ORGANIZATION MEN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ISSUES AMONG MALE MBA STUDENTS

by

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Abstract

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This qualitative study explored the ways that male MBA students entering highly demanding careers envision their personal and professional lives. The purpose of this research was as follows: 1) to begin filling gaps in a literature that offers few studies on male MBAs – especially those in the anticipatory stages of their careers – and their orientations to personal and professional life; 2) to highlight salient issues that clinicians may face in working with this population; and 3) to ascertain themes that can serve as a foundation for additional research with men like those in the current study.

Participants included a group of 12 male MBA students, ages 26-35, enrolled in the first or second year of a top-ranked, full-time graduate business program. Subjects had either received a job offer or intended to obtain positions in various segments of the financial services industry, including investment banking and management consulting. Data were collected using an in-depth, semi-structured interview designed to elicit narratives from each participant regarding his vision of personal and professional life. These narratives were analyzed using grounded theory methodology to discern patterns in the ways subjects

conceptualize work and personal life and how they anticipate negotiating these two realms in the future.

The narrative analysis yielded a number of themes that clustered around three general domains: the participants' work histories, influences on their career choices, and their visions of future personal and professional life. The most salient of these themes included the subjects' desire to make an impact at work, the opportunistic nature of their job selection, and their recognition of the demanding aspects of their future jobs. Despite that most participants expressed some desire for balance between their personal and professional lives, none offered specific plans for how to negotiate between these domains in the future. In fact, subjects made a number of contradictory statements in describing their hopes for work and personal or family life. These contradictions and the potential underlying psychodynamic issues they illustrate were also addressed.

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One can live magnificently in this world, if one knows how to work and how to love, to work for the person one loves and to love one's work.

- Leo Tolstoy

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

> *Work, then, is dominant. Everything else is subordinate and the executive is unable to compartmentalize his life. Whatever segment of it – leisure, home, friends – he instinctively measures it in terms of how well it meshes with his work.*
>
> - William H. Whyte

Whyte's (1956) comment, taken from The Organization Man, his seminal business and social commentary, underscores the central role that work plays in human experience. These words reflect the mindset of the prototypical mid-20th century American business professional, one dedicated to the pursuit of organizational life. Nearly 50 years later, the focus on work as a social phenomenon is stronger than ever, as evidenced by an endless progression of research studies exploring innumerable issues related to this topic. Katz & Feroz (1992) argue that interest in this area stems from the idea that work, along with family, is crucial to one's identity formation:

> We cannot escape from the conclusion that work exerts a critical influence on adult development. This is especially true in American society with its unabashed valuing of business, consumption, and personal status. All of these are directly rooted in the concept we call work. Thus the character of work in contemporary American society to a large extent defines who we are. It makes us feel good or not good about ourselves. It allows us to live the "good life" in terms of consumption and status. It puts us in contact with persons with whom we spend more time than the very members of our own families. (p. 423)

For some, professional life can be as salient, if not more so, than personal life.

The significance of professional life in contemporary society is also reflected in how hard we work and many scholars have drawn attention to a trend

toward increased work hours for Americans. Schor (1992) notes that this increase amounted to the equivalent of an extra month of work per year between the 1970s and 1980s. According to the International Labor Organization (2001), the trend continued in the 1990s as Americans spent nearly one week more on the job each year as they did in the 1980s. In particular, these increases have affected middle to upper class individuals in managerial and professional jobs (Bond, Galinsky, & Swanberg, 1998). Furthermore, research points to our growing realization that we are working too hard. Based on an executive summary of interview data from more than one thousand wage and salaried employees, Galinsky, Bond, Kim, Backon, Brownfield, and Sakai (2001) conclude that one-third of U.S. workers are chronically overworked. The media has sensationalized this issue by reporting glib sound bytes that oversimplify the problem. Fast Company magazine, for example, recently quoted the executive director of a well-known think tank as saying, "the 40-hour workweek is a bit of a myth now" and "the 50- to 60-hour workweek is now the norm" (Tischler, 2005, April, p. 54). Although this claim may be accurate, it fails to address the complexity of the trend toward overwork and its resulting implications for employees.

Work-family conflict, one consequence of overwork, has been an area of considerable focus in sociological and psychological research over the past two decades. Despite an abundance of studies that demonstrate how one's personal and professional life domains can enhance each other (Voydanoff, 2002), researchers have also noted that balancing these realms is becoming more difficult. Using data from the 1977 Quality of Employment survey and the 1997

National Study of the Changing Workforce, Winslow (2005) finds that work-family conflict increased between 1977 and 1997, particularly for men. More recent data only reinforce this finding. The 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce reveals that "employees with families report significantly higher levels of interference between their jobs and their family lives than employees 25 years ago (45% versus 34% report this "some" or "a lot"). And men with families report higher levels of interference between their jobs and their family lives than women in the same situation" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002). Interestingly, whereas the challenges and conflicts of working mothers have received much attention in the literature, "work-family research has rarely looked at working fathers discretely nor focused on the degree to which they experience work-family conflict" (Hill, 2005, p. 794). Yet, MacDermid, Galinsky, & Bond (2005) conclude that the issue of balancing these areas is just as salient for fathers as it is for mothers.

The business management literature has also begun to address the incompatibility between work and personal life, as Rogers & Rogers (1989) explain, "Business is a good thing. Family is also a good thing. These are simple, self-evident propositions. Yet the awkward fact is that when we try to combine these two assertions in the new labor force, they stop being safe, compatible, and obvious, and become difficult, even antagonistic" (p. 121). Corporate executives, in particular, struggle with this issue given their often-excessive job demands and the tendency of organizations to force compromises when it comes to balancing work and personal life. This is especially true of business service firms – like

investment banks and management consultancies – where, Lott (2005) suggests, overwork is de rigueur:

> The lifestyle for corporate finance professionals can be a killer. In fact, many corporate finance workers find that they literally dedicate their lives to the job. Social life suffers, free time disappears, and stress multiplies. It is not uncommon to find analysts and associates wearing rumpled pants and wrinkled shirts, exhibiting the wear and tear of all-nighters. (p. 52)

Professionals with MBA degrees, who typically fill the management ranks at these corporations, often have precious little time outside of work to pick up their dry-cleaning, let alone spend time with family or significant others.

Though MBAs are clearly some of the hardest working people in business, research on work rarely focuses on this particular group of professionals. Studies exploring the career and life choices of MBA students in anticipation of starting their careers are even less common. Most of the literature on men in executive or managerial jobs investigates those who are already working. According to Orrange (2003), "We have little in-depth knowledge about the aspirations of young adults as they move into professional careers" (p. 452). Furthermore, based on his research with advanced law and MBA students, Orrange contends that this group is "destined to enter the ranks of the highly privileged upper-middle class, a segment of society that both (1) serves to define political and cultural debates for the broader society and (2) directs our major public and private institutions" (p. 452). As future business leaders, these individuals will be in a position to shape the way organizations and industries conceptualize the relationship between work and personal life and, thus, influence the lives, work schedules, and work styles of countless employees. Consequently, it is important to understand how these future

executives approach their personal and professional lives, especially in the early stages of their careers.

The current study explores the ways that male MBA students entering highly demanding careers envision their personal and professional lives, particularly the future intersection of these two domains. Specifically, this research utilizes in-depth interviews to elicit narratives from a sample of men who are currently enrolled in a top graduate business program and who have secured or are seeking positions in investment banking, management consulting, or other related areas of the financial services industry. The narratives are analyzed to discern patterns in the ways these men conceptualize work and personal life and how they anticipate negotiating these realms in the future. The goals of the study are as follows: 1) to begin filling gaps in a literature that lacks studies on male MBAs, especially those in the anticipatory stages of their careers, and their orientations to personal and professional life; 2) to highlight salient issues that clinicians may face in working with this population; and 3) to ascertain themes that can serve as a foundation for additional research with men like those in the current study.

The following chapter presents a review of literature in three major domains that are relevant to this investigation. These include literature on adult development, career theory, and the work and family literature, with a particular focus on roles. This review is followed by a description of the methodology used in the study and a presentation of the results. The research findings are then

summarized in a discussion of these results and their implications for clinical practice and future inquiry into this topic.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories of Adult Development

Relative to psychoanalysis, the topic of adult development, which explores the ongoing process of growth and differentiation following adolescence, has only recently emerged as a distinct field of study. Nemiroff and Colarusso (1990) broadly define development as the lifelong interaction between a person and both biological and environmental factors. According to Spitz (1965), these interactions can be understood as *exchanges* between an organism and its inner and outer world. Yet, whereas Spitz and other traditional psychoanalytic thinkers mainly viewed development as a process restricted to childhood, adult development theorists have focused on the evolution of personality and experience across the lifespan. These scholars propose that this evolution is influenced by cultural and social phenomena as well as by biological and intrapsychic factors.

Despite adult development's status as a relatively young discipline, the subject boasts a voluminous literature that is not easily segmented. While some reviewers (Brewster, 1999; Srebnick, 2001) divide the literature along psychoanalytic and psychosocial lines, others (Grady, 2002) organize writings based on specific theoretical models or according to a continuum that ranges from perspectives that are purely psychoanalytic to those that are wholly sociological in nature (Taylor, 1981). Still others (Nemiroff & Colarusso, 1990) distinguish between theoretical pioneers and more recent contributors to the field or

categorize based on developmental issues. Stevens-Long (1990), for example, contends that "it may be best to think of developmental theories as a set of lenses, each one sharply focused on a different dimension or system of development" (p. 128), including motivation, emotion, cognition, and behavior. This multiplicity of approaches to organizing the literature underscores the somewhat overwhelming nature of available views on adult development and suggests that a straightforward approach to thinking about the topic is most useful. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the literature will be divided according to psychoanalytic and psychosocial perspectives. These two broad categories capture the variety of theoretical approaches and, most importantly, the spirit of the adult development literature.

Psychoanalytic Perspectives

Though analysts have long attempted to understand adult experience, psychoanalysis as a discipline has yet to offer a comprehensive theory of normal adult development (Colarusso & Nemiroff, 1979). Early psychoanalytic thinkers tended to view development as synonymous with the first years of life and saw adulthood as a product of this seminal experience. Freud's (1905) theory of psychosexual development, which outlined a series of biologically predetermined libidinal stages, was based on the idea that development ended with the onset of adolescence. For Freud, adulthood was rife with intrapsychic conflicts linked to these childhood stages and psychic growth could only be achieved by working through such issues. His focus on drive-related conflicts and adult

psychopathology largely ignored the impact of environment on development and the potential for internal growth and structural change beyond adolescence.

Ego psychology, originating in the 1930s, preserved Freud's drive theory while shifting focus onto issues around normal development. Heinz Hartmann (1939), long considered the father of ego psychology, proposed that certain ego functions developed outside the sphere of conflict and he emphasized the role of the environment in such development. The concept of *adaptation*, first introduced by Hartmann, refers to the reciprocal relationship between an organism and its environment and emphasizes the crucial role the environment plays in development as one's ego adapts in response to the external world. Though biologically rooted, this theory expanded Freud's original scope of inquiry and recognized the importance of object relations as a factor affecting development, an assumption at the heart of contemporary adult development theories.

Despite his contributions to the psychoanalytic study of development, Hartmann, like Freud, concluded that ego development culminated prior to adulthood. Subsequent theorists challenged this view by describing how development continues in a variety of contexts during the adult years. For example, Loewald (1960) argued that the analytic process, which he likened to a mother-child dyadic relationship, included a developmental valence. According to Loewald, patients improved by gaining insight and reaching higher levels of organization through interaction and identification with the analyst, much as an infant utilizes his parent as an external auxiliary ego until this structure is sufficiently developed to enable him to function more autonomously. Similarly,

other theorists viewed pregnancy as a developmental process (Bibring, Dwyer, Huntington, & Valenstein, 1961) and considered parenthood in general to be a significant developmental phase (Benedek, 1959). Each of these perspectives, consequently, served to broaden the context of a psychoanalytic framework for understanding development as an ongoing process.

Contemporary psychoanalytic theorists continue to expand this framework by challenging the idea that adults are finished developmental products. Settlage (1992) and Settlage, Curtis, Lozoff, Silberschatz and Simberg (1988) outline a model that views development as "a process of growth, differentiation, and integration that progresses from lower and simpler to higher and more complex forms of organization and function" and which specifies how development is "concerned with the formation of mental functions and structures that serve self-regulation and adaptation" (Settlage, 1992, p. 351). According to this *process model*, development is stimulated by a disturbance in one's previously adequate self-regulatory and adaptive functioning that creates disequilibrium and results in varying degrees of mental and emotional stress. Resolution of this tension "proceeds hand-in-hand with the acquisition, mastery, and structural integration of the new function and leads to a change in self-image, marking the accomplishment of a unit of developmental process" (Nemiroff & Colarusso, 1990, p. 106). Thus, a sequence that begins with a developmental challenge ends with a change in self-representation. Furthermore, Settlage (1992) suggests that this model is applicable to both adulthood and childhood and contends that age-stage theory – which links adult development to specific, universal chronological

periods – inadequately captures developmental process, or "the means by which specific aspects of development are achieved within all of the life-span stages of development" (p. 353). While acknowledging that adulthood may be segmented into various periods, such as early, middle, and late stages, Settlage et al. (1988) reject the notion that these stages are universal and instead focus on the developmental tasks occurring within such periods.

Colarusso and Nemiroff (1979) offer several hypotheses concerning adult development and they argue that the nature of developmental process is the same in adulthood as in childhood (Nemiroff & Colarusso, 1990). Nemiroff and Colarusso (1990) claim that adult developmental history can be organized as either a chronological description of stages and tasks or as a series of processes or major themes. For conceptual purposes, they divide adulthood into four broad stages, including early (ages 20-40), middle (ages 40-60), later (ages 60-80) and late-late (age 80+) periods. However, like Settlage et al. (1988), Nemiroff and Colarusso suggest that this age-stage conceptualization is of limited use and they instead emphasize the importance of developmental tasks, which are described as "major, universal themes that engage the thoughts and, usually, the actions of every adult" (p. 106) within such periods. Additionally, just as it is in childhood, the environment is crucial to the achievement of phase-specific developmental tasks. Nemiroff and Colarusso point out that "the engagement and mastery of adult developmental tasks such as mature sexual functioning, intimacy, creativity, work, and coping with adult loss are as important to the adult as mastery of bowel and bladder, formal learning, and the internalization of the superego are to the

child – all result from the constant interaction between organism and environment throughout the life cycle" (p. 100). Furthermore, they hypothesize that major, unresolved childhood developmental themes are carried forward as central aspects of adult life and that adult developmental processes are based on the "adult past" as well as the childhood past. This contemporary psychoanalytic framework thus seeks to integrate both childhood and adult determinants in understanding development.

Whereas they also consider development to be an ongoing dynamic process that evolves throughout adulthood, other contemporary psychoanalytic theorists focus on different aspects of this process. Jacques (1993) contends that his own experience "has been that significant developmental stages occur throughout life and that it is a matter of some importance to recognize their existence" (p. 202). Nonetheless, he rejects the uniformity of age-stage theories by arguing that psychological development does not proceed evenly, but rather in discontinuous stages punctuated by periods of rapid change or transition. Jacques (1965) elaborates this view in proposing a theory of adult developmental positions based on Klein's (1935) conception of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions in childhood. While the individual moves through early adulthood – a period of heightened ambitiousness focused on increasing power, authority, and status in the world – he re-enacts the paranoid-schizoid position by using such mechanisms as splitting, projective identification, psychotic anxiety, and an inability to integrate whole objects. This position is gradually relinquished, Jacques suggests, as the individual begins to integrate ambivalent feelings into his

sense of self and eventually concedes to the depressive position in mid-life. At this point, both good and bad aspects of human experience and of the self are accepted and the *mid-life crisis* is resolved.

Similar to Jacques, Stevens-Long (1990) considers development to be an asynchronous process in which developmental timing in one area is not necessarily closely related to timing in another area. Stevens-Long claims that there is little reason to think of adult life stages "as an invariant, inevitable sequence of qualitatively different sets of abilities or concerns" but also explains that it is "possible to assume that the motivational, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral structures that characterize adult life change over the years, and the that the structures developed at one period are gradually replaced by the structures typical of the next phase" (p. 152). In contrast, Shane and Shane (1990) argue that successful adult development depends on one's ability to serve as a "good-enough" object for another. In other words, the capacity to remain empathic and altruistic in relationships and to invest oneself unselfishly in another's growth is a sign of maturity and, hence, successful development. According to Gould (1997), the social roles an individual occupies carry a developmental valence and role occupancy can either facilitate or impede successful development. Using leadership and mid-life development as an example, Gould suggests that dilemmas arise when the role one occupies is incongruent with the developmental requirements of a given life stage. Both ongoing development and role performance suffer as a result of this *role dis-synchrony*.

Psychosocial Perspectives

The distinction between contemporary psychoanalytic and psychosocial perspectives on adult development is somewhat arbitrary because most psychosocial theories acknowledge the importance of intrapsychic processes in adult experience and also view development as an ongoing phenomenon. However, this appreciation for one's inner world is often eclipsed, from a psychosocial viewpoint, by a greater emphasis on social factors that impact development across the life span. Individual experience, then, can be viewed as a series of themes or events that unfold throughout the life course and which are greatly influenced by one's environmental context. Age-stage theorists (Erikson, 1950/1963, 1959; Levinson, 1978, 1986; Gould, 1978, 1990) link these themes and events to universal chronological periods in adult life whereas other psychosocial writers (Neugarten, 1979; Vaillant, 1977) are less convinced those periods apply uniformly to all people.

Jung (1960), considered by many to be a psychoanalytic theorist, is frequently credited as a pioneer of the psychosocial approach to adult development (Nemiroff and Colarusso, 1990; Levinson, 1980). Jung's theory of the life cycle divides adulthood into two phases and links each of these periods to a set of tasks essential to identity formation. For men, early adulthood involves the establishment of oneself in the world, including the investment of self in family and career. Cultural archetypes often compel men to live and structure their lives according to societal expectations and stereotypes, thus making it difficult to develop a unique sense of self. As men progress through young

adulthood, Jung argues, they undergo a process of *individuation* in which their growing internal resources enable them to focus on their own goals and dreams and to develop a clear identity despite such expectations. By the time men reach mid-life, these pressures diminish, creating an opportunity to address unmet needs or important aspects of self-identity that have to this point been ignored or avoided. Underlying this broadly sketched theory of development is Jung's notion that society, or one's external environment, plays a lead role in determining how individuals negotiate a complex process of growth and change in adulthood. This concept features prominently in subsequent age-stage theories of development.

While Jung's theory introduces the idea that certain key tasks arise over the course of adulthood, Erikson's (1950/1963, 1959) work locates these tasks within specific periods of the life course. His epigenetic model outlines eight stages of ego development, each characterized by a crisis or conflict that must be resolved in order for development to continue (Erikson, 1950/1963). According to Erikson, these crises and the life stages they represent are universal and chronological and each necessitates the integration of polar opposite developmental tasks prior to achievement of the next stage. Four stages comprise the period from childhood through adolescence and into early adulthood, while three stages – *Intimacy vs. Isolation*, *Generativity vs. Stagnation*, and *Integrity vs. Despair* – unfold throughout adulthood.

Erikson's model assumes that ego identity, or one's inner sense of continuity over time must be consolidated by early adulthood, during a stage he terms *Identity vs. Role Confusion*. The next developmental period, Intimacy vs.

Isolation, overlaps with the beginning of adulthood proper and involves a struggle to balance the desire to maintain oneself as an individual in the world with the need to form deeper relationships. The resolution of this crisis results in one's capacity for intimacy, that is, "the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises" (Erikson, 1950/1963, p. 263). For Erikson, life really begins during this period, when "we work or study for a specified career, sociability with the other sex, and in time, marriage and a family of one's own" (Erikson, 1959, p. 100). In other words, to successfully enter adulthood, one must be able to form intimate love relationships as well as build enduring professional and social ties. In contrast, those who engage in *distantiation* during this period isolate themselves from people and activities perceived as threatening to their sense of self as individuals. This self-absorption can inhibit, among other things, the ability to partner romantically, to successfully negotiate work and social environments, and to start a family.

The last two stages in Erikson's model address major issues of middle and late adulthood. Generativity vs. Stagnation embodies the conflict over one's growing sense of mortality, or biological and psychological limitations. Erikson (1950/1963) explains that generativity is "primarily the concern in establishing and growing the next generation" (p. 267) but also notes that simply wanting or having children does not resolve this issue. Generativity also implies productivity and creativity, in both working and parenting capacities, and a larger desire to be

empathic and care for others. Erikson's final stage, Integrity vs. Despair, is resolved in late adulthood with the acceptance of "one's one and only life cycle as something that had to be" (p. 269). Implicit in this outcome is the ability to overcome any fears of death, which represents a successful progression through all of these developmental stages.

Levinson (1978, 1986) credits Erikson's conception of the life course with having the greatest overall impact on the study of adult development. Yet, whereas Erikson's model highlights critical developmental challenges across the lifespan, Levinson's work presents what is arguably the most comprehensive view of adulthood in the contemporary literature. Utilizing a sample of forty men, Levinson (1978) employs psychobiographical interviewing techniques (see Newton, 1995) to elucidate a conception of adulthood and its underlying developmental processes. The resulting framework describes the life course as "the concrete character of a life in its evolution from beginning to end" (p. 3) and each phase of this evolutionary process is important in its own way:

> The imagery of the life cycle thus suggests that the life course evolves through a sequence of definable forms. A season is a major segment of the total cycle. Change goes on within each season, and a transition is required for the shift from one to the next. Every season has its own time, although it is part of and colored by the whole. No season is better or more important than any other. Each has its necessary place and contributes its special character to the whole. (p. 4)

Levinson (1986) defines the macrostructure of the life cycle as a series of eras, each possessing its own biopsychosocial character, with major life changes occurring from one era to the next and lesser changes within each era. These eras all begin and end at a "well-defined modal age" while "cross-era transitions" of

about five years terminate one era and usher in the next (p. 5). For all the men in his study, Levinson (1978) thus concludes that "the life structure evolves in a relatively orderly sequence during the adult years" with "a series of alternating stable (structure-building) periods and transitional (structure-changing) periods" (p. 49) that shape the course of psychosocial development. Furthermore, the primary task of each stable period is to build life structure by making choices and forming structure around them in pursuit of goals and values, whereas the primary task of transitional periods is to question and reappraise existing structure and to explore possibilities for change. Levinson (1986) also emphasizes that the key unit of study within this framework is the individual life structure, that is, "the underlying pattern or design of a person's life at a given time" (p. 6). The main elements of a life structure, he argues, are relationships – investments of self and a reciprocal investment by the other.

Levinson's research outlines five eras, lasting approximately twenty years each, including *Preadulthood* (birth to age 20), *Early Adulthood* (ages 20-40), *Middle Adulthood* (ages 40-60), *Late Adulthood* (ages 60-80), and *Late Late Adulthood* (age 80 and beyond). Early Adulthood is the period most relevant to the sample of male participants in the present study. Levinson (1986) indicates that this period lasts roughly from ages 17-45 and is a time of "greatest contradiction and stress" (p. 5). Biologically speaking, these are the peak years in the life cycle and they bring both reward and challenge:

> This can be a time of rich satisfaction in terms of love, sexuality, family life, occupational advancement, creativity, and realization of major life goals. But there can also be crushing stresses. Most of us simultaneously undertake the burdens of parenthood and of forming an occupation. We

> incur heavy financial obligations when our earning power is still relatively low. We must make crucially important choices regarding marriage, family, work, and life-style before we have the maturity or life experience to choose wisely. Early adulthood is the era in which we are most buffeted by our own passions and ambitions from within and by the demands of family, community, and society from without. Under reasonably favorable conditions, the rewards of living in this era are enormous, but the costs often equal or even exceed the benefits. (p. 5)

Levinson (1978) breaks Early Adulthood down into a series of periods that includes the *early adult transition* (ages 17-22), which ushers in this era, and the *entry life structure* (ages 22-28), during which a preliminary adult identity is formed as one makes significant choices about marriage, occupation, life-style, place of residence, and starting a family. The *age thirty transition* (ages 28-33) provides an opportunity to reevaluate this initial life structure and to make changes. For many men, this transition presents a crisis, as untenable elements of the entry life structure are acknowledged and addressed. Levinson labels the period between ages 17-33 the *novice phase*, a term that captures the provisional nature of the post-adolescent life structure and its inherent flaws. These limitations are, ideally, worked out during the *settling down period* (ages 33-40) when a man invests himself in the major components of his life structure – work, family, friendships, leisure, community, etc. – and completes the task of becoming "a full-fledged adult within his own world" (Levinson, 1978, p. 59). The choices made during this period are critical, for if they are flawed, the individual will pay a price during Middle Adulthood, the next period in the life course. In other words, one's ability to settle into a feasible and satisfying life structure during this time decreases the chance that crises will emerge in the next developmental period.

Gould (1978, 1980) articulates a different vision of young adulthood, based on research conducted with outpatients and non-patients at UCLA in the 1970s. According to Gould, this life stage can be divided into four chronological phases, including ages 16-22, 22-28, 28-34, and 35-45. Rather than focus on developmental tasks specific to these age ranges, Gould (1978) links individual development to changes in one's consciousness during these phases because events are experienced in different ways at different times in one's life. As individuals mature, the childhood assumptions that govern how the world in perceived and negotiated are gradually relinquished and individual goals and ways of being come to dominate one's experience. This process is analogous to ego development and the healthy maturation of the superego.

In contrast, Neugarten (1979) argues that age-stage theories of adult development are oversimplified because the timing of life events is irregular and, more important, psychological themes and preoccupations do not follow a fixed order, but are recurrent. "Whether the life cycle is perceived as consisting of 3, 6, or 10 periods, individuals develop a concept of the normal, expectable life cycle, a set of anticipations that certain life events will occur at certain times, and a mental clock telling them where they are and whether they are on or off time" (p. 888). Hence, the life cycle is fluid, with an ever-increasing number of role transitions and, Neugarten suggests, traditional timetables have disappeared. Furthermore, young adulthood is characterized by its salient issues rather than by its chronology:

> In young adulthood, the emergent issues are usually described as those related to intimacy, parenthood, and to meeting the expectations of the

> world of work. The major tasks are to achieve a balance between settling down and moving forward; growing new roots while striving for achievement; meeting new obligations, especially toward spouse and children; and investing oneself in the lives of a few significant others to whom one will be bound for years to come, while at the same time achieving individuation, competency, and job mastery. (p. 890)

These developmental themes, while similar to those proposed by other psychosocial theorists, are not time-bound and do not occur in a stepwise fashion.

Like Neugarten, Vaillant (1977) supports the notion that adult development proceeds in a non-prescribed way. Nonetheless, his longitudinal Grant Study of 95 male Harvard graduates confirms Erikson's hypothesis that a given developmental stage can rarely be achieved until a previous one has been mastered. Vaillant reports that his subjects evidenced a pattern of shifting focus from identity to intimacy to career consolidation in young adulthood. Whereas adolescence is a period of differentiation in which objects are internalized, the task for these men in young adulthood is to reestablish links to the outside world and to strengthen friendships and romantic relationships. Once these ties are in place, men can focus on consolidating their careers. Importantly, Vaillant stresses that successful development is predicated on an ability to adapt and meet challenges imposed by the external world. Adaptation to life, then, is the key issue underlying developmental process across the life span.

Masculinity and Adult Development

A full review of the literature on masculinity is beyond the scope of this investigation. Yet, given the significant influence of gender socialization on adult male development, a brief summary of some pertinent writings is worthwhile.

Pollack (1995) explains that feminist scholars have routinely pointed out how boys and girls develop differently based on culturally accepted norms. Whereas girls are encouraged to develop and maintain close interpersonal relationships, boys are socialized to be separate and to disidentify with their mothers in order to create strong, independent masculine identities regardless of the effect on their relationships (Chodorow, 1978, 1989; Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1976). This gender-bifurcated socialization process seeps into every facet of life and impacts how individuals manage, for example, career and family life. "The 'mommy track' for women and its equally destructive counterpart, the 'daddy with no feelings, work 'til you drop' track for men, begin long before the work-career ladder is in view" (Pollack, 1995).

These stereotypes are particularly relevant to the sample of men in the present study, for it is clear that individuals are exposed from a very early age to a set of role expectations that inevitably factor into their identity development. Interestingly, contemporary gender theory has moved away from the traditional sex-role model, which focused on the way males and females, as biological beings, become socialized in a particular culture (Kimmel, 1987). This framework has been supplanted in favor of a social constructionist approach that assumes "notions of masculinity and femininity are relational, socially constructed, and subject to change" rather than biologically determined (Levant & Pollack, 1995, p. 3). Hence, development has come to be viewed as a product of the self-in-relation rather than the self-in-isolation. Despite the male subculture's inclination toward action and away from relating, Bergman (1995) argues that men, as much

as women, share a primary desire to connect with others. Unfortunately, conflict arises if this need contrasts with the socio-cultural norms present in one's environment.

Various theoretical paradigms have been proposed to describe this type of conflict. For example, "gender role conflict is the psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative consequences on the person or others" and this state "occurs when rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles result in personal restriction, devaluation, or violation of others or self" (O'Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995, p. 166). Restriction, in this case, is a limitation of human potential, either that of the person experiencing the conflict or that of another. Another concept, *gender role strain*, was first introduced by Pleck (1981) and "proposes that contemporary gender roles are contradictory and inconsistent; that the proportion of persons who violate gender roles is high; that violation of gender roles leads to condemnation and negative psychological consequences; that actual or imagined violation of gender roles leads people to overconform to them; that violating gender roles has more severe consequences for males than for females; and that certain prescribed gender role traits (such as male aggression) are too often dysfunctional" (Levant & Pollack, 1995, p. 3). Pleck (1995) has since updated this concept to include dynamics such as *gender role dysfunction*, the notion that "successful fulfillment of male role expectations can have negative consequences because many of the characteristics viewed as desirable or acceptable in men (e.g., low level of family participation) have inherent negative side effects, either for males themselves or for others" (p. 12). When men fail to conform to male

role expectations, Pleck explains, they defy masculinity ideology – which stresses the importance of adhering to culturally defined standards for male behavior – and risk experiencing diminished self-esteem. Ironically, following such standards can also lead to a decrease in psychological well-being. For instance, Messner (1987) notes the propensity of men in young adulthood to define themselves primarily in terms of their work. The effort to establish oneself in the professional realm frequently leads these men to become physically absent and emotionally distant from home and family. Even if they find a way to become more present in midlife, their children are often gone and many of their spouses have themselves moved into the world of work. Psychologically speaking, the damage has already been done, both to the individual men and to their loved ones.

Despite these consequences, Western culture has consistently promoted the role of men as economic providers. Pleck (1987) contends that this stereotype is particularly true for fathers and is rooted in 18th and early 19th century views of fathers as moral overseers of the family. The advent of industrialization took fathers away from the home for work and the male role became associated with the "distant breadwinner" concept that, Pleck suggests, remains dominant today (p. 93). Other scholars (Bernard, 1981; Brooks & Gilbert, 1995) have rearticulated this concept as the *good provider role* and they note how strongly fathers identify with this stereotype. Bernard (1981) explains that, "it is primarily through the assumption of this provider role that traditional men feel they are able to demonstrate their loyalty and love for their children" (p. 1). Moreover, the vestiges of this phenomenon have spread throughout the corporate world, so that

even men without children and families feel the effects of this culturally reinforced ideal. For participants in the present study, all men in the formative stages of their careers, this social construction inevitably plays a role as they navigate personal and professional life decisions.

Career Theory

Since the mid-twentieth century, when the study of careers first emerged as a broad area of research interest, a variety of perspectives have been proposed to explain how individuals choose professions and negotiate the course of their working lives. According to Brown and Brooks (1990), two philosophical assumptions underlie most career theories. *Logical positivism*, traditionally the more dominant of these positions, views career development as normative, controllable, and predictable behavior. Increasingly, however, *phenomenology* has posited that careers have no single meaning and that they defy neat categorization. The difference between these assumptions parallels what Derr and Laurent (1989) describe as the frequent conflict between psychological and sociological approaches to career theory (see also Arthur, Hall, & Lawrence, 1989). The psychological perspective, which asserts that, "people make careers," focuses on intrapsychic aspects of career choice and development while the sociological perspective claims that "careers make people" and stresses the influence of environmental or organizational factors on careers (Derr & Laurent, 1989, p. 454). Much of the career literature thus distinguishes between the internal

(psychological) and the external (sociological) career, which Derr and Laurent (1989) view as ultimately inseparable.

