
P2	N/A	N/A
P3	"I elected to be a 'hoteler', so that's played a huge change. So, I try to come into the office only a couple days a week. I set up most of my meetings for those days and again, even on those days, I'm coming in later and leaving earlier, so that's been a huge change. I like it a lot because you're prioritizing and not having to get up and drive to work. You're not having to totally get dressed and ready and makeup and hair and the whole deal and drive to work, which for me is about an hour commute, maybe 45 minutes. You know, eliminating that is a gift of time. But I'm still getting the same amount of work done."	Adaptability
P4	"For a while there it was always the goal is to move up. So, here I am 11 years into my role within my job function and all I knew was to go for the next thing, the next job of greater responsibility. Now, we often think of that as moving up but, in the last few years, I think I've opened my mind a little bit more in that sometimes sideways movement is just as good as upward movement. So, I've done that and I've been in that frame of mind for 11 years to either move up or move sideways or do something different that will enhance my learning within the HR portfolio."	Adaptability
	"But, as I grow in my career, I need to be focused on how to maintain work-life balance, while at the same time, dealing with the changing dynamics in my work (boss, customers, etc)."	Adaptability
P5	In the future, my new schedule shift working from 8:00 until 3:30 and then going to the gym will probably be working from 8:00 until 3:30 and going home and dealing with the kids. But I've definitely been thinking about that because there's a woman in our department who has to	Adaptability

	two kids and she's slowly shifted her schedule all over. She's part-time, but she still keeps shifting her schedule based on age of kids, so that will definitely have to happen."	
P6	I feel like you still have to grow and if I'm not going to grow by taking on additional responsibilities up the ladder, I'd rather grow by learning new things across."	Self-Awareness
P7	"You could look at my career and you could almost argue that I've had multiple careers. But, I feel like my career and all these multiple things that I've done have actually led me to my current work role and my current career. The marketing, the resume strategy and staffing and the accounting, all of that together has influenced kind of where I wanted to go."	Self-Awareness
	"I fell into this role, but it's absolutely perfect for my background and all of the things that I have done up to this point in my career, so that's how I look at it."	Adaptability
	A lot of variety, a lot of different people, a lot of things and I like to think that it's helped. It's put me where I am today and gives me some insight and makes it a little easier."	Self-Awareness
	"There's been a lot of angst, a lot of things along the way, but I can't really regret any of them because each one of them has led me to the next thing. I anticipate there will be waves in my work life and in my personal life too for that matter, so I try to keep that in mind."	Adaptability
P8	N/A	N/A
P9	"It also opened lots of doors in other agencies and if my husband and I didn't want to stay in D.C. forever, it would probably be a great way to get a position with a different agency that has a presence throughout the rest of the country."	Adaptability
	"I feel like I'm contributing and I'm not going to work just to collect a paycheck. I really am contributing and I'm learning new things. So, ultimately, this is more rewarding."	Self-Awareness

P10	"I have an undergraduate degree in anthropology and I knew I wasn't going to be Indiana Jones and I knew I didn't want to teach so that was sort of a just-wanted-to- learn-it kind of degree. I spent about ten years trying to figure out what I wanted to do when I grew up."	Self-Awareness
	"And I would get a job and be very good at it and in about two or three years I would get bored because I'd reach the highest level I could get to with an undergraduate degree. Once I learned how to do it then I wanted to go learn how to do something else because that's really what drives me, is that learning how to do something."	Self-Awareness
	"In late 2004, I sat down with a life coach and did a lot of internal discussions with myself, a lot of self-study to figure out what I wanted to do because I felt like I was wasting my time by not focusing on something. That's where I rediscovered a career in the Foreign Service, which meant my learning curve changes every two to three years radically. We're in a different country, we're in a different language and different work environment and I love it!"	Self-Awareness
	"And if that means I am 40 years old and starting over in a different career, then that's what that means and that's the risk we took when we made the decision to have kids and have this kind of job and this kind of lifestyle."	Adaptability
	"One of the things that they encourage you to do is come back and do what they call a tour in D.C. So, you come back and do a stateside based assignment where you get to know how the Department functions out of D.C. So, if we came back and did that, I would probably go back to school and get a graduate degree either in consular law or law. I would get a law degree so that I could perhaps do a career in law having to do with citizenship and consular affairs, which would be based on kind of what I do now or crisis management." "If it turns out that we come back to D.C. and	Adaptability

	they don't want to go again, I've got somewhere else to go professionally. I'm going to try and see what kind of options I really have."	
P11	This is a career jump, where maybe my next thing might be lateral, just because of location and the importance of going to my son's baseball game or what have you. So, it won't be so much about me moving up and onward as much as just staying at the same level, which is fine with me."	Adaptability
	"So, it's broadened my perspective of what my career means and it might be more about a job than my career, which is okay."	Self-Awareness

Note. P = participant

Summary

Chapter 6 presented the composite textural-structural description, organized into seven themes that emerged among the textural-structural descriptions of the eleven participants. These themes included the following:

1. Work-Family Role Conflict
2. Role Enhancement
3. Role Salience
4. Work-Family Borders
5. Mid-Career Characteristics
6. Kaleidoscope Careers
7. Protean Careers

Most of these themes were found in the review of theory and literature in the area of women's work-family role integration and career choices. However, a few ideas related to Role Enhancement and Mid-Career Characteristics emerged from the data (and will be discussed in Chapter 7). The composite textural-structural description characterized the

essential structure and meaning of the experience of integrating work and family roles for this group of women at the mid-career stage and represented the group as a whole. Chapter 7 will discuss conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 7

(CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS)

Overview and Research Questions

Overview

Women who have delayed childbearing until they have reached the mid-career stage may have a unique set of challenges related to the ability to balance the conflicting demands of motherhood and career. Though this topic has been discussed extensively in the press, there has been limited theoretical and empirical research of a scholarly nature on this subject (Marcinkus & Hamilton, 2006). The mid-career stage is frequently a time period when work needs and women's family life requirements are at odds (Auster, 2001), and this reality is even more pronounced for mid-career women with young children.

This study focused on the interrelationship between work-family integration and career choices for professional and managerial mid-career women with pre-school age children. For women to delay childbearing until their careers are well established (the mid-career stage) is a relatively recent phenomenon and, as a result, the career stage of mid to senior management is increasingly intersecting with prime childbearing years (Auster, 2001). This decision results in a distinct set of challenges related to the management of multiple and often conflicting roles of career and family. Prior research had not specifically addressed the problem of understanding how work and family requirements are integrated by women who are at the mid-career stage with young children.

Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to examine the experience of work-family integration among managerial and professional women at the mid-career stage, who work

in organizational settings and have young children (under the age of six). The goal is to understand how these women, whose jobs are characterized by significant work demands and pressure, manage the dual roles of mother and working professional. There are three broad research questions for this study.

1. How do women describe and perceive the interrelationship between work-family role integration and their subsequent career choices?
2. How do women describe the experience of work-family role integration and their career choices?
3. What is the essential structure of women's descriptions of their experience in integrating work and family roles and career choices?

The findings of this study demonstrated that mid-career women described their experiences in integrating work and family roles as consisting of elements of both work-family role conflict and role enhancement. Also found was that a heightened focus on balance and relationships existed simultaneously with a desire to continue to learn and grow in their career. The interplay of these elements was influenced by role salience, work-family borders and characterized by the need for flexibility and a preference for working pragmatically.

Review of the Data Analysis Process

This study was grounded in the interpretive paradigm, which has a subjectivist view of social reality. Research in the interpretive paradigm is naturalistic and descriptive in nature and views knowledge as socially constructed. The interpretive paradigm seeks to understand the nature of the world as it is through the perspective of subjective experience (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Moreover, the interpretive paradigm is focused on

understanding individual consciousness and subjective knowledge through the viewpoint of the participants. The nature of this research, which was to understand the lived experience of work-family integration, was subjective and constructed by the eleven participants. This study was rooted in the ontological assumption that knowledge is subjective and the epistemological assumption that knowledge is directly experienced. These ontological and epistemological assumptions were consistent with the purpose of this study.

This study used a phenomenological methodology. The phenomenological methodology was appropriate for this study because it describes the meaning of the lived experiences about a shared concept (Creswell, 1998). This study specifically used the *Empirical Psychological Phenomenological Research Method* (EPPRM). The EPPRM examines what an experience means for the participant, through each respondent providing a comprehensive description of it. Then, general meanings are derived through these descriptions, which characterize the essences, or structures, of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The EPPRM was appropriate for this study because it explored the essence of the essential structure of an individual level experience.

The researcher interviewed eleven women who met the criteria for participation in this study. The data collection method for this study included two interviews for each participant, using a modified Seidman technique (Seidman, 1998). The first interview was face-to-face, approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length and focused on the context and details of the experience. A short follow up interview was conducted with each participant, over the phone, approximately one to two weeks after the initial interview, which allowed the participants to reflect on the meaning of the experience.

Data was analyzed according to the modified Van Kaam method of analysis (Moustakas, 1994). After each interview was transcribed, the researcher reviewed the transcript and attached notes from the follow up interview. After all interviews were completed and transcribed, the researcher coded the transcribed data using Atlas T.I. software. Atlas was used to produce a list of 42 initial codes, which were then reduced and grouped into 29 broader categories of codes, which were then further reduced (throughout the coding process) into 23 categories and finally collapsed into seven themes. Codes were developed to reflect both of the following: (a) meaning units that emerged from the data, and (b) ideas that were presented in the theoretical discussion of women's work-family integration and career choices. Coded text was exported into Microsoft Word for the development of textural, structural, and textural-structural descriptions for each participant (directly after each interview was coded). Finally, a composite textural-structural description was created after all of the eleven textural, structural, and textural-structural descriptions for each participant were completed. The composite textural-structural description incorporated data from the seven broad themes to represent the experience of the group as a whole.

