

Bureaucracy, the profession, and retention of Captains in the U.S. Army

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Abstract

This research examines if the U.S. Army has a problem retaining high performing junior officers, with a focus on officers with the rank of Captain. It is theoretically posited that officer retention is influenced by a contradiction that exists between the profession of being an army officer and the social context of the bureaucratic structures in which officers are embedded. Specifically, the formal, rational bureaucratic structures utilized by the army restrict the agency of individual officers in making professional career decisions. In turn, it is hypothesized that this serves as a disincentive for officers to remain in the army. A methodology is developed for categorizing the performance characteristics of U.S. Army Captains. Retention rates are compared among Captains with different performance levels. Logistic regression analysis is used to identify correlates between Captains' perceptions of army bureaucratic structures and their planned career decisions. The results of this study can inform the development of retention strategies or policies that target the retention of high performing Captains in the U.S. Army.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The United States Army is an inherently bureaucratic organization that uses formal rationality in its bureaucratic structures to manage its professional officer corps. As will be explained below, officers are embedded within a tension that resides between the profession and the Army personnel management system. A key proposition of this thesis is that this tension influences the retention and attrition rates of junior officers. The retention of junior officers has been a concern for the military since the implementation of the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of the 1980s (Kane, 2011).

According to the United States Government Accountability Office (USGAO), the U.S. Army, more so than any other branch of the military, has routinely had an issue retaining junior officers (USGAO, 2007). This has been a concern for the U.S. Army during times of peace and conflict as well as economic expansion and contraction. Furthermore, the U.S. Army relies on a closed, pyramidal rank structure and promotion system. This means that the future leaders of the U.S. Army are promoted from within a closed pool of candidates that get smaller with each subsequent promotion in rank. The retention of junior officers is of significance if the U.S. Army wants the best officers to become General Officers. If so, then the U.S. Army needs to retain the best to ensure it has the highest quality aggregate pool of candidates to promote from for each rank.

Previous studies on retention and attrition of junior officers are largely confined to examining why officers leave the military. Findings from these studies suggest that officers leave the U.S. Army because of numerous deployments or operations tempo (OPTEMPO), economic opportunities outside of the military, and dissatisfaction with the personnel management system. OPTEMPO is a military acronym created by joining the words Operation and Tempo. The

Department of Defense defines operations as "a military action or the carry out of a strategic, tactical, service, training or administrative military mission" (Castro and Adler, 1999). Tempo simply means the rate of activity. Therefore, OPTEMPO refers to the rate of military operations.

Dissatisfaction with the personnel management system facilitates the re-thinking of quality versus quantity in officer retention since the personnel management system and the effects of its associated policies can be completely controlled by the army. This is different from OPTEMPO and economic opportunities, as both are affected by variables beyond the military's control. This leaves room for examining if personnel management bureaucracy affects quality officer retention.

Previous junior officer retention studies have focused on retention at the expiration of an initial service obligation. This is the service requirement an officer has upon commissioning as a Second Lieutenant. The length of this service requirement differs depending on how an officer was commissioned, either through the United States Service Academy (frequently referred to as West Point), the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), or Officer Candidate School (OCS). Attrition rates of each of these populations vary from 38% to 7% at the expiration of an initial service obligation (USGAO, 2007). Furthermore, the same study by the USGAO found that 94%-95% of officers that remain in past the 10-year mark remain in until eligible to retire after 20-years of service. The 10-year mark is the halfway point in a 20-year career in the military. 20-years of service is the minimum requirement to retire with full benefits from the military.

There are common perceptions and even written claims that "the best" are leaving the U.S. Army officer corps (Kane, 2011; Tilgham 2007). However, it should be noted that these studies do not specifically measure or define quality in making their claims regarding "the best." Other studies promote quality officer retention without establishing a basis for measuring or

defining quality as well (Wardyinski et, al., 2010). These studies and previous studies on why officers leave the U.S. Army create a gap in the knowledge base concerning whether or not the U.S. Army has a quality officer retention problem. Therefore, this research seeks to add to the previous literature on U.S. Army officer retention by measuring and categorizing the quality of officers based on their past performance and achievements. This study will then seek to determine if there are differences in the retention rates of officers with different performance levels. This will provide empirical evidence concerning the claim that "the best are getting out."

Beyond examining officer performance and retention claims, this study also aims to examine the role bureaucratic structures play in junior officer retention. As stated, the U.S. Army is inherently a bureaucratic organization. It has a personnel management system that manages over 475,000 soldiers stationed around the globe. Therefore, its personnel management system must be able to operate fairly, efficiently, and predictively to identify personnel shortages or overages. To manage its personnel, the U.S. Army has an entire doctrine and set of regulations published on promotions, evaluations, service obligations, and the army as a profession. These publications create a learnable and navigable system that officers traverse throughout their time in service. While these regulations are effective in providing predictability, fairness, and efficiency, they also impose constraints on professional autonomy (a key characteristic of a profession) and can create dissatisfaction within the junior officer corps (Kane, 2011).

The profession-bureaucracy tension arises because both of these sociological phenomena lead people to value different organizational characteristics. Max Weber (1978) argues that bureaucracies gave rise to modern armies because the modern bureaucratic army is only possible with the adoption of a bureaucratic political-economic structure. Thus, the adoption of a bureaucratic structure makes possible a professional army capable of pacifying large territories,

fighting distant wars, and projecting power overseas. Furthermore, the modern bureaucratic army can provide provisions and resources for itself, develop strict discipline, and provide training due to the legal-rational authority of its bureaucratic structure. Weber suggests the modern army would cease to exist without the inherent bureaucracy it uses to manage itself. Using Weber's characteristics of a modern army, I further assert that the U.S. Army is indeed a modern bureaucratic army and the structures that create the modern army are the same ones that create tension with the professional officer corps—primarily the tension between formal rationality and professional autonomy.

The bureaucracy that enabled the creation of the modern army remains at odds with the profession of being an army officer. A profession is defined by a set of characteristics of which a degree of autonomy is key (ADRP 1, 2015; Brante, 1990; Friedson, 2001). The U.S. Army's doctrine specifically states the officer corps is a profession in which its members "are granted a significant autonomy" (ADRP 1, 2015, p.1-1). The strict requirements of bureaucracy, however, can impose constraints on this autonomy, thereby creating a tension between bureaucracy and the profession or professional. How this tension is managed can serve to alleviate the tension or amplify it, thereby making it a factor in the career decision making of army officers.

The officer career timeline is largely based on the bureaucratic structures that keep officers moving along a linear career path. Promotion boards and promotion requirements further exacerbate the profession-bureaucracy tension officers are embedded in because they largely dictate individual duty assignments and locations. Again, these structures do create a learnable and navigable system but do so by removing a degree of autonomy from the professional army officer.

Lastly, perceptions of organizational support largely influence employee commitment and retention to an organization (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002); Eisenberger, et. al., 1986). This is largely due to employees' tendency to assign to the organization, humanlike characteristics. This means that actions taken by agents of the organization, largely supervisors or superiors, are viewed as indicators of the organization's "intent" and not the actions of individuals (Levinson, 1965; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). On the basis of the personification of the organization, favorable or unfavorable treatment is viewed as an indication of the degree of organizational support (Rhoades and Eisenber, 2002). Higher levels of perceived organizational support (POS) are positively correlated with higher employee retention rates and lower levels of POS are negatively correlated with employee retention rates (Vardaman, et. al., 2016; Eisenberger, et. al., 2002).

Furthermore, perceived supervisor support (PSS) is related to POS in that employees associate increased POS from increased PSS (Eisenberger, et. al., 2002). Therefore, the personification of qualities attributed to the organization by employees through supervisor interactions and the influence that PSS has on POS, directly influence the retention rate of employees.

Perceptions of organizational support play out in the U.S. Army through junior officer interactions with senior officers and with their branch managers. Branch managers are assigned to officers based off of rank and branch (job) and play a middle man role in meeting U.S. Army manning requirements and individual officer preferences. Branch managers also work with officers individually to ensure they meet requirements for promotion, which, in turn, meet U.S. Army manning requirements by rank.

At times, officer interactions with senior officers and branch managers center around evaluations, job assignments, and competitiveness for promotions. These interactions can influence POS as actions may be viewed as favorable or unfavorable. This brings to the forefront the role of bureaucratic structures in impacting career decision making, as both senior officers and branch managers have roles in ensuring officers remain eligible for promotion and the U.S. Army is meeting its personnel requirements. Feelings of non-support or the inability to manage one's career can lead to less support for the organization. At its extreme, I contend this can increase rates of attrition.

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, this study aims to describe the pattern of attrition and retention of U.S. Army active duty Captains. Officers at the rank of Captain are selected because they represent a subpopulation of the U.S. Army officer corps that has served beyond an initial service obligation but has yet to cross the 10-year mark in employment. Furthermore, this first research objective specifically examines the role of bureaucracy in career decision making. Second, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature by categorizing officers based on their past performance and then examining the retention and attrition rates of officers by performance category. This provides empirical evidence in determining if "the best are getting out." Third, this study further adds to the literature by conducting a logistic regression analysis to examine the impacts of demographics, service history, and perceptions of organizational support variables in influencing the decision to stay or opt out of a 20-year career in the U.S. Army.

In my thesis, the underlying research question is, "Does the U.S. Army have a high-performing officer retention problem?" I will answer this question by addressing three research objectives that will be presented in what follows. The remainder of the thesis is organized as

follows: Chapter Two reviews literature pertinent to the study. In it, I provide background information regarding the U.S. Army structure, officer retention studies, rationality and bureaucracy, professions, and retention perceptions of organizational support. The purpose of the literature review is to highlight the current U.S. Army literature and the sociological phenomenon officers are embedded in during their time in service. Chapter Three is the problem statement chapter which sets up the research question and subsequent three research objectives of my study. Chapter Four describes the research methodology that was used to address the three research objectives. Chapter Five describes the results from data analysis. Chapter Six presents the discussion, conclusion, and findings from my study.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background information on the U.S. Army as an organization as well as cover the relevant literature on sociological themes that affect U.S. Army junior officer retention. This chapter is broken up into five main subsections: the U.S. Army structure, officer ranks, and promotion requirements; officer retention in the U.S. Army; Weberian bureaucracy, and rationality; what is a profession and a professional; and the effects of perceptions of organizational support on the retention of employees.

U.S. Army Structure, Officer Ranks, and Promotion Requirements

In the aftermath of the Vietnam conflict, in 1973, the United States Military became an all-volunteer force. Conversely, in November of 1980, Congress amended Title 10, United States Code, to "make uniform the provisions of law relating to appointment, promotion, separation, and retirement of regular commissioned officers of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps." (Rostker, et, al., 1993, p. 1) The Purpose of the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) was to "maintain, a high-quality, numerically sufficient officer corps [that] provided career opportunity that would attract and retain the numbers of high-caliber officers needed [and] provide reasonably consistent career opportunity among the services." (Rostker, et, al., 1993, p. 1) This established a maximum number of majors (O-4) in each service, created the number of appointments for commissioned officers, rules for promotions, and standards for separation and retirement.