Contemporary definitions of career incorporate elements from both of these frameworks. Hall (1976) defines career as "the individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of the person's life" (p. 8), a description that encompasses both internal and external aspects of career. Similarly, Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence (1989) suggest that a career represents the evolving sequence of one's work experience over time. Notably, these definitions both include a temporal element that reflects the literature's growing emphasis on adult development and experience across the life span. Levinson (1980) follows a similar approach, but specifies that the term career "refers to the relatively patterned sequence of role change" in a person's life over time (p. 271). Accordingly, "an occupational career involves a series of positions and roles within one or more occupational worlds" (p. 271). Implicit in this description is the notion that the sequence – or development – of one's career is just as, if not more, important as one's internal and external work experience at any given point in time.

Regardless of how career is defined, research has consistently shown that work is a particularly salient aspect of human experience (Masih, 1967). This salience is often related to the ability of one's work to meet an ongoing need for personal satisfaction. Indeed, Hall (1976) points out that we can view careers as life, that is, work offers a setting for satisfying almost the entire range of human needs. This reality is especially true for men, many of who define themselves

based on their occupations. Gould (1978) argues that, "the work men do substantially determines their world view and self-image" (p. 173). Consequently, the following section reviews literature on career theory and focuses specifically on the issues of career choice and development as well as theoretical conceptions of masculinity relevant to work and professional identity.

Career Choice Theories

The literature on career choice can be traced to Parsons (1909), who suggested that individuals should choose a vocation rather than a job. This recommendation was based on the idea that one's professional life, if selected wisely, could increase one's chances for satisfaction and success, a concept central to later theories of career development (Brown & Brooks, 1990). Subsequent writers have focused more specifically on the factors that influence how individuals make this choice. For example, Carter (1940) argues that career choice is based on one's personality dynamics and environmental realities. In other words, this choice represents an attempt to make practical adjustments to environmental conditions. In contrast, Bordin (1943) considers vocational interests to be dynamic phenomena and concludes, based on psychological test data, that people view themselves in terms of occupational stereotypes. When one's self-concept changes in relation to his awareness of these stereotypes, career interests also change. Other theorists, such as Hendrick (1943), offer a more psychoanalytic understanding of this process. Hendrick posits a *work principle* that suggests the primary motivation for work is one's need to efficiently use both

intellectual and muscular tools. According to this principle, man not only finds primary pleasure in controlling or altering the environment by using the mind, hand, and tools, his work performance may also satisfy aggressive, sexual, and self-preservative needs. Intellectual satisfaction aside, such needs speak to the more primitive connection between work and the self.

Since the development of these early perspectives, career theories have tended to focus either on individual or social factors in the choice process (Brown & Brooks, 1990). Hall (1976) suggests that this literature can be divided into two broad categories: matching theories and process theories. Matching theories describe how different kinds of people enter different occupations based on some measure of compatibility whereas process theories describe the way individuals gradually arrive at a career choice.

The most prominent matching theory evident in the literature is the *trait and factor* approach to career choice. Betz, Fitzgerald, and Hill (1989) explain that this approach focuses on describing and measuring individual characteristics and attempts to understand the fit between traits in the individual and the work environment. Of course, Brown (1990) points out, trait and factor theory assumes that individuals possess rather stable psychological traits based on their interactions with others and with the environment. Given that different occupations require varying numbers of these traits for adequate performance, choosing an occupation involves matching individuals to jobs so that required performance is achieved and individual needs are met. Ultimately, the trait and factor approach assumes that people seek jobs with requirements that are

consistent with their personality traits and interests, needs, and aptitudes are the key characteristics that help to determine this choice (Brown & Brooks, 1990).

One of the most frequently cited trait and factor theorists, Roe (1956) contends that the once popular idea that individuals work just to make a living inadequately explains why people choose to work in certain ways. She bases her understanding of occupational psychology on Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, which suggests that motivation and personality are linked to fundamental goals or needs – not drives – and that such needs are arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency that helps to explain many aspects of behavior. Roe relates Maslow's theory to occupations and writes, "In our society there is no single situation which is potentially so capable of giving some satisfaction at all levels of basic needs as is the occupation" (p. 31). Beyond simply affording the worker food and shelter, she argues, occupations provide self-esteem and, since cultural, social, and economic status depend so much on career, being in an occupation is seen as a sign of adulthood in Western society. Roe's theory concludes that intrinsic personality needs, especially the need for self-esteem, are the principal determinants of occupational choice.

Other writers present variations on trait and factor theory, all of which seek to explain the psychology behind career choice. Holland's (1966, 1973, 1996) central idea is that "vocational satisfaction, stability, and achievement depend on the congruence between one's personality and the environment in which one works" (Betz, Fitzgerald, & Hill, 1989, p. 33). He bases this idea on observable characteristics and presents a range of personality types to illustrate

how people choose those work environments that are most congruent with their personalities.

Using a more psychoanalytic approach, Bordin (1990) suggests that individuals express their self-concepts in occupational terms and that "intrinsic work requirements give the individual a way of being that is consonant with the dynamics and structure of his or her personality" (p. 104). Of course, Bordin admits, other factors influence personality and motivational dynamics and, hence, impact career choice. Examples include economic, cultural/ethnic, geographical/climatic, biological, and even accidental factors, which constantly interact with more dynamic intrapsychic variables. Similarly, Dewald (1993) employs psychoanalytic language in linking job choice to a variety of factors. "Such issues as positive or negative identification with important childhood objects, fears of or needs for competitive struggle, narcissistic needs, expression of otherwise unacceptable instinctual drive derivatives, parental or internalized superego values and demands, reversals from passive to active roles, unconscious guilt or shame, etc., may all represent significant unconscious influences on these choices" (p. 144). The more intense these unconscious forces are, Dewald argues, the greater likelihood of disappointment and symptom formation in relation to work. Conversely, by minimizing the pull of these forces, one can more realistically assess his innate talents, interests, and motivations and, hopefully, make more stable and satisfying job choices. According to Dewald, the optimal situation is not always achievable through work:

> In an optimally adaptive situation, occupational choice permits the expression of sublimated instinctual strivings compatible with ego ideal

> value systems, unencumbered by unconscious inhibition or conflict. The work role and situation thus provide pleasurable fulfillment and narcissistic self-esteem over and beyond immediate social and economic rewards. However, for large numbers of people the work role does not fulfill these needs, and such satisfactions must be achieved through other forms of activity. (pp. 144-145)

This framework suggests that vocational choice involves a complex negotiation between one's internal, often unconscious, needs and the demands of the external world. For Super (1953), this process involves a compromise between one's interests, capacities, and values and the professional opportunities available at any given time. This compromise, he posits, is ultimately between the self and reality, that is, "the degree to which and the conditions under which one yields to the other" (p. 187).

Beyond psychoanalytic conceptualizations of vocational choice, other scholars focus less on intrapsychic process and more on understanding the different external variables that impact job selection. Numerous studies have utilized direct attribute-rating methodologies to produce lists of such variables, which can include pay and benefits, job security, type of work, advancement potential, opportunity for autonomy and responsibility, the ability to use certain skill sets, and job flexibility (Zedeck, 1977; Jurgensen, 1978; Feldman & Arnold, 1978; Rynes, Scwab, & Heneman, 1983). Additionally, despite that applied psychology offers extensive research on work values and how they influence job satisfaction (see, for example, Ravlin & Meglino, 1987; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989), Judge and Bretz (1992) argue that these studies fail to link such values to job choice. These authors conclude that career choice is significantly affected by organizational work values and that individuals are more likely to

choose jobs with value content similar to their own value orientation. According to Judge and Bretz, salary, promotion opportunities, and type of work are the most important job attributes to examine in relation to work values and career choice. In a study of 67 graduate and undergraduate students pursuing human resource and general management majors, their results support the hypothesis that values are important in determining one's fit with an organization and, specifically, that job offer acceptance is best predicted when values inherent in a job match the primary value orientation of the individual applicant. Furthermore, in a preliminary study with 279 MBA students from European and American business schools, ninety percent of respondents indicated that they would be willing to forgo more money in order to work for organizations with better reputations for social responsibility (Montgomery & Ramus, 2003). Though perhaps surprising to those who question the motivations of corporate America, such results support the notion that a wide range of factors impact job choice. Ultimately, culture of origin may function as one of the most salient variables in this process. Derr and Laurent (1989) advocate a cultural model in understanding career choice, a perspective that emphasizes how "careers link individuals to their cultures through their socialization experiences in various institutions" (p. 466). Implicit in this approach is the idea that one's national culture shapes the way career is viewed and, for better or worse, this influence can lead to a more homogenized sense of appropriate job opportunities. Culture is, inevitably, an important consideration for the sample of men in the current study, who are shaped both by their cultures of origin and by the culture of the business community in which they study and

work. Thus, as Derr and Laurent point out, it seems that their careers make them just as they make their careers.

While matching theories like the trait and factor approach focus on how people choose jobs based on compatibility factors, process theory seeks to understand how individuals gradually arrive at this choice over time. For example, Vroom (1966) claims that individuals select jobs consistent with their work goals and that these goals change over time. Based on his study of MBAs, Vroom concludes that, following job choice, employees undergo a dissonance reduction process in which this choice is clarified and doubts about the decision and potential alternative choices are dissipated. Additionally, Soelberg, in a paper (as cited in Hall, 1976) delivered at the 26th annual meeting of the Academy of Management, finds that people select jobs unconsciously and that they perform such clarification tasks before they are even aware of making a choice. Thus, what seems to be a decision making process is really a process of clarifying and reducing dissonance between the selected job and the alternatives. Importantly, this process is not considered to be limited to any particular life stage, but continues throughout a person's career as he moves from one organization to the next.

Perhaps the most widely cited process theory is that of Ginzberg, Ginsberg, Axelrad, and Herman (1951), who conducted one of the first exploratory studies of occupational choice involving people at various stages of development. Ginzberg et al. identify four variables that serve as the focus of this research: *reality factors*, including social and economic variables that compromise

the environment into which one is born; *educational process*, including its influence on one's thinking and the opportunities one has available; *emotional determinants*, including emotional needs and desires that impact personal choice; and *values*, which can be a major influence despite one's economic reality (p. 8). Taking such factors into consideration, these authors outline three periods of occupational choice determination. First, the period of *fantasy choice* occurs during latency, between ages six and eleven, and carries into preadolescence. This stage is followed by a period of *tentative choice* during early and late adolescence and, finally, a period of *realistic choice* in young adulthood. This last period, realistic choice, is most relevant to the developmental stage of men in the current study and Ginzberg et al. further break this period down into a series of sub-stages. During *exploration*, the first of these sub-stages, a college student attempts to gain the experience necessary to make an initial occupational choice. This process is followed by a period of *crystallization*, in which the individual assesses the factors under consideration in this choice and commits himself to it. Once committed, he proceeds through a period of *specification* where the alternatives he has decided to pursue are "reviewed in respect to a field of specialization and to particular career objectives" (p. 95). Ginzberg et al. point out, however, that this process continues beyond specification and that young adults are often ill equipped to commit permanently to an occupational field:

> It is difficult for a student to plan in advance the various stages in his career or even to determine definitely his field of specialization. He must first acquire considerable experience in his field of choice…Even those who pursue several years of graduate studies find it difficult to acquire the requisite knowledge, skill, and experience to make the subtle distinction required for specification. And even if the individual confidently plans the

> details of his career objectives and commits himself to a field of specification while still in school, it is possible that he may change his mind after he has had actual work experience. (p. 113)

This statement suggests that even MBA students – most of who possess full-time work experience and all of who enter a program of graduate study that is somewhat specialized around the business field – face potential revisions during the specification process based on ongoing interactions with their work environments. The process model also suggests that occupational choice is a developmental phenomenon, one that is inextricably linked to individual experience in the world. Indeed, Ginzberg et al. report the main finding of their study is that "occupational choice is a developmental process: it is not a single decision, but a series of decisions made over a period of years" and that, "each step in the process has a meaningful relation to those which precede and follow it" (p. 185). This conclusion is particularly relevant to the next section of this review, which presents a summary of the literature on career development.

Perspectives on Career Development

The notion that professional life involves a developmental process and that career is an important component of the life span has become a central tenet of career theory over the past two decades. The growth of interest in adult development as an area of study, in particular, informs this idea. Whereas researchers once honed in on the choice process involved in selection of an initial occupation, theorists are now equally, if not more interested in the way that individuals manage job choice over the course of their working lives. Cytrynbaum

and Crites (1989) underscore this point by arguing that, to fully understand career developmental processes, we must pay attention to life course development and adjustment dynamics because career and adult life stages can mutually inform each other. Arthur and Bailyn (1984), who define career as "the evolving sequences of a person's work experiences over time," (p. 104) also view career development as a dynamic process in which evolving life circumstances significantly influence one's career path, not just initial job choice. These authors suggest that traditional assumptions about careers need to be reexamined given that the "narrow focus on the occupational domain, and especially on occupational entry, is seen to have denied us the opportunity to appreciate the more realistic picture of the career as a component of a person's life structure" (p. 105). Within this framework, one's career unfolds via transactions between individual and social systems over the course of the life span.

Although the emphasis on developmental process in the career literature is a more recent phenomenon, the idea that one's occupation can be viewed in terms of a series of stages dates back to the 1950s. Super (1953, 1990) offers one of the earliest perspectives on vocational development, based on self-concept theory, or the idea that occupational choice represents an attempt to implement a self-concept. In other words, when preparing for and pursuing an occupation, individuals seek to translate their ideas of themselves into occupational terms. The notion that "work is a way of life" is a basic element of this perspective: "This is the theory that work is a way of life, and that adequate vocational and personal adjustment are most likely to result when both the nature of the work itself and

the way of life that goes with it (this is, the kind of community, home, leisure-time activities, friends, etc.) are congenial to the aptitudes, interests, and values of the person in question" (Super, 1953, p. 189). Among the propositions Super articulates is the idea that the career development process occurs in a series of life stages where "vocational preferences and competencies, the situations in which people live and work, and hence their self-concepts change with time and experience…making choice and adjustment a continuous process" (p. 189). Occupational choice thus evolves over time and career can be defined as "a sequence of positions occupied by a person during the course of a lifetime" (Super & Hall, 1978, p. 334). Moreover, the developmental tasks arising during each phase of this process can be encountered at any life stage. Campbell and Heffernan (1983) outline four such phases, including "preparation," when one prepares for an occupation and obtains a job, "establishment," when one demonstrates competence in and adjusts to a new work environment, "maintenance," when one maintains and/or advances one's position in an established occupation, and "retirement," when one's involvement with the workplace declines (p. 226). Hence, each of these phases, which may be thought of as career developmental positions, brings its own set of tasks. Ultimately, Super (1990) hopes that people reach a state of career maturity, which he defines as "the individual's readiness to cope with the developmental tasks with which he or she is confronted because of his or her biological or social developments and because of society's expectations of people who have reached that stage of development" (p. 213). One's degree of success in coping with the demands of

earlier stages and sub-stages of career development, especially the most recent, largely determine one's ability to achieve career maturity.

Like Super, Schein (1978) contends that people develop occupational self-concepts, which he terms *career anchors*. Based on his study of 44 business school alumni interviewed at 10-12 years post-graduation, Schein concludes that these anchors consist of three components, including one's self-perceived talents and abilities, self-perceived motives and needs, and self-perceived attitudes and values. "In summary, the career anchor – the pattern of self-perceived talents, motives, and values – serves to guide, constrain, stabilize, and integrate the person's career" (p. 127). Interestingly, these components cannot be predicted and they emerge only through work experience, that is, via interaction between the individual and the organization. This interaction is critical to Schein's career development perspective, which focuses on the way these entities relate to each other over time. To understand this process, Schein argues, we must think about the total adult in the total life cycle: "In practice, this point of view means that we must consider how activities related to self-development, career development, and family development interact throughout the entire life span of that person" (p.6). Of course, these "life space" issues and the needs that drive them change over the course of the life span and, because the developmental issues embedded in each derive from different sources, Schein finds it useful to think about each – self-development, career development, and family development – as a separate cycle with its own set of tasks, milestones, choice points, difficulties, and goals to be

achieved. It follows that one's ability to negotiate the challenges present in one life space impact experience in other life spaces.

While Schein's (1978) work hints at the growing blend of career and adult developmental perspectives, Levinson's (1984) approach to career development represents a more fully integrated theoretical framework. Indeed, Levinson's context for understanding careers is the overall life structure and he considers "the occupation as one aspect of a person's current life pattern" and career development "as an aspect of overall adult development" (p. 49). Furthermore, he spells out his sense of the interdependence of one's life structure and its individual components by explaining, "My starting point is the individual life structure – the underlying pattern or design of a person's life at a given time – and the evolution of this structure over the adult life course. A person's engagement in work is one component of her or his life structure and has to be described and understood within this framework" (pp. 49-50). This outlook clearly suggests that an understanding of a particular occupational choice is secondary to a conception of where this choice fits into the overall life structure and how this structure shapes and gives meaning to such choices. Levinson (1984) proposes that his standard sequence of developmental periods (see, for example, Levinson, 1978) makes it possible to explore the evolution of career development, or any other single component, in the life structure:

> In short, my approach to the study of career development involves the following key propositions: 1. A person's engagement in work at a given time is one component of the individual's life structure, and the meaning of work can be adequately understood only if we regard it as a component of the larger structure. 2. The evolution of a person's engagement in work – which we may refer to as the occupational career – is part of the

> evolution of the life structure, and is shaped by the sequence of periods in life structure development. 3. Even when our primary interest is in the current state of a person's career, our understanding will be greatly enhanced by an adult development perspective, that is, by taking into account the individual's current developmental period and the ways in which previous periods of adult development are reflected in the present. To take a developmental perspective, we must have a conception of the human life cycle. In studying people at any given age, we consider where they are in the life cycle, whence they have come, and whither they may be going. (p. 51)

Levinson's propositions drive home the point that any occupational choice, throughout a person's career, exists within a larger context that both shapes this choice and is, in turn, also shaped by it.

Of course, opinions vary as to the nature and dynamics of this context. Bordin (1990), who advocates a psychodynamic understanding of career development, suggests that, "A person's life can be seen as a string of career decisions reflecting the individual's groping for an ideal fit between self and work" (p. 109). Underlying this effort, Bordin posits, is a desire to build a personal identity that incorporates aspects of one's mother and father while retaining elements unique to the self. Career development, then, is akin to an ongoing process of ego development. Vaillant (1977) conceptualizes this process in terms of career consolidation, a stage occurring sometime between ages 25-35 in which the men in his Grant Study achieved solid career identifications. According to Vaillant, an important inner change accompanies career consolidation, one in which men cast aside their adolescent ego ideals and identify with professional mentors or those to who they apprenticed themselves (see also Dalton, Thompson, & Price, 1977). Whereas men in their twenties are mainly preoccupied with yearning for and retreating from intimacy, a

developmental issue highlighted by Erikson (1950/1963, 1959), Vaillant argues that men in their thirties are focused on conflicts about professional success and identifications with mentors loom large in their lives. After age 40, though, mentors cease to be important and individuals ideally reach Erikson's generativity stage. Nonetheless, those who reach this stage also risk stagnation – something particularly true for the businessmen in Vaillant's study – if they are unable to outgrow career consolidation. That these businessmen were especially vulnerable to stagnation suggests how career-focused individuals, as many MBAs are, may be more prone to experience conflicts between personal and professional aspects of their lives.

Hall (1996) presents a relational approach to career development based on the concept of a "protean career" that is driven by the desire for psychological success rather than by externally determined measures of success. Accordingly, he writes, "The driving questions now are more about meaning than money, purpose than power, identity than ego, and learning than attainments" (p. xii). Hall suggests that the notion of a career as a steady series of upward moves no longer exists. In its place is a sense of the subjective career as it interacts with work challenges, relationships, and experiences. Thus, Kram (1996) explains, "A relational approach to career development explores the ways in which individuals learn and grow in their work-related experiences through connections with others, taking a holistic view of individuals and the nature of their interactions with assignments, people, organizations, and the social context in which they work" (p. 133). Whereas traditional models of development have equated growth with

movement from a state of dependence to one of autonomy, mastery, and differentiation, this relational career development perspective emphasizes the role of relational interactions in the growth process and the facilitation of interdependence, mutuality, and reciprocity in order to achieve psychological success. Additionally, Fletcher (1996) advises that work-life integration is key to a relational approach to working. He suggests that the experience of caring for others, such as family, can help to develop relational skills to be applied to professional life. This framework further implies that one's inability to achieve such integration compromises prospects for success in both personal and professional realms.

Careers and Masculinity

Although some professionals may be motivated to build their careers around a search for psychological rather than externally determined success, few men can escape the social cues that emphasize financial gain and the increasing acquisition of power and authority as measures of achievement at work. The literature on men and careers clearly reflects the expectation – at least in Western culture – that males fulfill the provider role and approach their work in an aggressive effort to get ahead. Ochberg (1988) captures this theme in his description of narratives that middle-aged businessmen tell about their careers. The plots of these stories, he writes, "emphasize relentless forward movement" and "are shaped by career culture, which demands constant advancement" (p. 173). Ochberg further suggests that such narratives point to aspects of upper-

middle class culture, where "the cultural motifs are the aggressive ambitiousness and impersonality mandated by careerism" (p. 175). More specifically, this career culture demands that men be impersonal and hold their emotions in check while remaining affable team players at work. According to Ochberg, this "balance between detached, self-interested calculation and disingenuous affection is one of the formative tensions built into the fabric of the business world" (p. 200). For the men in his study, getting ahead at their jobs apparently required the ability to separate from personal attachments and focus in a single-minded way on advancement. Work production, rather than emotional availability, was rewarded.

Kanter (1977) describes these aspects of experience in the business world as being part of a "masculine ethic" that "elevates the traits assumed to belong to some men to necessities for effective management: a tough-minded approach to problems; analytical abilities to abstract and plan; a capacity to set aside personal, emotional considerations in the interest of task accomplishment; and a cognitive superiority in problem-solving and decision-making" (p. 22). Corporations reward those displaying such traits and thus shape work attitudes and behaviors, Kanter writes, which is what makes the business organization the "quintessential people producer" (p. 3). Other researchers argue that larger societal pressures are what influence our ideas about work and career, especially when men are concerned. Deutschendorf (1996) explains that, "from the time they are children, males are taught skills that will equip them to fulfill their role as provider" (p. 3). Additionally, he suggests that our notions about the value of work have changed little since the early 1900s. Men work to afford better lifestyles and they define

their self-image and self-worth by their work while society as a whole continues to judge people by their professional accomplishments. Moreover, Deutschendorf contends that "the American man's definition of success revolves around work and the financial rewards it yields" (p. 21). For many of these men, he writes, work is the primary relationship in their lives and they have allowed their careers to become almost their entire definition of themselves. This reality is manifested in the fact that workaholism is a respectable addiction in our society. Michels (1993) underscores this point by noting, "For the male, a major work role in adult life is assumed, and its absence would lead most to search for psychopathology" (p. 8). Men are assumed, or expected, to be career oriented and to inhabit the work and provider roles that society has predetermined for them.

These pressures are reflected in Komarovsky's (1976) exploration of male attitudes, roles, and problems based on case studies drawn from a sample of 62 college seniors. In his analysis of the results, Komarovsky concludes, "The overwhelming majority approached the role of worker and family provider as one of the touchstones of masculinity" (p. 207). At the same time, only one quarter of the total sample reported being free of conflicts about their occupational goals and many men expressed anxiety about their ability to make it in their chosen field, with fully one half of the sample worried about their future roles as workers. Additionally, nearly twelve percent of this sample reported giving up on serious interests to pursue more financially profitable, prestigious occupations. Such results, Komarovsky suggests, point to "distinctly masculine role strains" (p. 222), which he defines as "felt or latent difficulty in role fulfillment or the experience of

low rewards for role conformity" (p. 225). Role strains point to the premium many of these study participants placed on achieving success in their careers. "Clearly, work, and success in it, still symbolized the essence of manhood for these youths" (p. 223).

Levinson (1978) acknowledges that a man's occupation is important because it places him on a particular socioeconomic level and affects the options available to him. Nonetheless, male careers also represent a crucial aspect of the self, one that is frequently related to life dreams:

> Occupation has important sources within the self and important consequences for the self. It is often the primary medium in which a young man's dreams for the future are defined, and the vehicle he uses to pursue those dreams. At best, his occupation permits the fulfillment of basic values and life goals. At worst, a man's work life over the years is oppressive and corrupting, and contributes to a growing alienation from self, work, and society. In studying a man's life, we need to understand the meaning of work and the multiple ways in which it may serve to fulfill, or barely sustain or to destroy the self. (p. 45)

A man's work and, indeed, his career thus serve both tangible and intangible needs. On a practical level, there is the income and social prestige – or respect – derived from professional accomplishment. But there is also a more primitive, internal remuneration in the form of greater self-satisfaction and, perhaps, a more complete sense of identity among men who consider themselves successful in their working lives. William Whyte (1956) addresses this dual fulfillment in The Organization Man, one of the best-known social commentaries on men and corporate life in America. Whyte's sense of the new business litany in the mid-twentieth century is that men who are loyal and do a good job for their organizations will be paid in kind, for it only makes sense that companies should

reward loyalty with loyalty. Yet, Whyte also recognizes that economics and job security are not the only reasons why businessmen work so hard: "In talking about why he works, the executive does not speak first of service, or of pressures from the organization; very rarely does he mention his family as a reason. He speaks of himself – and the demon within him. He works because his ego demands it" (p. 146). Are we to conclude that a man's ultimate motivation for working lies deep within him, in a need to fulfill the self? Or are his career choices and development largely influenced by our socio-culturally imposed concepts of masculinity and providerhood? How important are his basic economic needs in determining his negotiation of this important aspect of life structure? The answers to these questions, of course, are complex and likely unique to the men who face such issues every day of their adult lives. More complex still are the challenges that men, especially those with families, experience in balancing their personal and professional lives. Accordingly, the next section of this review presents a selection of literature on work and family in an effort to highlight some of these challenges.

Work and Family Literature

The body of research and literature on work and family is no less extensive than that of adult development and career theory. Hood (1993) notes that interest in this area of study exploded following the publication of Kanter's (1977) critical review and agenda for research and policy and the topic has grown into a major subfield within the sociological sciences. Importantly, Kanter's work

revealed how researchers had perpetuated the "myth of separate worlds" (p. 8) by neglecting to study people's work and family lives together. However, the past two decades have witnessed an important change in the way scholars view these major life components. Sociologists and psychologists alike are now more fully aware of the ways that work and family intersect and the resulting benefits and disadvantages. "Among the most common themes in this literature are the incursion of family demands on work and vice versa, and the impact of one set of roles on the other" (Hood, 1993, p. x). Indeed, the roles people inhabit and negotiate in these two spheres are a critical area of focus for work and family theorists, and rightly so. As Cazenave and Leon (1987) point out, "Work and family role scripts are key determinants of both personal identity and social structure" (p. 244). Clearly, the perspectives we assume regarding our roles in these two domains significantly impact how we construct our lives and the larger environments around us.

Despite advances in work and family research, society continues to be influenced by traditional gender role assumptions that govern how we view men and women as participants in work and family life. While feminist scholars have for some time challenged conventional notions of femininity and female roles, researchers have only recently turned their attention to masculinity and the lived experiences of men (Hood, 1993). The socialization of men, particularly around issues of work and family, is especially relevant to participants in the current study because their personal and professional choices are made in the context of a set of larger socio-cultural assumptions that inevitably affect how they think about

their roles in various domains of life. Consequently, the following section summarizes relevant general theories and research on roles in the work-family literature as well as writings on male role expectations. Also included is a review of perspectives on work and family from business management scholars, who have increasingly turned their attention to these issues over the past two decades.

Multiple Roles and Role Conflict

Comprehensive reviews of work and family research from the past two decades suggest that this literature can be organized around several nodal themes. Menaghan and Parcel (1990) break writings from the 1980s into four topical categories, including new home economics, work-family role conflict, work socialization, and work stress. For 1990s literature, Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, and Crouter (2000) highlight studies on children's well being, work socialization, work stress, and multiple roles. Other, less prevalent themes include paid versus unpaid employment, child and adolescent employment, aging and retirement, and elder care (Barnett, 1998). For the purpose of the current study, which explores how men understand and articulate their commitments to personal and professional life, emphasis is placed on literature that addresses multiple roles and role conflict.

According to Barnett (1998), no inclusive conceptual model exists that explains the interplay between work and family, but there are several theoretical approaches in the literature that focus on multiple roles and role conflict. Two conflicting perspectives that are based on the concept of *role accumulation*

address the number of roles occupied by a particular individual. Both of these approaches attempt to relate role occupancy to stress and are especially relevant when considering the conflict between work and family responsibilities. Goode (1960) advocates a *role strain* approach that suggests the more roles a person occupies, the greater the demands and the likelihood that conflict between roles will result. In other words, role strain is the "felt difficulty in meeting role demands" and is positively related to psychological distress (p. 483). This concept is based on the scarcity hypothesis, or the notion that individuals have limited amounts of energy, all of which is demanded by social organizations (see also Slater, 1963, and Coser, 1974). Thus, the more roles one inhabits, the more likely the depletion of time and energy and the greater likelihood of conflicting obligations, leading to role strain and distress. Goode considers this process to be normal for all individuals and he defines role overload as the diminished probability of satisfactory performance in any or all of one's roles due to these conflicting demands. That is, satisfactory performance of one role jeopardizes satisfactory performance of another. Furthermore, role strain is not role-specific, but develops when the individual's total role system is too demanding. Marks and MacDermid (1996) suggest that this analysis is holistic rather than atomistic in that it calls attention to the "way our roles function as a single pattern or system" (p. 418). These authors argue that most of the literature published subsequent to Goode's work utilizes an atomistic framework, in which each role is viewed individually and is seen as separate from an organized role system.

One potential solution to role strain is *role delegation* (Moen & Dempster-McClain, 1987). A traditional example of this solution in a family would be the delegation of the provider role to the husband, leaving the major childrearing tasks to his wife or partner. The increased prevalence of dual earner couples, however, has made such delegation more problematic. Women playing multiple roles, including career and childrearing responsibilities, are much more likely to experience role strain and perform one or more roles inadequately.

An alternative formulation to role strain is offered by Marks (1977), who proposes a *role enhancement* approach that suggests occupying multiple roles can have positive benefits. He argues that well-being is enhanced when individuals establish equally positive commitments to each of their typical roles. The rewards and privileges associated with performing such roles aids in the management of multiple responsibilities and counters problematic effects of role accumulation. This approach is based on the expansion hypothesis, which – contrary to role strain – predicts less psychological distress with increased role accumulation. Marks also suggests that role strain can result when people evaluate their roles hierarchically. That is, the more individuals view their different roles as competing alternatives, the more likely they are to prioritize some roles over others and to experience distress as a result of these choices. Sieber (1974) supports the idea that role enhancement is beneficial and explains that four types of rewards are associated with role accumulation: "role privileges; overall status security; resources for status enhancement and role performance; and enrichment of the personality and ego gratification" (p. 567). These benefits are assumed to

outweigh any stress arising from role accumulation, thus yielding net gratification.

Other role related theory in the work/family literature focuses on gender differences. Gove (1972) argues that sex-specific roles account for differences in psychological well-being between women and men. The traditional social roles that men and women occupy are related to these levels of well-being and roles among married people, in particular, differ more than those of unmarried people. Furthermore, men and women differ within the marriage role (see also Gove & Tudor, 1973, and Gove & Geerken, 1977). Because men in post-industrialization Western culture have traditionally held two major roles (husband and worker), whereas women have inhabited only one (housewife), men possess alternative sources of gratification if they become unsatisfied with one role. Women are thus likely to experience more distress due to a lack of alternative gratification. Even employed wives are thought to have lower levels of well-being than their husbands, since the expectations associated with their social roles assume that they will manage both household and work tasks. Consequently, these women face a higher probability of role overload and the demands of their multiple roles may lead to impaired ability to perform adequately in each. Despite occupying a spouse and work role, like their husbands, married working women are thus expected to experience greater psychological distress than their partners.