Overview of Findings

As outlined and discussed in Chapter 6, seven overarching themes emerged from the interviews with the 11 participants. These themes included the following: Work-Family Role Conflict, Role Enhancement, Role Salience, Work-Family Borders, Mid-Career Characteristics, Kaleidoscope Careers, and Protean Careers. Most ideas related to these thematic areas were presented and reviewed in theory and literature in the area of women's work-family role integration and career choices. Some sub-themes related to

Mid-Career Characteristics, in particular the value of career establishment, emerged from the interviews. Moreover, several factors related to role enhancement also emerged from this study. These themes will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Work-Family Role Conflict

The feelings of work-family role conflict that were described among the participants were grouped into three major categories: *Strain-Based, Time-Based,* and *Work-to-Family.* Most of the participants (with the exception of one person) expressed some form of work-family role conflict as part of the experience of integrating work and family roles. This work-family role conflict was most often expressed as strain-based or time-based conflict. Expressions of strain-based conflict involved conflicting emotions manifested in feelings of stress, anxiety, confusion, and guilt as well as anxiety regarding the ability to perform in both roles. Feelings of time-based conflict were often conveyed as a challenge in the ability to respond to the time demands of both roles, which had a negative impact on their ability to perform in the work role. Issues and concerns related to being able to perform successfully in the work role was an underlying concern among many of the participants. These findings are consistent with prior research that has shown that mothers' experience work-family role conflict because work and family roles do not support one another and the time spent attempting to satisfy the role requirements of each area leads to increased conflict between these domains (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). Moreover, career women are challenged to take time away from their work roles to satisfy family obligations and are often expected to modify their career aspirations to meet their family demands (Duxbury & Higgins,1991), which can produce

feelings of stress and concern about not meeting performance requirements of the work role.

These findings also support prior research in the area of work-family role conflict among women with very young (pre-school age) children. Older studies have shown that the combination of the roles of mother and paid worker can be particularly stressful, particularly when children are very young and the existence of small children (under the age of six), in particular, can make this balancing act extremely difficult for women (Milkie & Petola, 1999; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001; Vistnes, 1997).

The particular sample of women in this study, however, was unique in that all of the women not only had young (pre-school) age children, but were also at a stage in their careers when time and work demands were particularly intense and demanding. Prior studies have also suggested the degree of time, commitment and performance associated with mid-to-senior level positions can compound the level of stress in trying to manage demands of the conflicting work and family roles. Ehrenberg, Gearing-Small, Hunter, & Small (2001) found that the challenges to delaying childbearing can be significant due to the work demands of a mid-to-senior level position. Furthermore, for senior level professional women with demanding careers, an intense conflict often occurs between competing cultural models of work versus family (Blair-Loy, 2003). Thus, the challenge in balancing work and family needs may be intensified at the mid-career stage (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007).

Role Enhancement

Barnett and Hyde (2001) suggested multiple roles are beneficial for women and can often produce feelings of role enhancement. Though most of the women in this sample

experienced some form of work-family role conflict, all of the participants also expressed an overall feeling of role enhancement as part of the experience of integrating work and family roles (though there were different factors that contributed to this feeling). Statements related to role enhancement were grouped into the following major categories: *Reduced Role Strain, Expanded Frame of Reference, Additional Income, Trust and Support,* and *Personal Gratification.* The reduction of role strain and an expanded frame of reference had a particularly strong impact on feelings of role enhancement, for this group of women.

The effect of reduced role strain took several forms, but it was most frequently experienced as a sense of relief from the mother role and also from the household chores and other elements of their family role. Others described an effect of reduced role strain as an increase in energy levels and more ability to fully engage in their work roles. This finding is consistent with prior research that suggested that multiple roles can have a positive effect on women's well being by providing opportunities for social integration, mastery, and social and personal recognition (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001) and reduce role strain (Amatea & Fong, 1991). Rothbard (2001) also proposed a role enrichment perspective to the study of work-family integration, which suggests that more role commitments produce more benefits to people's well being and that energy is not fixed and can grow. Thus, the enrichment perspective suggests that being engaged in a role can lead to energy expansion, enhanced self-esteem, gratification, and a positive emotional response to that role, as well as increased engagement to other roles (through increased availability to that role).

Moreover, studies also have shown that there are many factors which can buffer the experience of managing multiple roles (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). The relief and freedom from some elements of the mother role, including the reduction of household tasks that typically accompany that role, may indeed serve as a buffer to any additional stress that may result from the work role. Additionally, multiple roles can be influenced by the number of roles, time demands, and quality of the roles (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). As mentioned at the beginning of this study, a major gap in the role enhancement arena is that prior research had not focused exclusively on women at the mid-career stage with pre-school age children. Since the sample of women in this study were all seasoned, mid-career professionals, it makes sense that, though the time demands of their roles may have been intense, the quality of their work roles were very favorable. In other words, most of these women really enjoy their work and they also feel a sense of mastery from being in their positions for a significant length of time. Together, these two factors (confidence and gratification) may serve as strong buffering factors against what could otherwise be experienced as additional role strain and stress. This finding also supports Greenberger and O'Neil's study (1993) that found that high levels of work satisfaction may be an important factor in overall positive feelings associated with the existence of multiple roles. An expanded frame of reference was another interesting finding related to these women's feelings of role enhancement. This expanded frame of reference was described as the ability to apply the knowledge and experience gained in one role toward the other role, enhancing both the experience and performance of both roles. The wider frame of reference cultivated through their work roles allowed these women to apply their work experiences and challenges to their mother roles, while at the same time use their parenting

experiences and challenges to enhance their professional and other personal roles. As mid-career professionals, this deeply developed alternative frame of reference manifested from the work role enabled these women to cultivate a wider variety of helpful techniques to apply to their mother roles. Moreover, the experience of motherhood enabled many of these women to expand their personal and professional networks by developing relationships with other mothers both within and outside of work.

Role Salience

Role Salience refers to the importance of a role to one's self-image (Cook, 1994; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000). Role salience is an important factor in how one integrates work and family roles because it serves to influence which role activities in which to engage. Moreover, role salience may influence how one organizes work and family roles. The term role salience refers to unique combinations of commitment, participation, and knowledge (Cook, 1994). Commitment involves a person's emotional attachment to a role. Participation refers to the time and energy actually spent in a role. Finally, knowledge is gained through experience in the role (Neville & Super, 1986). Role salience has also been referred to as role embracement, which is the "zeal with which one enacts a role" (Kossek et al., 1999, p. 106), which is shown through the relative degree of energy and time one chooses to devote to work and family roles (Kossek, et al., 1999). Research suggests that high role involvement may cause one to be mentally focused on one role while physically involved in the demands of a second role (Frone & Rice, 1987).

Role salience influenced each of the participants' experience of integrating work and family roles. Role salience was expressed in different ways and included the following categories (with respect to engagement and organization of work and family

roles): *Family Role Salience, Career Role Salience, Multi-Role Structuring* and *Role Balance.* In this study, the participants' expressions of role salience were most aligned with family role salience and multi-role structuring.

Feelings related to family role salience were expressed by almost all of the participants, with many conveying that their children and families take first priority in their lives and that their work roles were secondary (in terms of importance). Hence, the needs of the children came first and work sometimes suffered the consequences. For some, the career as a whole became diminished in significance. This finding is consistent with research that supports that a high level of role involvement in one role makes it difficult to adhere to the expectations of a second role (Frone & Rice, 1986). Feelings of career role salience, however, were not as pronounced as feelings of family role salience. Of the four women that did express feelings of career role salience, three also shared feelings of family role salience.

Though the absence of a strong career role salience theme among the women in this study was surprising, there are several reasons why this finding makes sense in the context of these women being at the mid-career stage. Having delayed childbearing for a significant length of time to devote their energy to their careers, many of these women were at a point in their lives where they were ready to fully embrace their new roles as mothers. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this study focused on the time period representing Levinson's culminating structure (Levinson, 1996) for early adulthood and the mid-life transition (ages 33 to 45), which also coincides with the middle stage of one's career (ages 36-45) (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Levinson (1996) proposed these two periods, the Culminating Structure for Early Adulthood, which occurs between the ages of 33 and 40,

and the Mid-life Transition (40 to 45), conclude the early adulthood phase and launch one into the stage of middle adulthood. This time period represents a *structure-changing period,* which ends the life structure that exists to start to create a new life structure. Levinson stated that the most critical tasks of this transitional period are to re-evaluate the existing structure, to explore the possibilities for change in one's self and the world, and to move toward committing to the important choices that form the basis for a new life structure. The criteria for participation in this study required women be within the age range that corresponded to both the mid-career stage, as well as the structure changing period between early adulthood and the mid-life transition. These women's priorities and commitments may have reflected the new life structures (their new families) that naturally emerged after a lengthy career structure building period, which would explain the diminished career role salience at this time in their lives. Gordon et al. (2002) found that, among women ages 35 to 50 years old (mid-to-late-career), with children, 72% gave their families equal or greater importance than their careers. This represented a shift from work being the higher priority during the early career stage.

Another notable finding related to role salience that emerged from this study involved how these women organized their roles, in terms of priority and significance. More than half of the participants in this study organized their roles through multi-role structuring. Multi-role structuring is a combination of hierarchical and lateral structuring of roles (Graham et al., 2004), which involves balancing only those roles that are viewed to be most important (salient). For the women in this study who organized their roles according to multi-role structuring, focusing on only the most salient roles of being a mother and working professional is a deliberate choice, as opposed to an unintended

outcome. Other roles became diminished in importance or even eliminated. For some, the role as a wife became secondary in order to accommodate the roles of mother and working professional. The preference among this sample of women for multi-role structuring supports the finding of dual role salience of the mother and professional roles. Although career role salience, by itself, was not a strong finding in this study, there were several participants who expressed career role salience in addition to family role salience. In this study, however, multi-role structuring appeared to mitigate some of the stress by eliminating or reducing any other competing roles. On the other hand, personal needs, including the marital relationship and self-care, were sacrificed to fully attend to the two competing roles of mother and working professional. Hence, though perhaps an effective strategy for managing competing demands for the short-term, it is unclear what the long term effect would be of the denial of other roles to these women's feelings of well being and balance.