The above revisions to the army's personnel management marked a changed in the army's thinking that aligned with its realization that "it could not motivate the highly educated work-force it was seeking, it would have to settle on simply educating the motivated people that it could attract." (FIRL, 1968, pp. 61-69). Thus, the military as a whole became more

bureaucratic in the professionalization of its all-volunteer officer corps in the 1980s. The professionalization and bureaucratization of the officer corps along with its realization of needing to retain high-caliber officers has played a role in the retention of its junior officers since 1980. The United States Army, more so than any other branch, has routinely had an issue in retaining junior officers (USGAO, 2007). The issue of the U.S. Army retaining officers from the USGAO's report pertained to attrition numbers compared across all branches of the military.

To understand why the retention of quality officers in the U.S. Army matters you must understand the organization of the officer corps in relation to the configuration of the army. The U.S. Army is built in a hierarchical manner beginning with platoons and ending with combatant level commands (General Officer level commands). In this research and literature review, the focus on officer retention will be limited to the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) (Colonel level command) and below organizations.

The platoon is the smallest organization of which an officer is in charge. It is managed by either a Second Lieutenant (O-1) or First Lieutenant (O-2). This is the entry level position for an officer and is where they are acclimated to military service. There are three to four platoons in a typical (infantry, artillery, or armor) company. A company is commanded by a Captain (O-3) and is the first level where an officer is in command. A battalion is the next higher organizational level commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel (O-5) and is composed of five to six companies. Finally, a brigade is commanded by a Colonel (O-6) and is composed of seven battalions consisting of maneuver (infantry and armor), artillery, engineer, and support battalions. This is the backbone of the army's "fighting force" and where junior officers (O-1-O-3) are usually employed (FM 3-21.10, 2006; FM 3-96, 2015).

Outside of the leadership positions in each organizational level, i.e. platoon, company, battalion, and brigade, there are additional officer positions. At the company, battalion and brigade level, there is a second in command otherwise called an executive officer. In battalions and brigades, there is a wide array of staff positions headed by Lieutenants and Captains (battalion level) or Majors (O-4) (brigade level). These positions employ a large number of officers that work to provide the commander information required for timely decision making on the battlefield (FM 3-96, 2015). Figure 2.1 is a table of officer ranks from Second Lieutenant thru Lieutenant Colonel with associated insignia, time in service requirements, and corresponding brigade combat team duty position.






| Rank | Insignia | Time in Service Requirement | Associated Brigade Combat Team Duty Position |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| Second Lieutenant (2LT) |  | None | Platoon Leader or Battalion Staff Officer |
| First Lieutenant (1LT) |  | 18 Months | Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer, or Battalion Staff Officer |
| Captain (CPT) |  | 4 years | Company Commander, Battalion Staff Officer, Brigade Staff Officer |
| Major (MAJ) |  | 10 years +/- 1 year for below or above the zone selection | Battalion Operations Officer, Battalion Executive Officer, Brigade Staff Officer, Brigade Operations Officer, Brigade Executive Officer |
| Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) |  | 16 years +/- 1 year for below or above the zone selection | Battalion Commander |

Figure 2.1: US Army Officer Rank, Insignia, Time in Service Requirements, and Associated BCT Duty Positions.

Within this structure of the U.S. Army, there are more junior officers (Lieutenant and Captains) than field grade officers (Majors, Lieutenant Colonels, and Colonels). The military typically does not hire civilians as Captains, Majors, or Colonels. The exception to this rule is the direct commissioning of officers in some specialty positions (doctors, dentists, surgeons) within the US Army Medical Command. The senior ranking leaders in the military are promoted from within the system and started their careers initially as Lieutenants. This creates a need to retain

the best performing junior officers to ensure that senior ranking officers are selected from a pool of the highest performing officers up for promotion.

Lastly, the officer promotion process within the military is currently based off of timeline requirements along with performance in key development and broadening jobs, which are codified in an annual Officer Evaluation Report (OER). The minimum timeline requirements for promotion are 18 months Time In Service (TIS) for First Lieutenant, 48 months TIS for Captain, 10 years TIS for Major, and 16 years TIS for Lieutenant Colonel. An Officer is eligible to retire after 20 years of service and can be promoted to Colonel after 22 years of service if they stay in past retirement. These are the primary promotional times; however, an officer does have the ability to be promoted one year earlier to the ranks of Major, Lieutenant Colonel, and Colonel for strong performance or to meet army requirements (AR 600-8-29, 2005) (See Figure 2.1).

Given the structure of the army at the BCT level and below, the promotion timeline, and promotion requirements, it becomes clear that the U.S. Army optimally needs to retain its best quality officers. The attrition of quality officers can be a significant problem for the future of the U.S. Army because its senior leaders can only be promoted from officers that remain in the army.

The Officer's Career Timeline

The United States Army is inherently a bureaucratic organization and has become more bureaucratic since the implementation of the DOPMA legislation in the 1980s. The bureaucratic policies put in place to manage personnel are designed to maximize fairness, efficiency, and predictability for personnel management. The types of policies are ones that make promotion, duty assignment location, professional military education, and job assignment heavily dependent upon an officer's career timeline. The timeline based promotion process is a direct result of the

DOPMA legislation from the 1980s which has resulted in a decrease of individual agency while increasing structure in individual officer career management and career decision making. Figure 2.2 is a graphic representation of an infantry officer's career timeline. Figure 2.2 shows when an infantry officer's promotion boards, promotion dates, and duty assignment windows are throughout their career.

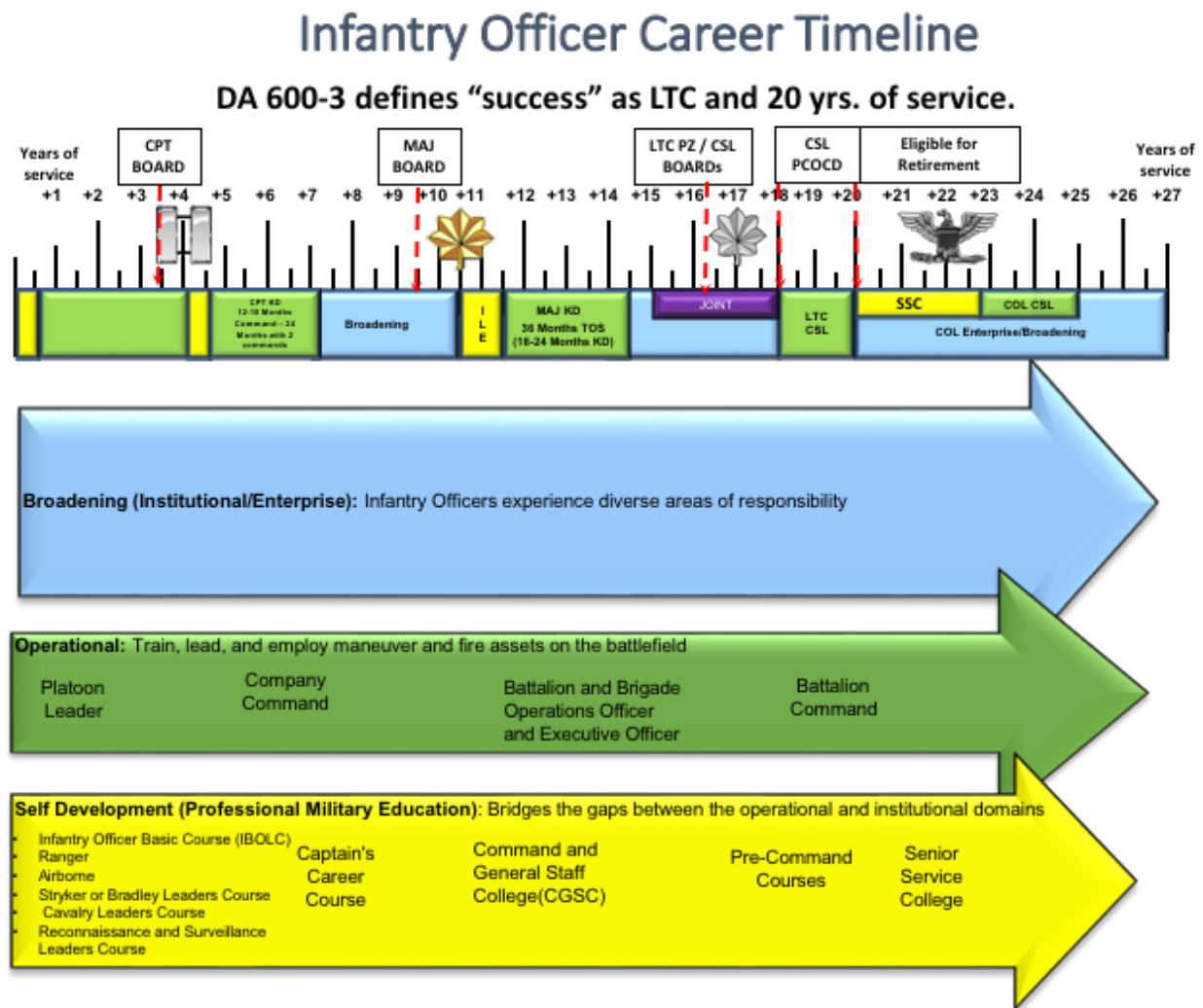


Figure 2.2: Simplified Infantry Officer Career Timeline. Officers of different branches (Field Artillery, Armor, Engineers, etc.) have similar career timelines.

The officer career timeline in Figure 2.2 illustrates the rigidity of the bureaucratic system within which an officer must make career decisions. The career timeline is predicated on

promotion timelines and rates put into place from the DOPMA legislation of the 1980s. There are three spheres that must be juggled in navigating a 20-year career to ensure an officer remains competitive for promotions and retirement. First, and most importantly are operational assignments that are considered Key Development (KD) jobs. These are jobs that have large impacts on promotions and future assignments, such as company command for a Captain and battalion executive officer or operations officer (S3) for a Major. These positions become the de facto gates that must be successfully navigated to give an officer the best chance at promotion and competitive schooling.

Secondly, self-development assignments, otherwise called professional military education, must be completed in order to be considered for promotion as well as to be assigned to a key development position. Professional military education includes the Captain's Career Course (CCC) for all Captains, and Intermediate Level Education (ILE) (usually in the form of the Command General Staff College (CGSC)) for Majors. Both of these assignments usually accompany a change of duty station and additional service obligation upon relocating (AR 350-100, 2017).

Thirdly, broadening assignments are important and enable officers to have diverse experiences within the army. Broadening assignments enable officers to continue to refine skills learned in professional military education and operational assignments in addition to passing on learned skills to future cohorts in numerous institutional positions. These assignments are critical in further developing the officer and the army at large, both of which aim at improving future leaders and the fighting force.

While the career timeline may make for a great tool to “stay on track” for future promotions and assignments, it becomes a constraint by ensuring officers follow a linear path

toward the next rank and assignment. Due to this top-down mandated timeline, officers can find themselves with limited ability to shape their current and next assignments. It also keeps officers moving down a linear path without allowing an officer to stay in a position they may enjoy or by forcing them into an assignment they may not want. Timeline constraints play a large factor in deciding when an officer moves, gets into a KD job, attends professional military education, or conducts a broadening assignment. Therefore, the bureaucratic structures put in place become the driving force in personnel management in lieu of individual considerations. Additionally, any deviation from the rigid timeline creates ripple effects that can cause an officer to lose opportunities or become less competitive for promotion and future assignments.