Voydanoff and Donnelly (1999) also address gender differences in the relationship between multiple roles and psychological distress. These authors offer two competing hypotheses underlying these differences. First, the *sex-role*

hypothesis states that gender moderates the relationship between psychological distress and role involvement due to gender differences in role demands and salience. This approach suggests that family-related roles (parent, spouse, caregiver) are more related to stress for women than for men since these roles are viewed to be more important for women. Alternatively, work roles are more related to stress for men since these roles are considered more important for males. Second, the *social-role hypothesis* states that comparable roles should have similar effects on psychological distress for men and women because stress-related effects of social roles are inherent in the roles themselves. In addition to these hypotheses, Voydanoff and Donnelly describe three types of relationships that are possible when the effects of holding multiple roles are considered, including "additive relationships in which the effects of one role on well-being are independent of the other, positive spillover in which the characteristics of one role buffer the effects of another role on well-being, and negative spillover in which characteristics of one role exacerbate the effects of another role" (pp. 726-727).

Barnett (1994) further clarifies some of this terminology. She defines *spillover* as a process whereby experiences in one area (e.g. work) can moderate the extent to which experiences in another area (e.g. home) relate to psychological distress. Additionally, *contagion* occurs when subjective experiences at home or work generate feelings that are carried into and affect the dynamics of life in another area. Furthermore, she suggests that studies of home-to-work spillover and contagion interpret findings largely based on gender differences in how men and women cope with multiple roles.

Marks and MacDermid (1996) discuss two problems with the multiple roles literature stemming from work/family research. In addition to the atomistic, unconnected framework that ignores a systemic approach to role analysis, they argue that the literature assumes a hierarchical organization of the self and role system. Alternatively, these authors propose a middle-range theory of role balance, which hypothesizes that "people with more balanced role systems will report less role strain, more role ease, greater well-being, and more positive role-specific experience than people with less balanced role systems" (p. 420). Role balance is considered to be a behavioral pattern, or way of acting across roles, as well as a cognitive method for organizing internalizations of multiple selves. Moreover, people are not expected to have to cut back on overall role involvements to achieve this balance. Within this framework, *positive role balance* occurs when a person is engaged in performing every role in their total role system, meaning that they approach each role with attention and care. In contrast, *negative role balance* exists when a person is fully disengaged, or apathetic, in the performance of all these roles. As such, role balance is a general orientation rather than a role-specific one. Furthermore, *role ease* is defined as the ease felt in executing one's role performances. This theory also suggests that when busy schedules restrict opportunities for role engagement, people become more organized in their management of role performance so that engagement in highly valued roles is possible.

Perry-Jenkins and Crouter (1990) contend that roles have been studied from three major perspectives: structuralism, which focuses on cultural and

normative prescriptions that influence behavior; interactionism, which emphasizes developmental and creative aspects of role behavior; and a behavioral lens, which assumes that behaviors define roles (p. 138-139). Arguing that individuals' understandings of the meaning of their role identities have been ignored in stress research, Simon (1997) examines ways that such meaning has been assessed. Two of the four approaches she cites relate to role theory. The *self and identity approach* states that self-concept determines a stressor's meaning to an individual. That is, the extent to which a particular role is important for self-conception affects how a person understands and responds to a stressor threatening that role. The *values and beliefs approach* suggests that general values and beliefs determine the meanings and impact of stressors and roles.

Research studies examining multiple roles and role conflicts largely focus on the relationship between roles and psychological well-being and a subset of this work investigates how men's subjective experiences in family and work roles relate to distress. For example, Barnett, Marshall, and Pleck (1992) utilize a stratified random sample of 300 employed men, aged 25-40, in dual-earner couples to examine the moderating effects of parental status, parental role quality, and marital role quality on the relationship between job role quality and distress. Findings suggest that the quality of men's family and work roles contribute equally to psychological well-being. Having children per se was not related to psychological distress, but both parental and marital role quality were found to significantly predict distress after controlling for job role quality. Furthermore, the quality of marital and parental roles was found to moderate the relationship

between job role quality and distress. These results suggest that men's work roles are not necessarily the primary determinant of psychological health (see also Guezlow, Bird, & Koball, 1991).

A number of other studies focusing on the relationship between role occupancy and psychological distress address sex differences. McClanahan and Glass (1985) suggest that, whereas the absolute level of psychological distress increased in the population as a whole in the decades leading up to the mid 1980s, sex differences in distress have decreased. This decrease is attributed to the decline in well-being of men, related both to increased unemployment among men and to higher levels of employment among women. Thus, the relative well-being of males has decreased.

Other research suggests that women experience more distress than do men. In a study of family roles and sex differences in depression, Aneshensel, Frerichs, and Clark (1981) analyze data from a large-scale community survey in the Los Angeles area. These authors find that women are significantly more depressed than men and that sex differences in depression levels relate to specific constellations of family and work roles. In households with children, employed men indicated lower levels of depression than either employed women or housewives, whereas these two groups of women did not differ significantly in depression level. In general, reduced depression in both sexes is associated with work and family roles, but this effect is greater for men. Cleary and Mechanic (1983) present similar findings. Data from their psychological distress study on a sample of 1,026 midwestern adults indicate that women reported more distress

than men and that the most significant difference in reported distress levels among married people was between employed men and housewives. Although employed married women reported less distress than housewives, the presence of children counteracted positive benefits of employment.

The nature of multiple roles, rather than sex differences, is the focus of another segment of research studies. O'Neil and Greenberger (1994) examine the relation between patterns of commitment to work and parenting and level of role strain. A sample of 102 fathers and 194 mothers who were employed, married, and had a child in preschool completed self-report measures of role strain and role commitment and described their role quality, occupation, and social support. Contrary to Marks' (1977) hypothesis that balanced, positive multiple role commitments benefit adults (i.e. lower role strain), results from this study suggest that those with high positive commitments to parenting and work do not experience less role strain than others. Moreover, the data for employed mothers does not support the hypothesis that an unbalanced set of commitments to social roles will be associated with greater role strain. Women with high dual commitments to parenting and work and who hold professional or managerial jobs experience less role strain than do women in lower status jobs. The data for men are mixed and show that unbalanced role patterns are associated with variable levels of role strain. Men with high dual commitments and who report their spouses to be very supportive of their parenting and work activities report less role strain than their counterparts with less supportive wives.

Verbrugge (1983) addresses the relationship between multiple roles and physical health. Marriage, parenthood, and employment are associated with good physical health for women and men in a survey of 711 adults from Detroit, MI. Interestingly, parenthood had the weakest effect on physical health and employment had the strongest impact. Furthermore, whereas subjects with family and job roles derived health benefits from each role, multiple roles were not shown to have special effects, either positive or negative, on health.

In another study of multiple roles, Barnett (1994) estimates separately the effect of parent and marital role quality on the relationship between job role quality and psychological distress. Data taken from interviews with a random sample of 300 dual-earner couples living in eastern Massachusetts suggest that quality of family role moderates the relationship between job role quality and psychological distress. When subjects had positive parental or marital experiences, a buffering effect resulted and there was little relationship between job experiences and distress. Conversely, negative parental or marital experiences indicated a stronger relationship between job experiences and distress. Gender was not shown to affect these interaction effects and the buffering effect of roles is also supported by other studies (see, for example, Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999).

Perception of role quality and the meanings people attach to roles are explored in other multiple role research. Using data from interviews with and health-related diaries written by 302 men and 412 women, Verbrugge (1986) finds that dissatisfaction with roles and feelings of time pressure are associated

with poor health. Having multiple roles is associated with good health for both men and women, but women seem to be at greater health risk due to the fact that they often have fewer roles than men and they are more dissatisfied with their main role. Simon (1997) contends that stress research has ignored individuals' understandings of the meaning of their role identities. Her in-depth interviews with 40 full-time employed married parents reveal much variability in the meanings people attach to parent, spouse, and worker identities and she also finds that such meanings are based on perceptions of the pros and cons of role involvement. Additionally, these findings suggest that the meanings men and women attach to their role identities are associated with psychological symptoms and reflect gender differences in distress.

Moen and Dempster-McClain (1987) examine work-time preferences among 224 dual-earner couples with children from the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey. Using the role strain approach as a basis for exploring the data, these authors hypothesize that gender, family obligations, current work hours, perceived work-family interference, occupational status, and job flexibility are all related to a working parent's preference for fewer work hours. Findings indicate that actual hours on the job do not correspond to preferences for work-time involvement. Neither objective family constraints, such as the number and ages of children, nor objective working conditions, such as occupational status and job flexibility, are found to be important to the likelihood of preferring reduced work hours. However, gender, actual work hours, and perceived work-family interference are related to this preference. Such factors are also shown to

affect an individual's work-hour preference for his or her spouse. Additionally, mothers and fathers working full-time and who report high levels of work-family interference are most likely to prefer reduced work hours.

In an attempt to link male provider-role attitudes with involvement in family tasks, Perry-Jenkins and Crouter (1990) examine the division of work inside and outside the home and men's cognitions about work and family roles, hypothesizing that men who feel primarily responsible for providing economically for their families will feel less obligated to participate in family work. Data collected from home and telephone interviews of 43 dual-earner families indicate that men's provider role attitudes are clearly linked to ways in which family roles are enacted. When their wives are employed full-time outside the home, men's attitudes about their provider role duties influence how much household task responsibility they take on. Main and secondary male providers are found to be less involved in traditionally female household tasks than men who are either co-providers or ambivalent co-providers. Moreover, results indicate that men report higher marital satisfaction when there is a congruence of role beliefs and role enactments within the home.

Men, Work, and Family

Another segment of the work and family literature highlights male role expectations and the gender-based assumptions that inform society's view of how men should negotiate their engagement in personal and professional life. Despite a greater awareness of the importance of family and personal time to overall well-

being, these expectations still dominate mainstream culture. Gerson (1993) notes how psychoanalytic and social learning theories suggest adult orientations to issues of work and family are based in childhood experiences. Citing both Chodorow's (1978) idea that interactions between mothers and sons result in rigid ego boundaries, causing boys to repress their relational capacities, and role-learning theory's assumption that boys tend to identify with and adopt the behaviors of their fathers and other significant male role models, Gerson argues that these influences result in "men who share a package of psychological traits that leads them to prefer and choose work accomplishment over family involvement and individual achievement over interpersonal attachment" (p. 61). Furthermore, Gerson's in-depth interviews with a socially diverse group of 138 men reveal how such preferences manifest in a *breadwinning ethos* where, "Hard work and a successful, well-remunerated career formed the foundation on which these men could pile their goals, such as getting married, having children, and supporting a family in comfort" (p. 63). Interestingly, men aspiring to breadwinning and marriage assumed they would choose spouses who would not work full-time and parenthood was seen as a way to confirm their masculine identity. In short, "Men who embraced the breadwinning ethos saw it as a commitment to a set of interconnected responsibilities and privileges involving work, money, marriage, and parenthood. Most recognized that it could and probably would entail difficulties, but all expected the attendant privileges to offset the potential problems" (p. 65).

Other researchers utilize different language to identify some of the same assumptions inherent in the breadwinning ethos. For example, Gould (1976) suggests that one's masculinity is measured by the size of his paycheck and that men derive their self-esteem from performance at work since the pursuit of wages is assumed to be the only really meaningful male activity. Hood (1993) describes this mindset in terms of the "hegemonic masculinity" inherent in the father-as-provider role (p. xi) and argues that such thinking is the reason our society views men as workers first and fathers second. Similarly, Bernard (1983) points out that good providing has come to be equated with good fathering, regardless of the negative impact men's work can have on their children. Furthermore, Thompson and Walker's (1989) review of literature on gender and families highlights research that concludes a majority of men believe that being a good father means being a good provider first. Still others note how jobs are often viewed as a source of conflict for couples, particularly when they lead to an imbalance between work and personal life. Nonetheless, Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) explain that significant others frequently expect their men to succeed professionally: "Men are used to having partners who expect them to be ambitious. And this fits with their own inclinations. The combined effect is to keep men deeply invested in their work" (p. 188).

Although such investment can yield professional rewards, conflict inevitably results when work is privileged over personal life. Pleck (1981) claims that, between being husbands, partners, and breadwinners, more is expected of men than they can realistically provide. Furthermore, he writes, "Husbands report

considerable conflict between their work and family roles – as much, in fact, as do employed wives" (p. 152). The heart of this conflict, according to Pleck, is men's greater investment of time in work than in family, which is a function of socialization to view providerhood as their primary family role. Ironically, Kanter (1977) explains that many organizations look favorably upon family men, who are associated with stability and maturity, and even take into account whether or not an employee is married when awarding promotions. At the same time, she notes that work is not set up to privilege family commitments. Companies may want their male executives to have families, but they also want these professionals to be loyal to the job above all else and men who are unable to negotiate such commitments may put their careers in jeopardy. As Hochschild (1975) indicates, "To the extent that his family (1) does not positively help him in his work or (2) makes demands upon his time and psychic energy that compete with those devoted to his job, they lower his chances for survival" (p. 67). This reality, Hochschild suggests, is just as present in academia as it is in traditional business organizations.

As a result of these competing demands, men often experience significant role conflict. Several writers (Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980; Trost, 1988) have documented the stress fathers report in trying to combine work and family life and a significant number of studies confirm that such stress is linked to depression in men (O'Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995). Even though organizations have more recently begun to address this problem by instituting family-supportive work policies, Pleck (1993) contends that men are reluctant to openly take advantage of

these benefits for fear that their earnings will be reduced and that they will be perceived as lacking commitment to their jobs. Instead, he reveals, men tend to use flextime and informal paternity leave – such as vacation days – to attend to family life rather than using more formal benefits.

Indeed, the gradual movement toward a more family-friendly workplace over the past two decades has caused researchers to speculate whether attitudes toward balancing work and personal life have actually changed at all. Cohen (1993) argues that his own research (Cohen, 1986; 1987) is designed to reveal the "inadequacy of the father-as-provider ideology" (p. 3). His exploratory study of men's transitions to marriage and fatherhood and their enactments of marital, parental, and work roles suggests that men identify more strongly with being husbands and fathers than workers. Thus, Cohen summarizes, "traditional work-centered definitions of 'fathering' are inadequate for characterizing either informants' beliefs about fathering or their behavior as parents" (p. 19) and the traditional father-as-provider role does not fit all men's lives. Conversely, Komarovsky's (1976) study of male attitudes, roles, and problems in a sample of 62 college seniors reveals that many subjects support women's rights to train and work, but most of these young men still prefer their future wives to stay at home and raise the children while they become the principal achievers in the outside world. Willinger (1993) reaches a similar conclusion based on data collected from senior males enrolled at southern universities throughout the 1980s. Despite their changing attitudes toward greater acceptance of women's employment and their own involvement in family roles, these men consistently support the work role for

men and the maternal role for women. According to other scholars, attitude changes do not necessarily lead to behavioral modification. “Although the ideal about men’s participation in family life may have changed, the actual behavior of men has changed relatively little” (Dennehy & Mortimer, 1993, p. 89; see also Larossa, 1988). Moreover, Hood (1993) notes that it is the workplace that has been slow to catch up to changes in thinking about male and female roles.

Research on men, work, and family increasingly points to the ways both sexes attempt to manage personal and professional aspects of life. Sekaran and Hall (1993) employ a developmental perspective to explore the dynamic relationships between individuals, families, particularly in dual-career couples. These authors use the term *asynchronism* to describe the dynamics of incompatibility of work-family interfaces for husbands and wives at various life stages. Arguing that, “everyone is concerned about juggling a work life, a personal life, a family life, a leisure life, a home, and other facets of living” (p. 161), Sekaran and Hall suggest that the requisite adult developmental tasks each person or couple faces in any given life stage determine the dynamics of conflict that will be experienced. For example, the most tension-ridden period for dual-earner couples is the “young parenthood” stage, when couples have children under age six at home and must balance childcare responsibilities with the demands of career development (p. 170). According to Sekaran and Hall, it makes sense for both partners in this developmental stage to place more emphasis on family life and less on career.

Although men and women may seek to achieve some balance between the different areas of their lives, Andrews and Bailyn (1993) point out that they may adopt employ different perspectives in organizing this effort. Data from their study of 10-year post MBA graduates reveal that male subjects think of work and family in terms of a segmentation model, which assumes that family responsibilities are a drain on work investment. Conversely, female study participants apply a synergistic model that seeks to bridge public and private domains and, in contrast to the segmentation approach, does not view this effort in terms of emotional and temporal trade-offs that must be made. Importantly, Andrews and Bailyn acknowledge that "prevailing notions of careers and work are based on segmentation" (p. 274), which means that men who want to be professionally successful have little choice but to commit most of their time to work, especially if they are employed in business organizations. This reality is particularly relevant to the next section of this review, which focuses on perspectives on work and family in the business management literature.

Business Management Perspectives on Work and Family

The business management literature on work and family addresses many of the same issues explored in psychological and sociological research. Much of this work, however, integrates an organizational perspective on the struggle to balance personal and professional domains of life. Not surprisingly, most of this writing still privileges the experience of male corporate executives over female professionals and mainly focuses on the issues men face in organizational life.

Friedman, Christensen, and Degroot (1998/2000) argue that most companies view work and personal life as competing priorities in a zero-sum game and that a majority of executives still believe one's personal interests negatively affect an organization's bottom line. These authors articulate three approaches to managing the relationship between personal and professional life: a trade-off approach where either the individual or the organization wins, but not both; an integrated approach where employees and managers work together to meet both sets of needs; and a leveraged approach in which practices designed to create work-life balance add value to the business. Such practices, they suggest, could lead to a virtuous cycle:

> When a manager helps employees balance their work lives with the rest of their lives, they feel a stronger commitment to the organization. Their trust redoubles, and so do their loyalty and the energy they invest in work. Not surprisingly, their performance improves, and the organization benefits. Strong results help the manager to continue practicing the principles that help employees strike this work-life balance. (p. 4)

Notwithstanding this optimistic assessment, many researchers point out the undeniable challenges executives face in striving for some kind of balance. Based on their study of more than 2000 executives, Bartolome and Evans (1980/2000), acknowledge that many who reach executive levels in organizations do so at the expense of their personal lives, despite their efforts at achieving balance. A major problem, they suggest, is emotional spillover that consistently seeps from one domain into the other. That is, "the major determinant of work's impact on private life is whether negative emotional feelings aroused at work spill over into family and leisure time. When an executive experiences worry, tension, fear, doubt, or stress intensely, he is not able to shake these feelings when he goes

home, and they render him psychologically unavailable for a rich private life" (p. 33). Although positive spillover can also exist when an ambitious executive feels competent and satisfied in his work, Bartolome and Evans caution that a well-functioning professional life is a necessary though not sufficient condition for a satisfying private life. For Levinson (1981/2000), spillover is particularly dangerous to family life when it involves feelings of burnout. Importantly, he suggests that organizational managers can play a role in alleviating this problem by being more open to family-friendly work policies. For some executives, though, work offers an excuse to escape dealing with family. Bartolome (1983/2000) notes that those addicted to professional success do not escape private life, but simply neglect it. While negative spillover is the usual culprit in creating problems at home, he suggests that some executives may not experience spillover at all, but simply ensconce themselves at work in order to avoid dealing with family problems.

Business management researchers still debate what male professionals really want. Kimmel (1993/2000) writes that social commentators, Freud included, never questioned what men wanted, especially in the realm of work: "After all, a man's profession and his ability to bring home a paycheck have traditionally defines who that man was" (p. 128). At the same time, Kimmel notes how scholars such as Gaylin (1992) and Weiss (1990) have highlighted the erosion of traditional male roles in America and the concomitant ambivalence and frustration many men feel toward work. Male professionals in the 1990s, he argues, are forced to redefine themselves and what they want and to reevaluate

what success means. “Rather than a suburban conformist or high-flying single yuppie, today’s organization man carries a briefcase while pushing a baby carriage” (p. 129). Still, he adds, corporations view more family investment by men as a form of treason. Thus, the perceived costs of being an involved father, spouse, or partner – such as lost income or sense of manhood – remain because traditional views of success have not changed.

How, then, can business professionals be expected to cope with these challenges? Some research suggests that individual priorities are key to addressing this question. Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) explore cross-domain effects between work and family in a sample of 861 employed alumni of two Philadelphia area business schools to better understand how men’s and women’s career and lifestyle choices impact experience in these two realms. Subjects in this study are categorized based on their “life role priorities,” which measures “the relative priority or focus attached to work, family, and other roles” (p. 21) and include: a *career* group for those primarily focused on career, a *family* group for those focused on family, a *career* + *family* group for those placing dual importance on these domains, and a *self/society* group for subjects who prioritize personal development or community. Within this framework, Friedman and Greenhaus emphasize that the issue of time is less important than the spillover occurring between work and family. The intersection of work and family is seen as a psychological phenomenon because our experiences in different life roles impacts how we feel about them and, they write, “How we spend our time matters, but not as much as the psychological relationship between and among

different life roles" (p. 68). Emphasizing this interdependence of work and family lives, they explain that, "Work-family integration occurs when participation in one role enhances the quality of life within the other role" and, conversely, "Work-family conflict occurs when participation in one role detracts from the quality of life in the other role" (p. 122). For both male and female participants in this study, the authors find that the work + family group displays the highest level of work-family integration rather than conflict, which they argue is key to achieving fulfillment in both of these domains. Additionally, when compared to other participants, members of this group are the most satisfied with their careers, among the most satisfied with family life and personal growth and development, and they have children who are doing well physically, emotionally, and academically. Significantly, Friedman and Greenhaus report, these subjects are among the most satisfied with their overall lives. Members of the career group, on the other hand, do not experience the high levels of career satisfaction that might be expected and they experience little satisfaction with family life and personal growth and development. Ultimately, these authors conclude that the more people invest in life roles, the more they receive from them and that the domains of work and family both promote well-being and create conflict in each other.

Bailyn (1984) also emphasizes how individuals must integrate the demands of work and family systems. "Though it is obvious that social expectations as well as self-defined priorities determine how these demands are perceived, interpreted, and reacted to, the essential individual task is to assess the satisfactions provided by each system and thus to arrive at a relative weighting of

importance between them, at least for a particular time in a person's life" (p. 89). According to Bailyn, it is up to individuals, not organizations, to determine their level of work commitment. Unfortunately, she writes, "Most people, when choosing occupations, do not consider how the work will impinge on their private lives" (Bailyn, 1993, p. 10). Consequently, they become surprised when difficulties and conflicts arise. "Similarly, when individuals consider occupational choice, the typical emphasis is on the skills a particular occupation requires and the material benefits that it can provide. Often ignored are the other aspects of the job – what might be called its psychological demands – that profoundly affect the type of life one can lead" (p. 40). Additionally, Bailyn points out that companies premise their human systems on the assumption that all workers define success in the same way. For MBAs, this assumption is particularly true and most organizations presume that all business executives wish to climb the corporate ladder toward greater levels of responsibility, respectability, and compensation. What these companies often ignore are the unique experiences of each individual as he or she struggles to negotiate the personal and professional landscape while addressing the demands of these very different realms.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways that male graduate business students entering very demanding career paths articulate their visions of future personal and professional life. Because each man's experience was unique, it was important to capture the nuances of his vision in order to achieve a clearer understanding of how this sample thinks about and plans to negotiate these two domains. The study's focus on how such men view the interaction between these domains fits with a phenomenological theoretical orientation, or what Patton (1990) describes as an attempt to understand "the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people" (p. 69). Consequently, a qualitative research methodology was best suited to accomplish this understanding. As such, there were no hypotheses to be tested, nor was an attempt made to reduce data into quantifiable variables. Rather, this approach was "inductive" and utilized open-ended inquiry that "permits the respondent to describe what is meaningful and salient without being pigeonholed into standardized categories" (Patton, 1990, p. 46). Exploring in this manner allowed for the generation of themes to help organize and explain the phenomenon under investigation and for the development of additional research ideas.

Overview of the Study Design

Data for this study were collected using an in-depth, semi-structured interview of male MBA students entering highly demanding careers. The aim of the research was to elucidate themes from each man's narrative and to develop

hypotheses about the ways in which these individuals articulate a vision about their personal and professional future. Per Brewster's (1999) suggestion, ratings scales and questionnaires were not used because they likely would have circumscribed material that might otherwise have emerged unexpectedly in a more flexible methodological approach. The interview used in this research sought to explore each subject's vision of personal and professional life, as opposed to his entire life history, and inquiries were designed to be open-ended and to allow for the spontaneous generation of unanticipated material. In addition to exploring this vision, the interview also focused on earlier interactions with family-of-origin and significant others, on early thoughts and dreams about professional goals, and on feelings about roles and the meaning of work.

Subjects

The 12 study participants were male MBA students ranging in age from 26-35, with an average age of 28.9 years. At the time of the interview, all of these men were attending the same top graduate business program in the New York metropolitan area.[1] Six men were engaged in their first year of study, while the other six were completing their second year. All second year students had full-time job offers, including three positions in investment banking, one in fixed-income trading at an investment bank, and one in real estate finance. The sixth man was deciding between job offers in management consulting and investment banking. As for the first year students, two stated their intention to pursue

[1] A top MBA program in this case denotes a school that has been consistently ranked as one of the top ten graduate business programs in the United States. Rankings are compiled by a variety of publications, including U.S. News & World Report, Business Week, The New York Times, and the Financial Times.

investment banking, two wanted to work in investment management, one in real estate finance, and one in management consulting. Subjects had an average of four years work experience in a variety of fields prior to business school. Three men served in the military, three worked at investment banks, two in management consulting, and one each in sales & trading, law, real estate, and the food service industry.

All of the subjects attended college and two earned their degrees at a four-year military academy. Three men held advanced degrees, including a Master of Science, a Juris Doctor, and a Medical Doctor. In terms of ethnicity, four subjects were of color and eight were white. Four participants originated from countries outside the United States, including two from Europe, one from South America, and one from the Far East. Only three men were married, but a few others reported being in serious romantic relationships. None of these men had children at the time of the interview.

Research Materials

The primary research instrument for this study was an in-depth, semi-structured interview (see Appendix A.), loosely based on the style of psychobiographical interviewing developed by Levinson et al. (1978) and employed by Brewster (1999), Grady (2003), and Srebnick (2002). Unlike in these studies, however, the instrument used in the present research did not address each subject's entire life sequence. Instead, it focused on particular aspects of experience related to the participants' current thinking about the intersection of

personal and professional life. This approach was thus more akin to the grounded theoretical studies conducted by Singleton (2004) and Brandt (2005), both of which explored a particular segment of human experience.

Interview questions were thoughtfully constructed to avoid leading participants while keeping the discourse within the realm of personal and professional life. Moreover, these queries were designed to be open-ended and to encourage the spontaneous generation of unexpected material. The interview began by asking subjects to describe their current life and, depending on how each subject chose to respond to this question, the discussion either shifted toward more work-focused questions or remained in the personal realm. Although the questions followed a sequence, it was considered important for the interviewer to remain open and flexible and to allow the subject's responses guide the interview process. As Brewster (1999) notes, it was "the interviewer's intention to adhere to the areas outlined in the semi-structured interview, but not in a strict, step-by-step fashion" (pp.72-73). Indeed, rather than a list of ordered questions, this style of interviewing is better conceptualized as a flow chart, in which material arises in unexpected ways and in which themes may be unearthed and revisited at different points in the discourse (Peter Fraenkel, personal communication, September 25, 2002). Although the investigator sought to cover all questions, it was ultimately the subject who controlled the flow of information. In this way, material was offered spontaneously and interviewer bias was more effectively reduced because the open-ended nature of the questions avoided undue emphasis on a particular way of responding to each inquiry.

In addition to posing questions about career and life plans, the interview also focused on each subject's family-of-origin and attempted to understand how earlier life experiences were linked to current thoughts about personal and professional life. The connection between work and identity within this sample is of particular interest and the interview sought to explore this connection as well as each participant's system of work values as they related to career goals and ideas about balancing personal and professional life.

Procedures

Participants were recruited from a graduate business program at a university in the New York metropolitan area. After receiving permission from the program's dean and obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Boards at this university and at The City College of the City University of New York, an electronic mail message was distributed to the membership of several business student clubs. These industry-focused organizations were comprised of students interested in pursuing career opportunities in fields relevant to the present study, including the investment banking, management consulting, investment management, equity research, private equity, and sales & trading clubs. Student members were informed that the investigator, who was also a graduate of this business program, was conducting research on the career choices of male MBA students entering highly time-demanding jobs. The message also specified that this study would utilize an interview designed to explore aspects of personal and professional life as they related to this career choice. Students interested in

participating were invited to contact the investigator directly by phone or electronic mail.

The first 12 men to respond were invited to participate in the study, regardless of which specific field they planned to enter. This group consisted of men who self-identified as headed for time-demanding careers and recruitment for this study was thus based on an "opportunistic sampling" approach (Patton, 1990, p.179). Subjects were scheduled for a single interview session, lasting approximately two hours, during which all data was collected via audio tape recording. These sessions were held in private interview rooms at the Office of Career Services on the business school campus. Each audio taped interview was subsequently transcribed verbatim and detailed process notes were also taken during the course of the interviews. Additionally, each participant was paid a stipend of 15 dollars per hour of completed interview. This remuneration was considered reasonable given the multiple demands – including classes, homework, and job searching – on each man's schedule at the time of the interview.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the narratives generated from participant interviews was based on the guiding principles of grounded theory, as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Theory, in this case, is a way of organizing identified patterns that emerge from the data. "Grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action"

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12). According to Charmaz (1995), "the hallmark of grounded theory studies consists of the researcher deriving his or her analytic categories directly from the data, not from preconceived concepts or hypotheses" (p. 32). Furthermore, Charmaz explains, this method utilizes inductive strategies to analyze data, in which the investigator will "start with individual cases, incidents or experiences and develop progressively more abstract conceptual categories to synthesize, to explain and to understand your data and to identify patterned relationships within it" (p. 28). When the data consist of interview transcripts, this analysis often involves the coding of individual phrases and sentences, larger segments of text, or even an entire narrative to deepen understanding and elucidate themes and patterns. Unlike in most quantitative research, such codes are created as the data is collected and studied, rather than beforehand.

As previously mentioned, the current study used a semi-structured interview of subjects to generate narratives that were subsequently analyzed for emergent themes and patterns. Once these narratives were transcribed, a qualitative research software package – Atlas-ti (Muir, 1997) – was employed to organize the data analysis process. Each transcript was divided into meaningful units and, through a process of open coding, concepts identified in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These concepts, or codes, were then compared and organized into more abstract categories, which represented phenomena, or "repeated patterns of happenings, events, or actions/interactions that represent what people do or say, alone or together, in response to the problems and

situations in which they find themselves" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.130). Finally, categories were linked to one of three core domains representing a larger explanatory scheme for how study participants articulated their understanding of the intersection between their personal and professional lives. These results are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Following an intensive analysis of the 12 interview transcripts, several hundred open codes were generated according to the methodology outlined in the previous chapter. These codes were subsequently organized into categories representing salient themes that emerged from the narrative data. The individual codes, listed by category, are included in Appendix B. These categories ultimately clustered around three general domains that formed the ground on which these men based their thinking about personal and professional life during the interview: Participant Work History, Influences on Career Choice, and Envisioning the Future. Each category is summarized below with results presented in prose form, using participant quotes to highlight important themes that will be further discussed in the next chapter. These categories are followed by two case examples including a more detailed summary of themes that emerged across the entire interview for two members of the sample.

Participant Work History

Experience of Work Culture

When asked to describe past work experience, all 12 participants discussed aspects of work culture and their attitudes toward the work styles at their employing organizations (Table 1). Most of these men found their jobs to be quite intense. For some, this intensity was perceived in a negative way. One participant expressed his experience in almost visceral terms:

> It was a bad one where I think it was where I was, like, on my third or fourth night of getting like no sleep. It was towards the very end of the summer where I was just exhausted and I had completed this very complex project and it was, like, midnight and as one of the managing directors was leaving she said "let's change everything around," so that meant I had to stay up another six hours and I was just, it was painful. It was just painful. I felt like I had just gotten kicked in the gut and that was pretty awful. That was pretty bad.

Other men found this intensity to be an enjoyable, expectable aspect of the work. Two participants suggested that such intensity was important for stimulating learning on the job, even though, as one man indicated, work sometimes seemed like a "24 hour boot camp." Another man pointed to the generally accepted belief on Wall Street that younger employees must work harder early in their careers, stating, "I think part of that was the idea that they knew that I just knew to, like, work. You know, pay your dues." One former military officer confirmed that this axiom also held true in other fields, as "face time" at the office signified a level of commitment to the job, regardless of how much actual work got done.