Work-Family Borders

Work-family border theory (Clark, 2001) was developed to explain how individuals integrate work and family domains through understanding how they enact the borders, or boundaries (Ashforth, 2001) between these two spheres. For example, for some individuals, the transitions between the two spheres are minimal, whereas for others, the contrast between the spheres is more pronounced (Ashforth, 2001; Clark, 2001).

Participant statements related to work-family borders were grouped into two categories: *High Boundary Separation* and *Low Boundary Separation*. Most of the participants in this study expressed ideas related to a preference for integrating their roles through high boundary separation, which is characterized by less integration and more

segmentation between work and family domains. High boundary separation results in a more pronounced distinction regarding what is classified as belonging to work versus belonging to non-work, or where work and family roles are non-overlapping (Ashforth, 2001; Kossek et al., 1999).

High boundary separation is also characterized by having strong borders between work and family domains. Strong borders are more impermeable, inflexible, and do not allow much blending between work and family (Ashforth, 2001). This is in contrast to a weaker border, (and lower boundary separation) which is more permeable, flexible, and allows more blending between the domains. For many of the participants, high boundary separation between work and family domains occurred through a conscious decision to compartmentalize work and family activities, so that only one was happening at a time. This compartmentalization happened both mentally and physically. Specific strategies for compartmentalizing included leaving work early, not working at home, and turning off the technical gadgets, such as Blackberries and cell phones, after the work day was over. For others, the shift between work and family mode was more of a mental exercise, which involved not thinking or worrying about work during focused family time in the evenings.

The preference for high boundary separation for most of the participants was somewhat surprising. This particular sample of women consisted of established mid-career professionals, many having been in their career roles for a period of time before starting their families. Therefore, one might expect to see a stronger overall preference for low boundary separation. Clark (2001) found when work flexibility is high, weak borders may enhance work-family balance; however, when work flexibility is low, a high degree of separation (high border) between the two domains may be preferred to increase work-

family balance. These women, being at the mid-career stage, generally worked under conditions of high autonomy and flexibility (with opportunities to structure and organize their roles as they saw fit) and desired high boundary separation. Research has shown that lower (not higher) levels of job autonomy may be linked with strategies that promote higher levels of work-family boundary separation (Kossek et al., 1999); therefore, at first glance, this finding is somewhat counter-intuitive. The following examination of work-family border theory and balance sheds light on this finding.

Work-family border theory stimulates questions regarding the process of how individuals separate and integrate work and non-work aspects of their lives and how these processes lead to overall feelings of balance. Although it may make sense that individuals who have a more integrative approach between work and family domains will therefore be more balanced, this is not necessarily the case, as people with a more segmented approach to work and family may also feel their lives are fully balanced, and the perceived distinction between work and family further creates this balance (Clark, 2001; Graham, 2000; Graham et al., 2004). Therefore, it is plausible many of these women were able to achieve higher levels of balance through a more pronounced separation between work and family domains.

The preference for high boundary separation may also be better understood within the context of role salience; specifically, this sample's priority of family role salience but also the mutual role salience of several of the women on this study. As mentioned previously, feelings related to family role salience were expressed by almost all of the participants, with many conveying that their children and families take first priority in their lives and that their work roles were secondary (in terms of importance). However,

although career role salience, by itself, was not a strong finding in this study, there were several participants who expressed career role salience in addition to family role salience. Ashforth (2001) suggested permeability and flexibility could serve to increase role conflict, through mutual salience of the roles or difficulty in decoupling the roles. Thus, it could be that this sample of women chose high boundary separation as a strategy to reduce role conflict, particularly in the cases of dual role salience (between work and family roles).

Mid-Career Characteristics

All of the study participants were selected based upon a specific age criteria (36 to 45 years) that corresponded to the mid-career stage (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). All of the women in this study shared characteristics of their careers that were consistent with being at the mid-career stage. Specific ideas that emerged from this study which were aligned with the mid-career stage included a *Pragmatic Perspective, Flexibility, Satisfaction,* and *Career Establishment.* The dominant themes within the mid-career construct included a pragmatic perspective, a preference for flexibility, and a sense of career establishment.

Most of the participants in this study demonstrated a pragmatic attitude toward their work roles. For many, this pragmatic approach was applied to their current roles, reflecting a focus on doing whatever they needed to do to get critical things done at work. Several accomplished this through efficient processes for managing their schedules and tasks. For a few of the participants, a change in the work schedule or a limit to hours in the office facilitated the need to be more efficient. For others, this pragmatic perspective of their jobs takes the form of eliminating or limiting unnecessary or less valued tasks from their schedules. The pragmatic approach indicated by these women is consistent with mid-

career stage theory. O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) proposed a three-stage model of women's career development*: Idealistic Achievement, Pragmatic Endurance,* and *Reinventive Contribution.* Pragmatic Endurance, the second phase, includes the middle stage of one's career (ages 36-45) and is characterized by a pragmatic view of one's career. Women in this career stage are aware of the multiple demands on their time, as they are often managing many responsibilities in both their personal and professional lives. Thus, they tend to be production oriented, doing whatever they need to get things done. Moreover, these women may transition energy from their careers to other areas of life that provide them with a sense of satisfaction, self-worth, achievement, and recognition, because their careers are no longer as fulfilling (Gordon et al., 2002; O'Neil and Bilimoria, 2005).

Most of the participants expressed the value of and need for flexibility in their work roles, which had a favorable impact on the ability to integrate work and family. In most cases, this flexibility was experienced through a family-friendly work environment or culture. Some described the ease created by encouraging and accommodating work environments or policies. Others described the influential role of their managers in supporting flexibility. This is an interesting finding in the context of this sample's overall preference for high boundary separation between work and family domains. However, through a closer examination of the meaning of flexibility for this group of participants, it is evident that job autonomy, flexible scheduling and/or location, and freedom from micromanagement were the more valued attributes, rather than the ability to blend work and family domains. Some of the flexible arrangements described included extended maternity leaves, and the ability to work from home, or telework, a few days a week. This

supports part of Auster's framework of women's mid-career satisfaction, which suggests the ability to use flexible work hours is linked to higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Auster, 2001). Auster's framework describes multiple factors (individual, career, job, organizational, and stress factors) that contribute to a general feeling of mid-career satisfaction. In this study, career characteristics, such as the use of flexible work options, job specific characteristics (such as job autonomy and creativity), and organizational characteristics (such as progressive HR policies), all combined together to create an overall sense of flexibility for this group of mid-career women (Auster, 2001).

Finally, several participants expressed ideas related to the benefits of being at a stage in their careers where they are well established, which contributed to feelings of ease and stability in navigating work and family roles. For these women, being well established in their careers had a positive impact on overall support and access to resources, as well as enhancing feelings of stability in their work roles. Moreover, this enhanced sense of work role stability allowed many of the women to engage more in their family roles. Others described the effect of their career establishment as contributing to a more pronounced sense of ease in navigating career and family. This heightened feeling of ease was described as a result of waiting to have their kids after they had established themselves professionally and gained the necessary experience to be successful in their careers. Thus, the work experience these women were able to gain before starting their families helped them tremendously in the work-family navigation process because it gave them leverage, resources, connections, and relationships they may not have otherwise had if they had started their families earlier in their careers. These tools helped them to balance their roles and draw boundaries where needed, without fear of negative impact to their work roles.

The work experience gained before starting their families, in many cases, also enabled these women to develop a proficient level of tacit knowledge that allowed them to continue in their work roles without as much conscious effort, contributing to an overall enhanced ability to engage deeper in the parent role.

The mid-career stage is a point of time in a woman's career that is characterized by different, and sometimes conflicting, feelings. Levinson (1996) found that work-family conflict is most evident during the mid-career stage. Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) found that women had an increased need for balance during the mid-career stage. O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) found that women tend to be searching for overall meaning in their lives during the mid-career stage and are often moving toward a career and life phase where they are reflecting upon "the essential centrality of their careers in their lives, given the other increasing demands on their time" (p. 183). The findings from this study showed that the attitude toward work of the women interviewed was pragmatic, they valued flexibility, and they benefited (in terms of their ability to navigate their roles) from being established in their careers. At the same time, being established in their careers allowed them to really enjoy their work roles and, in many cases, benefit from earlier accomplishments which provided them with a sense of security and stability. All of these mid-career attributes (pragmatic perspective, focus on flexibility, and career establishment) served to reduce role conflict, and increase role enhancement for this group of women. This finding supports Auster's theoretical framework that proposes multiple factors (Individual, Career, Organizational, and Stress factors) that contribute to an overall feeling of mid-career satisfaction (Auster, 2001).

Kaleidoscope Careers

The kaleidoscope career model is unique in that it provides context to facilitate the understanding of women's career choices (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006) and suggests women's careers do not fit well within the traditional career stage model (which is focused more on the career patterns of men). While men tend to follow the alpha career pattern of a focus first on self and then others, women follow more of a beta career pattern that is more complex (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). Most of the study participants, with the exception of one, expressed ideas or thoughts about their careers that were aligned with the kaleidoscope career model, which is a relational career framework based upon individuals creating and re-creating their careers on their own terms, defined by one's changing values, life choices, and parameters at different points in time (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).