The upside to the career timeline and associated policies is that they allow the army at large to predict personnel shortfalls, overstaffing, and personnel moves that ensure units are at minimum manning requirements for specific cohorts. For example, these policies enable the army to know how many Captains are graduating from the Captains Career Course (CCC) every year and they can match vacant or soon to be vacated positions in brigade combat teams that must be filled by CCC graduates. Therefore, these policies are highly effective for managing and predicting personnel requirements across a large force.

In addition to the career timeline, other personnel policies are considered in personnel management. Two policies that are factored into junior infantry officer assignments are the vehicular/non-vehicular imperative, and overseas versus non-overseas assignments. Generally, an officer will serve as a Captain at a location that is different from where they were assigned as a Lieutenant. For example, an officer that was assigned to a non-vehicular assignment (light infantry) will serve in a vehicular assignment (mechanized infantry) as a Captain. Similarly, if an officer served overseas as a Lieutenant, such as in Europe, they will serve at a stateside post as a

Captain. Both of these policies create well rounded, experienced officers, as well as reduce the rates of "inbreeding" (serving in the same unit). However, they further limit individual consideration in choosing duty assignments and expand the bureaucratic control over the career decision making of officers.

Again, these types of policies keep an officer moving down a linear path with minimum individual consideration. As noted, rigid promotion timelines may not only keep officers from remaining in jobs they may enjoy but might also force them to take assignments they may not want. Thus, policies can serve to limit the future assignments an officer can have.

The personnel policies associated with career timelines and unit imperatives capture the formal rational structures used in the U.S. Army personnel management bureaucracy. The goal of these personnel management policies is to manage personnel by universally backed rules and regulations that enable means-end calculability that is precise and efficient. Without policies that enable means-end calculability, the U.S. Army would face significant challenges in filling minimum manning requirements for various units. Personnel shortfalls could become a threat to national security if units do not have the officers required to lead soldiers within the U.S. Army. Therefore, these policies are required, at least to some degree, to maintain the U.S. Army's strength as a national defense asset.

An important question is whether or not these policies influence the attrition or retention of the officers subject to them? This question has been asked and answered in the studies conducted by Kane (2011 & 2012), Arnold (2015) and Wardynski, (2010). All three posit that personnel manning policies play a role in the attrition rates of junior officers. In the next section, I will discuss officer retention and attrition in the U.S. Army.

Officer Retention in the United States Army

The U.S. Army has had problems retaining quality officers and has faced this issue since the 1980s when the DOPMA legislation was enacted (Kane, 2011). The current literature on the U.S. Army junior officer retention problem centers around when officers decide to leave the military, why they decide to leave, and what can be done to better retain junior officers.

The military, unlike other government organizations or private corporations, legally does not let its soldiers quit or leave whenever they want. From the time an officer enters the U.S. Army, they adhere to a service obligation. These service obligations vary from an initial service obligation (when someone first joins the military) to an additional service obligation every time someone changes their duty station (move), completes professional military education, or complete civilian educational opportunities (AR 350-100, 2006, pp. 6-8). The DOPMA legislation of 1980 set the initial service obligation for officers entering the military. A graduate from a service academy (West Point, Annapolis, or the Air Force Academy) has a minimum five-year service obligation. An officer commissioning from a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program has a three-year service obligation if they did not receive a scholarship or a four-year service obligation if they received a scholarship. Finally, an officer commissioning from Officer Candidate School (OCS), an active duty commissioning program in the army, has a three-year service obligation (United States, Government Accountability Office (USGAO), 2007; AR 350-100, 2006, pp. 6-8).

The USGAO analyzed the data of officers leaving the military and found that in the years 2001, 2003, and 2005, anywhere from 7% (OCS commissioned officers, 2003) to 38% (West Point commissioned officer, 2005) of commissioned officers left the military at the end of their initial service obligation. Historically, the fourth and fifth years of service have the lowest

retention rate of officers (USGAO, 2007). This can be attributed to ROTC and the United States Military Academy (USMA) producing the largest number of commissioned officers and that these officers' initial service obligation expires during their fourth and fifth years of service, respectively. Tilgham (2007) found that "in 2003, around 8% of junior officers with between four and nine years of experience left for other careers" (p. 46). In 2007, "the attrition rates leapt to 13%" (Tilgham, 2007, p. 46). The United States Government Accountability Office (2007) found that, in 2001, 2003, and 2005, an average of 94-95% of Officers in the U.S. Army at their tenth year of service opt to stay in. With the military having a twenty-year retirement program, it would be safe to assume that the vast majority of officers that stay past ten years would remain until they were eligible for their twenty-year retirement. If correct, this suggests that officers leave the military in three main windows. Either they leave after the expiration of their initial service obligation, after their initial service obligation but before their tenth year of service, or after becoming eligible for retirement.

Reasons presented for why junior officers leave the Army are that junior officers are deployed too often (Tilgham, 2007; USGAO, 2007; Kane, 2011), that there are greater economic opportunities outside of the army (Kane, 2011; Kane, 2012; Tilgham, 2007), or that the officers leave due to dissatisfaction with the army's bureaucratic personnel management system (Kane, 2012, Arnold, 2015; Wardynski, et. al.; 2010).

The U.S. Army has been engaged in armed conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other stability operations around the globe, for the last seventeen years. Many officers have served multiple tours ranging from four to fifteen months in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, Tilgham (2007), states, "studies show that one deployment actually improves retention, as soldiers draw satisfaction from using their skills in the real world. Second deployments often

have no effect on retention. It's the third deployment that begins to burn out Soldiers" (Tilgham, 2007 p. 48). Tilgham's argument simply states that deployments initially do not play a role in officer attrition as they are satisfied with utilizing their training in the real world. The USGAO's (2007) report to the Armed Service Committee states, "the Office of Military Personnel Policy acknowledged that retention may have suffered because . . . [of] The high pace of operations. Army Officers have already completed multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan since the army is providing the majority of personnel for those operations" (USGAO, 2007, p. 29). Looking at it from both perspectives Tilgham's argument clearly applies to junior officers with four to nine years of service as they would typically have completed one to three deployments. This means that although deployments do play a role in junior officer retention rates it is probably not the main or sole reason why officers leave the military.

Deployments do play a role in officers leaving the army. However, the U.S. Army was concerned about junior officer retention long before the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. Army War College's Statement in 2010 states the problem has existed for decades, "Since the late 1980s prospects for the Officer Corps future have darkened by plummeting company-grade officer retention rates. Significantly this leakage includes a large share of high-performing officers" (Kane, 2011, p.1). This statement captures the problem outside of the current environment around the globe and shows this has been of interest to military leaders for the last four decades.

Economic opportunities play a role in officer retention. The USGAO's Report to the Committee on Armed Services states, "that an improving civilian labor market" has caused "retention to suffer" (USGAO, 2007, p.29). Additionally, Tim Kane (2011) and Andrew Tilgham (2007) both use what they would describe as quality officers as examples of the U.S. Army

“losing” these soldiers to more lucrative economic opportunities. However, the concept of losing quality to economic opportunity is something the army has known for decades. It was evident during the Vietnam era when the army shifted its goal from recruiting a "highly educated workforce" and acknowledged it would have to "settle" on "educating the people it could attract" (Roster, et al., 1990, pp. 1). Simply put, in times of economic prosperity, the U.S. Army can anticipate portions of its officer corps will leave; and, at times of economic depression, fewer officers leave due to economic incentives. So, while this is a problem in officer retention, it is one that can be accounted for and plays naturally in its pyramidal rank structure.

Lastly, the economic argument for officer retention does not account for junior officer retention being a concern for the last four decades. Since the 1980s, the United States has had numerous economic expansions and recessions that would change the dynamics of officers leaving and staying in the U.S. Army. Yet, during the last four decades, the junior officer retention rate has remained a concern for the U.S. Army—as noted by U.S. Army War College in 2010 (Kane, 2011).

The first two reasons cited for why junior officers leave the United States Army definitely play a small role in officer retention; however, they can largely be discarded because the U.S. Army has been concerned about the retention of junior officers since the 1980s. The significance of this concern being present since the DOPMA legislation was enacted highlights that officer retention has been a concern for decades and that something other than deployments and/or economic factors are the main reasons behind officer career decision making. This means that the army has faced retention issues both in times of peace and conflict as well as during times of economic expansion and recession. Therefore, some other factor beyond deployments and economic reasons is influencing officer career decision making.

The last reason for what causes junior officers to leave the military has been the focus of a lot of research. Tim Kane's book *'Bleeding Talent'* (2012) analyzes the results of a survey administered to 250 West Point graduates. According to his survey results "93 percent [of surveyed West Point graduates] believed that half or more of 'the best officers' leave the military early rather than serving a full career" because, as cited by veterans and active duty officers alike, "that the military personnel system-every aspect of it- is nearly blind to merit" (Kane, 2011, pp. 1-2). Furthermore, Arnold (2015), writing for the U.S. Army War College, echoes the same concerns in his statement, "gone is the era where a production line approach to managing officers and 'treating them as interchangeable parts' will be effective" (p. 2). Both Kane and Arnold capture the effect that the bureaucratic nature of the army's personnel system is having on officer retention.

Kane and Arnold both emphasize the bureaucratic promotion process and associated timeline and requirements that are used in the army's personnel management system. The overemphasis on broad policies to manage all officers creates conditions where little room for merit is left in the promotion process. This is due to a box check or minimum requirement effect, where personnel management is focused on ensuring officers meet minimum requirements instead of managing officers based on individual merit. Thus, the promotion process and associated policies go to great lengths to ensure all officers meet the minimum requirements and, once that threshold has been crossed, minimum attention is given to achievements beyond minimum requirements.

Wardynski, Lyle, and Colarusso (2010), in their paper "*Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Retaining Talent*," highlight the leakage of "high-performing officers, many of [whom were] developed via a fully funded undergraduate education." Their

paper emphasizes that the army's efforts to retain officers have missed the mark by focusing retention on all officers and not quality. They posit that the army should focus on retaining the highest performing officers while “simultaneously culling out those lacking distributions of skills, knowledge, and behaviors in demand across the force” (Wardynski, et al., 2010, p. v).

Wardynski et al. (2010) discuss some of the problems of retention that have come about due to poor “talent management” of U.S. Army officers. They point toward a downward cycle of high-performing officer retention as the army attempted to solve retention problems in the early to mid-2000s by increasing the number of Lieutenants commissioned into active duty, speeding up promotions to Captain and Major, and creating monetary incentives aimed at retaining more officers past their initial service obligations. They state that these policies have created conditions: (a) where junior officers lack time in developmental positions (platoon leader and executive officers); (b) that make it harder for the army to assess performance due to limited time in key developmental positions; and, (c) that create an environment where poor-to-mediocre officers are retained. Furthermore, this also meant that officers commissioned after these policies were enacted held key developmental positions under the poor-to-mediocre officers that were retained. All of this has created conditions for high performing officers to continue to leave the service at the end of their initial service obligation, further exacerbating the problem (Wardynski, et al, 2010).