Despite these rigors, several participants expressed positive attitudes toward their intense work environments. One veteran of investment banking missed the "camaraderie and collegiality of staying there until three in the morning and pulling an all-nighter and then being able to talk about it with your fellow analysts or fellow associates." Another man who completed a summer internship in banking regarded the lifestyle with a measure of reverence:

> I think towards the very beginning I was sort of impressed with how social and fun these people were and I was just hanging out with these analysts during a training and these guys – I mean, they were rock stars. They had been working really hard and they were still out until one in the morning just partying and socializing. Just having a great time.

This work hard-play hard approach was articulated differently by one participant who found the "punch in-punch out type lifestyle" of his nine-to-five job at a major accounting firm to be "disappointing." Several other men also expressed their preference for more intense work settings. One described his frustration with the slow pace of his former job, while the other felt "weird" about taking time off from work subsequent to leaving his company.

Although most participants worked very hard at their jobs prior to business school, they also recalled enjoying the many perks that accompanied this hard-driving lifestyle. These included international travel, flying on private jets, and staying in luxury hotels. The value of such benefits was not lost on these men, as one participant explained:

> So what can I say? It was a really interesting job for someone in their twenties because, you know, for someone who had never left the U.S. until he was 20, there I am jetting around Europe. You know, staying in nice hotels or taking people out to really, really fancy restaurants and some seedier things. But, yeah, it was great. It was a great way to spend my twenties.

Another man, who spent several years in the Army prior to changing careers, described himself as "lucky enough to be assigned to Europe. Lucky enough to travel. Lucky enough to see the world on the government's dime. Jumping out of airplanes, turning over tanks, shooting stuff. Literally just enjoying my ass." Four other participants echoed this sentiment when they described feeling highly satisfied with and impressed by the resources available to them at their former jobs.

Exposure to Senior Management

Several participants focused on exposure they had to senior managers within their organizations (Table 2). Although one man expressed dissatisfaction with the arrogant style of a particular executive in his department, others were generally positive about their interactions with superiors. Three participants were especially pleased to be able to advise senior people on major projects. Two did so in the context of significant military operations, while the third was asked to deliver a business pitch to high-level corporate officers. All of these men enjoyed being relied upon in such critical situations.

A few men also highlighted the importance of having a strong relationship with their immediate bosses. The benefits of close ties with one's manager were obvious for one participant, whose boss "made my four years unbelievable. He staffed me on great projects. He always gave me the best reviews." Another man appreciated that his firm's partners acted as mentors rather than treating him like an underling. Still another man admitted to staying for an entire year in a work group he disliked because "my boss was a really great guy."

Early Leadership Experience

Despite that most participants in the study had an average of only four years of work experience prior to entering business school, many of them garnered leadership positions early in their careers (Table 3). Those with military backgrounds were put in charge right away, managing as many as 20-30 people.

One man described the stress inherent in his position, but also revealed how the experience stimulated his desire to be a future manager:

> There's a lot of stress involved when you are 22 or 23 and you're the youngest person in the platoon and yet you're in charge of everybody…Almost, like, from my first day of ever working professionally out of college, I was in charge of 28 people. I was a manager/leader. I do enjoy that role somewhat and I did enjoy that role. I thought it was fulfilling. And so in the future a professional goal would be a certain status, where I could look and say, "Hey, this is what I'm in charge of. This is what I'm responsible for." And basically that's an ego boost for my personality and my brain and my actions and everything I've done up to that point to accomplish.

Similarly, another former Army officer reflected on how being in a leadership role boosted his sense of self:

> And the reason I liked it so much was because I was a general manager and I kind of did - as an infantry officer, you wouldn't believe all the different things I could do. I managed communities. I managed families. I managed budgets. I had production. I did all this stuff. Training plants in the context of fighting men. Crawl in the mud. And I liked that. I was liking being the center of my own world. Feeling so self-important.

Beyond simply being in charge, though, these men also emphasized how such early work experiences shaped their leadership philosophies and thoughts about what it means to be a manager. Unlike their peers from the military, participants with primarily corporate work experience had fewer opportunities to manage personnel. However, all of them were charged with managing projects and given varying levels of responsibility in the context of hierarchical reporting structures. One man recalled being pleasantly surprised by the increased responsibility he was granted when he switched from banking to work in a corporation. Upset by the "condescending," unsupportive environment at his earlier company, this participant "could feel the psychological wounds from my first job starting to heal

over time" when it was clear that he would have more responsibility in his new position.

Making an Impact

When describing past work experiences, all 12 participants highlighted incidents in which they made some impact or significant contribution (Table 4). For three of these men, association with a successful work project made them feel particularly important. As one man put it, "I did something that is important. Which is subjective, of course, but I'm part of the bigger picture. It makes me feel a little bigger, I guess, unconsciously." For others, accomplishment was linked to achievement of a bottom line result. Another man's sense of impact was driven by his ability to successfully raise over one million dollars for a company he started. Additionally, one participant's account of a real estate transaction he worked on captured the sense of pride these men felt in attaining such results:

> The deal, we just created something that nobody had ever done. We had to, you know, we made, you know, 700% returns in 11 months and we did it by being innovative and by doing, you know, by really – you know, you hate to use the term thinking outside the box, but it really was a true innovation and there wasn't a mold to follow. It really just was using whatever creativity finance guys have. You know, applying that and working your way around the system a little bit.

Other men expressed the importance of making an impact in terms of their frustration over a lack of control at work. After completing a summer internship at a major investment bank, one participant recalled his sense of disappointment at not having more control:

> I was there doing – working with the financial advisor and I just didn't feel it was me. I didn't feel I was going to be happy looking at a computer

> screen all day. Looking at some market line going up and down. Something I had absolutely no control over and whether that was going down. Fielding phone calls from pissed-off clients. And now it's going up. Fielding phone calls from happy clients. None of that I had an effect on.

The urge to achieve impact or have some control over their work environment was so important that two men described changing jobs or careers because of this issue. One left medicine after completing medical school and realizing he was incapable of changing bureaucratic "inefficiencies" in his field, while the other transitioned out of his financial services firm because it was filled with "a lot of young prima donnas with really bad ideas" and he felt no control over what was going on in the organization.

Choosing a Job

Study participants cited a variety of reasons for selecting past jobs, including the anticipated excitement of the work, a sense of cultural fit with the organization, and the challenges and rewards associated with the work environment (Table 5). For some men, such as those who entered the military, the choice was limited by the nature of assignments available at such an early career stage. Others were able to be more deliberate, as one former summer intern explained, "I pursued investment banking. That's the only thing I pursued." Yet, as focused as some individuals were in their job search, others attributed a sense of randomness to this process. One man, after deciding not to attend law school, obtained a position in management consulting, which he then quit after a friend asked him to help start an entrepreneurial venture. Although he chose to pursue these opportunities, his sense of choice was linked more to interest in the work

than to any predetermined career plans. Similarly, another participant described how an unanticipated chance to work abroad led him to accept a job offer:

> I mean, how I got into this – that was more random. When I was 24 and an opportunity presented itself and I was looking for – I didn't know what I was looking for and I was given a job. I was offered a job to go to London and I think the main influence there was, wow, I'm 24 and I'm getting a chance to go and live in Europe. And I did that for five years, so I think that's what originally got me into it.

Several other men also discussed early career moves in terms of chance opportunities they encountered. One participant from Europe claimed, "I had no clue" until he found an exchange program that enabled him to come and study technology in the U.S. He later parlayed his knowledge of this area into an offer to work in a technology-focused job at a top investment bank. Another man made contacts in the banking industry after an acquaintance invited him to attend an industry conference. This networking eventually made it easier for him to obtain a summer internship in banking once he entered business school.

Career Transition

All 12 participants reported undergoing some form of career transition prior to business school, whether changing industries altogether, shifting focus within their chosen fields, or simply doing the same thing at a different organization (Table 6). These men either attributed such movement to opportunities that arose in the course of working or to dissatisfaction with some aspect of their jobs. One former attorney left his large corporate firm to accept an in-house position at a company, citing, "there is probably no more legally intense or, uh, prestigious job than being general counsel for a public company." Another

man quit his job at a financial services firm to attend school in order to access better work opportunities:

> Because at work I was starting to work on projects and I realized that the projects that I wanted to work on, I wasn't qualified. God forbid I'm not qualified to work on them. And I realized that all of these are MBA wannabes. And that's probably what I had to do. So I go around looking at schools. And I decide I want to come to [subject's business program].

The same participant also described his earlier decision to leave the military after realizing he would not be able to work in the same capacity as before:

> I had done very, very well. The Army actually, at that point, wanted me to go to be a foreign area officer for a couple of years. Go to Africa, learn French, understand the political military expert, work for the State Department. Spooky, spooky stuff. I was, "this is kind of cool." That was another bead. I was kind of going to enjoy that. But I wanted to be in command. I defined my life in the Army as being a commander. And so I decided, well, if I can't do that, I'll go off and do something else. So I left the military.

Other men highlighted similar experiences, in which changes in their work or their organizations prompted a transition. One left after a merger with another company limited opportunities to move forward in his position. Another described his realization, while on his summer internship, that the work itself would not be fulfilling on a longer-term basis:

> I realized that what I thought would be fulfilling about that job, about dealing with individuals and helping them manage their resources – that wasn't there. What I saw was, you were dealing with individuals who were always going to be pissed off and trying to lay shit on you and your sole job is to make them get off the phone and still have an account with you. That's it. And I really didn't see it as my calling.

Influences on Career Choice

Parents' Work Experience

When asked to describe their parents' work experiences, participants focused on a variety of issues (Table 7). Three men indicated that seeing how their fathers had trouble succeeding at work impacted their own views on success. One felt that his father had "not yet found his niche" and worried about ending up in a similar situation by not maximizing his talents. Another man described how his father's lack of business success was something he wished to avoid:

> I think that one of the reasons why he has not progressed farther along in the company than he has is because a lot of people have taken advantage of him. He always does a good job, but he has had people and bosses say to him, "Well, I can't lose you. Who is going to do my work for me?" type of thing. "I need you here with me" and, meanwhile, they get promoted basically for what my dad has done. And he stays the same. And that's kind of a lesson that through him – that I've seen and I do not want to have happen to me as well.

Two participants pointed out that their fathers were unable to pursue desired career goals. One commented that knowing his father did not enjoy work led him and his wife to delay starting a family so that they could "truly find something that we enjoy and to get on a correct footing that will make work enjoyable."

Several men discussed challenges their parents faced at work. Three remembered these struggles as being quite intense, including such problems as ethical dilemmas, fights with business partners, and concerns about hiring the right type of employee. Three other men claimed they were not aware of such struggles because their parents did not openly share work challenges with them. One explained, "I didn't see any challenges. I guess from my perspective, they made it look so smooth that I did not perceive any challenges at the time." Two

men became more aware of their parents' work problems as they grew older and the struggles intensified, while another came to resent his father's employer over time for failing to recognize and reward his father's talent.

Parental Work Values

Another theme that emerged when participants discussed their parents' work experience was the sense of work values promoted within their families (Table 8). Several men linked their ideas about a work ethic directly to the value parents placed on working hard. Two participants described situations during high school in which they wanted to avoid work, but their parents made it clear that not working was unacceptable. Other men recalled how parents clearly expected them to work hard, or as one respondent explained, "It's just something they consider as given. And which I also consider as given." A few men were also encouraged to work by their parents' use of reward systems. For two men, this meant not having to use their own money to pay for things like new sneakers because parents treated them to such rewards when they demonstrated a strong work ethic. Another man described his father's system of paying him for good grades in high school and college as a "base driver" of his achievement orientation at work. Interestingly, several men indicated that their fathers viewed work as "very important" and the quality of one's work product as critical. One man even attributed his successful high school lawn care business, which enabled him to purchase his own car at age 16, to his father's insistence on checking his completed work for quality assurance.

When asked why work is so important to their fathers, a few men raised the issue of providerhood. One remembered an incident in which his father was unable to accompany the family on a planned trip to a theme park because of an emergency situation at the family's business. Although this participant complained at first, his father's stern explanation helped him to realize that prioritizing such matters was the only reason the family could afford to visit theme parks in the first place. Another man articulated how his father prioritized work in order to provide the good life for his family:

> I think my father thinks work is a way to provide the good life to the family. [*Interviewer asked how important work is to participant's father*.] I'd say it's very important. I think it's very, very important for him, but I think for him it's much more a way to give opportunities to the family. Like, he has to work to get money to allow the family to have a comfortable life…and to have the kids go to a good school. This kind of thing.

Whereas some men felt their parents were not ambitious and that they viewed work as "just a job" or a way to make a living, others expressed their parents' sense of passion for their careers. One respondent claimed his father "has just been very explicit in telling me that he loves his job and he really looks forward to every day going into the office." He even cited such zeal for the work as a reason he followed in his father's footsteps to law school, a career path he eventually left.

Parents and Work Time

All 12 participants recalled the amount of time their parents devoted to work (Table 9). While some men were satisfied with the way parents managed

work schedules, others had less positive memories. One revealed that, as mayor of their town, his father was too busy to spend much time with him until retirement. Another man, whose father ran a family business, remembered that his father often worked on weekends. As an adult, he began to recognize the benefits of this devotion to the job when the business prospered, but he remained mixed as to whether he would start his own business in the future. Others expressed more negative feelings. Two men described how their mothers were mostly unavailable due to busy work schedules. One said he felt "rejected" when his mother, tired at the end of her day, rebuffed his attempts to seek her attention, while the other, whose mother pursued a graduate degree while also working, described this time period with her as "intense" and sensed that it had a negative impact on their relationship. Still another participant reported that he had a hard time reconciling how some parents were able to attend his peers' athletic contests whereas his parents could not because of work, a reality he felt was "not fair."

In contrast, other participants found their parents to be more available during childhood and adolescence. One man related how his parents' business enabled them to set their own work hours and still meet the family's financial needs, explaining that this setup "provided them a unique ability to make a living and to have the ability to see their children every day and to eat dinner with them every day and, you know, and it really – only until the last few years did I come to the conclusion that it was a pretty sweet lifestyle." Similarly, another respondent lauded his mother's professional choices, which impacted his own career goals:

> My mom lived her women's life perfectly. She really chose the job that would give her the money, the flexibility, the time to take care of her kids.

> And that's why it's one of the big reasons why I'm going for money management. Because it kind of fills my criteria. To me, it's intellectually stimulating, pays decently, gives you time to spend with your family. And so I guess it works for my approach for life.

When asked if his mother was satisfied with her choice, this man went on to emphasize that she chose the route that would give her the life she wanted to lead, including enough time with her family.

Parents and Gender Roles

Four of the study participants indicated that their parents adhered to traditional gender roles, while seven other men believed their parents broke with these stereotypes (Table 10). Within most of the more traditional parental couples, females acted as housewives and males served as breadwinners, or as one participant stated, "The male goes to work, the female stays at home and takes care of the home and the kids." Some respondents described a home scenario right out of *Leave It to Beaver*, in which the dutiful wife had dinner on the table each night when her husband arrived from work. In recalling his experience, one man hinted at the permanence of such role structures in his family, explaining, "It seems like it's been the status quo forever, so I don't…it seems strange to imagine a different situation." Even in families where mothers worked, some participants confirmed that father was still head of the household:

> Now, my family is paternalistic. My father is in charge. My mother is my mother and his wife. And that's okay. If decisions are to be made and my father says that this is the decision that has got to be made, then my mother actually…and I questioned her. I challenged her. I pushed her and she would say, "Nope, that's the way it is."

Another man added that his father had the final say in important family decisions, despite that his mother earned more money.

Men from less traditional families described a division of labor between parents, regardless of who worked and how much. One participant revealed that his father did all the cooking while his mother tackled the laundry. Similarly, another explained, "There really are not defined roles. It's, you know, who wants to do it? Who can get the job done?" One man was particularly impressed by his parents' ability to split tasks and arrange family life such that they each performed complementary roles. When asked how they managed this situation so well, he replied that each inhabited a role that best fit his or her particular strengths or skill set. Thus, his father spent more time caring for the children while his mother was more involved on the "business side" of the family. "So in that sense," he explained, "they worked as a team and that team worked quite well, I would say."

Parents and Family Values

Though not asked directly about family values, several participants discussed themes related to this topic (Table 11). These issues arose in a variety of ways. For example, some men described how their parents made significant efforts to be available and to spend time with them. Two respondents emphasized the role their fathers played during earlier years. One of these men felt that his father was particularly supportive and commented, "He was always there to pick me up when I was down." Additionally, he remembered his father as being available to help with homework, coach little league games, and play tennis, all of

which deepened their relationship. The second of these participants suggested that his father's consistent presence in childhood affected his own views on raising children:

> I grew up, my dad was always around me and I know how valuable that is in someone's life. And in upbringing. And I definitely would want to be there for my children. Being a role – not just someone who is able to pay the bills and show up every once in a while to see a sporting event, or play, or whatever they are participating in.

This man also discussed family values from the perspective of sacrifices his parents made so that the family could have a better life. He described his parents as "very family-centered," so much so that they passed up on career opportunities that would have relocated the family and "would be disruptive to us growing up." Another participant repeated this theme when he described how his father held onto a job he did not love, thus sacrificing any entrepreneurial aspirations in order to keep his steady paycheck. He explained, "I think he wanted independence, but there just wasn't enough time for that. He had five kids he had to feed and God forbid he never had a job."

For other men, parental culture-of-origin played a major role in determining family values. Interestingly, two men from "Eastern culture" discussed how central the family was to their cultural experience at home. One specified, "We are still a close, close unit. In every sense. In economic terms, in psychological terms, whatever." This closeness also bred in him such a sense of loyalty to his parents that he anticipated starting his own family mainly because they expect it of him.

Self-Assessment

Several respondents talked specifically about a process of self-assessment, in which they pondered various career options and how these might fit their interests or needs (Table 12). Three men conducted extensive due diligence on different industries and job types. One did so by attending industry conferences, while another spoke with as many business school alumni as possible. He explained this process by saying, "I literally will try to meet with as many people as will meet with me to see what they are doing, to see what their experiences are, to see if that's something that would interest me." He also revealed how such meetings had a real impact on how he conducted his job search, stating, "So there are certain areas I assume interest me and then, de facto, I'm pursuing those opportunities by trying to meet with people and trying to see what makes them tick." For another man, participation in the Boy Scouts helped stimulate the self-assessment process. He suggested, "I think when you have to decide what you want to be, first you have to know yourself very well. You have to know your strengths, your weaknesses, and you have to know your, I think, your value scales – what is really important to you." For him, the Scouts provided an opportunity to discover these aspects of his personality.

Whereas the above men were deliberate in their self-assessment process, other participants seemed to uncover their career interests in a less planned way. One respondent claimed that he did not even begin to think about his career until college. Another viewed assessment as an ongoing process whereby he tried to explore work options he thought he would enjoy at each life stage, from high

school until his present stint at business school. Others were less clear about conducting self-assessment. One man even expressed his envy toward friends who discovered their desired career paths early on and who were already settled in jobs they enjoyed and planned to keep for the long term.

The Role of Education

Educational experiences were influential for several participants in helping to inform their current career paths (Table 13). Three men discussed how business school played a part in this process. After deciding to leave the military, one respondent chose business school over a job in order to enter a new industry at a higher level than he otherwise would have been able to achieve if he had gone straight to work. Another man went back to school in order to transition to a more desirable functional area within the same industry, even though he knew that he would initially earn less than he did at his job prior to business school. Yet another participant explained how the experience of seeing business school peers fail to make clear choices about their careers influenced his job search process:

> I think it's better to pick a direction. Go in it. Go full board and hope you've picked the right target, rather than sort of see what attracts you. What interests you. Because you are less likely, I think, to find the proper path by standing still than by going down one path. And, hey, if it doesn't work out, but you've done a good job at it, there are opportunities to maneuver.

Another group of men described how various college experiences affected their views on career. One man admitted he knew little about business before attending university and specified, "I didn't even know what business people did – I had no idea, you know, I remember my first year in college asking my

roommate what he wanted to do and he said he wanted to be a banker. I thought he meant a teller." This same participant also revealed how working on a school project introduced him to his current field of interest, while the on-campus recruiting process for business jobs impressed upon him the reality that these positions were more rigorous than the nine-to-five jobs he had encountered before. Another man, who attended an undergraduate military academy, stipulated that the code of ethics he learned at college influenced his decision to pursue a job at a highly ethically reputable investment bank, despite warnings from friends that the banking industry was full of "scoundrels" willing to lie or cheat in order to get a deal done. Finally, a different respondent alluded to a high school teacher who convinced him to explore a career in the military. Reluctant at first, this man subsequently went to an armed forces recruiting event and later attended a military academy, which determined his career path for the next decade of his life.

Successful Business People

Three men pointed specifically to successful executives who influenced their decision to pursue business careers (Table 14). For one participant, the advice he received from accomplished business people at various points in time had a significant impact on his professional choices. At first, his friend's father, the CEO of a large company, convinced him to apply to a military academy in lieu of college and medical school by saying, "We've got plenty of doctors. What the country needs now is leaders and you need to go to a place where you are going to become a leader." Later on, after serving as a military officer, this man's

father-in-law, the successful president of a publicly traded company, encouraged him to consider investment banking as a career option. As this participant explained:

> I didn't even know what it was. He told me it was something I should look into. That he had seen a lot of people that have gone that path and then have either done things or stayed in that and have been very successful, both in their career and in other things. So, I think he has been a very influential person in my life, whether he knows it or not, as far as kind of opening my eyes to what is out there.

He also described how meeting and interacting with several banking executives solidified his decision to apply to business school, a move that set him on course to an associate position at a top-tier investment bank.

Similarly, another respondent remembered taking an interest in the activities of his parents' accountant, who frequently visited their home-based family business. He recalled, " I remember having him sit down at the table and I was just being very – I was very fascinated with how he was going through the stuff and I took an interest in that and I remember talking to him all the time about what he was doing and how that lays out…you know, certainly left an impression on me and I actually, when I thought about maybe being an actuary or looking into the actuarial sciences, he got me in contact with someone to talk to about that stuff." Although this man ended up working in the real estate industry, not as an actuary, these discussions still represented a seminal event in his professional life in which he was stimulated to explore work possibilities.

The third man to discuss this theme highlighted the "outlook" of successful professionals who seemed to have achieved financial success while maintaining some sort of life balance:

> I think what is more important is that there are people who have a certain lifestyle financially, now, and are able to maintain a good life balance, that I have come across in the past. Managing directors of venture capital funds, portfolio managers at mutual funds, portfolio managers at hedge funds. And that's the type of lifestyle that I would like to have.

In this case, the "balance" such individuals found was more salient than economic achievement.

Money and Material Needs

When asked to discuss their experiences with material needs, 10 out of 12 participants offered responses that ranged in focus from specific objects to more abstract concepts (Table 15). Three men described experiences involving cars. One recalled the particularly comfortable feeling of sitting in his parents' German luxury sedan, while a second emphasized the car his parents bought him at age 16, which he described as "this little gold Honda Accord stick shift, and I was like, this is the best thing ever. I just felt like, God…this is the best thing ever, just this freedom and this power in this car. It was just – it was pretty good." The third respondent offered a somewhat contrasting statement when he talked about the sense of pride he felt in recently being able to buy a car for himself. Though having a car was pleasurable enough, he focused more on the fact that he was able to achieve his goal of saving enough money for the purchase, an accomplishment that made him "feel like a grownup." Another man derived comfort from the homes owned by his wife's parents, two objects he described as "vicariously possessed:"

> They have a very nice home. Actually they have two homes and very well done. Very nice homes. And when you come into those homes, they just

> feel very comforting. And that's something that kind of inspires me to work hard to be able to have something like that. Not only to come home to for myself, but for my family to be able to have that as well. It's something that I would like to be able to have.

Yet another participant talked about the pleasure he found in buying things like a snowboard, a bike, and a humidor for his cigars, but he also admitted, "I can tell you that they didn't matter a week later."

Others described their needs in less concrete ways. For example, one man found more comfort in personal relationships than in material goods, saying, "I usually get more comfort from the people around me, from my friends, from my relationships, from my spirituality, than really from money or objects." Quite the opposite, another respondent revealed the distinct pleasure he took in thinking about large sums of money. Even if he did not own this cash, he explained, just imagining it "gives you a feeling of – it sounds really strange, but a feeling of power…and maybe you think that, because you look at this number or you are close to this number, you are powerful and you can have an impact and you can change something." One participant summed up his view on wealth more simply by stating, "I just wanted to be very successful and very wealthy, and I think I sort of assumed that would mean I'd be happy."

Several men in the study discussed material needs in connection to some outside influence, such as parents or friends. One participant, an avid outdoorsman, identified with his friend's goal of earning enough money to live reasonably while funding unlimited rock climbing expeditions. Another acknowledged his connection to the business world's materialistic side:

> I didn't really care about the brands until I got into Wall Street, where everyone was wearing Polos and Brooks Brothers. Fancy watches and stuff. But it's strange, the more senior you get, the less they care. It's usually the people who are not the big shots, but they think they are the big shots, that are wearing expensive stuff. But the stuff is nice. So who would not want to buy their fiancé a Tiffany ring as a wedding, an engagement ring? But not everyone can afford it, but it's nice. So everyone wants certain aspects of materialism in their lives.

Five men also spoke about their parents and material needs. Three of these participants felt more aligned with parents' values and views on money. One explained, "On a materialistic, professional side, it's making money, working hard – I absolutely share a very common value with my parents." Another man attributed his laissez-faire approach to thinking about money to the lack of financial pressure his parents put on him, while the third felt his parents "did the best to give us what we wanted, as long as it was within reason," a practice that made sense to him. Two other respondents seemed to diverge from their parents on this theme. One claimed his experience as a spoiled child was "unhealthy," whereas the second described his mother's "thrifty" behavior as "just totally different" from his own spending habits.

Dreams and Career Visions

When asked if they had any early dreams or ideas about professional choices, a majority of participants admitted to having no specific career goals in childhood or adolescence (Table 16). One man dismissed his childhood urge to be in the military by joking, "Come on, that's like totally nonsense to me now." However, another man stated, "The only thing I ever wanted to be was a businessman," and then admitted, "I didn't even know what that meant."

Similarly, as a kid, one respondent dreamed of being a "successful businessman," though he could not remember exactly when his present career goal emerged:

> I don't remember when I first knew what investment banking was. When I was, maybe, frankly, when I was a kid. I would – I was a voracious reader. I would read about entrepreneurs and I would read about business and, you know, in high school I was sort of aware of the stock market and kind of followed that sort of thing. But I don't remember when I understood what an investment banker was per se.

Two other respondents indicated that they "didn't really have an objective" or that there was "nothing concrete" about their ideas in regard to professional life. Another yearned for a "great life," but also suggested that "whatever you did to get there was kind of incidental, or, moreover, part of that great life." Nonetheless, he connected this goal to having a variety of experiences by stating, "I might have described it as a beaded necklace and you would put one bead on at a time and every bead was a different experience."

Just as most participants remembered having no specific career goals while growing up, few of their parents had clearly articulated expectations about their sons' professional lives. Four men reported that their parents just wanted them to be happy, regardless of how they made a living. For two of these men, parents connected this happiness with success. As one man put it, "I think they just wanted me to be happy and I think their definition of success is being happy at what you do. I don't think it attaches a monetary value to success." Another man added, "They were always clear. I could do whatever I wanted." Yet another felt his parents were highly satisfied with their work lives and wished the same for him.

Even those parents who had clearer ideas about potential career goals for their sons did not seem to push them in any real way toward those paths. Though one man's mother advocated for him to be "independent" and perhaps take over the family business, she remained supportive even when he chose not to do so. Likewise, another participant interpreted his father's ongoing comments that he would make a great lawyer as "more teasing than anything else" and never felt pressured to move in this direction. A third man sensed that his parents may have wanted him to stick with his original professional goals, but he felt they also supported his decision to change:

> Of course they would have liked to have a doctor, but I don't think they are really dissatisfied. And they respect my choice and they also think I made a good choice. Being a business person is still a very respected profession. And you can also make money and, hopefully, maybe you'll make more money than as a doctor. And if I achieve that, I think they will respect my decision very much. Actually, if I really made more than a doctor in my future life, they would probably think I made the right choice because I did something else which was valued higher than a doctor's profession.

He went on to suggest that this goal was syntonic with his parents' value system, which stemmed from their experience as immigrants trying to become economically successful.

Only one man reported conflict between his career goals and his parents' ideas about what he planned to do for a living. This friction mostly emerged around his father:

> My dad had an issue with me not going into science and academics rather than business, so he really wasn't supportive of that, but I figure I just have to do what I really like. I respect his idea, but it clashes at times when I go back and have discussions about what I want to do. He really looked down on business people. He thinks they really do nothing, just bullshitting, which I think in a certain sense is true, but I just can't deal

> with him. I just can't do chemistry. He really hoped I could get a Ph.D. in biochem. Maybe my children can accomplish what their grandfather wants them to do.

Even as he hinted at the tension with his father, this respondent made it clear that his father's dreams would not cause him to change his current path.

Influences on Career Choice

When asked specifically who or what influenced their career choices, participants offered responses that clustered around a number of motivating factors, including family, culture, work content/style, compensation, and peers (Table 17). Notably, none of the respondents pointed to a specific influence that singularly helped to determine their current job selection.

Men who discussed family described varying degrees of influence. For example, one participant admitted that his family's geographic proximity to the epicenter of his chosen industry was a "lesser, though important factor" in selecting this field. Two other men indicated that their parents had an impact on early career choices. One studied business and accounting at first because his mother suggested that CPAs made good money. The other, born and raised in China, initially pursued an academic path, stating, "I was influenced by my parents at first, like everyone in China. We were brought up in a Confucian society, that you listen to what your parents tell you. So I was on track to get a Ph.D. in biochemistry or chemistry. My dad is a professor in organic chemistry." Several participants also mentioned that their fathers influenced how they thought about certain jobs. One man revealed that his father openly discouraged him from

entering the family business: “He was always telling me he didn’t want me to go into his business, but I remember that, going to camp with all these people and they would be like, oh, this is going to be your business, and it just never occurred to me that I would be doing what my dad did.” In contrast, another participant’s father-in-law pushed him toward business school in the hope that this man would someday help run his accounting service. Two other respondents were impressed enough with their father’s jobs to consider joining the same field. One of these men explained how visits to his father’s office made him want to work in a similar environment:

> He would take us up into his office, a big high-rise building in [participant’s hometown]. So he took us up in here on a weekend – he had to do some work. And I remember going in and looking at these cubes and sitting in some of these cubes and I thought that was the neatest thing. And I wanted to be – work in an office like that. Have an office.

The second man decided to become a lawyer because his father seemed to enjoy it so much:

> I remember really admiring my dad. You know, he worked in this really cool law firm and everybody treated him with respect and he seemed to make a lot of money and be very happy and enjoy his colleagues. And they enjoyed him. And, you know, I thought it was the best deal in the world and that’s one of the reasons I went into law kind of blindly. It was just like, oh, you know, this is the best thing ever.

Other men cited the more general influence parents had on their development, which facilitated moves toward desired jobs. For one, being forced by his parents to switch from a public to a private high school was a “defining moment” that set him on a path to business school and, eventually, a position in real estate finance. Another man felt that his parents’ strict boundaries and belief in his abilities helped to prepare him for a career in investment banking.

Half of the participants listed culture as an influencing factor in the job selection process. One man, who felt his decision to enter the business world ran counter to the culturally-based, more academic values promoted by his family, revealed that he avoided management consulting because "coming out of a traditional Chinese education system, I don't think my thinking is creative as a consultant, as a lot of Americans are." Conversely, another man sensed more of a fit with his employer and suggested, "I felt like this company had some of the same philosophies that I have and that's valuable to me." Additionally, three participants described how the business culture's "herd" mentality impacted their thinking. One explained that, at college and in business school, "I think there is a sort of herd mentality, as you probably remember. With a lot of people, it's almost, uh, you almost believe that because it's sort of this bias I think they still have, that if everyone wants to do it, then it must be good because everyone is doing it. So, I think that's something that influenced me." The second of these men posited that, in the environment where he was educated "you are more or less, you know, herded towards a certain pool or jobs that fit your background," while the third man asserted that his undergraduate business program "just molds people into being good corporate soldiers; consulting, banking, whatever." One respondent questioned his commitment to this type of business educational culture, stating that "sometimes, some people I was in the classrooms with – it was just, I could not relate to these people. Over-competitive, cutthroat competitive, silly competitive. It's like, get a fucking life. So I'm mixed."