Statements related to the kaleidoscope career model were grouped into four categories: *Relationalism, Balance, Challenge,* and *Authenticity*. Relationalism emphasizes how a career action will impact the needs of family, children, and other important relationships in these women's lives at any given point in time (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). The other three categories-- balance, challenge and authenticity-- influence career decisions. Authenticity refers to being true to one's values and alignment between values and behaviors. Balance refers to a state of equilibrium and of wanting to successfully integrate one's work and non-work lives. Challenge refers to the desire to learn, grow and experience stimulation and career advancement (Cabrera, 2006; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). For example, at one point in her career, a woman may be focused on devoting time and energy to career advancement. At another point, such as after the birth of a child, she may be more focused on work and family integration. Finally, at a later

time, she may be most concerned with meaning and spirituality in her life (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).

Almost all of the participants in this study expressed ideas related to a focus on relationalism, which is consistent with the kaleidoscope career framework. The women in this study, as a whole, carefully evaluated how their career actions, whether within their current positions or in the context of considering future work assignments, would impact the needs of their family, particularly their children. For some, the value of relationalism was evident in how specific decisions were made with respect to what kind of future jobs to pursue, including a reduced desire to move up the career ladder. In other words, the pursuit of a promotion or higher level position was no longer the goal at this point in time in their lives and some stated they would prefer to stay in the same position level for a period of time. Others, however, did indeed plan to seek new work opportunities, but relationalism guided the criteria. These new opportunities included the consideration of an entrepreneurial venture, a lateral position with a closer commute, and within closer proximity to day care, and a new position with home-based work. Relationalism was also demonstrated through the choices these women made within their current positions. These decisions involved how much additional work to accommodate and how and when to leave work behind to respond to family needs. The women's focus on relationalism to guide their career choices was also evident by the deliberate pursuit of flexibility with the current work role, either through a flexible schedule or by seeking out specific work assignments that were better able to accommodate a flexible or more "family-friendly" schedule.

The findings also demonstrated support for the kaleidoscope career model beta career pattern that most women seem to follow regarding their career trajectories (Sullivan

& Mainiero, 2007). Almost all of the participants in this study expressed ideas related to a priority of balance as the most important factor in career decisions, wanting to successfully integrate work and non-work lives. Balance was achieved through changes to work schedules, turning away extra work or special assignments or not being as available to the employer or clients. Still for others, the pursuit of balance represented more of a change in mindset, rather than characterized by a set of certain behaviors. It is not surprising to find a strong value of relationalism and balance for the women in this sample, as they were all mid-career professionals with young children. Mainiero and Sullivan (2005, 2006) proposed that the factor of balance (and relationships) has the most influence on women's careers at the mid-career stage, when family needs tend to become high priority.

Protean Careers

Most of the study participants expressed ideas about their careers that were aligned with the Protean Career orientation (Hall, 1996), which requires the ability and willingness to engage in continuous learning and is cultivated by the development of the meta-competencies of identity and adaptability. The term meta-competency involves learning how to learn and manage change (Ashforth, 2001). Learning can involve coming to a new awareness about one's self or learning how to adapt to new work or task conditions over a period of time (Hall, 1996). Statements reflecting a protean career orientation were grouped into two categories: *Adaptability* and *Self-Awareness.*

Most of the participants shared thoughts or ideas related to adaptability. Adaptability in the protean context refers to being open to new work or task conditions and self-directed in one's learning process (Hall, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995). Several of the participants discussed the importance of being flexible about their career trajectories and

the need to consider alternative career options. This included a self–directed approach to being open to self-employment, entrepreneurial ventures, experience in different industries or functions, or alternative career paths. Others demonstrated adaptability through their means of getting work done in a different way, including modifications to work schedules and using less physical office space. In this study, adaptability and being self-directed were valued primarily within the context of the relationship to achieving balance. Being adaptable to change, flexible, and self-directed toward learning, while still maintaining balance, was the goal for many. In other words, being adaptable was valued as long as there was no detrimental impact to the ability to maintain balance between work and family. Thus, adaptability was not a strategy used to benefit the career itself, but more used to help maintain, or in some cases achieve, balance between career and family. The experience of trying to integrate working and mothering to achieve an optimal level of balance created the conditions for the need to be adaptable.

Many of the participants shared thoughts related to another element of the protean career theory, which was a focus on enhanced self-awareness, which was also stimulated by the experience of trying to integrate working and mothering to achieve an optimal level of balance. Awareness in the protean context refers to coming to a new awareness about one's self (Hall, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995). Each individual's process of awareness contributed to a unique learning experience and/or outcome related to these women's new experience of being working mothers. Examples of these learning experiences included the following:

- An awareness of a preference to learn and grow through lateral (as opposed to hierarchical) positions

- A desire to expand options (within different fields or industries) for career development
- A deeper awareness about the meaning of career and the role of work in one's life
- An awareness of the value of diverse career experiences on one's overall career
- The awareness of the need for continuous learning, change, and contribution through work.

Each participant experienced a new awareness about herself relative to her career and motherhood and the common thread among each of these women who shared these ideas was a deep passion for learning and change, but not through upward mobility. The desire for balance, again, set the context for the heightened self-awareness and the women in this study did not want to sacrifice their feelings of balance even in the pursuit of new learning or career opportunities. Most wanted to learn and grow in their careers, while at the same time achieving balance. In some cases, the desire for balance even stimulated these women's awareness about themselves.

The protean career concept suggests people can bring their whole selves to work, including their passions, values and creative energy, which occurs through the continuous learning processes of awareness and adaptability. Protean career attitudes were expressed by many of these mid-career professionals with young children, which is not a surprising finding. The mid-career stage has been shown to be a time when individuals may be particularly open to engaging in continuous learning (Hall & Mirvis, 1995) and also as a time when work and family integration issues become more salient and complex,

particularly when children are very young. The findings from this study support prior research (MacDermid, Lee, Buck, & Williams, 2001) which found that those who successfully maintained a protean career orientation were focused more on the content and process of their jobs--emphasizing learning, personal development, relationships, and enjoyment of the work--and looked at success in broader terms, including the success of their children and overall lives (as opposed to just their career advancement or the pursuit of challenge in their earlier career stages). The participants in this study expressed protean career attitudes as tools to help maintain or achieve balance, enabling them to conceptualize an expanded meaning of career success.

Conclusions

Six key conclusions can be drawn from integrating the findings of the seven general themes which were evident in this study, which focused on the interrelationship between work-family integration and career choices for professional and managerial mid-career women with pre-school age children.

Conclusion 1: Work-Family Role Conflict and Role Enhancement Experienced Simultaneously among Mid-Career Women

In this study of mid-career women with young children, most of the participants expressed some form of work-family role conflict as part of the experience of integrating work and family roles. This work-family role conflict was most often expressed as strain-based or time-based conflict. Trying to respond to the demands of work and family roles, which were particularly intense for these women by definition of their career stage and ages of their children, was a focal issue. However, being able to perform successfully in the work role was an underlying concern and a major source of stress among many of the

participants. Though this finding is not surprising and it is aligned with prior research on women's experience of work-family role conflict with young children (Milkie & Petola, 1999; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001; Vistnes, 1997) and also women at the mid-career stage (Gordon et al., 2002; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007), all of the participants in this study also expressed an overall feeling of role enhancement as part of the experience of integrating work and family roles. The most salient factor of role enhancement expressed by the participants was related to the reduction of role strain. So, the women in this study experienced strain from trying to engage in the dual roles of mother and working professional, while at the same time receiving a reduction in role strain (from the mother role in particular) as a result of working. This reduction in role strain was described as a sense of relief from the mother role, but also from the household chores and other elements typically associated with the mother role. The result of the reduction in role strain was also described as an increase in energy levels and it created more opportunities for these women to fully engage in their work roles. It is evident from this particular sample of mid-career mothers of young children that most of these women really enjoyed their careers, which appeared to be influenced by their levels of seasoning and career establishment, efficacy, and personal and professional relationships. Therefore, the overall quality of their work roles was high. This is aligned with Barnett and Hyde's (2001) role enhancement theory, which suggested multiple roles can be influenced by the quality of the roles. Though the stress and time demands were intense and unforgiving at times, the participants viewed the benefits (of role enhancement) to outweigh the costs (of role conflict). In addition to the favorable elements of their work roles, feelings of role enhancement were also influenced by their

ability to outsource (through additional income) other less desirable elements of the mother role, such as household tasks. Thus, the relief and freedom from some aspects of the mother role, including the reduction of household tasks which typically accompany that role, may have served as a buffer to any additional stress that come from the work role. Gordon et al. (2002) found that, during the time period of mid-to late-career (between 35 and 50), women with children described their lives as stressful and characterized by a feeling of being pulled in multiple, conflicting directions. At the same time, they experienced a sense of enhanced satisfaction with their careers and overall lives.

Conclusion 2: Family Role Salience Stronger than Career Role Salience among Mid-Career Professionals with Young Children

Role salience influenced each of the participants' experience of integrating work and family roles. In this study, however, participants' expressions of role salience were most aligned with family role salience, with many conveying that their children and families take first priority in their lives and that their work roles were secondary (in terms of importance). Participants were willing to make tradeoffs to their careers to accommodate the needs of their children. This may appear to be a somewhat surprising finding given the experience and time these women had invested in their careers and the fact that, for the most part, these women really enjoyed their jobs. It can be understood, however, upon a deeper examination of the participants' shift in priorities at this stage in their lives. Having delayed childbearing for a significant length of time to devote their energy to their careers, many of these women were at a point in their lives where they were ready to fully embrace their new roles as mothers. The criteria for participation in this study required women be within the age range that corresponded to both the mid-career

stage (ages 36-45) (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005), as well as the structure changing period between early adulthood and the mid-life transition (ages 33 to 45) (Levinson, 1996). These women's priorities and commitments may have reflected the new life structures (their new families) that naturally emerged after a lengthy career structure building period, which would explain the diminished career role salience at this time in their lives. Having accomplished so much professionally before starting their families may have provided these women with the freedom to engage more substantially in the mother role. This conclusion is consistent with O'Neil and Bilimoria's mid-career phase of pragmatic endurance, which proposed that women at this career stage often question the centrality of their careers relative to other areas of their lives, after a period of time in the early career stage of idealistic achievement (focused on achievement, success, and self) (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Moreover, this conclusion is also aligned with Sullivan & Mainiero's beta career pattern within the kaleidoscope career model, which found that during mid-career, issues related to balance took priority for women, after a focused period of time on activities related to career challenge and advancement (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). Finally, although career role salience, by itself, was not a strong finding in this study, there were several participants that expressed career role salience in addition to family role salience (which reflects a dual role salience among some of the women). Though family role salience was a strong theme among the participants in this study, it was also the case (as discussed in the first conclusion) that these women really enjoyed their careers and wanted to perform well at work. The desire to put time, energy and commitment into the mother role, while at the same time wanting to fully engage and perform well at work, served to further intensify work-family role conflict.