In the next section, I shift focus from the U.S. Army to bureaucracy, rationality, professions, and perceptions of organizational support to describe the sociological structures that affect the individual agency of junior officers in regard to retention and attrition.

Weber and Bureaucracy

Max Weber did extensive work understanding how ideas shaped the material world. According to Stephen Kalberg, rationality has been recognized as the “major theme in Max oeuvre” (p. 1145, 1980). Central to his idealistic focus, Weber constructed a historical analysis of how capitalism was shaped by the protestant ethic and how bureaucracy became the cornerstone for modern political and economic institutions. Weber’s bureaucratic ideal type provides insight into how large institutions provide a legal-rational framework for calculable and predictable action.

Max Weber created the concept of “legitimate domination” or “legal authority” in his book *Economy and Society* (1978). I’ll use, as Weber did, both legitimate domination and legal authority interchangeably. Weber’s concept of legitimate domination is broadly defined as obeying a command because of a “belief in legitimacy” (Weber, 1978, p. 213 & Guzman, 2015). Weber constructed three ideal types of domination: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational (Weber, 1978). Each type of domination is defined by the grounds of legitimacy for its authority. Traditional authority is legitimized through “established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them” (Weber, 1978, p. 215). Traditional authority rests in the sanctity of the “eternal yesterday” (Guzman, 2015, p. 73). Charismatic authority is legitimized through the “devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person” (Weber, 1978, p. 215). Charismatic authority comes from the belief in a person's extraordinary abilities. Legal-rational authority is legitimized through the “legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands” (Weber, 1978 p. 215). Legal-rational authority comes from the formal

rationalization of legality (Guzman, 2015). The rules or laws provide the authority of an office or action, not an individual. Obedience is obtained through the obeying of the law (Szelenyi, 2016). Legal-rational authority becomes the form of domination that gives rise to large scale bureaucracy. Legal-rational authority rests upon pre-established laws and rules; authority is granted by holding an office not personal authority and individuals obeying the legality of laws. Due to authority being held in pre-established laws and rules, legal-rational authority enables predictable and calculable actions which are beneficial in capitalistic societies. Therefore, legal-rational authority paves the road to bureaucratic administrations that execute their authority.

Max Weber defines six characteristics of a modern bureaucracy as: (1) the regular activities required for the purposes of the bureaucratically governed structure assigned as official duties, in which the authority to give commands is distributed in a stable manner according to rules placed at the disposal of qualified officials- who continuously fulfill these duties (Weber, 1978, p. 956); (2) there is a hierarchal structure of "super and subordination in which there is a supervision of the lower of officers by the higher ones" (Weber, 1978, p. 957); (3) "the management of the office is based upon written documents" (Weber, 1978, p. 957); (4) specialized training is required to hold office; (5) the office requires the "full working capacity of the official", regardless of obligatory working hours (Weber, 1978, p. 958); and (6) the management of office follows stable, exhausted, and learnable rules (Weber, 1978).

Weber's characteristics of a bureaucracy show there are two key aspects that maintain the legitimization of legal-rational authority. First, the characteristics of a modern bureaucracy maintain the legal authority in the office upon which an official presides. The individual can be elected or appointed and their authority is granted to them from the rules governing their office, not from personal charisma. Secondly, individuals must learn the rules and regulations of their

office and are required to meet minimum qualifications to enter an office. These conditions must be met prior to being permitted the ability to exercise the authority granted to them from their office. Thus, the characteristics of a bureaucracy maintain the predictability and calculability of action within the institution it manages. Individuals operating within the institution are able to make legal rational action by consulting the rules or laws beforehand and not having to worry about radical changes to the regulations with every transition of office.

Paul Du Gay, analyzing Weber's work on bureaucracy, identifies three elements that set bureaucracy apart from all other types of domination. First, it has become "indispensable to the operation of the modern capitalistic state" (Du Gay, 2005, p. 119). Second, it created a mechanism for concentrating and distributing power that facilitates the surveillance of social action in political, economic, and cultural life. Third, it legitimizes the functional rationality as the "cognitive mode... through which a means-ends decision making... is systematically imposed in all walks of modern life" (Du Gay, 2005, p. 119). Utilizing Weber's famous analogy, bureaucracy has created the "stahlhartes Gehäuse" or "iron cage" that manages social action in everyday life (Weber, 2002, p. 121).

Bureaucracies are "the organizational form of modernity" (Du Gay, 2005, p. 119). Bureaucracies regulate the relationship between the individual and the organization through its highly developed rules and regulations. This enables bureaucracy to adapt and respond to the constantly changing needs of a modern capitalist economy and society. In turn, it has created a flexible form of administrative power that reduces conflict among social groups and manages the inequality resulting from a capitalist economy. The diffusion of bureaucracy through modern political economies has produced long term benefits such as "a high level of technical

effectiveness” compared to other forms of domination, the “development of meritocracy,” and the “diffusion of an ethic of public service” (Du Gay, 2005, p. 120).

The expense of the modern bureaucracy has been the encroachment of legal-rational action in all realms of everyday life. Once established, bureaucracies become almost indestructible and “alternative organizational futures” are unable to come to fruition (Du Gay, 2005, p. 120). The material gains of bureaucracy in its concurrent growth with capitalism become a price worth paying in the limitation of individual liberty that now acts within the constraints of legal-rational authority (Du Gay, 2005).

Lastly, Weber posits the rise of the modern bureaucratic army is only possible with the adoption of a bureaucratic political-economic structure. Thus, the modern army is capable of producing a professional army that can pacify large territories, fight distant wars, and project force overseas. Furthermore, the military can be provided with provisions and resources, develop strict discipline, and provide technical training due to the legal-rational authority of bureaucratic structures. The organization is able to function due to the leveling of economic and social differences amongst the populace and the state regulatory role in administering the expenses, budget, and administrative functions of the force (Weber, 1978).

Social Action and Rationality

Max Weber conceptualizes four forms of social action: instrumentally rational, value-rational, affectual, and traditional. Instrumentally rational action and value-rational action are largely used within bureaucratic structures as each plays a role in forming legal-rational authority. Instrumentally rational action forms legal-rational authority by using "expectations as means for the attainment of the actor's own rationally pursued and calculated ends" (Weber, 1978, p. 24). Value-rational action ensures “self-conscious values” that govern social action are

incorporated within legal-rational authority (Weber, 1978, p. 24). Therefore, instrumentally rational action and value-rational action are the two types of social action that form the basis of a bureaucratic legal-rational authority. These two forms of rational action form the basis of bureaucratic legal-rational authority because they allow a legal-rational authority to take into consideration a means for a calculated end state and a set of self-conscious values. Affectual and traditional rational action will not be discussed as neither type of social action is a primary driving force behind bureaucratization and legal-rational authority (Weber, 1978).

Out of these forms of social action, two forms of rationalization arise each in somewhat of a dialectical relationship with one another-- formal rationality and substantive rationality. Formal rationality legitimates a means-end calculation aimed at the most precise and efficient means for resolving problems backed by universally applied rules, laws or regulations (Kalberg, 1980, p. 1158; Weber, 1978). In contrast, substantive rationality is a value-driven rationality that is based on “goal oriented” rational calculation by “applying ‘certain criteria’ of ultimate ends” (Weber, 1978, p. 85). These “certain criteria” are methods driving social action that can arise from ethical, religious, political, utilitarian or egalitarian values (Weber, 1978).

Understanding the implications of utilizing one form of rationality versus another is critical when establishing and managing a bureaucratic system in a professional-based organization. Forms of rationality can either enhance the professional culture of an organization or work at undermining the professionalization of an organization’s professionals. While one type of rationality may make sense for efficiency and fairness, it may, at the same time, work against the retention and enhancement of its professionals that work within its structure.

Rationality and Bureaucracy

Gross, Hogler, and Henie state “bureaucracy is an essential tool for establishing control within a hierarchy and generating systems through which control is exercised and maintained” (2013, p. 91). Generally, bureaucratic rules and processes are created with the aim of improving the productivity and efficiency of an organization. These bureaucratic rules and processes enhance any large organization, industry, or profession’s ability to control and manage the personnel and activity within their authority. Without some degree of bureaucracy, large organizations would not be able to function efficiently and fairly on a daily basis.

Max Weber argued that bureaucracy is driven by rational action, where rules and processes are created with an intended meaning and purpose (Gross, et al. 2013). Formal and substantive rationality remain at odds within a bureaucracy as both provide a different starting point for rationality-based action. Formal rationality legitimates a means-end calculation aimed at the most precise and efficient means for resolving problems backed by universally applied rules, laws or regulations (Kalberg, 1980, p. 1158). Thus, formal rationality imposes order through a system of measurement and calculability (Race, 2003, p. 216). Formal rationality will generally lead to policies and regulations that are deemed “fair” or “consistent” for every employee or person involved which facilitates the management of large organizations, industries, or professions.

Formal rationality operates on the idea that there are rules to achieve specified goals. Therefore, we must follow them. The rules may have been initially developed with good intentions, but over time, the rules themselves become the rationale behind action (Weber, 1981). The loss of understanding of the rationale behind the creation of rules leads to people following

rules blindly without taking into account other rationales that may need to be applied in solving problems within the organization.

Finally, formal rationality leaves little room for exceptions in unique and deserving circumstances and does a poor job of managing conflict (Gross et al, 2013). Simply put, if everyone is treated as a number, and the institution loses sight of the individuals that it is managing, then problems can arise where individuals grow disenchanted with the system and choose to leave an organization rather than follow a system faithfully.

In contrast to formal rationality, substantive rationality “directly orders action into pattern. It does so... in relation to a past, present, or potential ‘value postulates’” (Kalberg, 1980, p. 1155). Roberts and Donahue (2000) describe substantive rationality as using rational means to achieve an end, but doing so through a set of coherent social values (2000, p. 366). Substantive rationality is a value-driven rationality, in which rationalization for action follows from an organization, profession, or industry’s values.

Formal rationality and substantive rationality remain at odds with one another because of what is driving the rationalization of action. Formal rationality is strictly calculated action based on precisely and efficiently achieving an end state. This leads to policies and rules that are followed without consideration for other values. Substantive rationality promotes action based on other values that are important to an organization and ensures these values are incorporated into the rules and policies. The two types of rationality remain at odds because formal rational action places precision and efficiency above any other values that can be incorporated into actions. Simply put, if a value negatively affects the efficient means to achieve a desired end state, then that value cannot play a role in determining action.

In the next section, I will discuss the role of rationality in professions. After introducing the role of rationality in professions, I will discuss what constitutes a profession, the professional, and the U.S. Army as a profession.

Rationality in Professions

Formal rationality has been used in a wide array of professions, including higher education, medicine, and governmental organizations (Race, 2003; Roberts and Donahue, 2000; Ritzer and Walczak, 1988). The over-reliance on formal rationality to manage the employees within professions has worked at undermining the professional nature of these professions (Roberts and Donahue, 2000; Ritzer and Walczak, 1988). Formal rationality works at undermining a profession because it can decrease motivation for productivity and creativity through the increase of bureaucratic control and supervision (Roberts and Donahue, 2000). Re-evaluating the type or degree of one form of rationality or another and implementing new bureaucratic structures that are aimed at strengthening the professional can lead to stronger, better managed, more effective, professional organizations (Roberts and Donahue, 2000; Ritzer and Walczak, 1988; Race, 2003).