Some men cited valuable aspects of the work content, or style, as a consideration. Three highlighted an interpersonal component as the key factor. One found that he enjoyed serving as a trusted advisor to clients, while a second focused on "the social interaction part" of his job. A third man avoided pursuing a certain career path because he knew much of the work would be done alone and that this could become too isolating. A different participant valued "the quick gratification of the trading desk, or managing money – it's just, you know, you get your score immediately" and added that he was most satisfied when the hectic pace at work cause his time to pass quickly. Another respondent liked the fact that, at the end of the day in real estate, "you do have something tangible to point to."

Few respondents listed financial compensation as a primary driver when asked about what influenced their career plans. One man switched from law to banking because he perceived that bankers worked fewer hours and made more money. He also enjoyed the social status attributed to his new field, explaining, "The reaction that I've gotten when I say that I'm going into investment banking when I meet women in bars has been pretty favorable." Another man admitted that money was the "overriding factor" in his decision to enter banking, but also expressed a desire to use this compensation to give back to people who had helped him to succeed along the way. This sentiment was echoed differently by another man whose earlier volunteer experiences pushed him to succeed so that he could again give back to his community in the future.

Three men claimed that peers influenced their current professional choices. Having left the financial services world and subsequently returned to business school so that he could reenter this field, one man felt the need to "get back on track with a career," especially because he would initially be earning less upon graduation than younger peers who were already working. Similarly, a former military officer explained that he partly chose investment banking because he "would be able to bring myself up the curve" and more quickly become competitive with peers. On a different note, one man's experience with friends who were unhappy with their legal careers convinced him to avoid this field and instead pursue a business job.

Market Variables

Participants did not spontaneously list current economic conditions or the effects of the September 11th terrorist attacks as factors influencing their career choices. However, when asked, several men indicated that they had considered these variables to some degree (Table 18). One man explained that the slow economy "narrowed my options significantly" and caused him to pursue the same functional area he had worked in prior to entering business school. Likewise, other respondents cited a lack of professional options due to the market downturn. These conditions caused another man to be more open to a variety of jobs because competition to enter the most desirable fields had intensified among MBA students. Conversely, one participant viewed this situation as a chance to enter

banking at a time when fewer people are getting jobs, which he hoped would give him an advantage once the market improved and hiring increased.

Men who discussed the September 11th attacks reported that this tragedy had little impact on their career goals, even though many witnessed the World Trade Center collapse firsthand or had colleagues working in the area at the time of the disaster. These participants made statements like, "It didn't have any significant impact on my career goals," or, "It hasn't really changed anything," or even, "It's definitely something I thought about, but I can't see it changing anything on the chance that something like that might happen." Even those who seemed convinced that another attack would occur expressed no desire to alter their professional plans.

Envisioning the Future

What Work Means

When asked what the career path they have chosen means to them, all 12 participants discussed aspects of the work they considered valuable (Table 19). Though some of these responses addressed the issue of financial remuneration, most focused on other forms of compensation, such as the opportunity to learn, the chance to work with other people, or simply the benefits of enjoying oneself. Three of the men who cited learning as a particularly meaningful aspect of their work emphasized how much they valued being "paid to learn" and gaining an understanding of how industries and companies operate. Another man described this learning process as a chance to "understand the business, understand how to

think, how to approach a problem. Problem solving and intellectually challenging – stimulating, for lack of a better word. Doing that stuff is interesting." Two other participants specified that being surrounded by intelligent colleagues helped to stimulate learning, or as one put it bluntly, "I want to be surrounded just like business school, you like to be surrounded with a whole bunch of smart people. There are a lot of smart-asses too, but I like smart people in an environment that I can learn a lot – it's very competitive."

Two men responded along similar lines in highlighting the importance of an interpersonal component to their work. One indicated that his account management position allowed him to focus on personal relationships, which he values a great deal. Both of these men, along with a third participant, said that they welcomed both the analytic and interpersonal aspects of their jobs.

As for monetary compensation, one man admitted, "I like nice things. That's one of the things I appreciate about the banking lifestyle, frankly." Another agreed that being paid well was important, but also linked his career satisfaction to enjoying the work itself. Similarly, two men concurred that they thought more about enjoying themselves at work than making money. "You really have – you have to enjoy what you are doing," one advised, "Because you spend more than half your life, I think, working, so it's better that you enjoy that."

Other men also focused on the general idea that work should be enjoyable. Four respondents seemed to express this goal as if it was an expectation. One stipulated, "I figure one day I'm going to die and when I die I better be doing something I enjoy." For two other men, enjoyment stemmed from the camaraderie

that emerged in intense work environments. The "fraternity of sorts" that developed around late nights and pressured time frames was, to them, considered fun. Despite that he hoped to enjoy his work, another man was more pessimistic on the subject:

> I was talking to this lawyer about this sort of question. He was like – he thinks maybe one in ten, at most, one in twenty people actually enjoy what they are doing and the rest are just getting by. And again, it's sort of like, you know, can you, ought you? Ought you to? Or should you just accept the other? And I suppose, for me, I'd like to be able to not manage my expectations, but sort of, you know, never give up. But be more tolerant of what probably are the facts of the situation.

Yet another respondent was similarly pessimistic about the prospect of enjoying his work, but indicated that he never expected his job to be a "calling" in the first place.

Opportunities to Make an Impact

Just as participants discussed past work experience in terms of the impact they made on their organizations, they also envisioned being able to effect change at future jobs (Table 20). Four men seemed confident in their ability to make an impact soon out of business school. One man said, "I just think I think in the right ways, that I understand this business well enough that I can make and have an impact pretty quickly." Although another one of these men saw himself initially as a "junior person," he still felt he would be valuable to his organization, as he explained, "I think that any time you are able to add value, to be able to participate in a meaningful way, it is kind of self-fulfilling to be able to see that you are being able to add something to a team." Two other respondents articulated

this perspective as a clear goal they had for the future. One even specified that he wanted to leave evidence of his contributions:

> What really drives me is that I want to have impact. I think I also want to leave something back. I will die one day and before I die, I want to look back and I want to say, "Okay," as an example, "I built that company." I want to leave something, absolutely. And I want to shape some of the changes. The world is always changing and I want to participate in the change. I want to say to myself one day, "You know, that change, you were part of it. You were part of the reason why it changed." So I think that change is very important in my life.

The same participant went on to describe how his experience working internationally, coupled with his American business education, has given him a broad world view that will add value to any future work he does. He and two other men also suggested that the business work they planned to do can positively impact the world or, as one put it, "You are sort of making the economy happen, being part of that engine that drives everything."

For other men, making an impact was tied to being a reliable worker. Two respondents posited that being a "trusted advisor" will be critical in their work as investment bankers. One also felt that being a "go-to guy" for his bosses would be rewarding: "I guess you're living for that one spot where the managing director says – he gets asked a question and he may not know the exact answer and he will look to you, the person who did the model or knows about it, if you can come up with that answer." Another participant expressed his desire to be a decision-maker, regardless of which position he ends up in, while three other men anticipated that being in leadership roles later on would allow them to make a significant impact at work. One stated, "I always want to be in a position where I can lead, where I can have some impact."

Work Demands

Most study participants discussed anticipated work demands, even though they were not specifically prompted to do so (Table 21). Eight of these men made statements indicating that they were aware of sacrifices they will have to make upon entering their chosen fields. One respondent exemplified this group when he stated, "I think I kind of know what I'm getting into. I think it's important that people realize what it is that they are about to get into and the sacrifices they are going to have to be able to make." Similarly, three other men expressed the idea that one has to "pay your dues," particularly in the early stages out of business school. One man, who was born in another country, explained, "Especially at the beginning of the career, it's very time demanding, like you will say in the U.S., there is no free lunch." Although one participant expected his work hours to reduce over time, two others doubted their professional schedules would permit them to be as available to family as their parents were. One quipped, "I'd love to be able to do that. I'm just not as confident that I'll be able to do that with the hours I'll be working." Notably, three others expressed willingness to work harder now, sacrificing lifestyle during the next few years, in order to achieve desired professional and financial goals down the road. "As everybody knows," one said, "It's a tradeoff between lifestyle and financial compensation, which to me is not important. So I'm willing to get myself slaved for another two or three years at least. And also it's good credentials on my resume to serve as a platform for whatever you do next." Nonetheless, another man realized he will have to put off

desirable activities because of work and, during the time before his job began, he planned to "try and use all the free time I can, because I don't think I'll see it again after work starts."

Several men connected the time demands of work to performance expectations on the part of their employers. For one, this assumption meant he would be adjusting his schedule to fit the work styles of managers at his company. Another man added that, despite the inherent demands of investment banking, working hard was already part of his formula for success:

> I'm kind of the belief that if you want to succeed, you're going to have to work hard. So, I don't care if you are a VP in finance in a corporation, or if you are an investment banking associate or an investment banking vice president, if you want to succeed, you are going to have to put in the hours to do – to go that extra mile. So I think my personality is like that as well. I'm going to put in the extra effort to make sure everything is 100%.

While discussing how hard they expected to work, some participants also cited the benefits of such efforts. One pointed out that by putting in a tremendous effort, "work won't seem like work." Another man highlighted the tradeoff between a compromised lifestyle and the opportunity to be challenged and to work with "very smart people," while a third participant felt that putting in longer hours early in his career would afford him the flexibility to scale back his work time later on. Notably, another man suggested that it was impossible to tell how he would fit in with an intense work culture until he spent some time on the job. He also questioned the assumption that longer work hours meant having a less satisfying life by saying, "I think it can be really happy working a hundred hours a week and you can be really miserable working fifty hours a week and vice versa."

Uncertain Career Plans

When asked where they will be, professionally, in the future, several participants expressed uncertainty about their career plans (Table 22). One man claimed, "I don't ever think I got bitten by that career bug" and was concerned by his lack of clear goals. Though driven by fear of not having a job in the future, he explained his nonexistent career planning by saying, "I mean, you look at my life and I sort of make it up as I go along." Other men also felt uncertain about what their careers will look like in five years. One joked, "These days, it seems having a plan is wishful thinking," while another speculated, "Who knows where I'll wind up. At this company, or I'll wind up in the industry. How much I'll really like it. And if I say, okay, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life." Unlike the first man above, however, these participants seemed less concerned about their lack of professional clarity. Two men described their approach to career planning as opportunistic and general, or as one man stated, "More like a direction, more vision." Another pointed out that "it seems that a lot of people who have been successful never necessarily had a plan." Similarly, two different men revealed that their career progression would depend on the ability to fit their skills to jobs they enjoy rather than on some predetermined scheme. One other respondent summarized his plan rather simply by stating he would, "keep moving forward."

Career Transitions

All 12 participants mentioned career transitions they expected to undergo at some point in the future (Table 23). Many of these men anticipated leaving the first company to employ them out of business school. Four respondents indicated that portability was a factor in their initial post-MBA job selection, as exemplified by one man's statement:

> The reason I want to do money management is because it's a portable job and I don't know if I'm going to stay in the U.S. or go back to Europe. Maybe travel to Asia. And it's one of the few jobs you can do where you can actually – you just need a computer and Internet connection and you are up in business.

Four other men admitted that they viewed their first post-MBA jobs as "stepping stones" to other positions, while two different participants stated their intention to reevaluate employment options after a period of time at their initial jobs. Though one man captured this attitude by saying, "I like to keep my options open. I like to hedge myself and still go for the gold," another explained, "I like to keep changing things anyway" and felt that he would likely change careers after 10 years to find something else he might enjoy. "If for some reason I was told I could not work in finance and I was given another opportunity somewhere else, I would be, like, okay," he said, "And it's not a function of me not finding something I love as much as I find a lot of things interesting."

Some of these men cited anticipated reasons for a future transition. Three expected other job opportunities to arise based on their first positions and they made statements like, "After you do investment banking, some other doors will open along the way," or, "It's a great platform for whatever you want to do next."

Of course, one of these men suggested, the chances of remaining within a company or industry increased along with potential for advancement. Other reasons cited for leaving included making enough money to retire and take a lower-paying job, or quitting if one felt unfulfilled: "I hope that the work environment is friendly and productive. That I feel fulfilled there. That I will see eye-to-eye on where the company is and where it needs to go. And if all that comes into line, I'll be happy. If it doesn't come into line five years from now in this company, I would be doing my best to make sure I'm going somewhere where that is true."

Additionally, a few participants discussed how their roles would transition down the line. Three men predicted that they would achieve senior positions in their respective industries. Others noted likely changes in the required skill set or work tasks at this higher level. Three anticipated shifting from managing the technical work process to focus more broadly on strategy or relationships, or as one man said, "Because once you've made your managing director or partner level, you basically try to win clients and by then it's all meeting with people and interpersonal and sucking up to people, kissing their ass, trying to win the deal and the mandates and stuff." Put differently, this stage was thought by some men to involve "soft skills," such as "managerial skills, negotiation skills, leadership skills."

Defining Success

When asked to define success and to describe what their future lives would look like if successful, participants spoke about accomplishment, both at work and in other areas of life (Table 24). Of the men who focused on work success, two hoped to achieve respect from peers and colleagues. One explained that, "Hopefully I've built up a solid reputation and have an excellent network of friends and people that – business acquaintances as well – that I can turn to." At the same time, he anticipated "becoming a leader within an organization, whether a managing director at a bank or a senior executive in a corporation. A decision maker. A person people look to." The other man felt that garnering such respect would facilitate maneuvering within the field. For other participants, success was associated with some measure of control. Two men with entrepreneurial aspirations suggested that starting or running one's own business, such as an investment fund, would allow for better control over work hours and activities. Similarly, another man felt he would be successful if he earned a high salary and was able to manage his own hours. A different participant explained how this situation will be difficult to achieve and said, "A lot of bankers make money, but they don't have time to spend it, except on things they can't use…so it's making the money and having time to do the things that I enjoy aside from work." Yet another man added that he aspired to enjoy his work life at some point in the future: "I feel there's a point in life where I will feel comfortable there and I don't have to keep climbing up just to get more money and additional stress – when I have all the money I need."

Two other men offered slightly different definitions of success. One associated accomplishment with his ability to develop people on the job and help them achieve professional success. The second man discussed the importance of leaving something behind:

> Also if you leave something back, I think that's very important for me. Leave something back. I mean, I don't think I will consider myself very successful if I go to Vegas and win a million playing blackjack. And I leave Vegas and nothing is left back. I will enjoy the million, but I'm not sure if I really see that as a success. I would probably see it as a success if I go to Vegas, build a casino by myself and leave Vegas and I know I built a casino. My name doesn't really have to be on the casino. It doesn't really have to say [respondent's name] casino or something like that. But just the feeling that I built something and left something back. That's how I see success.

However, other men considered money to be a more central aspect of success. Two linked accomplishment to the desirable status of financial independence, as one explained, "If you say that guy is a success, then you mean that guy does not have to go to work. That's what it means – success means he is financially independent." Three other participants provided similar definitions and added that monetary gain afforded opportunities to make an impact in life. Even though another man defined his success in terms of having many different life experiences, he also admitted that one desirable experience could include accumulating material possessions.

Some men linked success to being happy. Three of these participants felt they would only be happy if they made others around them happy too. However, one other man clarified that he would be successful if he was happy and had enough financial resources to enjoy his life, while another respondent surmised that success meant simply "living life without regret."

Material Goals

Nearly every participant in the study addressed the role they expected money to play in their lives (Table 25). Although several of these men emphasized the importance of earning a good living, only one seemed to privilege money above other factors. Some respondents discussed their wish to balance economic success with other priorities. Two men sought to make money and also enjoy their social lives, while another also desired strong relationships with friends and family. A different respondent pondered his interest in being socially responsible and concluded, "I need to strike a balance between being practical and also being able to make a meaningful contribution to the society." Another man aspired to earn enough to avoid preoccupation with finances and stated, "I hope I won't constantly be thinking about money." Yet another clearly prioritized getting the most he could out of his life. "My goal is not to make as much money as possible and die with as much money as I can," he claimed, "My goal is to enjoy the life while I am living here."

A number of men also spoke about money as a means to accomplish goals. Five men expressed how money makes it easier to do other things and made statements like, "I don't care for money, I care for what money accomplishes," and, "Money is important, but money is only an enabler to enjoy the other things in life." For some, these "other things" were quite basic. One man, who lost his job but was able to support himself for some time on his savings, even said, "It's nice not to have to worry about where my next meal is going to come from."

Another liked the fact that having money would give him the ability to "play" by pursuing rock climbing and other activities. For him, the capacity to minimize his spending early on would provide more flexibility later on to do the things he really enjoys. Notably, six men suggested that making money could enable them to give something back at some point in the future. Their ideas included engaging in non-profit work, making charitable donations, funding college scholarships, teaching for free, and also helping others to become financially successful.

Only one participant admitted openly that money was a "big factor" in his job selection process, though others clearly appreciated that financial success would be a side effect of their professional lives. Another man summarized his views on this theme by articulating the drive to earn as a type of natural priority among business people:

> This is probably what is the bar in the business world. Make money. And I would say most people want to make money, as much as they can. And this is definitely one of my goals…we are living in a capitalist world, so everyone – it's natural. You want to make money. This is the kind of goal everyone wants to, as long as they are doing business.

Being a Provider

Although not asked specifically about being providers, several participants addressed this theme when they offered their thoughts on male roles (Table 26). Many of these men felt pressure to earn a significant income. Two respondents said they were driven to make money based on anticipated family needs, or as one put it, "There's a certain expectation to make X amount of dollars to provide for your family." One man claimed this pressure was currently minimal, but would increase as he aged and started a family, while another described such

expectations as "a really scary level of responsibility…it's a big step that I can also see, sort of, can be imprisoning – from a work perspective if, you know, you need, you pay a mortgage. You know, slave to that paycheck." This sentiment was reiterated by another participant, who saw work as a necessary means to pay for his family and his school loans. Conversely, one man who made it through college on scholarships anticipated paying for his kids' school up until the university level, after which "they are on their own then. I'm not going to give them money and stuff like that. They just have to do what their dad did. Just make it on their own."

Some men hoped to provide things to family that went beyond money. According to four respondents, this included some sort of worldly knowledge or experience. One man hoped to achieve this goal by traveling with his family to "gain a worldly perspective." Another wanted to ensure that his children would be well-rounded and have a good set of values: "I think you have to think of your child as a citizen, you have to raise this citizen to be a good, to add value to the world, to be important, to make a difference." Two other men discussed the importance of being present for their children in the future. One emphasized being "physically" and "mentally" available, while the other felt he needed to provide both financially and emotionally:

> You have to be able to supply financially and then I think that the father has to be there for his kids. I am not a big believer in fathers going to soccer practice or going to every game. I think that's a misconception that is – I just don't think that's true. I think that's what people see on TV. I think what is important is the time that the parents spend with their kid, that they are there for their kids, and if a parent makes a commitment to a child, that commitment is held.

Additionally, several men revealed through their comments just how important the male provider role was to them. For example, one said he was open to having a dual career family, but not a single-earner household if he was the one to stay at home: "I don't mind having two, you know, just having a two-career family. I just think it's great, but a one-career family where I was the one without the career – I don't think I could be mister mom." Similarly, two other men envisioned themselves as the leading providers in their future families and one even quipped, "If my wife makes more money than I do, I'll feel uncomfortable – I will think that sucks." Two different participants also seemed to consider providerhood the most important male role. Though one claimed male and female roles in the family were not too different, he also posited that "the father or the male should be able to provide financially for the family and that's the expectation and once that expectation is met, everything else is surface."

Defining Roles at Home

When asked about the roles they anticipated playing with current or future partners/spouses, some participants were clearer than others regarding the issue of role division (Table 27). Two men advocated a clear division of responsibilities and one explained his view by saying, "When you put a team together for a project, you try to build a team with different skill sets, so in a couple the men have some skills and the women have some skills and then so I think it would be silly for everybody to do the same type of thing." These two men, like three others in the sample, anticipated that their partners would be staying at home to

manage the children and the house. One admitted, "I certainly want to be the hardcore, hard-driving professional who is the breadwinner and, ideally, I would like the wife to be the one who is spending the majority if her time with the family and taking care of the children and taking care of the house." Another man seemingly regretted that his wife would be staying at home, but cited his six-figure salary as the major reason for such an arrangement: "Just economically, it does not make sense to remove myself from the workplace." Other respondents concurred that role division would be based on "who has got the more important career" and one pointed to cultural stereotypes when explaining what role, as a male, he would assume:

> To support a family. To be in a position not to dominate over the female – not in that sense. Believe me, democracy stuff, but make decisions on big issues. What house are we going to buy. Where are we going to live. What cereals we need to buy, what brand of detergent we use – my wife can take care of that.

Another man hoped such culturally informed role stereotypes would change, but said, "I wouldn't hold my breath."

Several participants expressed less traditional views about how they planned to deal with this issue. Four men anticipated negotiating with their partners over roles in the family. One explained, "It's something that I can't define now because it's something that would evolve in that relationship and that we would both be comfortable with, ideally." Another predicted having a dialog with his wife, saying, "Let's discuss, let's make an arrangement, or I have to convince you or you have to convince me. And then we make the best decision that we think is the best decision." Notably, six men, including some of those who

clearly anticipated a more traditional arrangement with their partners, expressed a desire for their spouses to have a role outside the home. Of course, for some this role equated to volunteer or charity work, while others planned for their wives to take paying jobs. Two participants epitomized the mixed feelings a few men had about marrying someone without a career. One emphasized that, for him, "it would have to be someone who could get into something other than going for just being a homemaker," while the other expressed the real conundrum some men faced in selecting a partner:

> I'm totally comfortable with, you know, stay-at-home wife type thing. Take care of the kids. And, personally, I think that is, to some degree, just the way it is biologically and the way it ought to or has to be. But, on the other hand – and this is really a contradiction – sort of, I think any woman I'd be interested in would also be similarly ambitious or driven or intelligent. And so would probably also derive some kind of satisfaction from some kind of career or work outside the home.

Plans for Family Life

Men in the study provided a variety of responses when asked about starting and raising families (Table 28). One participant hoped to be tied down within five years so that he could "stop getting on these long meaningless relationships that I've been finding serially for the last, uh, the last five years." For this man, having a companion to do things with was a particularly salient aspect of being married. Another seemed more ambivalent about starting a family. Despite perceived pressure from his parents, which he linked to his "Asian background," this respondent admitted to being unsure about getting married and having children. He added that his current preference for a "kind of volatile personal life," including "excitement, adventure," might translate into an unstable

family life down the road if these tendencies do not abate. Another man related that he was flexible on the issue of marriage, but would not take this step unless he found a good match:

> I think too many people get married because it's something they are supposed to do. That society says they are supposed to do. They are scared of living single for the rest of their life, whereas I've already said to myself, if I don't meet the right person, I'm going to be happier single than with somebody who I don't get along with and who doesn't get along with me.

Several other men cited economic factors in their thinking about a commitment to family. In regard to having children, one man felt "two or three is sort of the perfect size," but also worried about having enough money to support kids and enough time to spend with them. Two other participants agreed that financial stability needed to be established before considering marriage or children. One broke up with his girlfriend because she wanted to get married and said, "I just didn't want that responsibility right now because I got too much going on. I can't handle that. I have a shitload of debt. How can I afford a family?" The second man, who was married, explained, "I don't want to have a child and still be living in this tiny one-bedroom brownstone walk-up. You know, I'd like to own an apartment maybe and have a second bedroom that is maybe big enough to actually fit a crib."

Some of these men also weighed in on the subject of raising children and what challenges they anticipated with this aspect of family life. Most participants indicated that they would like to have kids at some point in the future, though one admitted, "I have not given a lot of thought on how to raise children," even though he believed family to be very important. Likewise, another man said, "I

don't have a grand design" when it comes to raising kids, but he nonetheless anticipated being an involved parent. Others anticipated negative outcomes if they were not available enough for their children. However, a few men noted that being involved would not diminish the normal challenges of raising kids, or as one man joked, "having to deal with people just turning 12 or 13." For others, tough challenges would include, for example, the ability "to give them advice, but yet help them to make their own decisions."

The Intersection of Personal and Professional Life

Study participants made numerous statements about the interaction between personal and professional life (Table 29). These remarks were generated in response to several different questions about how they anticipated managing personal and professional life, what challenges they expected to face, how they defined success, and what roles they expected to play. Consequently, a number of themes arose, including: anticipated problems and benefits of balancing work and personal life, managing boundaries between these two domains, the prioritization of work over personal life, the prioritization of private life over work, the desire for balance between these areas, and ideas about how to achieve such a balance.

Men who anticipated problems in attempting to manage personal and professional life described a number of issues that would complicate this effort. One man felt he would have limited control over his time during the early years out of business school. He explained, "Five years out, I'm not quite sure that you are in a position to dictate your own – you are certainly not in a position to dictate

your own schedule if you are working in an investment bank." Another man, who planned on a career in management consulting, expected work to impinge on his personal relationships:

> I think what is most problematic is that it's a little bit hard to keep relationships with other people or, kind of, deep relationships. If you're very focused on your work, you still have time to go out with other people and to keep some kind of relationship, but you can't remain on a superficial level. I would say that's the most, let's say the personal level that's the most important. That you kind of give up when you focus very much on your work.

This participant also observed that high-pressure jobs cause one's personal life to be more volatile, especially because of the increased opportunities to meet and become involved with others who are attracted to high-profile business executives. Moreover, he added, the objectivity or "distance" one develops toward work relationships "can be transferred to private life." Other men expressed concern that their busy work lives would limit the chance to engage in outside activities, or as one part-time National Guard member and investment banker said, "I'm concerned how I'm going to squeeze it in once I start a career, because it takes up more than the reported weekend a month for me." For those hoping to have children in the near future, a sense of guilt had already emerged in anticipation of time spent at work and away from family. Interestingly, one man thought having kids would make his work life more fulfilling, rather than complicating things.

Some respondents wanted to establish clear boundaries between their personal and professional lives, while others were less inclined to create such divisions. For example, one man admitted that he partly chose to work as a

securities trader because "I like the kind of job where I get, where you get to get up out of your desk at 5 or 5:30 and you don't take anything with you." He also wanted a spouse who could do likewise, that is, "someone who is not going to be sharing her private life with her firm." In contrast, another participant hoped for positive spillover between his work and home life and felt that things would be more "productive" if he shared his personal life with colleagues by socializing from time to time. Similarly, two other men indicated that having a happy family life could facilitate a more productive work experience. As one stipulated, "If you are not happy in your family, inside your family, you can't be happy and you will not be productive and efficient in the work environment."

Some participants made statements suggesting that work will take precedence over personal life. One man referenced his experience observing the partners at his prior consulting firm and noted, "I would say that if I look at the lifestyle of these partners, what's really kind of constant is the work. But everything else is really volatile – it can change a lot." He suspected the same would be true of his private life, while his work should remain stable. He, like two other men, also expressed desire for a spouse willing to accept that work as the first priority. One married man lauded his wife's support for his career goals and need to work hard, but warned, "Certainly if she were reluctant to embrace my desires I think I'd probably be pretty pissed off; I don't think I would have the same outlook on marriage that I have now." A different respondent felt that his youth afforded him the energy and drive to pursue a demanding job, with time later on for more balance between professional and personal life. Yet another man

articulated his support for marriage and family values, but also argued that, because senior executives focus on so many high-level work issues, they tend to place less value on family life. He exemplified this focus when he explained just how important work is to him:

> I think it is my life, I would say. I think a lot of people…for most people, the work or the career path is part of their life. And they also have a different personal life or whatever. But I think, for me, it is my life.

Other men seemed to prioritize personal life over work, or at least hoped to do so as time progressed. "I hope that my career, whatever was accomplished in it, was second behind what I've accomplished with my family. I hope that it was never put in front of my family," one participant explained, "I mean, in the big picture family comes first." Similarly, two other men stated that they were unwilling to sacrifice family time for their work. One said he would not take a job if he had to travel often while the other intended to return to Europe if his career became too demanding because "I don't want to be like a lot of parents I see here who work like crazy and never see their kids." For a third man, being raised in what he called a "traditional" Chinese culture meant that he automatically prioritized home life over the office and intended to shift to a "family-driven" life once he had children. Likewise, several other respondents anticipated a shift from work to family over time. One felt this change would occur after the next couple of years, while another said, "After I get married, the priority in my life is going to shift from making money, from succeeding in career." Three different men also expected a similar transformation of priority. One explained that, when his kids

are born, “I want them to be the center of my world,” while a second of these participants hoped the emphasis on family life could occur sooner than later:

> Certainly the weekends will be my, will be my own. I hope to have dinner with my family, you know, on a consistent basis. I hope to be able to take vacations, you know, kind of just, you expect there to be a, uh, a light at the end of the tunnel. I guess, I hope that will come sooner than 15 or 20 years. You know, you don’t have to be a man of leisure, but certainly get your work done. You know, go home, be with your family and just enjoy the fruits of your labor.

Interestingly, three men claimed they would reconsider their career paths in order to better attend to family needs. Addressing the difficulty of succeeding at an intense job and also being there for his family, one future real estate financier predicted, “I don’t know, it just may come to a breaking point that is reached where I feel like I can’t take this lifestyle any more – I got to find, I got to do something else.”

For many of these men, the issue of trying to negotiate some balance between personal and professional life was particularly salient. In terms of future challenges, one man stated that work-life balance would be “the biggest one,” while three men expressed that their main goal would be to balance work and a personal life, consisting of marriage and children. One respondent even claimed that he has tried since college to have balance in all aspects of life and said that he intended to continue this effort. Two men were specific in desiring a reasonable mix of professional and social life while others expressed this need more generally in terms of also wanting time for leisure activities. For many, the desire for some kind of future balance between these domains stimulated ideas about how to manage if this aspiration was not achieved. Two men were open to

switching jobs if necessary. One specified, "I feel I just need more than one weekend off a week and two weeks off a year to remain happy. If I have to do that for 20 years straight, I will quit by then," Another man, headed for Wall Street, said he might eventually look to work in a corporate job "because it strikes a better balance between work and leisure. At least you get some of the weekends off; you don't have to work 24 hours a day, like a machine. And money is not that great, but decent." A third respondent, also going to work in an investment bank, planned to assess these trade-offs when considering a future job change. He pointed to his intense summer internship experience and acknowledged that his wife would have a significant impact on such a decision:

> I had one week and I worked 138 hours in one week and that was more than my wife had worked in the entire month. And she said, "If your hours are like that when you start full-time, I can see it a week here and a week there, but if it's consistently like that, I've got to be able to see you. I don't care if you're making $10 million a year. I want to be able to see you." And I think at that point in our lives, it's going to be, have I been able to strike a balance between family and work?

Men who had ideas about how to achieve such a balance all indicated that their current or future spouses would be directly involved in the effort to succeed at this goal. One man, who expected his future wife to work, anticipated some juggling of tasks and said, "To the extent that both parties are professionally integrated into the workforce, there will have to be some shuffling of each schedule to build a stable family life." Similarly, two other men predicted that their spouses, regardless of how much they intended to work, would be involved in making decisions about how to negotiate a balance between work and home life. Interestingly, none of the participants offered specific ideas about how this

negotiation was to be managed or about the amount of time that they would spend at work versus being with family or engaging in personal activities. Thus, the stated desire for some balance was, for these men, more of a general goal or way of looking at future life than a specific recipe for handling the demands of the personal and professional realms.

Ideas About Retirement

When asked to reflect on the issue of retirement, all 12 participants articulated clear expectations about what they thought this life stage would be like (Table 30). Some described this issue in terms of material possessions they hoped to enjoy. Three men anticipated having two homes, ranging from "a ranch in Montana or Canada" to "someplace warm, someplace cold." Four others associated this time in their lives with not having to worry about money. Interestingly, none of these men expressed a need to be extremely wealthy. Rather, most described wanting to live comfortably without concern about their finances, or as one man put it, "Being able to do the types of things that we do now and not be concerned about money." Another joked, "I hope I will have some money I can live on. Have a decent life…That's what everyone wants to, even if you don't want to be a business leader. Of course you want security for the future." One participant even hinted that having enough money would allow him to explore business or investment activities beyond his current career path: "I guess money is about freedom and that freedom would be to also, sort of, perhaps take greater risks than I am comfortable with right now."

Other men described activities they expected to pursue as retirees. Two men reiterated an earlier theme of having to put off desirable endeavors until this time. Several participants hoped to remain active and have fun by playing golf and traveling, whereas others expressed the desire to share their life and work experiences with people through teaching, either formally or informally. For two respondents, retirement would offer the chance for a different identity or the opportunity to reinvent themselves by taking on new challenges.