Conclusion 3: Multi-Role Structuring and High Boundary Separation as Strategies to Reduce Work-Family Role Conflict

As discussed in the prior conclusions, though family role salience was a stronger finding among these women than was career role salience, the participants valued their careers tremendously. Moreover, as mentioned, about one-fourth of the sample expressed feelings of both family role salience as well as career role salience. Both multi-role structuring and high boundary separation represented effective techniques that these women used to reduce work-family role conflict.

More than half of the participants in this study organized their roles through multi-role structuring, which is a combination of hierarchical and lateral structuring of roles (Graham et al., 2004). Multi-role structuring involves balancing only those roles that are viewed to be most important (salient). Other roles, such the role of wife, or other personal roles, become diminished in importance or even eliminated. Most of the participants in this study also expressed ideas related to a preference for integrating their roles through high boundary separation, which is characterized by less integration and more segmentation between work and family domains. High boundary separation results in a more pronounced distinction regarding what is classified as belonging to work versus belonging to non-work, or where work and family roles are non-overlapping (Ashforth, 2001; Kossek et al., 1999).

Eliminating or reducing the demands of other roles besides career and family (multi-role structuring) and the compartmentalizing of work and family activities so that only one was happening at a time (high boundary separation) were conscious choices that the participants made with respect to organizing their roles. The interesting element to this

finding is that the use of these techniques was deliberate and thoughtful and these processes were operating both mentally and physically. Though these mid-career women had the ability to work in settings of high autonomy and flexibility (with respect to how they completed their work), they chose to set boundaries and limitations. Thus, the processes of both multi-role structuring and high boundary separation appeared to mitigate some of the stress associated with work-family role conflict by reducing any additional competing roles and minimizing spillover from work to family domains (and vice versa). Both of these processes were used by these women to achieve optimal levels of balance, which is another important theme in this study of mid-career women (and will be discussed further in conclusion five).

Conclusion 4: Mid-Career Attributes Reduce Work-Family Role Conflict and Increase Role Enhancement

All of the study participants were selected based upon a specific age criteria (36 to 45 years) that corresponded to the mid-career stage (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Overall, the participants in this study could be described as having a pragmatic perspective of their careers, a preference for flexibility, and a positive feeling of career establishment. These characteristics are aligned with prior research in the area of women's career stages, specifically the mid-career stage of Pragmatic Endurance (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) and many of the attributes of mid-career satisfaction (Auster, 2001). Though Levinson (1996) found work-family conflict was most evident during the mid-career stage, in this study, all of these mid-career attributes (pragmatic perspective, focus on flexibility, and career establishment) served to reduce role conflict and increase role enhancement. This is aligned with Gordon, Beatty, and Whelan-Berry's research, which found that women ages

35 to 50 years old (mid-to-late-career) changed their perspectives at mid-life, resulting in a more positive self-image (enhanced self-efficacy and confidence), the ability to reduce their need for control (letting go of perfectionism and willing to make tradeoffs), and a change in their perspective on time and the pace of life (Gordon et al., 2002).

The pragmatic attitude many of these women had toward their work roles enabled them to work very efficiently and to selectively focus on critical things that needed to get done. Hence, they were able to let go of less valued tasks without guilt, and this allowed them more time for family. Moreover, the access that most of these women had to flexible working arrangements, by virtue of their experience, tenure and level of their positions, resulted in a smoother work-family integration process. Family-friendly supervisors and work cultures further facilitated this. Finally, several participants expressed ideas related to the benefits of being at a stage in their careers where they were well established. This contributed to their feelings of ease and stability in navigating work and family roles through overall support and access to organizational resources (such as relationships, networks, and mentors), as well as enhancing feelings of stability in their work roles. Moreover, a heightened feeling of ease was described as a result of waiting to have their kids after they had established themselves professionally and gained the necessary experience to be successful in their careers. Thus, the work experience these women were able to gain before starting their families helped them significantly in the work-family navigation process because it gave them leverage, resources, connections, and relationships they otherwise may not have had if they had started their families earlier in their careers. Finally, being established in their careers allowed them to really enjoy their work roles.

At the same time, all of these mid-career attributes helped many of the women to engage more in their family roles. The work experience gained before starting their families, in many cases, also enabled these women to develop a proficient level of tacit knowledge that allowed them to continue in their work roles without as much effort. This facilitated their ability to work pragmatically, to have access to flexibility (in many cases, as a result of having proven themselves), and to feel confident and be well respected in their positions, which allowed them more leverage to focus on family.

Conclusion 5: Relationships and Balance are Priorities for Mid-Career Women with Young Children

Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) found that women were focused on relationships and had an increased need for balance during the mid-career stage; however, prior studies concerning women's career stages had not focused on mid-career women with very young children. The women in this study were within the age range that corresponded to the mid-career stage (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005), in addition to being mothers of pre-school age children. The kaleidoscope career model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006) served as a very useful framework to facilitate a deeper understanding of women's career choices at different points in their lives.

The kaleidoscope career model is a relational career framework based upon individuals creating and re-creating their careers on their own terms, defined by one's changing values, life choices, and parameters at different points in time (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) found there are three parameters that serve as focal points throughout one's life (authenticity, balance, and challenge) and that as one's career develops throughout the life course, one parameter takes priority during a specified

period of time, while the other two parameters are experienced with less intensity. This model is unique in that it provides context to facilitate the understanding of women's career choices (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006) and suggests women's careers do not fit well within the traditional career stage model (which is focused more on the career patterns of men). As a whole, the mid-career women in this study were focused on relationalism and strived for balance, which is consistent with the beta pattern most women follow within the kaleidoscope career framework regarding women's career needs and priorities at the mid-career stage. The beta career pattern is illustrated by a focus on challenge during the early stage of one's career (characterized by ambition and advancement), followed by an emphasis on balance at mid-career (taking into consideration both work and non-work elements of one's life) and finally a focus on authenticity (characterized by personal development and being true to oneself) during late career. This is in contrast to the alpha pattern most men demonstrate, which is characterized by a focus on challenge during early career, authenticity during mid-career, and finally balance during late career (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007).

The women in this study, as a whole, carefully evaluated how their career actions, whether within their current positions or in the context of considering future work assignments, affected the needs of their family, particularly their children. The value of relationalism was evident in how decisions were made to pursue new opportunities, both within and outside their current organizations. Relationalism compelled these women to develop the criteria that limited many opportunities at this point in their careers. For many, there was a reduced desire to move up the career ladder. The priority of balance was also an important factor in career decisions of these women, as they wanted to successfully

integrate their work and non-work lives. Balance was achieved through changes to work schedules, turning away extra work or special assignments or not being as available to the employer or clients. Gordon et al. (2002) found that during the time period of mid-to late-career (between 35 and 50), women engaged in a process of external recalibration, where they consciously made changes to their roles and behaviors by changing their strategies at work and spending more time with their families.

It is not surprising to find a strong value of relationalism and balance for the women in this sample, as they were all mid-career professionals and these parameters tend to be the dominant issues for women at the mid-career stage (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). The presence of pre-school age children may have further intensified this focus for this group of mid-career women, considering the needs of children at this age. An interesting finding in this study was that two individuals who were very focused on achieving balance were also focused on other aspects of the kaleidoscope career framework (one on authenticity and one on challenge). Both were employed in the Foreign Service, and this may have contributed to these women's unique interests and trajectories. Employment with the Foreign Service gave them access to household help and other domestic resources not as easily available to women in the United States. Moreover, as the kaleidoscope career model proposes, all three parameters (authenticity, balance, and challenge) are still active in one's life even as one parameter moves to the forefront in terms of priority. A final explanation for why these other parameters (authenticity and challenge) were evident in these women's lives at mid-career may be the presence of an alpha pattern, such as the pattern that has been demonstrated to be typical of men. Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) found there are a small number of women who are indeed pursuing more linear and

traditional career patterns, and often in these cases, have husbands with flexible and/or less demanding jobs. The two women employed by the Foreign Service happened to be the higher income earners in their households, which may have influenced their career patterns.

Conclusion 6: Protean Career Characteristics help Mid-Career Women Achieve Balance

Hall (1996) suggested the career orientation of the 21st century would be protean in nature, which reflects a values-driven and self-directed approach to career management (Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth, 2006). Values-driven refers to one's internal values guiding career priorities and self-directed refers to being adaptive to the performance and learning requirements of one's career. The desired outcome of the protean career is psychological success, which is based on happiness, self-fulfillment and personal accomplishment, in contrast to only vertical, or hierarchical, career success (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). The protean career--characterized by flexibility and adaptability to change-- is driven by the person instead of the organization, and involves a search for self-fulfillment. Research has suggested that protean careers may be beneficial and practical for women for several reasons. First, protean careers can help enable women to be proactive about managing their careers, which can aid them in planning for and accommodating family responsibilities. This facilitates the ability to combine and balance work and family. Additionally, protean careers can help women make career choices that are more aligned with their own personal values, as well as enable them to expand their concepts of career success, focusing more on psychological success rather than traditional career success. Finally, protean careers can provide women with flexible options to adapt their careers to changing circumstances in

their lives at any given point in time, and can be better suited to career interruptions (Cabrera, 2009; Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Valcour & Ladge, 2008).These protean career attributes unfolded within the interviews of this sample of mid-career women with young children. Finally, protean career attitudes require the ability and willingness to engage in continuous learning.