Roberts and Donahue (2000), discuss bureaucratization and the deprofessionalization of college faculty by analyzing the contradiction between professionalism and bureaucracy. They argue that higher education is shifting towards formal rationality and that this shift is undermining the professionalization of academia. The use of formal rationality in universities is evident in the increase of top-down supervision, summative reviews of professor's work for tenure or promotion, and the use of legislatively mandated assessments (Donahue and Roberts, 2000, pp. 370-372).

Roberts and Donahue state professionalism is a “more effective motivation for productivity and creativity” and that cultivating a professional culture is better in the long run for an organization than implementing bureaucratic procedures aimed at treating work as “calculable units that can be enumerated like widgets in the factory” (Roberts and Donahue, 2000, pp. 365-366). They state it’s better to treat faculty as professionals versus widgets in the factory. Doing so will, in the long run, cause the organization to run better, be more productive, and creative. A shift back towards substantive rationality with university faculty will strengthen the professionalization of academia thereby making it more productive.

Ritzer and Walczak (1988) explore the deprofessionalization of physicians by the use of formal rational structures (capitalistic and bureaucratic) to exercise increasing control over physicians and eroding their substantive values of autonomy, authority over clients, and altruism (1988, p. 7). Overall, they examine how formal rationality, caused by governmental policies, societal changes, and new technologies are leading to the deprofessionalization of physicians. They contend that physicians could emerge from these changes even more professional if they become ‘hyper-rational’ by combining practical, theoretical, substantive, and formal rationalities” (1988, p.16). However, they conclude that formal rational changes are contributing to the deprofessionalization of medicine and have profound implications for all professions.

Both the medical and educational organizations discussed by Roberts and Donahue (2000), and Ritzer and Walczak (1988) emphasize the importance of substantive rationality in enhancing a profession. Both sets of authors argue that reliance on formal rationality works against the efficacy of these professions. Thus, they contend that substantive rationality is best suited for organizations that are professions filled with professionals.

What is a Profession and a Professional

A taxonomic approach will be used to define a profession in this paper. A taxonomic approach is used because it enables the examination of a profession based off of the characteristics it possesses. Mike Saks (2012), states in his paper *'Defining a Profession: The Role of Knowledge and Expertise'* that the taxonomic approach enables the defining of a profession based off a wide range of characteristics possessed by different occupational groups. There are other approaches that can be used to define a profession, professionalism, or a professional. These include the Interactionist, Marxist, Foucauldian, Neo-Weberian, the Power Approach, and The Professional Project (Saks, 2012; Macdonald, 2013). However, each of these approaches still delineates a profession or the process of professionalization with respect to knowledge and expertise. Additionally, all these approaches acknowledge the role of boundary making and maintenance within professions (Saks, 2012). For simplicity, the taxonomic approach will be used to simply describe the characteristics of a profession in lieu of examining why or how a profession exists or describing the process an occupation follows when undergoing professionalization.

The key characteristics of a profession according to Mike Saks (2012) becomes knowledge and expertise (or skill). Both knowledge and expertise are used in a manner that defines what is required for entry into a profession, defines what the profession does, and what separates it from other occupations. Additionally, through the taxonomic approach Saks (2012), identifies other characteristics of professions such as a code of ethics, altruism, and rationality. These characteristics further shape the makeup of the intellectual knowledge required by those granted status within a profession (Saks, 2012).

In his book *The System of Professions,* Andrew Abbott (1988) defines a profession as “exclusive occupational groups applying somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases” (1988, p. 8). Abbott examines the ways in which occupational groups manage knowledge and skills as the defining feature of whether an occupation is a craft or a profession. The defining characteristic is the interrelationship between knowledge and skill and how it is managed, either through technique or through abstract knowledge. The latter corresponds to a profession and the former to a craft. Hence, a “knowledge system governed by abstractions can redefine its problems and tasks” (1988, p. 9). Abstraction is what enables a profession to survive within a competitive system. Therefore, the management of knowledge and skill and a profession’s ability to redefine its problems and tasks, a form of boundary maintenance, are what segregates professions from crafts. Furthermore, due to the abstraction of knowledge and level of skill required, individuals must pass entry into the profession-- a further form of boundary maintenance (Abbott, 1988).

Elliot Freidson (2001) examines professions, professionals, and professionalism in his book *Professionalism.* He defines professionalism in its most elementary form as:

“a set of institutions which permit the members of an occupation to make a living while controlling their own work. That is a position of considerable privilege. It cannot exist unless it is believed that the particular tasks they perform are so different from those of most workers that self-control is essential” (Friedson, 2001, p. 17).

At the core of his definition of professionalism is boundary maintenance. The key statement in his definition of professionalism is that “self-control is essential.” Boundary maintenance becomes critical for both allowing entry into the profession as well as defining the breadth of the

profession. The task of boundary maintenance falls upon the shoulders of those within the profession to manage.

However, Friedson doesn't end his definition of professionalism with simply boundary maintenance. He further examines the other key aspects of professionalism-- knowledge and skill. He arrives at the ideal-type of professionalism as a profession that is "founded on the official belief that knowledge and skill of a particular specialization requires a foundation in abstract concepts and formal learning and necessitates the exercise of discretion" (2001, pp. 34-35). Again, as with Abbott, it's not that any knowledge or skill necessitates a profession, but knowledge and skill that are abstract. Thus, a profession requires a degree of intellectual or mental fortitude whereas a craft (to use Abbott's terms) requires mastery of technique.

Quoting Thomas Brante from his article *'Professions as Science-Based Occupations'* Burrage, Jarausach, and Siegrist, (1990: p.205) list the following six characteristics of a profession:

1. "It is a full-time, liberal (non-manual) occupation;
2. It establishes a monopoly in the labour market for expert services;
3. It attains self-governance or autonomy, i.e. freedom from control by any outsiders, whether the state, clients, lay persons or other;
4. Training is specialized and yet also systematic and scholarly;
5. Examinations, diplomas and titles control entry to the occupation and also sanction the monopoly;
6. Member rewards, both material and symbolic are tied not only to their occupationally competence and workplace ethics but also to contemporaries' belief that their expert services are of 'special importance for society and the common weal.'"

The key characteristics of a profession remain centered around abstract knowledge, expertise, and boundary maintenance. However, Brante (2011) introduces the role of autonomy within an occupational group's self-governed borders. Thus, the professional becomes the autonomous expert within their self-governed field. Outside influences, either from the government or other competitors, become of significant importance for the survival of a profession as it continues to exert control of its field through its autonomy and expertise.

Lastly, in defining a profession, Bernard Barber (1963, p.672) defines four key attributes of professional behavior: "a high degree of generalized and systemic knowledge; primary orientation to the community interest rather than to individual self-interest; a high degree of self-control of behavior through codes of ethics internalized in the process of work socialization and through voluntary associations organized and operated by the work specialist themselves; and a system of rewards." Barber's definition of professional behavior describes key characteristics of professional behavior including knowledge and expertise, altruism, and a code of ethics. Through these expected behaviors, individual behavior is subtly controlled through the profession. Thus, knowledge and expertise, particularly expert knowledge of these expected professional behaviors, becomes a defining characteristic of a profession.

Amalgamating information from the aforementioned sociologists and staying in line with the taxonomic approach, I use the following characteristics to define a profession: First, a profession uses abstract knowledge and expertise to define entry into an occupational group. Second, a profession must have a specialization, that gives the professional autonomy and authority within their field of expertise. Third, a profession requires internal control of its boundaries and what constitutes its field of expertise. Finally, a profession requires individuals to

internalize a code of ethics that controls their behavior before granting them status as professionals.

The Army as a Profession

The United States Army is a profession as described in ADRP 1 (2015) *'The Army Profession.'* The United States Army's doctrine describes a profession as a "trusted, disciplined, and relatively autonomous vocation" (p. 1-1). Furthermore, U.S. Army doctrine states its professional members do five things:

1. "Provide a unique and vital service to society, without which it could not flourish;
2. Provide this service by developing and applying expert knowledge;
3. Earn the trust of society through ethical, effective, and efficient practices;
4. Establish and uphold the discipline and standards of their art and science, including the responsibility for professional development and certification;
5. Are granted significant autonomy and discretion in the practice of their profession on behalf of society" (2015, p. 1-1).

Within this first definition of a profession and professional by the U.S. Army, the first two key characteristics of a profession are described. First, the Army states a professional, and hence its profession, arises from developing and applying expert knowledge. Simply put, not just anybody can be a soldier. A soldier must first develop their expert knowledge through an entrance examination that comes in the form of initial training, and for officers, a minimum of a bachelor's degree. The requirement of a bachelor's degree further demonstrates the abstract knowledge requirement for the officer corps.

The U.S. Army fits the second characteristic of a profession in that it has a degree of specialization that grants it autonomy within its field of expertise. Furthermore, the organization

must maintain this boundary so the professional can continue to have autonomy within its field.

As a government-sponsored organization, the U.S. Army has a monopoly on land warfare.

Therefore, it is the expert on land warfare. There is no other game in town with regard to national defense. However, the key to this second characteristic of a profession is an organization group maintaining its autonomy.

ADRP 1 states explicitly that it is an autonomous organization that is granted its autonomy on the “behalf of society” (2015, p. 1-1). However, implicit within it, is that it maintains its autonomy through earning “the trust of society, through ethical, effective, and efficient practice” (2015, p. 1-1). Given this logic, the army is only able to maintain its monopoly of national defense, and hence its autonomy, through keeping its trust with society. Therefore, as with any profession, it must maintain its boundaries by ensuring its professionals adhere to what is deemed trustworthy by society. Any lapse in this trust and the U.S. Army can lose its autonomy.

Finally, the third characteristic of a profession is maintained in the U.S. Army’s doctrine. ADRP 1 states, “professions self-regulate and guide the actions of their members and the quality of their work in accordance with the profession’s ethic” (2015, p. 1-1). The army ethic is a framework of legal and moral foundations that are internalized by the collective institution (The Army as a profession) and the individual soldiers (the individual as a professional) through its laws, values, and norms. This ethical framework rests on legal foundations including; The U.S. Constitution, Uniform Code of Military Justice, and Oaths of Enlistment/Office and on moral foundations such as trust relationships of the profession, the golden rule, basic rights, and “values, creeds, and mottos” (2015, p. 2-3). Therefore, the profession requires the professional to internalize this code of ethics prior to being considered a professional in the organization.

Perceptions of Organizational Support

Robert Eisenberger et al. (1986) find that the social exchange view of employee commitment to an organization is largely influenced by an employee's perception of organizational support (POS) to them. Eisenberger's research finds that perceptions of greater organizational support increase employees' commitment to the organization and decrease levels of absenteeism. The mechanism by which this works is through a process of personification of the organization. Levinson's (1965) paper *'The Relationship Between Man and Organization'* states that "people project upon organizations human qualities and then relate to them as if the organizations did in fact have human qualities" (p. 377). Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) take this personification process a step further and note that "actions taken by agents of the organization are often viewed as indications of the organization's intent rather than attributed solely to agents' personal motives" (p. 698). Through the process of personification, the organization becomes a human-like entity that employees develop perceptions of support or lack thereof. These perceptions, in turn, directly affect the retention of employees (Eisenberger, et, al., 2002; and Vardaman, et, al., 2016).