Importantly, two participants specifically associated this life stage with an opportunity to spend family time. One of these men anticipated making up for time he lost "during the more intense work years" and even stated that he would relish the chance to retire much earlier and just spend his days with his wife and kids. The second man shared a fantasy of how wonderful life could be in retirement: "That's when I get retired and then see my children, even my grandchildren, hopefully. That's what comes to mind. I imagine I would have a beautiful house somewhere. I don't know, in China or somewhere, and play with my grandkids. That's retirement. That's really a heavenly life, I think."

Case Examples

The following case examples represent a summary of the salient themes that emerged across the entire interview for two of the study participants. This material is included to provide a more continuous overview of thematic data for these two men. The subjects presented here were selected based on their different visions of future work and family life. Whereas one indicated that he hoped to

balance these domains, the other clearly stated that, for him, work would take priority over personal life. For the current sample of participants, these men thus represent different poles on the dimension of thought about the intersection of work and family. Moreover, these cases will help to illustrate how certain differences between their earlier experiences are related to thematic variations in each man's goals and beliefs about balance between personal and professional time.

Case 1

"John"[2] was a 29-year-old, married white male who had been born and raised in the Midwest. He graduated from a four-year military academy, after which he served for nearly five years as an officer in the armed forces, his sole full-time work experience prior to entering business school. At the time of the interview, John was finishing his second year of the MBA program. He completed a summer internship with a top investment bank and had received an offer to return to this firm as a full-time employee after graduation. He and his wife had been married for several years, but had no children. John's parents, who he described as "middle class" and "definitely not well off," were still married and living in the Midwest, not far from his younger brother.

John described his past work experience in the military as being very interpersonally-oriented, or "soft-skilled." As an officer, he had the opportunity to lead a significant number of other men in intense situations and was frequently away from his wife on missions for a month at a time. When asked what stood out

[2] In each case, the subject's name has been changed to preserve confidentiality.

about his work experiences, John focused on incidents in which he interacted with senior officers and was relied upon to deliver information or manage problems. For example, he recounted an exercise in which he served as liaison between a 120-person company and a 1500-person brigade and had to advise a "full-bird colonel" on how to clear a simulated minefield. From his description, John clearly relished the chance to be in contact with this high-ranking officer and to be held accountable for solving problems during the complex exercise in order to make the mission a success and "help the company save face in the eyes of the brigade commander." In another instance, he reported that he was "basically the right-hand man to a one-star general" who commanded large forces while on a 30-day stint in a volatile world region. John enjoyed the chance to "ride along" with this leader in his personal helicopter and felt "very privileged for some very top secret briefings." He said, "I kind of saw how the inner – how everything really came together." Statements like these point to John's desire to have access to the top people and reveal how salient an issue leadership, or seniority, is for him.

The theme of seniority was also evident in John's discussion of influences on his career choice to become an investment banker. He described numerous experiences in which older, more experienced men advised him on such decisions. One example included a talk during high school with his friend's father, the president of a large publicly traded corporation. Though John had already been accepted to a joint undergrad/graduate medical program and planned to become a doctor, this senior executive convinced him that a career in the military was worth considering by saying, "What this country needs now is

leaders and you need to go to a place where you are going to become a leader." John revealed that he made the decision to apply to a military academy "right there on the spot." Later, he sealed his decision to go to business school and enter investment banking after networking and being invited to sit in on a client meeting with an alumnus of the same military academy, who was also a managing director at a bank. John enjoyed seeing how this professional interacted with senior-level officers from the client company and realized that banking offered what he liked in a job: some analytical work along with personal interaction and "dealing with some high level, senior people in companies." Moreover, he also expressed great respect for his father-in-law, the president of a successful company, who first advised him to explore investment banking as a career option. John additionally reported that he was influenced by reading about famous business personalities, whose well-known success stories gave him exposure to the lifestyle of finance professionals.

Although John remembered visiting his father's office building as a young boy and wanting to someday work in the "corner" office, he did not include his father on the list of career influences. John clearly admired the hard work his father put in over more than 15 years in sales and training at a large corporation, but felt his dad had failed to make significant career progress because "people have taken advantage of him" and held him back because he does so much of their work for them. John said that he learned a lesson from his father's professional struggles and specified, "I do not want to have that happen to me as well." Furthermore, he revealed that his father was unable to pursue his original

goal of becoming a veterinarian and that work was not one of his parents' top priorities, but "one of those necessary things that they have to do." He explained, "I think they probably are a little bit more of the mindset of the people that they work to live type of people than live to work."

Despite this attitude, John emphasized that his father "tried to instill in me the hard work ethic," born of his parents' Midwestern upbringing and values. After John started a neighborhood lawn care business, his father went around checking his work and would point out mistakes or unfinished areas, explaining, "Your job is not done until it's perfect." His mother also reinforced this "invaluable trait." Consequently, John now checks all of his work to make sure it is perfect before he puts his name on it, suggesting that this theme remains particularly salient for him. Interestingly, despite the hard work ethic they promoted, John revealed that his parents were somewhat concerned about how demanding his job as an investment banker will be.

John described his family as a "traditional" one in which his mother was a homemaker while his father served as the breadwinner. "She sacrificed a career to raise us," he explained of his mother, "And I will be forever thankful because I think that's made me the person I am today." Despite his father's hard work and efforts to make sure that everything was 100 percent on the job, John remembered that his dad was "always around me and I know how valuable that is in someone's life." He expressed a desire to do the same for his own children in the future. Although he indicated that these parental values were especially important, John also spent much time during the interview talking about his wife's parents. When

asked for memories of family holidays, he recounted a time spent with his in-laws and seemed particularly impressed by their level of financial success and worldly knowledge. John clearly admired his father-in-law's lucrative career trajectory. He also explained that he and his wife go to her parents, not his, when they need financial advice, such as recommendations about buying an apartment in New York.

John's vision of future personal and professional life included his belief that he was aware of the rigorous demands of working for an investment bank. "I think I kind of know what I'm getting into," he said, anticipating being able to "tolerate" the long hours, just as he did in the military. Furthermore, he suspected the environment would be "very intense" because, at the associate level, he was expected to be perfect and make no mistakes. Nonetheless, he felt this intensity would stimulate his learning process and "if you are willing to put forth the effort and sacrifice, it is going to be rewarding work. And work won't seem like work." As with his prior job, John looked forward to having his clients rely on him as a "trusted advisor." He anticipated that his role would initially be much like that of a junior officer in the military, in that he would be "living for that one spot" when he could provide senior executives with the necessary answer or information. For John, this role was seen as a way to make an impact early in his career, again highlighting the salience of seniority in his conception of professional life.

Despite feeling that he could handle the demands of his job, John planned to reevaluate this career choice after two or three years at work. He said that one reason he chose to enter banking was because the skills he would learn were

portable and he anticipated being able to eventually go and work for one of his clients if his career at the bank did not progress. He added that he and his wife had reached a "consensus" that they were willing for him to sacrifice personal time during the next few years in an effort to advance his career. After this period, they hoped to start a family and expected to then assess whether the trade-offs inherent in his demanding job were worth maintaining.

John was clear that he "would not be fulfilled" if he did not have children and said that, although he and his wife currently shared household tasks, their "mutual goal" was for her role to shift entirely to one of full-time mother and homemaker once they have kids. Though he felt he would be "grateful for our role shift at that point," he also hoped that his wife would have some sort of role outside their home, whether as a volunteer or getting involved in charity work. This hope seemed connected to the memory of a fight his parents once had over his mother's feelings of worthlessness as a non-working mother. Of the fight, John said, "I will never forget that." Reflecting on his own anticipated role as family breadwinner, he explained that he wanted to be available to his wife and children as much as he could. He also acknowledged the problems that could ensue if parents are not around for their kids. John indicated that he hoped to achieve some balance between his personal and professional life, but his responses suggested that he felt he would need to make some kind of career change in the future in order to achieve this goal.

When asked to define success and what he hoped to accomplish, John downplayed monetary gain. "It's not first and foremost," he said, but specified

that having money would make doing other things much easier. Though he expected to earn a good living and have a comfortable lifestyle, John also wanted to provide his family with worldly "knowledge." That is, "kind of pass on what I've learned through some of these hopefully great experiences I will have in the future as well as things I have been able to do in the past." He also hoped to give back to the community, not just through economic contributions, but also as an adviser. Likewise, he anticipated feeling successful if he achieved a leadership position, both in the business world and outside it, so that people would look to him as an authority:

> A decision-maker. A person people look to and, I guess, not only within the business career but also outside of business. Maybe within the community. Someone that people look up to and aspire to either ask for advice or that people want to have me involved in their organization or their endeavor. People that would respect my opinion.

This statement suggests that John looked forward to becoming just the type of leader – whether business executive or military officer – that he had looked up to throughout his adolescence and young adulthood.

Case 2

"Alex" was completing his first year of the MBA program at the time of his interview. Born in the Far East and raised in Europe, he was a single 30-year-old male of Asian descent who had earned a medical degree before leaving this field to work in business as a management consultant. After working for several years, his employer sponsored[3] him to go to business school. Alex expected to

[3] Some large corporations offer to pay an employee's graduate school tuition in exchange for a commitment to return to the company for a specified period of time following graduation.

return to consulting after graduation, but remained willing to consider other employment opportunities. He had never been married, but dated and had been in prior relationships with women. His parents, who were still married, lived in Europe, as did his younger sister.

Alex described his past work experience in terms of his desire for "excitement and adventure." He initially fulfilled this need as an ambulance driver while performing mandatory military service, which led him to enter medical school. Alex's ambition was to become a surgeon so that he could have "impact" and also experience some adventure. However, he left after becoming frustrated with the field's "bureaucratic" nature and feeling like "there was no way to change that at all." He subsequently found a job working as a management consultant, first to pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies and later to private equity firms. When asked what he remembered about this work, Alex noted the long hours and the pressure to deliver advice to clients on short notice. Although he acknowledged that working in this manner had its downside, he found the "uncertainty" of whether he was providing the correct advice to be very exciting. He also enjoyed the frequent travel opportunities associated with his job. For Alex, this hectic lifestyle was viewed as a positive experience, one that reinforced the salience of "excitement and adventure."

When asked about influences on his career choice, Alex replied, "Certainly my family. You cannot deny your family." However, he was not specific about the nature of their role in his thinking about professional goals. Alex indicated that his decision to further pursue consulting probably stemmed

from “just the experience in my life – whatever I have experienced so far,” including his prior consulting job. He clearly enjoyed the work he had done in this field and would most likely go back to his sponsoring company. Interestingly, he also mentioned a high school teacher who once advised him to choose a career that would allow him to be in a position of influence, so that he could stimulate positive social change.

Alex said that he could not remember most of his childhood, but he seemed to have a clear sense of his family experience. His parents were both doctors and, by his description, “middle class, upper middle class” people who each had his/her own private practice. According to Alex, his father would have preferred to become an engineer, but for some unknown reason was unable to do so. Alex felt that his family was non-traditional in that his mother worked longer hours and said, “I was very much raised by my father.” This set-up meant that his dad did most of the housework and spent more time with the children, an experience Alex connected to his own “flexibility” and lack of strict role values. He also emphasized that his mother’s focus on work sometimes left him feeling rejected, especially when she came home late and was too tired to spend time with him. Still, Alex claimed to have a “good” relationship with his parents, though he admitted, “There was always some kind of distance. My parents were not my buddies.” He revealed that he mostly preferred to solve problems on his own rather than confiding in his parents. Though not sure of the reason, Alex said that he did not want to get too close to them, but he wondered during the interview if this preference was “weird.” At the same time, when asked to describe an

experience with his family, Alex remembered a "very good time together" when he, his sister, and their parents spent the weekend with each other. He added, "I think what sometimes comes into my mind is the times where we were very close together…and we had a very good time as a family." Yet, when asked to tell about a holiday memory, Alex recalled an experience when he traveled alone, without his family. These recollections underscored his simultaneous desire for closeness and wish for separation from his family, a salient theme that also emerged in Alex's discussion of future life.

Alex described his parents' work in terms of the difficulties in maintaining a successful medical practice. He felt their biggest challenge was to make enough money to keep these businesses going while also supporting a family. In order to accomplish this goal, Alex explained, his parents used complementary skills to work as a team. Whereas his father managed more of the household and childrearing duties, his mom took care of the "business side." Moreover, he noted that working hard was "just something they consider as given. And which I also consider as given." He identified with their "immigrant" values of working hard and making money to support oneself. "They just want their children to grow up in a stable environment," he explained, "Where they can make a decent living and hopefully they will achieve something, either if it's money or position or whatever." Alex was impressed with his parents' ability to accomplish this goal and said that his parents' successful practices made him feel good.

When asked what his life might be like five years in the future, Alex replied, "I will probably work a lot." He expected to adapt his lifestyle to his

employer's needs, a situation that he thought would lead to "some shortcomings on a personal level." Alex noted the ways that work life, particularly frequent business travel, was not conducive to having a personal life. Moreover, he surmised that his professional life would be "constant" while his personal life might be "volatile," much like the lives of executives he encountered before. Alex also posited that it was important to avoid becoming too emotionally attached to people at work, for this would impede his ability to make objective decisions, such as laying-off unnecessary employees. As with his parents, he would strive to keep some "distance" between himself and his colleagues in order to maintain objectivity. This "distance," he argued, would likely be transferred to his private life.

Not surprisingly, Alex expressed much ambivalence about whether or not he wanted a family life in the future. Though his "Asian" values and sense of "loyalty" to his family gave him the idea that he was expected to marry and have children, Alex was not sure that a "stable" personal life was something he really wanted. He doubted whether his need for "excitement and adventure" was good for him over the long term, but also suggested that, like other business people who are highly focused on working, his values were "not normal." When asked about his thoughts on male roles, Alex did not address this issue in terms of family or providerhood. Rather, he talked about the ways in which he was quite aggressive as a younger man, always trying to impress people and show how smart he was, and that he has sought to temper this impulse over time. Nonetheless, he asserted that aggression was still an important trait for males in the business world.

Alex was clear that if he decided to get married, his wife would "have to live with the fact that I cannot be at home every evening and she also has to know and respect and actually support it that I will have times where I need to work a lot and I cannot take care of too much of her. She has to know it and she has to need to want to lead such a life." Furthermore, he was unsure about having children. If he were to have kids, Alex said he would want to give them a "good family life," as in being home every night for dinner and play time with them, but he felt he would not be able to do so because of work. Thus, he anticipated trying to "keep in touch as often as I can" via telephone and alleviating his guilt, or "bad conscience," by giving them "big presents" whenever he returned. Alex seemed to indicate that this would not be an ideal way to engage in family life, but remained clear that work would always take priority. "For me, it is my life," he explained, without expressing any ideas about how to achieve a balance between the professional and personal domains.

Rather than having any specific career goals, Alex said that his plan was "more like a direction, more vision," in which he expected to position himself well for opportunities that will arise over time, or as he put it, "Just like a trader waiting for a good opportunity – waiting for a spread or something like that." Though he claimed to have no specific dreams in the past about his professional identity, he stated that he has always wanted to be in a position "where I can lead, where I can have some impact." In the future, he hoped to be able to look back and see some tangible evidence of this impact, such as a company that he built. This desire was also linked to Alex's sense that capitalism benefits society. "I'm a

strong believer that the freedom of the world is based on sound businesses," he explained, further elaborating on this idea:

> A lot of what is going on in the world will be driven by businesses and by economic decisions. So that's why I think the work I'm doing is going to be more important and, if you look at MBA classes, not often, but a lot of them will be the future rulers. Not only business leaders, but they are going to shape a lot of what is going on in the world. Because businesses have tremendous impact on people's lives and also what is going on in the world.

Clearly, Alex expected his work – as part of the larger business community – to serve the interests of all people.

Alex was the only study participant who seemed to privilege making money above other aims, stating that he viewed this goal as a "natural" priority among capitalistic business people. When asked to define success, he included earning money as part of his response, but also listed his desire to make an impact in his work life and "leave something back" as evidence of this accomplishment. Alex mentioned wanting to give something to charity, though he felt the "true objective" behind such contributions – for himself and others – was to network and build relationships rather than simply be altruistic. "I might do that because you have to do it," he said. Interestingly, he also hoped to have "good relationships" with family and friends, though he seemed uncertain about whether this goal would be possible. On some level, Alex's awareness of his commitment to work life made him to realize that certain aspects of his personal life would likely suffer over the long term. Nonetheless, he anticipated spending his retirement years catching up on things in his private life that he was unable to do while fully engaged in his career. "Right now I could do this stuff," he explained,

"But I don't want to do it because I want to focus on my work…you have to set priorities in life and focus. And I think after retirement I will probably do some of that."

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The core purpose of this research, as stated previously, was to understand the ways that male business students entering demanding careers envision and discuss issues related to their personal and professional lives. Analysis of semi-structured interviews with a sample of these men resulted in a number of findings about how participants conceptualize past work experience, the multiple influences on current job choices and thoughts about professional goals, and the anticipation of what future personal and professional life – particularly the intersection of these domains – will be like. These findings are discussed below in an effort to discern what is most salient for these men when they think about such issues as well as the clinical implications of this thought process. Additionally, the two case examples presented in the Results chapter are discussed in terms of the dynamics underlying these issues. The limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are also addressed.

Work History

This section discusses themes related to the respondents' presentation of information about past work experiences. As such, this material is retrospective in nature and represents what these men were able to recollect about prior jobs in the context of the interview situation. In an effort to highlight emergent themes, this discussion weaves together issues presented in the various subsections under the Participant Work History category of the Results chapter.

Enjoyment of Intense Work Environments

Regardless of the type of work performed before business school, each participant readily described the organizational culture surrounding prior jobs. Almost all of these men viewed past work environments as very intense, both in terms of expectations for performance and the time and energy commitments necessary to get the job done. Though a few participants noted the drawbacks of intense business culture, the majority claimed to enjoy working in this manner and considered a rigorous approach to be normative. However, reasons for their enjoyment varied. Some identified with the work hard-play hard ethos so prevalent among Wall Street professionals, while others highlighted the camaraderie, or sense of kinship, that developed when forced to work long hours and in close quarters with other hard-driving peers. For several men, this aspect of work symbolized the need to "pay your dues" at the early stages of their careers. Nonetheless, other men were quick to reassure that these challenges did not go unrewarded. Most detailed a variety of perks made available by their employers, including worldwide travel, luxury accommodations, and leisure activities funded by expense accounts for the purpose of entertaining clients. These accounts of corporate trappings were quite consistent with those described by professionals who have worked in such environments and subsequently written about their intense experiences (Lott, 2005; Rolfe & Troob, 2000). Furthermore, the facility with which participants articulated these aspects of past work experiences suggests that this group of men was particularly attuned to the requisite demands

of organizational life and also to the compensation available to those willing and able to fulfill what the business world required of them. This attunement to the demanding nature of work was also reflected in the respondents' articulation of sacrifices they anticipated making in order to be successful in their careers, an issue that is addressed later in a discussion of how these men envision future professional life.

Making an Impact at Work

A majority of men in the study described how they made an impact while working at previous jobs. These contributions were linked to a sense of pride or increased self-esteem due to perceived good performance in a variety of capacities. For some men, working on a successful project made them feel particularly important. The ability to raise large amounts of investment capital or to close a sizable transaction was also cited as a significant achievement. Others derived satisfaction from exposure to and interaction with senior organizational leaders, especially if they were able to function in an advisory role to these managers. A few men pointed to their early experience in hands-on leadership roles as evidence of making an impact. Though stressful, such management opportunities were felt to be quite enjoyable. Even those who did not have the chance to manage people at this early point in their careers were pleased to be in charge of projects where their performance was ultimately measured by the quality of work product they delivered.

Overall, three quarters of the sample, or nine men, described past work experience in terms of the impact they made on their organizations. Common to all of these men was an apparent desire for control over what they were doing at work, regardless of their positions in the organizational hierarchy. Several participants even recalled becoming frustrated by a perceived lack of control and, consequently, made the decision to transition out of a particular job or career path in order to escape this situation. The impact-orientation of these men was thus critical, both to their sense of satisfaction at work and to making important career decisions, and will be discussed below in relation to the participants' vision of future professional life. This attribute fits with the "high drive and achievement desire" (p. 287) that Henry (1949) described in business executives more than a half-century ago and is also consistent with Waldroop and Butler's (1997) concept of *enterprise control*, one of several core business interests that emerged from extensive studies of MBAs working in organizations. Enterprise control is associated with an individual's desire to be in charge of organizations or operations, a tendency that matches the inclination to control work processes that was evident in some members of this sample.

Job Choice and Transition

Respondents listed a variety of reasons for selecting prior jobs. Their decisions were based on such factors as cultural fit, perceived excitement of the work, and the anticipated challenges and rewards of the position. In all of these cases, men seemed to be looking for some fit between their own personality traits

and those of the work environment, an approach to career choice that is consistent with the trait and factor theory described extensively in the career literature (Betz, Fitzgerald, & Hill, 1898; Brown & Brooks, 1990; Holland, 1966, 1973; Roe, 1956).

Though some men were deliberate in pursuing certain fields, others attributed a degree of randomness to their early career progression. Rather than going after jobs in a premeditated way, a number of these men had a limited sense of what they wanted to do upon graduating from college and took opportunities that seemed to arise by chance. Five participants, nearly half the sample, recalled obtaining jobs in this manner. One man captured the experience when he admitted that he "had no clue" until his participation in a Master's program steered him toward his first full-time job. Of course, having "no clue" did not mean that these men wandered aimlessly while awaiting job offers. Instead, most explored industries that might interest them or accepted the chance to engage in jobs that offered unique experiences, such as working abroad. Rather than focusing on a more predetermined set of career choices, such men took advantage of unexpected job opportunities or altered their career paths based on how their interests changed over time.

This opportunism characterized many of the job transitions these men reported prior to business school. Each of the 12 participants changed jobs at least once in the years before starting his MBA program. A few switched to a different position or functional area within the same organization, while others changed industries altogether. Ultimately, these moves were made for one of two reasons:

either an opportunity arose that prompted the transition, or men left because they became dissatisfied with some aspect of their work. Again, such opportunities were largely unanticipated and usually originated from friends or colleagues in other organizations. Conversely, those who left jobs because they were dissatisfied listed several reasons for this feeling, including problems with advancement, the inability to work in a desired capacity, or simply the realization that the work was not fulfilling enough to continue. One way to understand this dissatisfaction is to think of it as an incompatibility that developed over time between the individual's work goals and what the organization provided, which led certain men to seek other opportunities.

Making changes in this way also fits with the process theory approach detailed by Vroom (1966) and others in the career choice literature (Ginzberg, Ginzberg, Axelrad, & Herman, 1951; Hall, 1976). The implications of this sample's career opportunism will be further addressed in a discussion of findings about the respondents' visions of future professional life.

Influences on Career Choice

The following section includes a discussion of themes drawn from material the study participants articulated in regard to various influences on their career choices at the time the interviews were conducted. As with the prior section on Work History, this category presents retrospective material and combines information addressed in different subsections of the Career Choice segment of the Results chapter in order to emphasize relevant themes.

The Role of Parents

All of the participants recalled ways in which parents influenced their thinking about professional life and career choice. This experience was particularly salient for men in terms of three overarching themes: the work ethic learned from parents, an awareness of parents' work time and availability, and the gender roles their parents inhabited. For several respondents, the sense of work ethic communicated by parents was especially strong. These participants remembered how much their mothers and fathers worked and how they talked about the value of hard work. Most of these men were expected to work hard and concluded that such efforts were "given" or an assumed part of one's experience. More than simply putting in time on the job, though, participants noted how their parents, especially their fathers, stressed the importance of delivering a high quality work product. According to these men, work was important to their parents both as a means of providing financially and, in a few cases, a source of enjoyment.

Participants also clearly remembered how much time their parents spent at work and their availability during childhood. Feelings about this issue varied greatly. Though some men understood that their parents had to work, they expressed disappointment in the lack of family time due to these professional commitments. One man reported feeling "rejected" by his mother's unavailability while others indicated how this factor inhibited relationships with their parents. On the other hand, some participants found their parents to be more available.

This availability, or family orientation, was particularly evident in families where parents worked for themselves and were able to set their own hours, thus being sure to eat dinner at home every night or make time to attend to important school or extracurricular activities. In some cases, even parents who worked for business organizations arranged their work around family needs and consequently sacrificed potential career opportunities. Men recognized these efforts as attempts to privilege family values above work life. Furthermore, several indicated how exposure to this attitude influenced their decision to pursue careers in which they would have a similar ability to control their time. With the exception of one man who initially became an attorney like his father, none of these men decided to enter the same fields as their parents. This finding also held true for men whose parents owned and operated a family business.

When asked about the roles their mothers and fathers inhabited, some participants described their parents as more traditional than others. These "traditional" relationships, like those delineated by Gerson (2003), were defined as single-earner households in which fathers served as breadwinners and mothers as housewives. A majority of men – seven altogether – grew up in what they described as less traditional families and recalled that their parents engaged in complementary roles, typically based on which skills were required for performance of each role. Several men remarked on how well this arrangement seemed to work and a few indicated that seeing parents operate in this way influenced their desire to do likewise with their future spouses/partners. Their

views on what this family life might be like down the road are addressed below in a discussion of how these men envisioned the future.

Other Influences on Career Choice

When asked to specify who or what influenced their career choices, participants listed a range of factors, including family, culture, work content/style, compensation, and peers. Other influences mentioned at different points during the interview included successful business people, the self-assessment process, and various school experiences. Interestingly, no single one of these factors was purported to be the sole influence on job selection. Most of these men seemed to establish their current professional goals based on a combination of experiences and desired job characteristics. For example, half of the participants alluded to culture – whether one's culture-of-origin or the "herd" mentality of business culture – as a salient factor, but some of these same men also emphasized the importance of work content in choosing a job. As previously mentioned, these findings suggest that men utilized both trait and factor (Betz, Fitzgerald, & Hill, 1898; Brown & Brooks, 1990; Holland, 1966, 1973; Roe, 1956) and process theory (Vroom, 1966; Ginzberg, Ginzberg, Axelrad, & Herman, 1951; Hall, 1976) approaches to making career choices. That is, men chose jobs because certain of their individual traits matched with traits in the work environment (trait and factor theory) and also because, over time, they recognized how particular jobs were consistent with their work goals and selected these opportunities accordingly (process theory). In the example included above, some participants determined

that a hiring organization's culture matched with their own individual cultural traits, but also chose a career path based on an ongoing assessment of the work content.

Although one respondent acknowledged that financial compensation was an important part of his job choice, money was not an overriding factor according to most of these men. In fact, some participants who listed money as an aspect of the decision making process also noted the importance of using this resource to give back to the community in the future. Whereas all of these men clearly wanted to earn a good living, the desire to achieve wealth for wealth's sake was noticeably absent from their descriptions of what influenced them to pursue certain jobs or industries. This finding contradicts the popular media stereotype of MBAs as money-hungry careerists who are only out to make a buck and corroborates research suggesting that business professionals are at least equally concerned with other job attributes like, for example, socially responsible business practices (Montgomery & Ramus, 2003). Nonetheless, the participants' stated attitudes toward money during the interviews could have been influenced by a number of factors, such as the knowledge that the interviewer was an MBA or concern that, as a psychologist-in-training, the interviewer might judge those who privilege material needs above other goals. This issue will be addressed later in a discussion of the study's limitations.

The Role of Dreams

Only two participants remembered having a childhood desire to work in business. The majority of this sample had no specific early dreams or fantasies about their future professional lives. This finding was consistent with Srebnick's (2001) study on men's dreams and the age thirty transition, in which half the sample claimed to have had no professional dreams while growing up. Even those men who had early ideas about entering the business world admitted that they really had no concept of what it meant to work in this arena. Several others had only vague notions about what they wanted to be. Similarly, most of these men indicated that their parents had no specific professional dreams or goals for them. Those parents who had a sense of what their sons could do for a living were ultimately flexible in this outlook. Most simply wanted their sons to be happy, no matter what paths they chose.

The lack of a definitive childhood or pre-adult dream about work life for most of these men is also consistent with Levinson's (1978) contention that not all men have such dreams. According to Levinson, forming a dream – which includes a sense of professional identity – is a key task of early adulthood (roughly, ages 20-40) rather than childhood. Those unable to accomplish this task, he suggests, might never develop a deep sense of purpose in their lives and thus risk experiencing a crisis in later adulthood. Nonetheless, Markus and Nemus (1986) theorize that individuals have many possible selves, or representations of what they might become, which give meaning and direction to adult life. These representations can engender a sense of freedom based on the idea that the self is

not fixed and that it can change or transform. This concept may help to explain why, for the most part, men in the current study did not articulate clear professional dreams in the same manner as some of Levinson's (1978) subjects. As discussed in the next section, these men envisioned having "portable" skills that would allow them to access opportunities with different organizations and did not expect to stay forever at their first jobs. In this sense, they imagined a number of possible professional selves that could change over time. Whereas they might not have expressed dreams per se, the respondents clearly had visions of what future work and private life would be like. These visions will be addressed below.

Envisioning the Future

This section addresses themes that emerged as participants discussed expectations about future personal and professional life. Unlike in the prior two categories in this chapter, the material underlying these themes was prospective and thus representative of fantasies the respondents had about what is yet to happen. Some of the themes – including the desire to make an impact, the opportunistic nature of job selection, and the recognition of work demands – were particularly salient given that men discussed them in the context of both past experience and anticipations of the future.

What Men Want Out of Work

Rather than emphasize financial remuneration when asked what is meaningful about the career paths they will follow, most participants focused on

other forms of compensation, such as having interpersonal contact with colleagues. This finding was again consistent with Montgomery and Ramus' (2003) research indicating that MBA students are interested in job attributes beyond just financial compensation. Several men in the current study anticipated that the ability to learn on the job would be a significant benefit. Though some valued being "paid to learn," many felt the intellectual challenge of the work to be most important. This sentiment fits with Kotter's (1995) recommendation that business professionals look for new learning opportunities throughout their careers. Respondents also felt that work should be enjoyable. Even those who highlighted income potential as meaningful acknowledged that such compensation would be less important than being challenged intellectually and enjoying the job.

Participants also cited the opportunity to make an impact as an important and meaningful element of future professional life. This finding was consistent with their descriptions of past work experience. In fact, of the nine men who highlighted former work accomplishments, eight stressed that making an impact would be an important aspect of future jobs, indicating that this theme was particularly salient for these participants. Half of these men felt they would be able to accomplish something right away in their new positions, whether adding value to an organizational team, serving as a "trusted advisor," or even "being part of the engine that drives everything." These statements were reminiscent of Maccoby's (2000) descriptions of productive narcissism in the workplace, which imply that a healthy dose of narcissistic personality – including the charisma

narcissists use to engage others in pursuits they find valuable – is often important to the successful management and leadership of organizations. Large corporations require CEOs and presidents who can rally employees around the organization's vision. Furthermore, the consistency of this theme across the respondents' descriptions of both past and future work underscores their impact-orientation and suggests that these men will assess future career opportunities based on the degree to which they feel able to accomplish change or have a sense of control over the work they do.

This focus on impact and control may for some men reflect a grandiose desire to make things happen at work, or as one man put it, "You are sort of making the economy happen, being part of the engine that drives everything." Those who felt unable to control their professional environments became discouraged and transitioned out of jobs or altered career plans, a split that suggests a sense of agency was critical to their ability to tolerate the work. We can hypothesize that some other men found this theme especially salient based on their parents' ability to be effective at work. For example, one respondent described his father's inability to get promoted because his high-quality work made his boss look so good that this manager did not want to give him up to another position. Without directly linking this experience to his own ambitions for success as an investment banker, this respondent acknowledged that he became quite frustrated over time with his father's employer for not rewarding his dad's talent and efforts. As previously mentioned, the study participants were, on the whole, quite aware of the positive and negative aspects of their parents' work

lives. It makes sense that their experiences of these successes and frustrations would play a role in how these respondents map out plans and desires for their own professional lives.

Hopes for Success

As noted above, consistent with their descriptions of meaningful aspects of work, most participants seemed to downplay the importance of economic prosperity. Some respondents described other hopes for success at work, including having respect from coworkers, being in control of their time, or being able to assist with their colleagues' professional development. Others felt they would be successful if they were merely happy. Whereas these men certainly anticipated being well paid for the work, their stated ideas about success focused more on achieving financial independence and not having to worry about money. When describing material goals, they viewed money as a means to accomplish other aims, including the chance to give back to the community through charitable donations. Similarly, their ideas about retirement placed little emphasis on achieving sizable wealth. Though some respondents listed material possessions they hoped to enjoy, such as a house, several others wished to live comfortably, without concern for their economic positions. This apparent focus on security above material accumulation runs counter to the popular media's frequently stereotyped image of Wall Street professionals as free spenders looking to burn through their year-end bonuses.