The protean career orientation among many of the women in this study is not a surprising finding. The mid-career stage has been shown to be a time when individuals may be particularly open to engaging in continuous learning (Hall & Mirvis, 1995) and when work and family integration issues become more salient and complex (Gordon et al., 2002). This can be particularly true when children are very young, which was the case with this sample of mid-career women. In this study, protean career attributes, such as adaptability, self-awareness and continuous learning were highlighted as a means to achieve balance, contributing to strong feelings of psychological success. Several of the participants discussed the importance of flexibility regarding their career trajectories and the need to consider alternative career options (such as being open to self-employment, entrepreneurial ventures, experience in different industries or functions, or alternative career paths); however, flexibility was valued for its role in achieving balance, as opposed to being valued for its role in career advancement and/or achievement. The pursuit of balance also set the context for the learning and awareness experience, other protean career attributes. The mid-career women in this study wanted to learn and grow in their careers, while at the same time achieve balance. In some cases, the need for balance even stimulated these women's awareness about themselves (and their changing values as a result of motherhood). The learning and awareness experience was unique for each

individual and included ideas such as a desire to expand options for career development, a deeper awareness about the meaning of career and the role of work, and an awareness of the value of diverse career experiences. These learning experiences illuminated their changing values at the mid-career stage, and enabled them to re-define success based on family happiness as well as, in some cases, personal fulfillment.

Hence, adaptability, learning, and change were valued to the extent they facilitated balance. Briscoe and Hall (2006) characterize a protean career orientation as being values-driven. In the current study, the pursuit of protean career characteristics was driven by the value of and need for balance in managing their careers and motherhood. Moreover, in this study, the desired outcome of the protean career, psychological success, was directly linked to a successful feeling of work-family integration, as opposed to pure self-fulfillment, career development or personal accomplishment. This also supports Gordon, Beatty, and Whelan-Berry's research, which found that women ages 35 to 50 years old (mid-to-late-career) with children re-defined success to include internal and lifestyle criteria whereas earlier in their careers the criteria for success would have focused more on their professions (Gordon et al., 2002). At mid-to-late career, the single most important criteria for success was having a good family life, followed by happiness and fulfillment (Gordon et al., 2002).

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations, specifically with regard to the participant sample and research design. Eleven women voluntarily participated in this study; however, there were several criteria that needed to be met in order to be eligible for participation. As noted, the criteria were as follows:

1. She had to have recently (within three years) given birth to, or adopted, a first child, and the child must have been under the age of six at the time of the interview.
2. She had to have been employed by an organization in a managerial or professional position
3. She had to have been between 36 and 45 years of age at the time of the interview
4. She had to have been married
5. She had to have been willing and able to engage in an interview and given permission for the researcher to audio-tape the interview.

In keeping with the goals of the study, the sample intentionally excluded women who did not meet these criteria. Since the sample was very narrow by the design of the researcher, it was very challenging to recruit, identify, and ultimately obtain participants for the study. In several cases, even though all of the technical criteria were met for participation, some women simply did not have the time to commit to the face-to-face interview. This is not surprising and is consistent with the findings of this study, which suggest that mid-career women with young children are often too busy to attend to anything outside of career and family. For the women who did participate, the scheduling was challenging (often resulting in rescheduling) and, in a few cases, the interview session was constrained. Moreover, though the snowball sampling technique was the approach proposed to identify potential participants, it did not work as effectively as anticipated due to the very narrow criteria. It did, however, work particularly well in identifying and ultimately securing the participation of three women who all worked within the Foreign

Service arena (two were Foreign Service Officers and one was a Foreign Affairs Director). Careers in the Foreign Service have some unique attributes, as compared to careers in other commercial sectors, and this was evident in this study. Thus, the findings relative to these three participants showed some elements of a preference for a more traditional career pattern and therefore may not be reflective of the sample as a whole (though they were included in the composite textural-structural description and discussion of themes).

As mentioned, the criteria for participation in this study was intentionally narrow (consistent with the nature of a phenomenological study) so the specific experience of mid-career women with pre-school age children could be examined and understood. However, even with these specific criteria, there are many other factors that were not reflected in this study which could influence a women's experience of work-family integration and career choices. For example, as mentioned with respect to the Foreign Service area, different types of occupations or career paths could have produced different results. Other than the three women who worked in Foreign Service, the sample was relatively diverse with respect to occupations represented. There is undoubtedly much to be gained by looking at a sample of women from a particular industry, such as law or higher education, as these careers also tend to have unique attributes that may influence the work-family integration and career process. Gaining access to such a sample, while also maintaining the criteria specific to mid-career women with young children, may prove to be challenging. Moreover, in addition to differences in career attributes, there may be differences in family dynamics that could influence results. Though all of the participants were married, the spouse's career, special needs of children, and the spousal support of the women's careers could have had an impact on this experience for these women. In addition, though all of

the women in this study had access to childcare, the perceived quality was different. For example, some had their children in daycare and some had nannies. The type and quality of the childcare affect the experience of managing work and family roles, particularly for busy mid-career professionals. None of these factors were examined in this study.

Finally, different findings could have emerged with participants from different socioeconomic, educational, cultural, religious, and /or ethnic backgrounds and different levels of work performance. These variables were not addressed in this study, as this would have added additional criteria to the study sample, and increased the challenge of obtaining the sample (which was already very specific).

Another area worth noting with regard to the participant sample is the identification of these women as being at the "mid-career" stage. The researcher chose to define the mid-career stage specifically by age, in alignment with the time period representing the middle of one's career (ages 36-45) and characterized by a pragmatic view of one's career (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Though the women in this study met the criteria of being at the mid-career stage by virtue of their ages, there still was some variation in tenure, experience and career maturity among the women. This could have been the case because the women started their careers at different ages--perhaps from being in graduate school--or made multiple career changes. Thus, some women had been in their careers, organizations and/or roles for a longer period of time than other participants, and some had been through more career changes before having children.

Another factor in the participant sample that warrants discussion pertains to the variations in the characteristics of the children (or in some cases, child). Though the criteria required that the participants had recently (within three years) given birth to, or

adopted, a first child who had to have been currently under the age of six, several of the participants had very young infants and others had three-year olds. As a result, the women with very young infants described an experience that was more recent and possibly more intense as a result of more recent recollection. In contrast, those with comparatively older children reflected upon an experience that was not as recent (though still ongoing). This brings to light another important aspect which is that the experience of work-family integration and women's career choices is a dynamic experience that begins with the transition back to work after the addition of the first child and continues throughout the years of having young children. A final point with respect to the characteristics of the children is that some of the sample had two children, but some had only one. It would be logical that three or more children could undoubtedly influence the experience in some manner.

Finally, the findings of this study are not able to be generalized to a population beyond this specific sample of women. This is the case with qualitative research since it is descriptive in nature. It may be the case that younger women employed in more traditional types of occupations and/or who have older children may have completely different career patterns and experiences in integrating work and family roles. Thus, assertions cannot be made relative to all women's experiences.

Contributions of the Study

This study focused on the interrelationship between work-family integration and career choices for professional and managerial mid-career women with pre-school age children. Though this topic is widely discussed in the press, there was limited theoretical and empirical research of a scholarly nature on this subject (Marcinkus & Hamilton, 2006).

This study contributed to theory and research in this area by examining the intersection between work-family role integration and career choices through the qualitative examination of this phenomenon, as experienced by mid-to-senior level female professionals who had recently had their first child. The mid-career stage was an important factor in the link between work-family role integration and career choices and set the unique context for this study. The study demonstrated that women who delayed childbearing until they reached the mid-career stage had a unique set of challenges related to the ability to balance the conflicting demands of motherhood and a corporate career. Prior to the current study, research had not specifically addressed the problem of understanding how work and family demands are integrated by women who are at the mid-career stage with young children. Work-family integration research primarily has focused on younger women in the early stages of their careers (Gordon et al., 2002)

Implications for Research:

The career stage of mid to senior management increasingly intersects with prime childbearing years (Auster, 2001), yet there is little research on the interplay between work and family for mid-level career women. As mentioned in chapter one, research specifically focused on women's professional lives at the mid-career stage is sparse (Auster, 2001) and the role of work at mid-life is also an area ripe for further research (Greller & Stroh, 1995). The mid-life stage involves an assessment and rebalancing of the personal and professional components of a person's life (Gordon et al., 2002), and this process had not been extensively studied among professional women with children. There was an even greater dearth of research on mid-career women with very young children. This study helped fill that gap and highlighted the various aspects of these mid-career women's experiences with

integrating work and family roles, including a focus on balance and relationships, the contrasting elements of work-family role conflict and role enhancement, the strong pull of family role salience, the need for flexibility and a preference for working pragmatically, and the ongoing desire to continue to learn and grow in their careers while also achieving balance. This study further illuminates some particular advantages of being at the mid-career stage before having children. Some of these benefits include a heightened feeling of ease as a result of waiting to have children until after being established professionally and the development of requisite experience and knowledge to be successful. These benefits enabled these women to develop a proficient level of tacit knowledge that allowed them to continue in their work roles without as much conscious effort. These mid-career attributes helped many of the women to engage more fully in their family roles.