Eisenberger et al. (1986) found that "employees believed themselves the recipients of general evaluations by the organization" and that these evaluations were either "consistently favorable or unfavorable" (p. 504). These perceived favorable or unfavorable evaluations, in turn, influenced employee's perceptions towards "their treatment in a variety of situations" (p. 504). They find that increased material and symbolic rewards, such as "pay, rank, job enrichment, and influence over policy" increase POS to the extent that such rewards signified positive evaluations from the organization (p. 504).

The influence of perceived supervisor support (PSS) on POS begs the question of whether POS affects PSS and therefore, perceptions of supervisor support are what really matters in employee retention. Eisenberger et al. (2002), examine this relationship and find that increased PSS is positively correlated to POS, which in turn, is positively correlated to employee retention. Furthermore, they find that POS has no reciprocal effect on PSS. This means that the relationship between POS and PSS is asymmetric and that PSS can increase or decrease POS, but POS does not affect PSS. Therefore, supervisors have magnifying effects on employee retention. This follows with Levinson's logic on employees viewing supervisors as agents of the organization and not individuals.

Eisenberger et al. (2002) further find that supervisors with "higher perceived organizational status are taken by subordinates to more completely embody the organization's basic character, leading to a stronger relationship between PSS and POS" (p. 569). This means that supervisors with greater status increase the strength of the effect of PSS on POS compared to supervisors with less status.

Vardaman et al. (2016), produce similar findings regarding POS and retention. However, they find that "favorable POS comparisons with peers in one's work-unit are positively associated with commitment and retention, whereas unfavorable comparisons are negatively related" (p. 14840). The key difference is that POS comparisons matter within peer groups. Their findings suggest POS is not as simple as overall perceptions of organizational support but rather is influenced by differences in POS between peers. Thus, an employee has to feel as if they receive above-average support from the organization in comparison with their peers. This means that organizations should have tailored or individual approaches to employee support to have the

greatest impact on perceptions of organizational support and, in turn, higher employee retention rates should result.

Lastly, Rhoades and Eisenberger's (2002) literature review on POS, indicates that perceived employee autonomy and organization size are both related to perceptions of organizational support. Autonomy refers to an "employee's perceived control over how they carry out their job, including scheduling, work procedures, and task variety" (p. 700). Increased perceptions of autonomy are correlated with increased POS. Regarding organizational size, individuals feel less valued in large organizations with formalized policies and procedures because employees feel there is less flexibility in meeting individual needs.

Chapter 3 - Problem Statement and Research Questions

The preceding chapter described the structure of the U.S. Army, the current literature on junior officer retention and the contextual sociological phenomena that influences junior officer career decision making. It is theoretically posited that officer retention is influenced by a contradiction that exists between the profession of being an army officer and the social context of the bureaucratic structures in which officers are embedded. This chapter links the sociological phenomena of bureaucracy, rationality, the profession, and perceptions of organizational support to individual officer career decision making. Specifically, I will examine the influence of these phenomena on officer career decision making. This chapter will present my research question and objectives and situate my research within the extant literature on junior officer retention.

The contextual weight of the sociological phenomena in which junior officers are embedded is at a pinnacle for an officer at the rank of Captain. This is because Captain represents the rank where an officer has remained in service beyond an initial service obligation but has not yet crossed over the 10-year mark or halfway point towards retirement. As cited in the literature review, 94-95% of officers who remain in the Army to the 10-year mark will remain in the US Army until eligible for retirement (USGAO, 2007).

The difference between the expiration of an initial service obligation and the 10-year mark creates a retention gap. Captains represent the population in the U.S. Army that falls within this retention gap. This population is the focus of retention strategies that aim at bridging the gap between an initial service obligation and the 10-year mark in order to create career officers (see Figure 3.1). This retention gap is important because it creates an opportunity for the army to retain the highest performing officers while culling the lowest performing officers—increasing the overall quality of officers considered for future promotion.

The U.S. Army utilizes a wide array of retention strategies that aim to retain officers beyond the 10-year mark in their careers. Examples of these retention strategies are the post 9-11 GI Bill, extending GI Bill benefits to family members, graduate school programs, and continuation pay. These retention strategies can be viewed as a means to increase perceptions of organizational support as they are all positive incentives created by the organization for the employee. However, each of these retention strategies creates varying service requirements and are offered at different points in an officer's career. Specific retention strategies will not be covered as they are not the focus of this study. However, the significance of the military's retention strategies is that they employ some form of benefit (historically educational or monetary) that requires an additional service obligation that will get officers beyond the 10-year mark in their career timeline.

Finally, the significant reduction of the total number of officers in a cohort from Captain to Major means Captain is a rank where the army can gain the most by retaining the best performers and culling out the worst performers-- focusing on quality. This is because the population of officers being promoted from Captain to Major is reduced by over 1000 officers, more than at any other change in rank (Infantry Branch Brief, 2018) (see Figure 3.1).

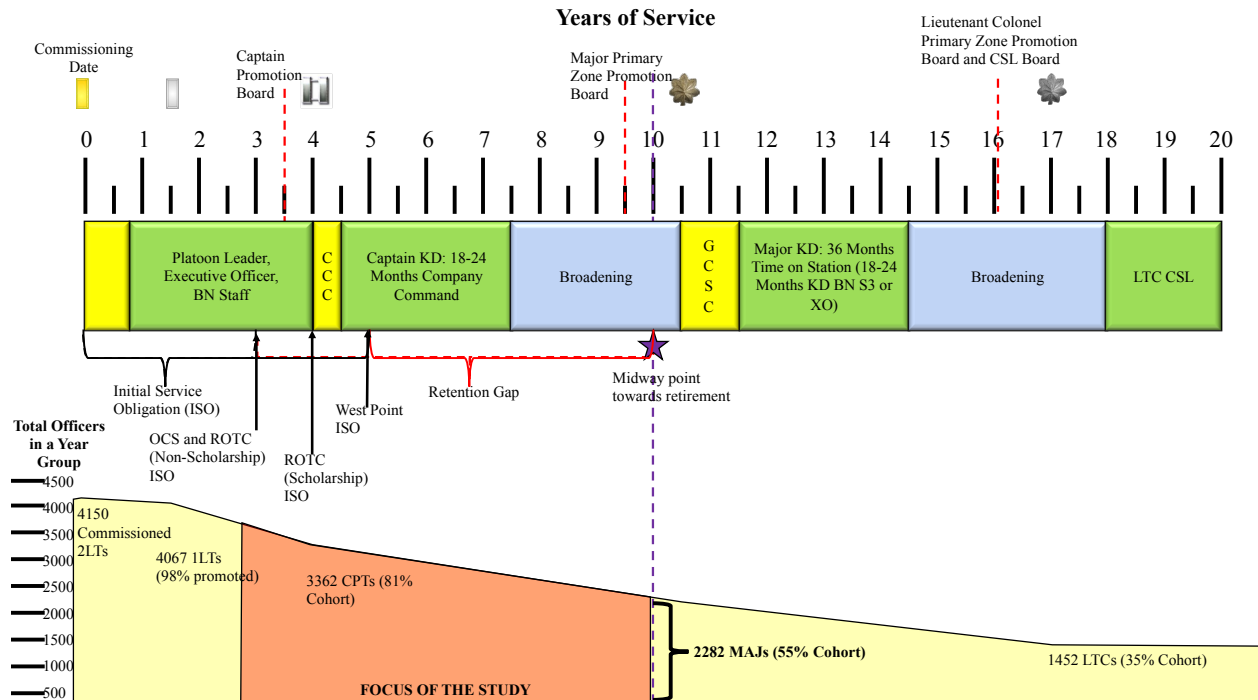


Figure 3.1: 20-Year officer career timeline overlaid 20-year cohort attrition. The red underlined portion from the 4yr to the 10yr mark represents the retention gap. The retention gap is the period of time between the initial service obligation and the mid-way point that the Army focuses on in attempting to retain the highest performing officers. The bottom half of the slide shows the progression of a one-year cohort of officers over a 20-year career. 4150 commissioned 2LTs will lead to 1452 Lieutenant Colonels

Research Question

Currently, the literature on U.S. Army junior officer retention seeks to understand why junior officers leave the U.S. Army and posits that the army is not able to retain “the best” officers. It should be pointed out that this claim is not substantiated by empirical data (Kane, 2011; Tilgham, 2007). The literature also highlights the need to shift retention efforts toward quality over quantity (Arnold, 2015, Wardynski, et, al., 2010). However, none of the reviewed studies define quality or performance characteristics of officers that remain in or leave the U.S. Army. Assuming that the U.S. Army continues to seek strategies to retain its best performers as career officers, while simultaneously meeting personnel requirements, then there is a good reason to analyze the quality and characteristics of officers leaving and staying in the U.S. Army.

This analysis can aid in the development of high performing officer retention strategies.

Therefore, my research question starts the conversation first and foremost by examining whether the U.S. Army has a high-performing officer retention problem.

My research question has the goal of adding to the current literature on junior officer retention in three ways. First, I examine the differences between Captains that stay in and those that opt out of the U.S. Army. Second, I categorize Captains based on their performance in the U.S. Army and examine their associated retention rates. Third, I use multivariate logistic regression analysis to identify factors that influence the retention of U.S. Army Captains. Thus, my research question is:

Research Question: Does the U.S. Army have a high-performing officer retention problem?

Research Objective 1

Research Objective 1 (ROI): Describe the pattern of attrition and retention among U.S. Army active duty Captains.

The current literature on U.S. Army junior officer retention is focused on why junior officers leave the U.S. Army. Reasons given for why officers leave the U.S. Army are too many deployments, economic opportunities outside of the U.S. Army, and dissatisfaction with the personnel management system. These reasons are examined in this research objective to situate the study population with previous research. Furthermore, dissatisfaction with the personnel management system as a reason for leaving the military serves to highlight the tension between bureaucracy and the army as a profession.

Research Objective 1 seeks to connect my research with the U.S. Army retention literature and sociological literature by examining Captain retention rates due to the profession-

bureaucracy tension. First, Research Objective 1 examines the retention rates in the U.S. Army in a comparative manner to the literature discussing retention issues during the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Kane, 2011; Tilgham, 2007; USGAO, 2007). Secondly, Research Objective 1 examines why officers have left the U.S. Army or why they would leave the U.S. Army in the future. This includes reasons discussed in the literature such as; OPTEMPO, economic opportunity, and bureaucracy.

I first describe the pattern of retention among U.S. Army active duty Captains and describe the basic characteristics of officers that decide to leave versus those that remain in the U.S. Army. Basic characteristics of the study population that are examined include demographics, number of deployments, and commissioning sources. The goal of Research Objective 1 is to situate my research within the literature on current junior officer retention. This part of my analysis provides an overview of the population and examines reasons for officers leaving the U.S. Army before analyzing performance characteristics of each subpopulation (those that opt out and those that stay in).

Research Objective 2

Research Objective 2 (RO2): Examine the difference in performance characteristics of Captains who plan on leaving the U.S. Army versus those that plan on remaining until eligible for retirement.