One could speculate that men who downplayed the financial aspects of success had, in the context of the interview situation, simply repressed their desire to make lots of money. The fact that the interviewer was an MBA who chose to pursue work as a psychologist may have led some participants to edit comments about their huge earning potential, perhaps in the knowledge that they would be more economically successful than the interviewer. Similarly, men could find it difficult to accept that their present career paths will enable them to earn much more than their parents ever could. Several noted how much their parents sacrificed in order to provide them with a good life and this factor may be cause for guilt about outshining those who worked so hard to put them in a position to succeed.

Of course, this speculation raises the question of how attitudes may shift for these men once they actually move into their jobs and work side by side with others whose incomes afford them a conspicuously consumptive lifestyle. Wachtel (2003) emphasizes the significant role that social context plays in shaping how we think about money and our material needs. He writes, "A wide variety of features in our own society increase the likelihood that the configuration of psychological forces that evolves in an individual will find its structuring and expression in the materialistic end of the spectrum and will contain elements of insatiability" (p. 112). One has only to consider the endlessly rising cost of living in the New York metropolitan area and New York City's celebration of consumer culture to understand how such insatiability is fostered. Study participants who plan to live and work in this part of the world will not only

have to pay more for their basic living needs, but they will also be exposed to friends and coworkers who are trying desperately to keep up with their affluent peers. While on relatively equal economic footing as business students, these men – by virtue of the high-powered careers they plan to establish – will soon enter competitive work environments oriented to production and consumption. The pursuit of material goods may be hard for some of them to escape.

Wachtel (2003) also reminds us that people do not always acknowledge their materialism:

> Few people believe or openly avow that having more money or material goods is the primary motivator or goal in their lives. Most people would certainly say that a good relationship or a warm family or happy children count more. But the reality of American life is often quite different. The actual choices and trade-offs people make may be quite at odds with what they say they want. (p. 113)

This comment suggests that some participants in the current study, while they seemingly downplayed material aims during the interviews, may not be conscious of how important their paychecks are to them. Yet, as Wachtel's statement implies, the business contexts these men inhabit will likely remind them of this fact every day. Furthermore, the trade-offs some of these men will be required to make in order to earn good incomes could lead to future conflicts over whether personal sacrifices are a fair price to pay for professional success.

Anticipating Professional Life

When anticipating what future professional life will be like, respondents addressed some important issues, including perceived work demands and expectations about career progression. As with their descriptions of past work

experience, a majority of participants discussed the demands inherent in the career paths they had chosen, even though they were not prompted to do so. Specifically, two-thirds of the sample claimed some awareness of the sacrifices they would have to make in order to succeed in these future jobs. This finding contradicts Bailyn's (1984) contention that most professionals do not consider how work will impinge on private life when choosing jobs. Both men whose parents instilled a hard work ethic and some whose mothers and fathers did not emphasize this value said that they expected to work hard, which suggests that a learned parental work ethic alone cannot account for the respondents' intention to work hard at their jobs. Another factor may be that long hours will simply be a necessity for some of these men, regardless of individual orientation to the work. A recent article in Fast Company Magazine (Tischler, 2005, April) links this phenomenon to the vicissitudes of today's corporate environment:

> Time was when toiling 60 hours a week signaled that you were a corporate warrior, willing to put work at the top of your life's priorities. Now, with corporate downsizing forcing staffers to shoulder the load of fallen colleagues, and a job market still so frosty that workers know they go home early at their peril, folks far down the corporate food chain are often logging grueling hours, less because they're passionate about their work than because they're scared not to. (p. 55)

Of the five men who described their parents as successful in professional life, three said their mothers and/or fathers emphasized a strong work ethic at home while two did not. Five other men indicated that their parents were not successful at work. Two of these latter respondents said their parents nonetheless promoted a hard work ethic whereas two others claimed that their parents did not emphasize this value. Consequently, there was some variance among the parental models

these men were exposed to in terms of the connection between stated work ethic and perceived level of professional success.

The opportunistic nature of past job selection and transition was also reflected in this group's statements about future professional life, making this a particularly salient theme. Eight men indicated that they would most likely transition out of their initial post-MBA jobs after some period of time. The reasons for this anticipated move were consistent across this segment of the sample. Half of these men revealed how they chose this initial job because it was "portable." That is, the skills and experience accumulated in the position would translate to other jobs and organizations. Similarly, the other half described their first jobs as "stepping stones" that would "open doors" to other opportunities. Most of these men intended to reevaluate their options after working for a while at initial jobs. This finding suggests that some, if not a majority, of the men in this sample will change positions several times in the future. We can think of these men as career opportunists who are not committed to a single company or industry over the long term. Of course, this opportunism is likely driven to an extent by what Orrange (2002) views as the changing socio-historical context for work in this country:

> Downsizing and restructuring have increasingly become accepted practices in the corporate world since the 1980s. Much of this activity has been in response to mergers and takeovers, which had become commonplace by the mid-1980s as part of a general economic restructuring that has led to profound changes in the nature of professional work in America. Two of the most significant transformations associated with restructuring and downsizing have been the reduction of internal career ladders within the corporation, along with growing mistrust on the part of their employees. As a result, there has been growing consensus

> over the past decade that remaining loyal to one's corporate employer is unwise. (p. 315)

Men in the current study will enter the professional ranks in the midst of this changing context. Their career opportunism can on some level be considered a protective response – perhaps unconscious – to this reality. Furthermore, their interest in "portable" jobs reflects Kanter's (1995) "employability security" (p. 157), the idea that developing job skills in the present enhances one's ability to leverage these tools in order to obtain employment in the future.

The participants' intention to reevaluate career plans and keep options open may reflect a desire to avoid becoming stuck in a particular job, as some of their parents seemed to do. However, not all men described their parents' work in negative terms. One respondent, for example, identified with his father's success and enjoyment at being a lawyer and indicated that this factor initially led him to pursue a career in law. However, he subsequently left this path when discussions with colleagues about other opportunities led him to consider switching to investment banking, a choice he felt would be more prestigious and lucrative. This change seemed to reflect a disidentification with his father's path, or a process of separation-individuation in which he integrated a new professional identity. In another sense, such changes may be representative of an experience that other men in the sample will undergo throughout their careers. McWilliams (1994) might describe this experience in terms of narcissistic idealization and devaluation that manifests in a constant "ranking" (p. 173) process used to assess career opportunities. In other words, it is possible that many of these participants will "hedge their bets" over the course of their professional lives by initially

building up new job opportunities, then devaluing them and moving on once disappointed by intolerable aspects of the working environment. This phenomenon is reflected on Wall Street each January as executives, dissatisfied with their year-end bonuses, begin the search for another position.

Anticipating Personal Life

The participants' expectations about future personal life elucidated a number of themes, including the importance of being a provider, the issue of gender roles, and plans for family life. Men were not asked specifically about the salience of being providers, but most said that they expected to inhabit this role in some way. Interestingly, providerhood for these men was not simply a matter of making money. Though several anticipated the need to earn a significant income in order to support their families, others expressed a desire to give in a different way. For example, four respondents – one-third of the sample – said they wanted to impart worldly knowledge to family members while two other men stressed the importance of being emotionally or physically available to their loved ones. Regardless of what they hoped to give to their significant others, half of the participants viewed the provider role as particularly salient and made statements indicating that they either anticipated being the major provider in their families or that this role was the most important one they would inhabit. This attitude is consistent with literature that suggests a majority of men associate being a good father first and foremost with being a good provider (Thompson & Walker, 1989; Hood, 1993).

When asked about role arrangements they expected to make with partners or spouses, participants revealed an interesting contradiction. Two-thirds of the sample anticipated that their spouses/partners would either stay at home full-time to care for the house and children or that these significant others would at least remain at home for a period of years to manage such responsibilities before returning to the work force. Of these men, only three came from families in which parents adhered to traditional gender roles. Half of them also said they expected their spouses/partners to have a role outside the home, whether a paid job or some kind of volunteer or charity work. Komarovsky (1976) and Willinger (1993) describe similar findings in studies of male college students, while Orrange (2003) concludes that the same phenomenon exists among law and MBA students:

> These men generally tend to see themselves as breadwinners and therefore, almost by default, their future wives will be expected to fill homemaker roles – regardless of the fact that the men tend to support gender equality at work and home in the abstract. (p. 456)

This conclusion suggests that conflict looms in the future for those men who want their spouses/partners to be more than just homemakers, but who also expect them to take on the traditional responsibilities of this role. Fraenkel (2003) notes, "Numerous studies have documented that women actually work more hours than men when paid work, housework, and child care are combined" (p. 79). Coltrane (2000) adds, "On average, women perform two or three times as much housework as men, and the vast majority of men, as well as most women, rate these arrangements as fair. In part, this is because most husbands are employed more hours and earn more income than do their wives" (p. 1208). Based on their

interview responses, men in the current sample certainly anticipated working and earning more than their spouses/partners. What remains unclear, though, is how they will negotiate the division of role responsibilities with their significant others. Several men indicated their intention to be available to help out at home, but none mentioned how arrangements would be made when work demands increase, making them less able to share in these duties. Furthermore, the long hours these men are likely to face at the office can lead to temporal problems in their relationships at home, which are often a source of conflict for couples and families (Fraenkel & Wilson, 2000).

Although some participants worried about being economically prepared for a family or finding the right mate, nearly all expected to get married and have children at some point in the future. Most indicated that family would be a primary source of meaning in their lives, much like the sample of law and business students in Orrange's (1998, 2002, 2003) research. Nonetheless, these men also expressed a variety of concerns about the implications of starting a family. Several noted the importance of being available to their children, though some doubted their work schedules would permit them much flexibility in this regard. Others highlighted their need to be financially sound and expected to delay having children until they achieved this position.

Anticipating the Intersection of Personal and Professional Life

One of the most interesting findings in the study was the extent to which participants seemed to be aware of the difficulties inherent in attempting to

manage both personal and professional life. Part of this awareness no doubt stemmed from their recognition of how demanding their high-powered careers will be, as many worked in such industries before. Additionally, all but one of the respondents expressed a desire for some sort of balance between these domains. Whereas certain men articulated this wish as a more general life goal, others stated that they expected to achieve a balance by shifting priority from work to family over a period of time. Still others addressed this issue by stating their willingness to make a career change in the future to have more balance. Some even claimed they would be unwilling to sacrifice family time for work. However, most of these men also anticipated problems in accomplishing this goal. Several noted that they would have less control over the amount of time spent at work during initial years on the job. Furthermore, half of the participants made statements indicating that they would be willing to sacrifice personal for professional time early in their careers. Even some who said they were unwilling to prioritize work over family acknowledged that, at first, sacrifices would have to be made.

These findings reveal a number of issues linked to the way respondents conceptualized the intersection of personal and professional life. First, the desire for some sort of balance between these domains was particularly salient for this cohort of men, regardless of whether they perceived their parents as successful in managing work and family demands. Of the nine men who specifically discussed their parents' availability and/or ability to balance work and family, four expressed positive feelings while five concluded that their parents had been

unsuccessful in this regard. All but one of these men articulated some desire for personal/professional balance in the future, suggesting that this urge did not vary based on exposure to different parent modeling. Second, the fact that many participants anticipated sacrificing personal time in order to focus on work early in their careers implies that these men viewed the negotiation of work and personal life as a zero-sum game. That is, rather than seeing potential synergies between these domains, respondents seemed convinced that devotion to one area came at the expense of the other, much like the attitudes of executives and corporations described in the business management (Friedman, Christensen, & Degroot, 1998/2000) and family literature (Andrews & Bailyn, 1993). Third, participants expressed a number of contradictions in describing their hopes for personal and professional life. Several men who stated their desire for balance or unwillingness to sacrifice family time also discussed plans to "pay your dues" or trade-off personal for work time, especially in the first few years after business school. Many of these respondents intended to shift priority from work to family over time, but neglected to explain how this transition would take place. Finally, despite much discussion of the hope for balance, none of the participants offered specific ideas about how to negotiate between their personal and professional lives in order to achieve this goal. Some anticipated that their spouses/partners would stay home, at least for a period of time, yet they also wanted these significant others to have a role outside the home. Others expected to scale back work hours over time, but did not account for the impact of increased responsibility on their professional lives due to promotions. For some, having a

more senior job title might result in greater control over work schedules, whereas for others it will mean more time spent at the office or traveling in order to manage higher-level client relationships. Furthermore, Fraenkel (2001) notes how advances in technology have loosened boundaries between personal and professional life, such that "we're always just one beep, one phone call or one e-mail away from the working world" (p. 24). Even the most senior executives have become more accessible and are forced, just as junior employees, to respond to an ever-growing number of daily communications.

The underlying reasons for these contradictory statements and the lack of specific plans for managing work and life demands were not readily apparent from the interview data. One could hypothesize that, despite the participants' awareness of how difficult it will be to achieve some balance, they tend to repress the conflict between these domains by speaking in generalities about how to manage this problem. Moreover, the conflict itself is largely stimulated by the respondents' intention to work hard and "pay your dues," a choice that, for some, is linked to the work ethic promoted by their parents. How, then, do these men reconcile their need to work hard with their desire for work-life balance? Many cited the lack of control they would have over work hours – at least initially – as their employers demanded more of them early in their careers. By projecting the locus of control over work hours into their employers, these men are on some level splitting off their ambition and willingness to be hard driving as a means to advancement in the business world. Furthermore, they may be in denial of the inevitable disappointment their significant others will feel over their

unavailability due to work demands. This is especially true of those respondents who described similar feelings toward parents whose professional commitments compromised family time.

Context may also play a role in how the study participants formulate their ideas about the intersection of personal and professional life. Levinson's (1978) adult developmental framework would place these men squarely in the *age thirty transition* (ages 28-33), a time when they have the chance to reevaluate the adult life structure they have built so far and make changes to unsatisfactory elements of this structure. According to Levinson, this transition prepares men to enter the *settling down period* (ages 33-40) in which these changes are, ideally, worked out, thus setting the stage for successful entry into middle adulthood. Men in the current study were not completely out of the work world, nor were they fully engaged in it. Hence, their responses to the interview questions were based on ideas and fantasies about how life could or should be after graduating from business school. This developmental position may account for the lack of specific plans for managing work-life and achieving some sort of balance. Put differently, these men – most of who were unmarried and none of who had children – were anticipating how these aspects of their lives would play out before actually living them. We might expect their responses to change en vivo when faced with an imminent conflict between their personal and professional lives.

Case Examples Revisited

The case examples presented in the Results section revealed how a number of the themes discussed in the current chapter emerged across the interview for two of the sample participants, "John" and "Alex." The most salient of these themes will now be addressed in terms of the underlying psychodynamic issues they suggest in the experience of these two participants and of the larger sample. Such dynamics include oedipal issues, aggression and narcissism, defensive processes, and the transmission of family values. Wachtel (2003) posits that, "The great strength of psychoanalysis is not so much in its answers as in its questions" (p. 103). He also suggests:

> Psychoanalysis is, most of all, a point of view that probes beneath the surface of the obvious and raises questions about what we have comfortably assumed. Perhaps the most important product of a well-conducted analysis is increased curiosity. (p. 103)

A brief exploration of these dynamics, which are reflected in the themes these men present, is offered in the spirit of this statement, not to diagnose or specify a clinical formulation, but to hypothesize about what could be impacting the way they conceptualize their personal and professional lives.

Oedipal Issues

Both John and Alex made a number of statements during their interviews that suggested the presence of an underlying oedipal issue in their experiences. Although John seemed to respect his father for being available and making sacrifices for their family, he detailed numerous instances in which he sought out other authoritative, older men – whether senior executives or military leaders – to

ask for advice or to serve as a "right-hand man." John's adulation of these successful men and what they had accomplished was juxtaposed with his recognition that his father had "let people walk on him," leading to an inability to advance professionally. The "lesson" John claimed to learn from witnessing his father's struggle was to not let the same thing happen to his career, indicating that he intended to be more successful than, or to surpass his dad. Alex evidenced a similar urge in his description of his parents' non-traditional roles. He considered the fact that his mother worked more than his father, who managed most of the household tasks, to be "not normal." In stark contrast, Alex explained that he would not be available to perform such tasks for his family. He expected that his future wife would be a homemaker while he spent much of his time working and he was clear that any potential spouse would have to accept that he "cannot take care of too much of her." Like John, he anticipated being different from his father, who did not fit the hard-driving career profile Alex imagined for himself.

This impetus to surpass the father was also evident during interviews with other participants. For example, one man who planned to work in investment management revealed, "At this point I am very afraid of professionally ending up like my dad…I don't necessarily want to end up in a situation where I don't maximize my talents." Another respondent, who anticipated working in investment banking, said that it was "disconcerting" when he learned that his father had trouble at work because "a younger woman was brought in and put over him." Though he sympathized with his dad, this man felt fortunate that he had not experienced the same situation. These statements, like those of John and

Alex, hint at the underlying oedipal strivings experienced by these men. While the participants did not imagine destroying their fathers in a classic psychoanalytic sense, they clearly expected to outshine them on a professional level. Mitchell and Black (1995) point out that scholars like Greenberg (1991) have "argued that the meaning of this [oedipal] concept has changed remarkably over decades of psychoanalytic theorizing and that Freud's vision of sexual possession and rivalry has been vastly broadened to include an array of different kinds of motivations and various constellations of family dynamics" (p. 16). The dynamic between many of the study participants and their fathers, if not based on outright rivalry, certainly highlighted an urge on the part of these men to be more successful in the career domain.

Aggression and Narcissism

A review of themes emergent in the case examples also revealed dynamics related to aggression and narcissism. These issues were connected to the participants' strong desire to make an impact in their careers. John's sense of making an impact was linked to his goal of becoming a "decision-maker" and "a person people look to" for advice or guidance. He also wanted senior executives, whether clients or colleagues, to rely on him to get the job done, especially early on in his career. Alex's initial decision to become a surgeon was related to his hope of making an impact at his job. Now in the business world, he wanted to leave tangible evidence of what he had built over the course of his career, which he felt would require a measure of aggression. "A certain baseline of

aggressiveness is needed to be successful in business life," he argued, adding, "You need some kind of drive. Something that motivates you to do it. Something that motivates you to go into your office and do something." Moreover, Alex associated his work with the larger business community and the idea that capitalism "basically protects the free world." According to Alex, "the world will be driven by businesses and by economic decisions" and he planned to be an active part of this process. These sentiments were also evident in statements made by other participants, such as, "You are sort of making the economy happen, being part of the engine that drives everything" and "I just think I think in the right ways that I understand this business well enough that I can make and have an impact pretty quickly."

On one level, all of these statements reflect a degree of aggression that Freud (1920) would likely have understood as the expression of basic instinctual energy. However, whereas Freud might have considered these impulses to be destructive, they could also be viewed as adaptive to a modern business culture that champions productivity above all else. Indeed, as Alex pointed out, all of these men will need a certain amount of drive to succeed in the highly competitive work environments they plan to enter. Furthermore, this competition and the aggression it inspires may also be quite gratifying for some men, a sort of pleasure principle (Freud, 1920) lived through the workplace.

The way that Alex and other respondents imagined business and their work as a driving force in the world also suggests an underlying narcissistic orientation in some of these men. Their apparent desire to make an impact, to be

in control and at the center of a very powerful economic engine is reminiscent of elements of the grandiose self, as described by Kohut (1966, 1971, 1977) and Kernberg (1975). While Kernberg (1975) views the grandiose self as inherently pathological, Kohut (1966) argues that narcissism has a healthy trajectory in which the grandiose self is transformed into realistic forms of self-esteem and ambition, qualities that many successful businesspeople possess in abundance. As previously mentioned, Maccoby (2000) notes the ways that productive narcissism – which draws on these qualities, as well as a degree of grandiosity – can be vital to innovation and success within an organizational setting. Similarly, Diamond (2005) and Lasch (1979) acknowledge the many ways that the narcissistic grandiose self fits with our modern society and performance-oriented work environments. Channeled productively, constructive narcissism can enable executives to be confident managers and to inspire subordinates with their vision of organizational change (Kets De Vries & Miller, 1985). However, these tendencies can become destructive, particularly in a business environment, when work and positions of leadership are viewed merely as "sources of gratification for narcissistic needs for success, power, prestige, and admiration" (Kernberg, 1979, p.57). Recent corporate scandals at companies like Enron and Tyco stand out as examples of destructive narcissism at work. The challenge for participants in the current study will be to avoid becoming caught up in a business culture, or ideology, that often fosters the pursuit of such gratifications. As one respondent noted, "I didn't really care about the brands until I got into Wall Street where everyone was wearing Polos and Brooks Brothers, fancy watches and stuff."

Maintaining one's independence in such environments will be increasingly difficult, Lasch (1979) contends, especially because our society "surrounds the individual with manufactured fantasies of total gratification" (p. 231).

Defensive Processes

Analysis of the ways in which John, Alex, and the rest of the sample discussed their visions of personal and professional life revealed a number of inherent conflicts in their accounts of how these two domains would interact in the future. Such conflicts also suggest that these men employed various defenses in order to manage some difficult contradictions. For example, many participants expressed a desire to have some balance between work and family life, but also emphasized how hard they anticipated working, especially during the early phase of their careers. They seemed to compartmentalize their rigorous work demands in order to keep alive the hope of being available to both their families and their jobs, even though many acknowledged the long hours they would have to work. Several men rationalized that they planned to reduce their hours over time as family demands came more fully into the picture, but none seemed to have a clear picture of the timing or exact nature of this reduction or its potential impact on their professional advancement.

A number of participants rationalized the hard work they expected to do by citing the benefits of being "paid to learn." However, statements like these may simply represent an intellectualized mantra, that is, an internalized message from the very industries that seek to exploit their willingness to be hard-driving

on the job. Others, like Alex, rationalized their interest in the work by linking it with a capitalistic ethos and the desire to make an impact on the world. Interestingly, Kovel (1981) argues that the rise of capitalism and a capitalistic ideology in Western culture has been responsible for the dialectical nature of personal and professional life. He suggests that this ideology has stimulated a crisis of family/personal life, one that necessitates the rise of the mental health profession in order to address the burden capitalism places on it:

> Mental-health trades are ordained to rise in a society dominated by so basic a contradiction in personal life. Without detailing the pathways, it should be obvious by now that the opposition of bound and unbound time in the individual will saturate the social order with neurosis and other forms of mental crippling that mock capital's promises of personal well-being. And as capitalism moves to its contemporary stage, the crisis of the family and of personal life in general sees to it that the pursuit of mental health reaches truly industrial proportions. (p. 119)

Put simply, the dialectic of work (bound time) and family (unbound time) is not easily managed.

How, then, did men in the current study understand and address this conflict? For the most part, they seemed to repress the contradictions inherent in their thinking about these two life domains. This may account for the lack of detail in their plans for achieving work-family/life balance. Those who were more conscious of the conflict utilized higher order defenses, such as rationalization and intellectualization, to finesse these issues. Ultimately, the use of such defensive styles is adaptive in the culture these men have chosen to enter. These processes allow professionals to navigate a complex business environment that, on the whole, does not reward efforts to achieve personal-professional balance. Nonetheless, these same adaptive skills may ultimately lead to problems in the

future when men are forced to address the very real conflict between these domains.

Transmission of Family Values

John and Alex also highlighted the ways in which certain values were transmitted from their families of origin. This transmission was particularly evident in terms of a sense of work ethic and attitudes toward managing the interaction of work and family life. Alex stated that he felt working hard was "given" because he had seen his parents demonstrate this value in their medical practices. John indicated that his hard work ethic came mostly from his father, who stressed the importance of delivering a perfect work product. Similarly, both men expressed attitudes toward the intersection of personal and professional life, particularly the balance between work and family, which reflected earlier experiences with their families. John grew up in a "traditional" family with a stay-at-home mom and a father who, though he worked full-time, was felt to be available when needed. Thus, John's expectation that his wife would stay at home to raise their children and manage household duties revealed his identification with his parents' traditional roles and his fantasy that he, too, could be present for his children. His desire for some balance between work and home life was linked to the sense that he benefited from his parents' availability while growing up. Conversely, Alex described his family as not "traditional" given that his mother worked more and was less available than his father. His expectation was that his own family situation, if he decided to have one, would be quite different, with a

stay-at-home wife and kids who he expected to see infrequently due to his busy work schedule. In many ways, Alex anticipated maintaining the same sort of "distance" from his future family as he did with his parents. This intention reflects an apparent use of reversal, that is, coping with painful feelings of not having his mother available while growing up by enacting the same dynamic with his future wife and children. To some extent, Alex also seemed to isolate his affect related to this experience by discussing his parents and their work in a very intellectualized, matter-of-fact way. Any real sense of loss due to his separation from his mother was obscured by an unemotional description of the "distance" he used to seemingly defend against further disappointment over their lack of closeness. How appropriate, then, that Alex would minimize the importance of work-family balance when envisioning his future life.

Although they expressed different expectations about a balance – or lack thereof – between personal and professional life, it seemed clear that both John's and Alex's views on this issue reflected dynamics originating from experiences in their families of origin. Furthermore, this finding supports research that demonstrates an intergenerational transmission effect of parental work and childrearing values to children (Kohn, 1983; Yi, Chang, & Chang, 2004). Studies comparing cross-national samples indicate that, in the United States, fathers play as important a role as mothers in the transmission process (Kohn, Slomczynski, & Schoenbach, 1986). In other words, the work and family values one's parents model are often transmitted to and become a part of the next generation's conception of how these domains should be managed. This phenomenon appeared

to hold true for other study participants. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, several men indicated that their parents, like John's, were able to establish some positive level of work-family balance. All of these men also expressed a desire or intent to achieve the same for their families in the future. Unlike Alex, other respondents who said their parents were unable to effectively manage work and family anticipated wanting to find some balance between these domains in the future. Consequently, these men either sought to recreate a positive family dynamic or to repair one that was unsatisfying by trying to make sure that this problem does not manifest in their own families.

Summary Comparison of Case Examples

The interviews with John and Alex revealed that these two men share many common themes. They both communicated an intense drive for success and enthusiasm for work that would enable them to take on leadership roles, make important decisions, and provide valuable advice. Both seemed motivated by the limitations in their parents', particularly their fathers', careers. Indeed, both expected to exceed their parents by succeeding at work in terms of income and power, or control, over their career trajectories.

Despite these similarities, John and Alex offered different views on the balance between personal and professional life. Both men anticipated that their work lives would be intense and take away from family time. However, John seemed more intent on finding a balance between these domains than Alex, who prioritized work, even if it precluded him from having a wife and children.

Clearly, these two case examples are not sufficient to generalize any causal hypotheses about family-of-origin influences on current beliefs about personal and professional life. Nonetheless, the different goals John and Alex expressed regarding the priority of work over family (or vice versa) may be influenced by apparent differences in their level of attachment to their mothers. John described a close relationship with his mother and asserted that her sacrifices "made me the person I am today." His identification with his mother, a full-time housewife, may well have impacted his ideas about needing to make a career change in the future in order to achieve some balance between his roles as a professional and a family man. John's desire for his wife to have a role outside their home may also be driven by his awareness of his mother's dissatisfaction with not having a career of her own.

Unlike in John's case, Alex's relationship with his mother was characterized by "distance" and feelings of rejection connected to her apparent prioritization of work over family life. His father's level of availability, though seemingly greater than that of some others in the sample, did not appear to counter Alex's experience of his mother's inaccessibility. His sense that work comes first – and that it always will, even after having a family – may be rooted in this identification with his mother.

These two case examples, in and of themselves, suggest that mothers' approach to managing their careers, either as professionals or as full-time parents, may be an important factor in how their sons conceptualize and seek work and family balance. Of course, establishing such a conclusion would require further

exploration. Indeed, the critical factor may be the degree to which children perceive involvement with and are attached to their mothers, rather than whether their mothers work or not. This idea is supported by Galinsky's (1999) interviews with children about their parents' work lives. Kids, according to Galinsky's study, rather than wanting their mothers to give up careers to stay at home, actually admire – and even enjoy – that their mothers and fathers work. More than simple face time, positive mother-child relationships depended on a mom's ability to limit negative spillover from work and to be emotionally present when spending time with kids. Just having a parent at home full-time was not sufficient to ensure a close, fulfilling relationship. Ultimately, this factor may account for some of the differences in the ways that John and Alex view the intersection of their future personal and professional lives.

Clinical Implications

In all likelihood, many of the participants in the current study will experience varying degrees of work-family conflict over the span of their careers. Conflict is likely not just because these men plan to enter demanding jobs, but also because many expect to dedicate more time to professional than personal life during the first few years of post-MBA work. Ultimately, they tend to view these areas of life as competing interests. Given that almost all of the respondents expressed some desire for a balance between these domains, a struggle with this issue may present itself earlier than anticipated as these men partner, get married, or start families. Furthermore, the resulting conflict could be difficult to manage.

Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton (2000) cite numerous studies indicating that, "outcomes associated with excessive work interference with family include job dissatisfaction, job burnout, turnover, depression, life dissatisfaction, and marital dissatisfaction" (p. 278). Although men in the present study were aware that conflicts might occur for them down the road, none provided specific ideas about how they might handle these difficulties in the future.

As clinicians, we are trained to assist individuals, couples, and families in dealing with some of these issues via therapeutic interventions. Our work with men like those in the current study requires application of a clinical lens that appreciates the complexity of each individual's personal-professional matrix. This includes an awareness of the assumptions and expectations that men have about the ways that their work and personal lives intersect, now and in the future. For example, many subjects in the present study described this intersection as a zero-sum game. In other words, time spent in one domain takes away from time spent in the other (Friedman, Christensen, & DeGroot, 1998/2000). Interestingly, this role-strain approach (Goode, 1960) to the problem, which assumes that psychological distress is likely to increase as one inhabits more roles, runs counter to other research demonstrating the benefits of multiple roles for business people. Galinsky, Salmond, & Bond (2003) summarize findings from a worldwide study[4] of 1,192 executives working in large corporations representing a variety of industries. Based on the research data, these authors challenge the hypothesis that professionals have to be work-centric in order to feel successful and to succeed in

[4] Leaders in a Global Economy: A Study of Executive Men and Women was conducted by three non-profit research organizations: Families and Work Institute, Catalyst, and the Boston College Center for Work & Family.

their careers. A "substantial minority of 32 percent" (p. 3) is described as "dual-centric," meaning that these executives placed the same priority on work and on their personal or family lives. Interestingly, "the executives who are dual-centric do not necessarily have fewer family responsibilities than other executives" (p. 3). Galinsky et al. indicate that 62% of them have children under 18 living at home with them at least half time, versus 54% of the general population of executives. The authors also reveal an interesting finding:

> Although working long and hard is clearly part and parcel of advancing in today's corporate structure, this study finds that a one-sided life, where work always comes first, isn't necessarily beneficial to career development…The close to one-third of executives who are dual-centric feel more successful at work, are less stressed, and have an easier time managing the demands of their work and personal/family lives. (pp. 3-4)

Additionally, Galinsky (2003) explains that a major strategy used by dual-centric executives is to set strict boundaries between the time they work and don't work. Other strategies include being emotionally present at home by focusing on the immediate situation instead of work and taking time for rest and recovery. Ultimately, Galinsky suggests, being clear about priorities makes it easier for these executives to focus on both personal and professional life.

Thus, individual clinical work with male business executives who experience problems with work-family conflict might focus on interventions designed to educate men about the benefits of occupying multiple roles and how these roles can enhance, rather than conflict with each other. Clinicians may also engage their clients to utilize specific mechanisms for coping with the stress inherent in role conflict. For example, Fraenkel (1994, 1998a, 1998b) describes interventions created to help couples negotiate the transition from work to home

and to reconnect with each other after a hectic day spent apart. Similar exercises could also be used in the treatment of families struggling with fathers and husbands who spend too much time at the office and not enough at home. Though it may be fruitful for some clients to probe the intrapsychic roots of their desire to work so hard, men and their significant others also need tools for managing the conflict that frequently erupts when this work style has a negative impact on personal life.