Harrington (2007) suggested that individual career management is a recent topic of interest within the work-life arena, and of particular interest is the desire to better understand how individual career strategies promote and facilitate successful work-family integration. This study made a contribution to furthering this research, as the findings of this study suggest that mid-career women demonstrate adaptability, value learning and desire change (with respect to their careers) to the extent that these characteristics facilitate balance. In this study, protean career characteristics were driven by the value of and need for the kaleidoscope career model parameter of balance, and they contributed to a broader meaning of career success for these mid-career women. Furthermore, the strategies of working pragmatically, creating strong borders between work and family domains, and multi-role structuring were found to further facilitate work-family integration for these 11 women. The findings of this study were consistent with research in the area of women's

career patterns, which have been shown to be non-linear, complex (Catalyst, 2008; Kirchmeyer, 1999; O'Neil et al., 2008), relational, and dynamic (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006). Finally, as mentioned earlier, much of the prior research in the area of career development had focused on the linear career patterns of men, as based on continuous employment, position advancement, and the separation of career and family. This study increases the body of knowledge on career patterns for women.

Implications for Practice

This study has implications for organizations and individuals working in large organizational settings. The findings of this study demonstrated that mid-career women (working in organizations) who have young children have demanding requirements from both work and family roles during this stage in their lives. Hence, though women may have some advantages in being at the mid-career stage before having children, the mid-career stage also represents a period in time when organizational needs and women's life requirements are at odds, and this has been demonstrated to intensify work-family role conflict for women. The desire to put time, energy and commitment into the mother role, while at the same time wanting to fully engage and perform well at work, served to further promote work-family role conflict. The degree to which women feel they can effectively manage or integrate work and family roles may have significant practical implications for their well being and ability to remain in the workforce.

This conflict, however, does not represent a problem for only these individuals. Research has shown that women are changing jobs every 4-5 years or leaving the workforce entirely. A major factor contributing to this movement is the desire to find a better balance between work and family (Hewlett & Luce, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero,

2007).Studies have shown women are leaving the corporate world at increasing rates, and many are deciding to become self-employed (Hewlett & Luce, 2005; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; Mattis, 2004; McCarty-Kilian et al., 2005; O'Neil et al., 2008) in order to gain more control and flexibility in how they balance work and family. Thus, the challenge that mid-career women face in balancing work and family roles can have an impact on organizations in a very tangible way through the high levels of attrition among their most seasoned professionals (Auster, 2001). Organizations must realize this challenge should influence their talent management strategies, especially as the trend of women delaying childbearing until their careers are established progresses. Mid-career women, though wanting to engage strongly and perform optimally in their work roles, have a strong pull toward the family domain. This study has shown that, for this group of mid-career women, they think of their children and families as taking first priority in their lives, and think of their work roles as secondary. Moreover, the participants in this study were willing to make tradeoffs to their careers to accommodate the needs of their children. The need for women to feel that they are performing successfully at work, while at the same time focusing on the needs of their families, represents a challenge for both these individuals as well as the organizations that employ them. Thus, both understanding and addressing these experiences among this group of women is important for organizations that want to retain women at middle management and executive levels.

This study also illuminates the central issues of balance, relationships and the specific ways this particular group of mid-career women prefer to structure their work and family roles. Relationalism and balance, according the kaleidoscope career model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006), tend to be the dominant issues for women at the mid-

career stage. Though these mid-career women had the ability to work in settings of high autonomy and flexibility (with respect to how they accomplished their work), they chose to set boundaries and limitations. Thus, the processes of both multi-role structuring and high boundary separation were used by these women to achieve optimal levels of balance.

It is important that organizations concerned with both the retention and career development of professional women understand, recognize and support the strategies and techniques women may need to use to achieve optimal levels of balance. Organizations must partner with mid-level career women to create viable solutions. Litzky and Greenhause (2007) found that women have less desire than men to pursue senior management positions due to a perceived lack of fit with their overall lives. Moreover, when women see a lack of senior women in organizations, it manifests symbolically as a lack of support for their own career progression which can significantly influence their own career choices (Sealy, 2010). Hence, effectively aligning women's changing needs at different career stages to viable career or job options should be an important priority for organizations (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). As the kaleidoscope career model suggests, women at the mid-career stage tend to be primarily focused on balance, but the parameters of authenticity and challenge are still areas of importance throughout their career trajectories. (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007; Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, & Mainiero, 2009). The goals for organizations that want to retain talented women at mid- to-senior levels should be to provide alternative career options that provide balance, while also encouraging challenging and creative assignments that contribute to learning and growth (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). Moreover, an organizational culture with progressive human resource policies, a reduced focus on face-

time, and alternative career paths also should be fostered in order to support the needs of a variety of career patterns (Cabrera, 2007, 2009; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). Finally, organizations and HR professionals who want to retain mid-career female talent should focus on identifying ways to align individual values with organizational values, as this may enable those with a strong protean orientation to achieve deeper feelings of satisfaction and subjective career success (Enache, Sallan, Simo & Fernandez, 2011). All of these strategies will enhance retention, performance, and organizational effectiveness.

The traditional career pattern must give way to more flexible alternatives; otherwise, talented women at mid-career and beyond will continue to leave organizations (Cabrera, 2009). "Protean organizations that recognize and respond to the need to reshape both how work gets done and how careers are built will achieve a competitive advantage by attracting and retaining valuable talent, particularly women" (Cabrera, 2009, p.198). Hence, providing flexibility in how work gets done--including flexible working arrangements—and fostering an environment that values autonomy, learning and work-life balance, will enhance the likelihood that organizations can be competitive in acquiring and retaining high performing mid-career female talent.

It is important, however, that organizations and managers go beyond simply offering these flexible programs and options, but truly endorse and support these choices. Unfortunately, though many organizations may offer such alternatives, there are perceived penalties for using these options. Trends that are continuing in women's career planning include the following:

- the delay of childbearing until mid-to-late thirties—after careers are well established
- more frequent and longer career interruptions to attend to the needs of children and elders
- the desire to leave corporate environments and pursue entrepreneurial work, such as the development of small businesses and independent consulting work.
- the initiation of more career changes and the pursuit of new credentials

Organizations can respond to such trends by: a) creating challenging, creative, yet flexible work assignments and lateral opportunities for those who are less focused on upward mobility (and more on learning and growth); b) rewarding outcomes and results instead of the number of work hours and office face-time; c) offering multiple career paths for women at different life stages so that women truly feel that there are choices within the organization that are aligned with their values (O'Neill, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2008).

Suggestions for Future Research

The findings that emerged from this study highlight the need for future research focused on the interrelationship between work-family integration and career choices for professional and managerial mid-career women with pre-school age children. As mentioned, the sample of women interviewed for this study is what makes this study inherently unique, as all of the women were within a specified age range, working as professionals or managers in organizational settings, and with children within a specified age range. Though the sample was very narrow, in order to understand the experience of

this particular cohort of women, there is more understanding to be gained through a deeper look into even more specific samples of mid-career women.

For example, the sample in this study was diverse with respect to the women's occupations and industries. A similar study of this experience among women from a particular industry, such as law, higher education, or consulting could be very informative as these careers tend to have unique attributes with respect to organizational culture and work hours. For example, women in the legal field work very long hours, even those who work "reduced" hours, due to billable hour requirements. Those in the consulting arena often have grueling travel requirements. Examining this experience among women working in fields that still tend to be dominated by men (such as engineering, science, or other technology related fields) could also prove to be particularly insightful. In addition, job performance is also an element of these women's career experiences. Those who perform very well often get more work opportunities. High-potential employees, in particular, are often assigned additional developmental tasks that can be very time consuming. It would be interesting to study those mid-career women (with young children) identified within their organizations as being "high-potential", as this specific group of women may have even more consuming work demands.

There were also differences among the women in this sample in regard to family dynamics, such as type and quality of childcare, number of children, support of the spouse, and the specific characteristics of the spouse's occupation. All of the aforementioned attributes could play a role in mid-career women's experience of work-family integration and career choices. It was not feasible to examine any of these elements through further narrowing of the sample criteria, but focusing more closely on one or more of these factors

could be beneficial to understanding their potential influence. For example, a future study could examine women who otherwise meet all of the same criteria as this study, but with an additional requirement that their children attend a day care facility (instead of hiring in-home help) to determine if this would make the experience more difficult. Another example could be a study of the experience for women who have spouses who travel during the week and are only home on weekends. One might think this would make the experience much more challenging, but perhaps not, since the wife role is altered. The impact of the spouse's career, and how it may affect the woman's career and her ability to manage her roles, was not explored in this study. Another interesting area to study would be mid-career women with blended families (perhaps with older stepchildren in addition to pre-school age children) to determine if this would make the experience easier or more challenging, husbands more supportive, or older children more helpful by taking on some household and childcare responsibilities. Finally, mid-career mothers with special needs children could be an interesting group to study, particularly those who must remain in the workforce for financial reasons.

As mentioned previously, this sample of women was diverse with respect to socioeconomic, educational, cultural, religious, and /or ethnic backgrounds. It could be very enlightening to understand this experience through the perspective of those mid-career women who have the socioeconomic status to allow them the freedom of choice, in terms of whether or not to remain in the workforce. For example, if these women had the choice to reduce hours or take sizeable salary cuts or not work at all, would this influence their feelings of ease? Would some of these other factors change the experience? For example, would women who have more invested in their education (such as lawyers or

those employed in academia) be more committed to making their careers work? In addition to the time and financial investment many of these professions require, research has highlighted the influence of interpersonal relationships on women's career choices. Volpe and Murphy (2011) proposed that, among married professional women, a women's identity interacts with her social network to influence her career choices, such as whether to remain in the workforce or opt out. This research could be expanded to focus on mid-career women with young children, to explore the influence of role relationships and social networks on career choices for women at this career stage.