Within the current literature, there exists a gap in measuring, defining, and categorizing the performance of army officers. It's been posited but never backed by empirical evidence that "the best" are leaving the U.S. Army or that the Army is "bleeding talent" (Kane, 2011 and Tilgham, 2007). Reasons cited for why officers are leaving include dissatisfaction with the personnel management system (Kane, 2011; Kane, 2012). As captured in the officer career

timeline (see figure 2.2) the rigid policies that enable predictability in personnel management act as a constraint on the professional autonomy of the individual officers that make up the professional officer corps.

Given the characteristics of what constitutes a profession, it becomes clear that there exists the chance for friction to arise between formal rationality and the professional. This friction manifests itself within the organization as the professional finds his or herself lacking autonomy to apply their expertise within their field due to formal bureaucratic structures that strip the individual of some of their autonomy. The symptoms of this friction may become noticeable in terms of retention or more appropriately, the attrition of high performing professionals within the organization. Simply put, if an individual feels as if their talents can be used better elsewhere, they may choose to vote with their feet and leave the organization.

Thus, the “deprofessionalization” of a profession through the use of formal rational bureaucratic structures can cause professionals to lose a degree of their motivation to stay in the organization, may hurt recruitment efforts, or lead to an employee turnover problem in the organization.

Within the U.S. Army, a contradiction develops between the formal rational structures that govern an officer’s career and individual autonomy in career decision making. The U.S. Army’s doctrine proclaiming itself as a profession states that the officer corps was the first professionalized portion of the army (ADRP 1, 2015). As a profession, individuals are typically granted a level of autonomy. Simultaneously, the personnel management system has to manage officers in a way that ensures that the U.S. Army meets minimum manning requirements for various units and ranks. This creates a rigid timeline that keeps officers moving down a linear path towards the next rank and assignment. This inherently strips professionals of autonomy as

they have to navigate a career within these imposed structures, potentially creating friction between the bureaucratic system and the professional. The friction that arises between the bureaucratic structures and professional autonomy can lead to dissatisfaction towards the personnel management system and working for the army as an organization.

Though not a specific measure of performance, valuable experiences, as measured by deployment and duty positions are examined to see if the army is losing a portion of experienced officers. This is examined because experience is valuable in leader development. However, not all officers across different branches of the army and units are afforded the same experiences. Nevertheless, a significant loss of valuable experiences, either deployment-related or duty-position related, can be of concern since the army only promotes officers that stay in the army.

Therefore, research objective 2 adds to the literature on junior officer retention and addresses the research question by defining and measuring levels of performance to categorize officers based on their past military performance. Further, I examine if there are significant differences between the performance characteristics of officers that decide to stay in or leave the U.S. Army. This adds to the current literature by providing empirical evidence on whether there is a “quality” retention problem. Here quality will be defined by past performance as measured through an officer’s Officer Evaluation Report (OER)¹.

Research Objective 3

Research Objective 3 (RO3): Identify correlates of retention and attrition among U.S. Army Captains.

¹ The Officer Evaluation Report (OER) is the official report of an officer’s performance and potential over a rated period-- usually annually. It is also a central component for promotion boards.

Research Objective 3 identifies correlates that affect retention and attrition of junior officers. The literature review highlights the structure and agency debate which is theorized to manifest itself in officer retention and attrition rates. This is also the main thesis of Tim Kane in his book *'Bleeding Talent'* (2012), in which he suggests the rigid structures of the personnel management system are what causes officers to leave the U.S. Army.

The impacts of perceptions of organizational support (POS) and perceptions of supervisor support (PSS) are key factors that influence employee retention within organizations (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Eisenberger et al. (1986) and Levinson (1965) stated that the influence of organizations on individual career decision making happens through the process of personification as employees attach human-like qualities to the organization and view the organization's (and supervisors' within it) actions as extensions of the organization and not the personal actions of individual agents who act on behalf of the organization. Furthermore, the "higher up" a supervisor is, or the more "clout" they have, the more an employee attributes that person's actions as an embodiment of the organization's actions. Favorable actions are associated with increased POS and retention rates while unfavorable actions decrease POS and increase attrition from the organization. Therefore, interactions between junior officers and senior officers and junior officers and branch managers should both have effects on retention and attrition. This is because senior officers and branch managers act as extensions of the organization and therefore, their interactions with junior officers affect POS.

Research Objective 3 continues to build upon RO1 and RO2 by incorporating demographics and service history and adding perceptions of organizational support to see how all three of these variables influence retention rates of U.S. Army Captains.

Chapter 4 - Research Methods

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology that was used to address each research objective. This chapter is broken up into four main sections, with the last section consisting of three separate subsections. The first section describes the unit of analysis and study population. The second section describes the research design and sampling method that was used. The third section describes how data were collected. The fourth section describes the study variables, how they are measured, and the methods of data analysis that are used for each research objective. Since there are three separate research objectives, each research objective is described individually within the fourth section of this chapter.

Unit of Analysis and Study Population

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual person, specifically individuals who are Captains in the U.S. Army. The study population consists of all active duty U.S. Army Captains who have completed the Captains Career Course (CCC). Two different data sets were used. One is a secondary data set and the other was collected from a survey that was administered to active duty, post-CCC U.S. Army Captains stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas.

Post-CCC Captains were selected as the study population because they represent the portion of the U.S. Army officer corps that has served beyond an initial service obligation but has not yet reached the half-way point toward retirement. This is a critical retention threshold in retaining officers for a 20-year career. This threshold is where the U.S. Army can seek to retain the best officers for promotion to the rank of Major. One reason is that with the promotion from Captain to Major the number of officers is reduced by over 1,000 officers. This means the U.S. Army has the greatest opportunity to retain the greatest number of high performers and cull the lowest performers, at the rank of Captain, more so than at any other rank.

The first data set is a secondary data set requested from the United States Army Operations Research System Analysis (ORSA) office. This data set (henceforth referred to as the ORSA data set) is a census of all active duty infantry officers in the United States Army during the Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17). The original request of a census of all post-CCC Captains in the U.S. Army was pared down to just Infantry officers with limited variables for two reasons. Only Infantry officers were provided due to me working through Infantry branch to get this data set. Infantry branch only had the ability to access Infantry officers and I did not have any contacts in other branches within the U.S. Army²³. The variables requested for the data set were further pared down due to the sensitivity of the data and personally identifiable information. Therefore, data on evaluation reports, race, gender, ethnicity, etc. were not included in the data set. The ORSA data set provides a national population, though limited to the infantry branch, that allows for juxtaposing trends and patterns from the second data set against a national population.

The second data set was created from an in-person administered survey to Captains assigned to the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team (2ABCT), 1st Infantry Division (1ID) at Fort Riley, Kansas. This data set will henceforth be called the 2ABCT data set. Though limited to one Brigade Combat Team, the 2ABCT data set provides data across multiple branches of the U.S. Army, which allows for juxtaposing trends and patterns from the ORSA data set (Infantry)

² There are 16 basic branches officers are commissioned into in the Army; Adjutant General, Air Defense Artillery, Armor, Aviation, Chemical Corps, Engineer, Field Artillery, Finance, Infantry, Medical Services, Military Intelligence, Military Police, Ordnance, Quartermaster, Signal Corps, and Transportation. Post-CCC Captains in Ordnance, Quartermaster, and Transportation branches are combined and grouped under the Logistics Branch.

³ Additional officer branches that require either additional academic education or advanced military training are Special Forces, Physiological Operations, Civil Affairs, Army Medical Specialist, Army Nurse Corps, Chaplain Corps, Cyber, Dental Corps, Electronic Warfare, Medical Corps, and Veterinary Corps.

versus other branches. Though the 2ABCT data set is unit specific, it allows for measuring career plans, past performance characteristics, service history, and perceptions of support across a sample population of the U.S. Army⁴.

The survey for the 2ABCT data set was administered to a cluster sample of post-CCC U.S. Army Captains stationed at Fort Riley, KS. All 2ABCT Captains stationed at Fort Riley at the time of data collection represent a "cluster" within the study population and are included in the sample. This sampling design meets the criteria for a probability sample because post-CCC Captains have the same probability of being assigned to 2ABCT at Fort Riley, KS as they do any other base within the U.S. Army. Table 4.1 presents the characteristics of the two datasets.

| | Number of Captains | Population Type | Method of Data Collection | Variables |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|
| ORSA Data Set | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1471 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census of Infantry Captains (Job Specific) Non-Unit Specific | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Data Set | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics • Service History |
| 2ABCT Data Set | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster Sample Population • Non-Job Specific • Unit Specific | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics • Service History • Perceptions of Support • Performance Characteristics • Reason(s) for leaving/would leave the army |

Table 4.1: Characteristics of the ORSA and 2ABCT data sets.

Research Design and Sampling Method

The research design is a cross-sectional, non-experimental design utilizing two different data sets. The ORSA data set is a national census consisting of all post-CCC Captains serving in the U.S. Army during the fiscal year 2017. This data set can be further broken down into two

⁴ Unit specific means specific to a single Brigade Combat Team.

groups of officers-- those who voluntarily separated from the U.S. Army in FY17 and those who remained in the U.S. Army. The ORSA data set contains six variables that can be used to examine the characteristics of Captains. These variables are marital status, number of dependents, commissioning source, number of combat tours, foreign language proficiency, and highest degree earned.

The 2ABCT data set consists of a sample of Captains, as defined by the study population, that are assigned to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas. This data set can be separated into officers who plan on leaving the U.S. Army and those who plan on remaining in the U.S. Army for a full career. Additionally, the data set is composed of U.S. Army Captains from the 14 basic branches of the U.S. Army as well as specialty branches⁵. This data set contains basic demographic variables, service history variables, performance variables, and perceptions of support variables that can be used to examine each individual officer. Each individual variable is described later in this chapter under each research objective.

Method of Data Collection

The ORSA data set was requested and received from the U.S. Army Office of Research and System Analysis as described earlier. This data set is a national census of every active duty post-CCC infantry Captain serving in the United States Army in FY17.

The 2ABCT data set was collected through in-person surveys administered to 2ABCT Captains conducting redeployment training at Fort Riley, KS (See Appendix A for the 2ABCT survey). I distributed the survey to every Captain attending redeployment training at Fort Riley.

⁵ 14 basic branches for Captains since Ordnance, Quartermaster, and Transportation are combined into Logistics Branch for post-CCC Captains.

The survey was self-administered by the respondents before training sessions began. My presence at each session allowed me to clarify any questions respondents had during the survey.

The Captains in the 2ABCT sample were redeploying from a nine-month deployment in Europe and were conducting mandatory redeployment training by return flight. I administered my survey to 13 of 14 redeployment flights. One flight (trail) was missed because of schedule conflicts. The flight that was missed contained personnel across the entire brigade and was not overly-representative of a single population either by rank or branch.

Ultimately, the survey was administered to 89 out of 90 Captains in 2ABCT that attended redeployment training. One Captain declined to take the survey without providing a specified reason as to why. The only other Captains in 2ABCT who did not complete a survey missed redeployment training for random reasons such as, individual emergencies or schedule conflicts. None of the reasons for missing the survey were systemic and represented random reasons why an individual was not at their place of duty for any day and time. Thus, the population sampled within 2ABCT constitutes a random cluster sample of Captains assigned to 2ABCT. And as previously stated, officers assigned to 2ABCT have an equal chance of being assigned to any other Brigade Combat Team throughout the U.S. Army. Therefore, inferential statistics can be used to analyze the survey results.