Of course, the above recommendations assume that male business executives have the time and inclination to enter clinical treatment. Even if men working in fields like those in the current study can make time, the perceived stigma of therapy may prevent some from tapping appropriate services. By serving as consultants to individuals and organizations, clinicians may be able to circumvent this issue. More than ever, psychologists are working in corporations, both as clinicians and consultants to individuals and groups of business professionals (see, for example, Maltz, 2005). In this capacity, clinicians are uniquely positioned to help build awareness of work-life issues and conflicts. Moreover, this work can occur on a number of different levels. Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas (2002) suggest that corporate interest in work-life issues is growing, albeit slowly, and that businesses are developing programs aimed at increasing employee satisfaction. Executive coaching[5] to help individuals more effectively manage conflicts between personal and professional realms might be one company-sanctioned means of helping men, like those in the present study, to

[5] Auerbach (2001) suggests that mental health professionals can utilize their clinical skills to function effectively as executive coaches.

explore ways of addressing this problem. Furthermore, consulting to educational institutions, particularly MBA programs, would allow clinicians to aid future executives in developing a greater awareness of these issues via workshops and counseling sessions before the job search process begins.

Limitations of the Current Study

Before any suggestions for future research can be made, the limitations of the current study must be addressed. Patton (1990) offers a compelling argument for the benefits of qualitative research, in which he proposes that this investigative framework allows for in-depth exploration of specific phenomena using a relatively small sample size. The current study adhered to this approach in seeking to understand the ways that male MBA students entering demanding career paths conceptualize their personal and professional lives, particularly their anticipations of the way these two domains will intersect in the future. This specific focus, though it revealed much about the phenomenological experience of male participants, relied on a limited sample size. As such, results from this study cannot be generalized to a larger population of men entering high-level business careers.

Beyond the small number of subjects, several other factors made this sample unique, thus limiting the ability to generalize study results. For one, a majority of participants were white males born and raised in the United States. Although the group reflected some diversity, with the inclusion of three men of Asian descent and one African-American – not to mention four subjects who were

born outside the U.S. – this composition prevented drawing any overarching conclusions about the role of culture and ethnicity. In general, most of these men came from relatively privileged backgrounds. Socioeconomic factors may have varied slightly, but none were raised in poverty and all were well educated. Hence, their attitudes toward work and the intense corporate environments they plan to enter were inevitably skewed due to greater access to educational and employment opportunities. Men from less privileged backgrounds, even those who work in business, might have very different views on the meaning of work and how to negotiate their personal and professional lives.

Two other factors made this sample unique, even among a larger population of male MBAs. First, these men planned to enter specific industries that are generally reputed to be among the most intense and which require the greatest commitment of time and energy (Lott, 2005; Chung, 2002). Thus, their work experience and its implications for managing personal and professional life are likely to be different from that of male MBAs working in other fields. Second, a majority of participants in the current study indicated their intention to work in the New York metropolitan area, at least in the near term. This factor will tend to make their professional experiences even more intense, especially given New York City's status as the epicenter for many of these industries. Men working outside this environment will necessarily have a different experience. For these reasons, the study results are not representative of a wider MBA population.

Another limitation of this study was the self-selective nature of its participants. That is, subjects volunteered to discuss their experiences and

thoughts about personal and professional life. Consequently, we may assume that these men were predisposed to reveal such information and that their responses might well vary from those of men unwilling to engage in this type of exploration. This is not to suggest that every subject was completely open about his experience. As a graduate of the same MBA program, the interviewer's affiliation with this business school must be taken into account. Some participants may have revealed less or framed their responses in a particular way because of this factor, especially if they questioned the investigator's ability to be objective. The fact that the investigator was a clinician may also have impacted response styles. Participants could have been more reluctant to reveal information or to appear vulnerable if they were concerned about being "analyzed." Furthermore, the data men provided were both retrospective and prospective and thus subject to the vicissitudes of both memory and emotion. Brandt's (2005) description of "motivated memory loss" (p. 102) refers to the inevitable effect that intrapsychic defenses, such as repression and denial, have on one's ability to recollect past experiences and to fantasize about the future. This limitation is a given element of any research project that utilizes self-reports, but is particularly salient in studies that employ an in-depth interviewing style. The current study encouraged participants to engage in a deeply introspective process that, if uncomfortable for some men, may have led them to unconsciously edit their responses.

Finally, two additional factors served to limit the potential richness of the research findings. For one, female MBA students were not included in the study. This decision was made based on the added complexity that women in business

careers bring to the table, especially considering the issue of childrearing, when exploring the intersection of personal and professional life. Nonetheless, a female perspective on this topic is absolutely crucial if researchers are to develop a more complete understanding of how these issues affect individual and family experience. Second, longitudinal data were not captured as part of the present investigation and outcomes for these subjects are unknown. Consequently, the study was not able to assess the future impact of the research findings nor could it formulate any conclusions about the connection between men's expectations and the ultimate realities of their personal and professional lives. This limitation is addressed below in a discussion of suggestions for future research.

Suggestions for Future Research

Findings discussed in this chapter suggest that men in the early, or contemplative, stages of their careers are a rich source of information about the way that individuals, particularly those entering demanding jobs, conceptualize the interplay of personal and professional life. As noted in the literature review, there is no shortage of research on work and family issues. Yet, despite a growing interest in how these issues impact younger people, Lewis & Cooper (1999) point out that "most work-family research has taken place with the Baby Boomer generation" (p.384). Haddock, Zimmerman, Ziemba & Current (2001) add that much of the empirical literature on work and family focuses on the question of whether or not mothers should work.

This is not to suggest that scholars have ignored male experience. More than two decades ago, Evans & Bartolome (1984) conducted a study to explore how male managers perceive the relationship between their careers and family lives. But a majority of these executives were over age 35 and all were employed at the time. With the notable exception of Orrange's (1998, 2002, 2003) research on law and business students, the current study is unique in exploring how male MBA students entering demanding careers anticipate future work and home life *before* starting their jobs.

The aforementioned limitations provide a useful initial guide for making recommendations about future research. A grounded theory approach is ideal for exploring the ways that people make meaning of their experiences and was critical to eliciting salient aspects of work and personal life among this small group of participants. Nonetheless, larger samples would enhance our ability to delineate patterns and trends in the narrative data these men produce. As sample size grows, however, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a standard of in-depth exploration and analysis and still conduct efficient studies in a manageable way. A mixed methodology, involving both narrative analyses based on grounded theory and more traditional quantitative techniques would hopefully enable investigators to generalize results without sacrificing the richness of the individual experiences subjects describe (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Using this approach, larger samples reflecting more diversity could be studied so that ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, and industry differences can be compared.

Another key recommendation is to conduct longitudinal studies so that outcomes can be measured. Despite that the current study was able to elicit a number of important themes about this sample, without follow-up it is impossible to know what the future truly holds for these men. Haddock et al. (2001) analyze qualitative narrative data from dual-earner couples with children to discern 10 adaptive strategies for successful work and family balance. A similar approach could be used with MBA students to track whether their expectations about future personal and professional life were eventually confirmed and to what extent they were able to cope with such outcomes. These data would foster the development of clinical interventions, both for those already struggling to manage work and private life and for individuals in the anticipatory stages of their careers who could benefit from a greater awareness of the potential future impact of their personal and professional choices. Participants matched for pre-graduation attitudes about work/personal life balance that ended up with different "balances"/outcomes could be compared regarding the mediating factors that resulted in different balances. Furthermore, in the spirit of Galinsky's (1999) focus on how children talk about their parents' work, outcome research can only benefit from self-reports of family members and significant others who are most affected by a subject's approach to negotiating these realms.

Notwithstanding the myriad studies of dual-earner couples (see, for example, Moen & Yu, 1999; Nomaguchi, Milkie, & Bianchi, 2005), research on working couples in which both members earned MBAs is also warranted. Given their common educational experience and level of accomplishment, these couples

may struggle especially hard if family life necessitates a change in work life. In highlights from the National Study of the Changing Workforce, Bond et al. (2002) note that "work-life supports on the job – both specific benefit entitlements and less formal policies and practices – have increased somewhat, although not a lot in the past decade" (p. 2). Though organizations have been slow to implement such policies, Bond et al. conclude:

> The National Study finds the importance of supportive work-life policies and practices, such as flexible work arrangements, is clear – when they are available, employees exhibit more positive work outcomes, such as job satisfaction, commitment to employer, and retention, as well as more positive life outcomes, such as less interference between job and family life. Less negative spillover from job to home, greater life satisfaction, and better mental health. (p. 3)

Unfortunately, the pace of today's business environment means that future executives like those in the current study will be challenged more than ever when it comes to managing work and home life. The corporate environments these men inhabit, in struggling to remain competitive in a constantly transforming marketplace, will not necessarily be invested in meeting this challenge (Morris, 1997, March 17). Thus, it is more important than ever to design research that effectively identifies the personal and professional challenges MBAs face and helps to develop useful clinical and organizational interventions to address the complex intersection of these domains.

APPENDIX A.

Semi-Structured Interview of Male MBA Students

Instructions to the interviewer are printed in bold text below. Questions for interview participants are shown in regular text.

*Tell me about your life now.
(If informant describes professional and not personal aspects of his life, proceed to work questions. If both personal and professional aspects are described, ask informant which he would like to tell you about first.)

> **Probe:** Where do your live? With whom do you live?
> **Probe:** Who are the most important people in your life right now?
> **Probe:** What are you studying? Where are you in your academic program?
> **Probe:** What do you like to do with your personal time?
> **Probe:** Describe yourself as a person.

*What do you think your life will be like five years from now?
(Follow informant's lead in terms of whether personal or professional issues emerge. If a blend of personal and professional issues is presented, assess for salience again by asking informant which issues he would like to tell you about first.)

> **Probe:** What challenges might you face at this time?

*What do you think your life will be like fifteen years from now?
(Follow informant's lead in terms of whether personal or professional issues emerge. If a blend of personal and professional issues is presented, assess for salience again by asking informant which issues he would like to tell you more about first.)

> **Probe:** What challenges might you face at this time?

*How do you see personal and professional aspects of your life coexisting?

*Tell me your thoughts about marriage/partnering.
(If informant is married/partnered, ask him to tell you about his marriage/partnership. If informant is not married, listen to his answer and proceed to the following probes where appropriate.)

> **Probe:** Do you envision being married/partnering?
> **Probe:** Tell me your thoughts about the roles you and your [future] partner/spouse will play.
> **Probe:** How do you envision your partner/spouse managing aspects of personal and professional life? **(If informant is married/partnered, ask whether his spouse/partner works and follow up with this probe question.)**

*Tell me your thoughts about male roles.

> **Probe:** Tell me your thoughts about traditional and non-traditional male roles.

Probe: Describe the roles you see yourself playing. **(Only ask this question if informant did not previously provide an answer.)**
Probe: Tell me your thoughts about traditional and non-traditional female roles.

*Tell me your thoughts about children/family.
(If informant has children, ask him to tell you about his children. If informant does not have children, listen to his answer and proceed to the following probes where appropriate.)

Probe: Do you envision having children?
Probe: Tell me your thoughts about raising children.

*Tell me about your career goals/plans.

Probe: When you think about doing this type of work, what comes to mind?
Probe: Who or what has influenced you in this choice? **(Depending on informant's response, probe for additional influences, such as family members, teachers, friends/peers, media, or previous work experiences. Once informant has completed his answer, assess for salience by asking which of these influences he would like to tell you about first.)**
Probe: How has the current economy affected your thinking about these goals/plans?
Probe: How have the events of September 11th affected your thinking about these goals/plans?

*What does work mean to you?

Probe: What does the career path you've chosen to pursue mean to you?
Probe: What aspects of this work do you find valuable?

*Tell me about your professional history.

Probe: Tell me about a time at work that stands out in your mind. **(If informant only describes one experience, be sure to probe for additional experiences. If informant presents only positive experiences, probe for negative experiences.)**

*Where do you see yourself professionally five years from now?
(Ask this question only if informant has not already provided this information.)

Probe: What challenges might you face at this time?

*Where do you see yourself professionally fifteen years from now?
(Ask this question only if informant has not already provided this information.)

Probe: What challenges might you face at this time?

*Pretend for a moment that you are in the future and looking back over the course of your career. What do you hope to have accomplished?
(Only ask these questions if the informant has not already provided this information.)

Probe: When you think about retirement, what comes to mind?
Probe: What do you see yourself doing upon retirement?

*Tell me about your family of origin.
(Depending on informant's answer, probe for information on the following: description of family members, birth order of siblings, ages of members, education level of members, professions of members, ethnic/religious background, immigration history, living situation, socioeconomic situation)

*Tell me about your relationships with your family members.
(Depending on how many family members already described above, ask informant who he thinks are the most important people to tell you about.)

Probe: Tell me about a time you remember with a family member. **(If informant only describes one experience, ask for additional examples. If informant describes only positive experiences, probe for negative examples.)**

*Tell me about a time when you were upset as a child and needed to be comforted. How did your parents respond?
(If informant does/did not have parents, ask this question in relation to a major caregiver.)

Probe: What helped you the most about how they responded? What helped you the least?

*What holidays do you celebrate?

Probe: Tell me about a holiday experience that stands out in your mind. **(If informant describes a positive experience, probe for any negative experiences.)**

*We all feel comforted at times by material things. Tell me about a time when you felt comforted by the material things in your life like money, possessions, clothes, etc.

*Tell me about a time having to do with your parents and their work.
(Probe for both positive and negative examples with both parents if appropriate.)

Probe: What did your parents think about work/working?
Probe: How important was work to your parents?
Probe: How hard did your parents work?
Probe: Were your parents satisfied with their choice of work/profession?
Probe: What were challenges you saw your parents face in their work? How did you experience these challenges?
Probe: How did your parents feel about traditional male and female roles?
Probe: How did you feel about your parents' work while growing up?

*Tell me about any dreams/goals your parents or other significant people in your life had.

Probe: How were these dreams/goals communicated to you?

Probe: Were these dreams realized or frustrated?

*Thinking back, what were your thoughts/dreams about what you wanted to be when you grew up?

Probe: Tell me about a time when you talked to somebody about what you wanted to be.
Probe: Tell me about a time when somebody caused you to think about what you wanted to be. What are your thoughts about this person's impact on your current career path?

*Tell me about dreams/goals your parents had for you.
(If informant does not have parents, probe for any dreams/goals held by major caregivers or significant others.)

Probe: What are/were your thoughts about their dreams/goals for you?
Probe: Tell me about how your parents envisioned your life as an adult.

*Tell me about anything else that you think is important to know about your family or significant others.

*Tell me anything else that you think is important to know about your career choice.

*What is most valuable about you as a person?

*How do you define success?
(Only ask this question if informant has not already provided this information.)

Probe: Describe what your future life would be like if you were successful.
Probe: Describe what your future life would be like if you were unsuccessful.

*Think back to the very first question that I asked you, which was to tell me about your life now. What do you think went into your answer?
(Depending on informant's answer, ask why he talked about personal or professional aspects of his life first.)

APPENDIX B.

Table 1: Experience of Work Culture

Boot camp approach of work environment influenced compulsive work style
Business values seen as different from those of normal people
Colleagues' work habits impacted views on face time
Desire to combine academic and practical experience
Early jobs focused on interpersonal contact
Enjoyed camaraderie of intense work situation
Enjoyed entrepreneurial nature of early job
Enjoyed perks of early job
Found pressure and uncertainty around advising clients to be exciting
Found regular hours at early job dissatisfying
Frustrated with slow pace of action at former job
Impressed with intense social/work life of colleagues
Intense pressure best for stimulating learning
Lack of pay at former job did not affect performance
Leadership position led to spillover from work to home
Long hours worked on project considered painful
Miserable work experience stimulated drive to ensure basic needs are met
Missed camaraderie of hard-driving work environment
Mixed feelings about time off from previous job
Not in sync with detailed career planning at early job
Privilege of access to top secret information
Recognized need to pay dues at first job
Rewarded self for hard work

Table 2: Exposure to Senior Management

Assistant to top person in organization
Charged with fixing serious problem for senior leader
Disliked arrogant style of manager
Early work involved power dynamic with older subordinate
Enjoyed advising senior person on key tasks
Exposure to senior leader influenced work style
Movement from lower level job to work with top person afforded unique perspective
Saving face with senior leader a priority
Strong relationship with boss seen as important
Work on major deal offered exposure to senior people

Table 3: Early Leadership Experience

Early leadership experience stimulated desire to be in charge
Enjoyed being in charge/control at early job
Felt responsible for managing negative situation with subordinate
First job involved leadership experience at a young age
Having greater responsibility made up for negative experience at earlier job
Leadership experience seen as rewarding
Leadership experience stimulated desire for management status

Table 4: Making an Impact

Ability to obtain work as teenager built confidence for later experiences
Advising senior person on using resources seen as having impact
Association with successful project made subject feel important
Changed from early career path because felt unable to impact flawed system
Collaboration during crisis situation led to success in past job
Enjoyed being in key role on important project
Frustrated by lack of control at summer position
Liked being relied upon in intense situations
Successful capital raising seen as early career highlight

Table 5: Choosing a Job

Chance opportunity leads to industry connection
Chose business school for networking, not classroom learning
Chose past job because it offered excitement/adventure
Cultural affiliation affects job choice
Early career planning reflects desire to combine skills and likes
Focused pursuit of job in only one industry
Internship influenced decision to avoid sales positions
Long hours on summer job did not deter pursuit of industry position
Opportunistic approach to early job choices
Past job selection based on both challenge and reward
Views early career opportunities as due to luck rather than planning

Table 6: Career Transition

Changes at company prompted thoughts about returning to old job
Deferred starting at early job to have fun at school
Left job for prestige and money of another position
Left job abruptly to attend business school
Left job to attend school in order to have more opportunity

Left job when realized no opportunity to be in charge
Movement from technical side in early job gave taste for business
Peers/colleagues at early job influenced decision to change careers
Sense of wasted talent at former company led to shift in functional focus
Summer experience led to change in career plans

Table 7: Family's Work Experience

Aware of grandfather's lack of success at work
Desire for enjoyment from work stimulated by father's lack of professional enjoyment
Did not appreciate father's work challenges while growing up
Father unable to pursue desired career goal
Father worked to keep busy
Learned lesson from father's lack of success at work
Parents did not share their work challenges directly
Parents' work challenges remembered as being very intense
Resentful of father's employer for not recognizing work contributions
Views parents as enjoying being in charge at work

Table 8: Parental Work Values

Admires father's ability to finance own education
Believes parents see work simply as way to make a living
Came to respect father's job while working for parents
Desire to instill work ethic in kids based on early work experience
Expectations for high performance linked to parental influence
Family seen as shaping beliefs about work
Father instilled work ethic and desire for perfection in work product
Father views work as very important
Father worked to provide the good life for family
Identified with father's prioritizing work over family time in order to provide
Identifies with parents' broad life focus
Parents' achievement orientation seen as key career driver
Parents concerned about subject's job demands
Parents' hard work ethic created assumption that working a lot is a given
Parents instilled strong work ethic
Parents' reward system taught value of hard work
Parents taught that winning not as important as how you play the game
Parents work too hard
Sense of parents as passionate about their work
Sense that parents were not ambitious people
Strong work ethic linked to freedom of self-sufficiency

Table 9: Parents and Work Time

Bad feelings about mother's work due to her unavailability
Considers it abnormal that father worked fewer hours than mother
Family business meant father worked long hours
Father's work schedule limited participation in childcare
Felt both parents were available while growing up
Impressed with parents' ability to balance work and family
Likes that parents controlled their own work schedule
Mixed feelings about father's devotion to work
Mother works harder than father
Mother's ability to balance personal and professional life influenced desire for more flexible job
Mother's long work hours led to unavailability and feelings of rejection
Mother's unavailability had negative impact on relationship
Parents able to provide well and still be available
Parents' atypical jobs led to peculiar view of work hours
Parents' unavailability due to work perceived as unfair

Table 10: Parents and Gender Roles

Belief in equal opportunity balanced by sense that women must be willing to make sacrifices
Experience with two working parents tied to flexible views on male and female roles
Helping mother with household tasks influenced ideas about gender roles
Parents adhered to traditional roles despite that mother earned more
Parents did not adhere to traditional gender roles
Parents stuck to traditional gender roles
Parents' use of complementary skills to manage work/family tasks seen as successful
Pictures self at center of nuclear family like father

Table 11: Parents and Family Values

Culture taught subject to value family
Decision to raise family linked with sense of loyalty to parents' expectations
Father described as very supportive
Father's presence in childhood influenced desire to be there for children
Parents made sacrifices for family's well-being
Parents viewed success in terms of family and not work
Positive memories of father being very involved parent
Religious affiliation in family-of-origin created expectations about family time

Table 12: Self-Assessment

Assessing career options via learning what alumni in different industries do
Conducted due diligence on various career options
Did not think about career until college
Envious of friends whose career path is already determined
Participation in social organization facilitated important self-assessment
Took opportunity to learn about industry by sitting in on conference
Views career as continuous process of discovery

Table 13: The Role of Education

Chose business school as means to enter industry at higher level
College recruiting opened eyes to standard of longer work hours
Desire to learn influenced education/career choices
Ethics learned in school influenced desire to select reputable company
Looking for career that draws on both academic and practical experiences
Naive about business until exposed in college
Peers with no direction influenced decision to stick to one career path
Rewards of going back to school outweigh the risks
School project stimulated interest in chosen field
Teacher influenced significant life choice

Table 14: Influenced by Successful Business People

Balanced work style of famous businesspeople impacted career choice
Career choice influenced by senior executive
Experience interacting with industry executives leads to business school application
Influenced by reading about famous business people/events
Lifestyle/life outlook of other businesspeople impacted career choice
Listening to senior dealmakers stimulates interest in the work
Parents' accountant stimulated interest in business
Respect for distinguished executives who provide direction on career path
Successful executive influenced sense that chosen field offers long-term opportunities for success
Successful executive opened eyes to different career possibilities

Table 15: Money and Material Needs

Assumed success and wealth would lead to happiness
Derives more comfort from interpersonal relationships than material things
Desire for comfortable lifestyle inspires hard work
Different approach to money than parents
Effort to balance need and desire in acquiring material things

Enjoyed power and freedom of car from parents
Experience as spoiled child considered unhealthy
Experience of sitting in luxury automobile feels comforting
Felt happy about achieving goal of buying car
Identifies with materialism of business world
Lack of pressure from parents linked to never thinking about money
Mother's poor background influenced desire to succeed at any price
Perceives split between parents' goals/values
Remembers parents as providing in reasonable way
Sees work/life goals as aligned with those of close friends
Thinking about large sums of money creates positive feeling of power
Views family as providing financial backup
Views professional goals of working hard and making money as aligned with parents

Table 16: Dreams and Career Visions

Career dreams from childhood now seen as nonsense
Career goals deviate from parents' wishes
Dreamed of being successful business person as a kid
Dreams of having a great life linked to desire for different experiences
Father envisioned different career for subject
Mother advocated trying to be independent
No clear career goals/dreams in childhood
Only desired to be businessman while growing up despite not knowing meaning of this dream
Parents supported decision making about goals
Parents want subject to be happy regardless of personal/professional choices
Parents wanted same dreams for subject as their own
Perceives parents' valuation of career choice as linked to earning potential
Unsure when first became aware of current job choice
Work goals aligned with parents' immigrant values

Table 17: Influences on Career Choice

Career change stimulated by desire for more money and fewer hours
Career choice goes against cultural/family values
Culture impacted sense of fit with job opportunity
Desire to be geographically closer to family a factor in job selection
Desire to repay those who have helped along the way
Enjoys being trusted advisor on important matters
Enjoys prestige others associate with job choice
Enjoys quick gratification versus longer term projects
Family did not influence career decisions

Family influenced early career planning
Father discouraged subject from entering family business
Father-in-law influenced decision to go to business school
Father's enjoyment of work influenced early career choice
Financial compensation viewed as main reason for job choice
Finds social aspect of work valuable
Herd mentality of peers influenced job choice
Identification with employer's work culture impacts job choice
Importance of interpersonal component to work
Impressed with father's work environment and corner office
Links parents' encouragement to idea that anything is possible
Mixed feelings over competitive nature of business world
Most satisfied when time passes quickly at work
Motivated by desire to get back on track with career
Parental intervention in education seen as turning point
Parents' strict boundaries stimulated drive to succeed in the world
Steep learning curve key to catching up to peers
Takes pride in tangible results of work
Unhappy peers influenced decision to avoid alternative career path
Volunteer experience influenced desire to give back

Table 18: Market Variables

Career choice unaffected by September 11th attacks
Economy impacted decision to return to same functional area
Economy impacted decision to try different job
Poor economy represents opportunity to get into industry at good time
Poor market conditions necessitate openness to different job types

Table 19: What Work Means

"Paid to learn"
Appreciates the nice things work affords
Associates intense work environments with enjoyment and camaraderie
Being challenged more important than making money
Both monetary and intellectual rewards of work seen as important
Does not expect work to be a calling
Driven by need for stimulating work process
Expectation that work should be enjoyable
Focused more on achieving intellectual fulfillment than on a specific job
Importance of interpersonal component to work
Importance of work as a means to keep busy

Interest in combining analytic and interpersonal work
Learning on the job is important
Pessimistic about possibility for enjoyment of work
Thinks more about enjoying work than making money
Work provides opportunity for enjoyment and compensation

Table 20: Opportunities to Make an Impact

Ability to add value to team makes up for junior status
Ability to make an impact and shape changes at work seen as career goal
Anticipates senior level job will entail much responsibility and making an impact
Being a trusted advisor seen as essential
Being go-to guy for senior managers seen as rewarding
Broad world view gained in prior job seen as value added to future work
Career choice linked to sense that business will serve best interests of the world
Confident in ability to make an early impact at work
Conviction that sound business benefits the world
Desire to be decision-maker regardless of job choice
Goal of gaining leadership position linked to desire to make an impact
Seeing the big picture important to work
Views leadership role as opportunity to make an impact

Table 21: Work Demands

"Pay your dues"
Anticipates adjusting work commitment to fit style of senior managers at company
Anticipates staged reduction in work hours over time
Belief that success is tied to working enough hours to make sure everything is 100%
Cannot assess work fit until you are in the environment
Confidence in awareness of sacrifices involved in job choice
Doubts work schedule will allow being available as parents were
Enormous expectations for performance at entry level
Expects to work long hours
Intensity of chosen field not much different from other jobs
Long hours not necessarily correlated with unhappiness
Putting off desirable activities because of work
Sacrifice and effort make work more rewarding and enjoyable
Trade-off between opportunity to challenge self and difficult lifestyle
Using summer experience to assess if work environment is tolerable
Willing to sacrifice personal time over next few years to achieve professional goals
Willing to trade lifestyle for financial compensation during next few years
Working hard now affords flexibility later on

Table 22: Uncertain Career Plans

"Make it up as it goes along"
Approach to career/life goals seen as opportunistic rather than specific
Attempt to fit skills to job that will be enjoyable
Driven by fear of not having a job
Keep moving forward
Lack of clear goals seen as a problem
Never bitten by the career bug
Uncertain about professional life five years from now

Table 23: Career Transitions

Anticipates that senior position will require broader world view and less focused work
Career seen as process of continuous assessment
Decision to stay in industry linked to advancement potential
Having new experiences more important than achieving a high position
Hopes to follow standard/steady career progression in field of choice
Initial job seen as stepping stone for a different position
Intention to return to prior field seen as natural
Luck plays a big role in career progression
Multiple interests means not wed to particular career path
Open to other career opportunities via working with future clients
Plans to leave business world if makes enough money
Plans to leave job if feels unfulfilled
Plans to reevaluate career options after brief period at first job
Portability a factor in job choice
Predicts being in senior executive position
Recognition that first job can open door to other opportunism
Senior position focuses on interpersonal tasks
Views soft skills as more important at higher levels of responsibility
Wants to keep options open/hedge bets

Table 24: Defining Success

Ability to meet clearly defined goals
Accomplishment associated with developing/mentoring people
Desire to build reputation and support network in chosen field
Financial independence and comparative status
Future entrepreneurial aspirations associated with being in control
Having peer respect and maneuverability important
Having time to spend the money you make

High salary plus control over work hours seen as ideal
Hopes to stop climbing up and enjoy professional life
Importance of accomplishment on one's own terms
Leaving something behind seen as important measure of success
Links success to becoming respected organizational leader
Monetary gain and opportunities to make an impact
Success defined in terms of experiences, not money
Success is being happy and having financial resources to enjoy life
Success means being happy and making others happy
Success means having no regrets

Table 25: Material Goals

Aspires to balance making money and enjoying social life
Desire to be comfortable, but not preoccupied with money
Desire to strike balance between making money and contributing to society
Does not want to depend on others financially
Drive to make money seen as natural priority in the business world
Enjoying life more important than making money
Having money means less worry about basic needs
Importance of giving something back later on
Minimizing material needs now allows for flexibility later on
Money a big factor in job selection
Money gives one the ability to play
Money makes doing a lot of other things easier
Wants to make lots of money and have strong relationships

Table 26: Being a Provider

Cost of living exerts breadwinning pressure
Desire to provide worldly knowledge to family
Drive to make money based on projected family needs
Expects kids to make it on their own
Making money will become more important later on
Open to dual or single earner family as long as he has a career
Providerhood considered most important male role
Providing associated with scary level of responsibility
Providing for family involves financial and emotional contributions
Providing for kids physically and emotionally
Views self as leading provider in family
Work viewed as means of supporting family and paying off debts

Table 27: Defining Roles at Home

Advocates clear role division with spouse based on skill sets
Anticipates negotiating evolving work/family roles with spouse/partner
Anticipates spouse/partner staying at home to care for family
Cultural traditions dictate male role as provider and decision-maker
Desire for spouse/partner to have a role outside the home
Desire to be helpful to spouse/partner at home
Mixed feelings about spouse/partner staying at home versus working
Prioritization of work life seen as factor in success/failure of relationships
Roles will be determined by who has more important career
Work culture looks down on male domestic participation

Table 28: Plans for Family Life

Ambivalence about whether future family life will be stable or volatile
Ambivalent about getting married and having a family
Anticipates being an involved parent
Anticipates challenge in advising children versus allowing them to make decisions
Anticipates challenges of raising kids as normal
Establishing trust with kids more important than spending time
Family size should be linked to amount of time/money available for kids
Flexible on issue of getting married
Flexible on issue of having children
Hopes to be tied down with relationship in five years
Links absent parent to problems with children
Little thought given to raising children despite stated importance of family
Marriage means having someone to do things with
No clear design for raising kids
Putting off marriage/family until financially responsible
Strong involvement in children's development seen as important

Table 29: The Intersection of Personal and Professional Life

Anticipates feeling guilt over being unavailable for family due to work commitments
Anticipates job transition to allow for involvement with family
Anticipates juggling schedules with spouse/partner to achieve stable family life
Anticipates shift from intense work focus over next few years
Anticipates work life will be consistent while private will be volatile
Anticipates work will impinge on ability to maintain close relationships
Aspires to put family ahead of work
Assessment of work/family balance impacted by partner's feeling
Better personal/professional balance of corporate job seen as ideal

Chose job to avoid work to family spillover
Concerned about fitting extra activities into work schedule
Culture influences desire to prioritize family over career
Decision to leave job will be based on assessment of potential for balance in another job
Desire for balance between professional and social life
Desire for positive spillover between professional and personal
Desires balance between work and leisure life
Desires spouse/partner to maintain boundary between personal/professional life
Desires spouse/partner who will accept that work is first priority
Goal of balancing work and personal life consisting of marriage and kids
Happy family life can facilitate productive work life
Having children makes family and work life more fulfilling
High-pressure corporate jobs lead to volatility in private life
Less able to control work schedule early in career
Objectivity toward work relationships can negatively impact private relationships
Open to future career change to balance lifestyle
Perception that nature of work causes senior executives to place less value on family
Priorities shift to family after marriage
Priority will shift from work to family over time
Spouse/partner involved in making decisions about personal/professional life
Tried since college to balance different aspects of life
Unwilling to sacrifice family time for work
Willing to reconsider career path to accommodate family needs
Work seen as most significant component of life
Work/family balance will be major challenge
Youth affords drive to pursue demanding jobs

Table 30: Ideas About Retirement

Anticipates making up for lost time with family later on
Anticipates putting off desirable activities until retirement due to focus on work
Continuing work by teaching others about experiences
Early retirement of senior executive seen as desirable
Hopes to assume different identity in retirement
Idealizes retiring early to spend time with kids
Not having to worry about money
Retirement associated with being active
Retirement associated with having fun
Retirement associated with having two homes
Retirement associated with spending family time

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