Furthermore, the birth of a child is a major life event and it is to be expected that many strong emotions are stimulated. This event represents a major change in these women's lives, as they learn how to respond to the requirements of the role. It is possible this experience could be examined through the lens of transformational learning, though that construct was not used in this study. Transformative learning is the process used to transform prior frames of reference to make them flexible and reflective so they may generate new knowledge (Mezirow, 2000). According to Mezirow, a disorienting dilemma is often the trigger to initiate the process of transformational learning. A disorienting dilemma can be a life event or experience (such as the birth of a child) that one views as a type of crisis (Mezirow). Transformational learning involves critically examining values, beliefs and assumptions which can lead to a change in how individuals view their world. Many of the participants demonstrated adaptability and discussed the significant role of learning and self-awareness through the context of the protean career orientation. A deeper and potentially different understanding of how mid-career women with young children respond to this experience of integrating work and family roles, after the birth of a child

(disorienting dilemma), could be gained through the paradigm of transformational learning. Gordon et al. (2002) found that, as the career and family circumstances in women's lives change, much of the shift in thinking that occurs is unconscious. Moreover, they are changing continuously and often may not be aware they are changing until it becomes evident that they have thought or acted differently.

It should also be mentioned that this study of mid-career women's experience of integrating work and family roles required the participants to reflect upon an experience that started up to three years before the time of the interview, in many cases just several months after a child was born. As discussed in the previous paragraph, this potentially disorienting dilemma occurred during a specific point in time, though the experience of integrating the roles is ongoing. Since the actual trigger event (the birth of a child) may initially produce a temporary state of emotion that may change over the course of several years, it is unknown how women feel at a later point in time, after they have adapted to and learned from the experience. How do these women feel one to two years later? How have their family and career dynamics changed? Does it get easier for them? It must not be overlooked that one's career and family are both dynamic elements that change over the course of even a short period of time, particularly with the addition of children or job changes. Consequently, the way the roles are integrated may change over time. Thus, longitudinal studies would be beneficial to explore the inherently dynamic nature of this experience.

The potential significance of generational cohort differences on career choices should not be overlooked. Sullivan et al. (2009) found that members of the Baby Boom generation and Generation X had different career priorities with respect to the KCM

parameters of authenticity, balance, and challenge. Specifically, members of Generation X had a significantly stronger desire for both authenticity and balance than Boomers, while no significant generational differences were found relative to the desire for challenge. Since virtually all of the participants in my study sample were members of Generation X, it is possible this generational factor had an influence on the tendency toward a preference for balance. Future studies might examine the KCM parameters of authenticity, balance, and challenge among younger generations who are currently at an early stage in their careers, but will be starting to move toward mid-career within the next seven years.

Finally, it should be recognized that there may be a benefit to understanding this experience from an organizational perspective. This study, and much of this discussion, has centered on the individual's experience and the subsequent impact to organizations. There is not much known, however, regarding how organizations view this issue of work-family role integration, particularly for their mid-career female employees with young children. While organizations may recognize the challenges that women face in integrating work and family, they may also experience a type of "role-conflict" as they must simultaneously meet performance requirements of shareholders or other constituents--while also meeting employee needs for career growth, work-life balance, and overall well–being. These two domains are, unfortunately, often at odds with each other. As a result, organizations may be dealing with their own conflict relative to this issue; namely, how to provide women with career options to facilitate work and family integration while still meeting organizational level performance requirements. A deeper examination of this challenge, from an organizational perspective, could provide a more comprehensive picture.

Future Research Questions

In light of the areas for future research discussed in the prior section, several potential research questions could be appropriate to further the study of the area of women's work-family integration and career choices at the mid-career stage. Some examples could include the following:

1. What is the relationship between the alpha career patterns of women (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007), particularly those in female breadwinner families, and women's career phases (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005)? Do women who follow an alpha career pattern (Challenge, Authenticity, then Balance) show characteristics of being at the reinventive contribution phase during mid-career? (The reinventive contribution phase (O'Neil & Bilimoria) is aligned with many of the attributes of the authenticity parameter of the kaleidoscope career model) How does having very young children influence this? Is balance sacrificed for authenticity or are they equally important?
2. Do careers with protean characteristics become more traditional, or linear, as women move from mid-career to a late-career stage? How do variables such as children and the economy influence this? Do ideas about the meaning of career success change? (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005, proposed that during late career, there is a return to an orderly and more externally driven career locus as women move into their late 40s.)
3. What are some of the different factors that contribute to negative versus positive experiences of the mid-career stage? Data from this study

highlighted some of the positive factors that contribute to role enhancement at the mid-career stage. It has been suggested (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) that many women have negative career experiences at this stage, which can be influenced by many factors, such as type and quality of childcare, number of children, support of the spouse, and the specific characteristics of the spouse's occupation.

4. How do women move from a focus on challenge (during early career) to a focus on balance (or authenticity) during mid-career? How do women plan their career and make the decisions to follow an alpha or beta pattern? To what degree does it happen deliberately versus being driven by circumstances?
5. What is the organization's role in helping women to achieve feelings of career success at the mid-career stage?

Summary

The purpose of this research was to qualitatively examine the experience of work-family integration among managerial and professional married women at the mid-career stage, who work in organizations and have young children (under the age of six). This phenomenological qualitative study used an interpretive paradigm which focused the research on understanding the subjective experience as viewed through the perspective of the participants (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In this study, the experience of inquiry was the lived experience of work-family integration as it was constructed by the eleven mid-career women with young children. The goal was to understand how these women, whose careers were often demanding and intense, managed the dual roles of mother and working

professional. This study examined the interrelationship between work-family role integration and career choices for this specific cohort of women.

Research had not specifically addressed the problem of understanding how work and family demands are integrated by mid-career women with pre-school age children, as many studies in this area had primarily focused on younger women who were at early stages of their careers. Moreover, quantitative studies still dominated research in this arena. Overall, career development research using non-linear career models had been subject to limited empirical research (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008; O'Neil et al., 2008).

This study filled this gap by highlighting the various aspects of these eleven mid-career women's experiences with integrating work and family roles. It shed light on the focus on balance and relationships, the contrasting elements of work-family role conflict and role enhancement, the strong pull of family role salience, the need for flexibility, a preference for working pragmatically, and the ongoing desire to continue to learn and grow in a career without sacrificing balance. In addition, the findings of this study suggest that mid-career women demonstrated adaptability, and they valued learning and change (with respect to their careers) to the extent these things facilitated balance. Finally, the strategies of working pragmatically, creating strong borders between work and family domains, and multi-role structuring were found to further facilitate work-family integration for this group of women. A deeper understanding of this experience of work-family integration among mid-career women with young children, however, could be gained through the lens of transformational learning. The transformational learning construct was not used in this study, but it could enable one to delve deeper into the learning implications of this potentially "disorienting" experience.

The unique contribution of this study also represents a major limitation, which relates to the specific criteria required for participation. This study was intentionally narrow so that the specific experience of mid-career women with pre-school age children could be examined and understood. Although the sample was very narrow, there was still quite a bit of diversity with respect to occupations represented, family characteristics (such as the spouse's career, number of children, and childcare), as well as differences in socioeconomic, educational, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. Each of these variables may influence this experience; therefore, more in depth studies with even more specific samples are needed to understand the potential impact of some of these other demographic factors.

Despite the study limitations, there are insights to be gained from this research focused exclusively on mid-career women with young children. Mid-career women, although having invested much in their careers and wanting to perform well in their work roles, have a strong pull toward the family domain. It behooves organizations to take note of the specific nuances of this group, as trends suggest women will continue the pattern of delaying childbearing until their careers are well established. Moreover, the necessity for dual incomes is becoming a reality, particularly in the current economic climate. Finally, as the work force ages, the mid-career part of women's lives will lengthen (Gordon et al., 2002). All of these factors may contribute to increasing numbers of mid-career women with young children in the workforce. Organizations will need to adapt their talent management and succession planning practices to respond to this demographic reality. In order to both retain women at the mid-career stage and beyond and help women creatively navigate their careers in a way that is mutually beneficial, organizations must first

understand the challenges women face with respect to managing their work and family roles. Understanding and awareness, gained through listening to the voices of the women engaged in the experience, is the first step to a productive conversation between organizations and their mid-career female talent.

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Table 2: Families by presence and relationship of employed members and family type, 2006-2007 annual averages.

Table 4: Families with own children: Employment status of parents by age of youngest child and family type, 2006-2007 annual averages.

Table 5: Employment status of the population by sex, marital status, and

presence and age of own children under 18, 2006-2007 annual averages.

Table 6: Employment status of mothers with own children under 3 years old by single year of age of youngest child and marital status, 2006-2007.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Research Question:

What is the essential structure of women's descriptions of their experience in integrating work and family roles? Sub-questions include the following: How do women describe the experience of work-family role integration? How do women describe and perceive the interrelationship between work-family role integration and their subsequent career choices?

Demographic Data:

- Age of participant:
- Marital status:
- Occupation:
- Years of relevant work experience:
- Job title:
- Age of child/children:
- Age participant had her first child:

Interview Questions:

1. Think back to when you first returned to work after the birth of your first child and tell me about that experience: Describe your experience of how you integrated or managed the dual roles of mother and working professional.
    a. Probe: What was the experience like?
    b. Probe: How did it feel?
    c. Probe: What was the easiest experience?

    d. Probe: What was the most positive experience?
    e. Probe: What was the most difficult experience?
    f. Probe: What was the most negative experience?
2. How has your career influenced your experience of your work role?
3. How has your career influenced your experience of your family role?
4. How has motherhood (or being a mother) influenced your experience of your work role?
5. How has motherhood (or being a mother) influenced your experience of your family role?
6. How is your career different now compared to before you had children?
7. Describe any changes in managing work and family integration that you have made.
8. Describe any changes in managing work and family integration that you may make in the future.
9. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experience integrating work and family?