Research Objective 1: Variables and Method of Data Analysis

Research Objective 1 (RO1): Describe the pattern of attrition and retention among U.S. Army active duty Captains.

The goal of RO1 is to describe the patterns of attrition and retention of post-CCC Captains in each data set. RO1 provides the percentages and proportions of officers in both data sets that plan on staying or opting out of the U.S. Army. In addition to analyzing binary career plans (stay or leave), RO1 describes the characteristics of both groups through the use of

demographic and service history variables. Finally, RO1 examines responses in the 2ABCT survey for reason(s) for leaving or reason(s) that would cause Captains to leave the U.S. Army.

Dependent Variable: Career Plans

ORSA Data Set: This variable is measured by three types of career plans-- remaining in the U.S. Army, voluntary separation, and involuntary separation. Voluntary separation is an individual's choice to leave the U.S. Army on their own accord. Involuntary separation is an individual being forced out of the U.S. Army either due to a medical reason or as disciplinary action (i.e. being fired). Involuntary separation does not represent a free choice made by officers to leave the army. Therefore, Captains leaving the army involuntarily will be eliminated from the data set and, career plans becomes a binary variable for the ORSA data set. Officers fall into two categories-- those that are voluntarily leaving the U.S. Army and those that are staying in the U.S. Army. Career plans are measured by whether an officer had submitted their paperwork to leave the U.S. Army to their branch managers during the fiscal year 2017. If an officer submitted paperwork they are considered to be leaving the U.S. Army. If an officer had not submitted paperwork they are considered to be staying in the U.S. Army.

2ABCT Data Set: A binary measure was created on whether a Captain plans to either leave the U.S. Army or remain in the U.S. Army until eligible for retirement (See Appendix A questions 1&2).

Demographic Variables

ORSA Data Set: Demographics are limited to marital status, number of dependents, and highest degree earned. Marital status and number of dependents are proxy variables for measuring the impact of family on the decision to stay or leave the U.S. Army. Highest degree earned is a measurement of education and its impact on the decision to stay or leave the U.S.

Army. Highest degree earned also serves as a proxy variable for economic opportunity outside of the U.S. Army. It is theorized that the higher the degree earned, the better economic opportunities one can pursue outside of the U.S. Army. This is due to no regulation in the U.S. Army stating that anything other than a bachelor's degree (required for commissioning) is required for future promotions. Therefore, the incentive for higher education largely facilitates economic opportunity outside of the U.S. Army.

2ABCT Data Set: Demographics are measured by respondents answers to questions concerning gender, race, ethnicity, commissioning year group, age, marital status, number of dependents, and highest degree earned. Marital status, number of dependents, and highest degree earned are analyzed in the same manner as the ORSA data set.

All demographic variables for both data sets were binary coded to examine the effects of marriage, dependents, and advanced degrees (Master's or Ph.D.) on the retention of U.S. Army Captains. Thus, demographic variables were coded as follows; marital status (0=not married, 1=married); dependents (0=no dependents, 1= have dependents); highest degree earned (0=bachelor's degree, 1=advanced degree (Master's or PhD)). The demographic variables of marital status, number of dependents, and highest degree earned were cross-tabulated with career plans to compare the proportions of officers remaining in the army with each demographic variable. A Z test was calculated and used to examine if the differences in proportions were significant.

Service History Variables

ORSA Data Set: Service history is limited in the ORSA data set to commissioning source and number of combat deployments. The commissioning source identifies where an officer received their commission, either from the U.S. Military Academy, Reserve Officer Training

Corps, or Officer Candidate School. The commissioning source identifies the degree to which an officer is serving beyond an initial service obligation as each source has various initial service obligations attached to them. This can be used as a proxy for commitment to the army. The further removed from an initial service obligation, the more committed an officer is to a 20-year career. The number of deployments measures the number of times an officer has been deployed and can be used to measure operational tempo (OPTEMPO). As previously discussed the number of deployments is correlated with retention and attrition. The literature (Tilgham, 2007) stated that three and more deployments led to lower rates of retention.

2ABCT Data Set: Service history is measured by the number of deployments, total number of months deployed, deployment locations, and commissioning source. Commissioning source, number of deployments, deployment locations, and total months deployed are also examined as discussed in the ORSA data set. Additionally, job sequence is used to measure the impact of bureaucratic structures (career timelines and career progression) on retention and attrition. This variable is a proxy for having to continue to advance along a career timeline in order to be competitive for promotion. It is theorized that officers who have completed a full career progression will correspond to lower retention rates as this represents an example of bureaucratic structures putting constraints on individual choice. Officers were coded as being job sequence complete if they had served a minimum of six months in each of the following positions, platoon leader, executive officer, staff officer, and commander.

The following service history variables for both data sets were binary coded to examine the effects of being a United States Military Academy (USMA) graduate, Officer Candidate School (OCS) graduate, deploying to a combat zone, and job sequence had on retention of U.S. Army Captains. Thus, service history variables were coded as follows; USMA Graduate (0=not a

USMA Graduate, 1=USMA Graduate); OCS graduate (0=not a OCS graduate, 1= OCS graduate); Combat Deployment (0=had not deployed to a combat zone, 1=had deployed to a combat zone (Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria); Job Sequence (0=Job Sequence not complete, 1=Job Sequence complete). The service history variables of the total number of deployments and total months deployed remained as quantitative variables. The binarily coded service history variables were cross-tabulated with career plans to compare the proportions of officers remaining in the army with each service history variable. A Z test was calculated and used to examine if the differences in proportions were significant. The quantitative service history variables were cross-tabulated with career plans and the average for each variable was calculated for each population. A difference of means and corresponding test of significance was used to examine if the difference of means was significant.

Reason(s) for Leaving the U.S. Army

2ABCT Data Set: Captains that plan to leave the U.S. Army were asked to list their reason(s) for leaving (see questions 1 thru 1d). Captains who indicate they plan on staying in the army were asked the hypothetical questions. “If you were to leave the U.S. Army what would be your reason(s) for leaving (see questions 2, 2a, and 2b in Appendix A). Furthermore, every Captain regardless of career plans was asked of their reason(s) listed for leaving or the hypothetical, which is the most important. Each listed response was examined across each population (leave vs. stay) and a difference of proportions test and corresponding test of significance was used to examine if the difference of proportions for each listed response was significant.

Methods of Data Analysis

Univariate statistics were generated for all study variables described above. For both the ORSA data set and the 2ABCT data set, the proportion of Captains who left the army (or plan on leaving in the in the 2ABCT data) and the proportion who have stayed in the army (or plan to stay in) was calculated. Using the ORSA data, these two groups were compared for differences in relation to the demographic and service history described above. Using the 2ABCT data, these two groups were compared for differences in relation to the demographic and service history variables as described above. Since these data were collected for a probability sample of U.S. Army Captains, a difference of means test or difference of proportions test will be used, where appropriate, to identify significant differences between the two groups. In addition, the reason(s) for leaving the army cited by those Captains who plan to leave was compared with the hypothetical reason(s) for leaving cited by those Captains who plan on staying in. Table 4.2 lists the variables that were examined in relation to RO1.

| | Dependent Variable (Y) | Demographics | Service History | Reason(s) for leaving |
|----------------|--|--|---|---|
| ORSA Data Set | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marital Status (Binary) • Dependents (Binary) • Advanced Degree (Binary) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployed to a Combat Zone (Binary) • USMA Graduate • OCS Graduate (Binary) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A |
| 2ABCT Data Set | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marital Status (Binary) • Dependents (Binary) • Advanced Degree (Binary) • Race • Gender • Ethnicity • Age | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployed to a Combat Zone (Binary) • USMA Graduate (Binary) • OCS Graduate (Binary) • Number of Combat Deployments • Total Months Deployed • Job Sequence (Binary) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason(s) for leaving |

Table 4.2: RO1 data sets and variables.

Research Objective 2: Variables and Method of Analysis

Research Objective 2 (RO2): Examine the difference in performance characteristics of Captains who plan on leaving the U.S. Army versus those that plan on remaining until eligible for retirement.

Using the 2ABCT data set the goal of RO2 is to measure the job performance of Captains based on data provided on their Officer Evaluation Reports (OER) (see question 3 in Appendix A). Job performance was then compared between Captains who plan on remaining in the army and those who plan on leaving. In addition to evaluation reports, aggregate military awards, skill badges, and tabs will be compared across the groups as an additional assessment of performance⁶. Finally, job sequence and deployment experience are analyzed. Though not a

⁶ Military awards, skill badges, and tabs consist of items that are awarded for achievement, performance, valor, and meritorious service. Military awards include valor awards that can only be earned in combat and achievement, performance and meritorious service awards that can be earned deployed or stateside. Skill badges and tabs are

direct measure of performance, both job progression and deployment experience do measure facets of valuable experience that are important in the retention of army officers.

Officer Evaluation Reports

U.S. Army officers are evaluated annually or any time they have a change of rater (i.e. a new boss). An Officer Evaluation Report (OER) is completed by a “senior rater” who evaluates the rated officer. In the Brigade Combat Team, this is usually done by a Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel, based on the rated officer’s duty position. Officers are rated on a four-point scale. In descending order, this includes: Most Qualified, Highly Qualified, Qualified, and Not Qualified. The OER is a primary factor in the selection of officers for promotion and is the only measure that is comparable across all branches of the U.S. Army. Promotion is not dependent on uncontrollable variables such as deployments, awards, or military schooling. Therefore, the OER is the only measure that can be used individually to categorize individual officers based on performance characteristics.

Captains were asked to provide the rating they received on their last five OERs (see question 3 in Appendix A). An inverse scale was constructed to assigned scores to each point on the OER scale as follows: Most Qualified = 3, Highly Qualified = 2, Qualified = 1, Not Qualified = 0. Scores were summed with an average computed across the total number of OERs reported by each officer. In addition, quartiles were used to divide the sample into four ordinal categories: high performers, high average performers, low average performers, and low performers. High performers will be those Captains whose average OER rating falls above the 75th percentile

earned through attending and successfully passing military schools such as Airborne School, Air Assault School, Pathfinder School, and Ranger School. Lack of any type of award, skill badge, or tab does not indicate poor performance but having awards, skill badges, and tabs do indicate a degree of valuable military experience.

(fourth quartile). High average performers, low average performers, and lower performers are those Captains whose average OER rating falls in the third, second, and first quarterlies, respectively.

Performance Awards

Military awards, skill badges, and tabs were examined as proxy variables for describing the job performance characteristics of army Captains.

One problem with these measures is that there are subtle nuances specific to each branch of the U.S. Army that can affect an individual's opportunities to receive an award, skill badge or tab. The different branches of the army have different opportunities to attend skill badge and tab-producing schools. Further, not every officer gets the opportunity to deploy and standard operating procedures for awards vary by unit⁷. Therefore, there is individual variation in awards, skill badges, and tabs that are beyond an individual officer's control, as measured by their performance.

For example, the Bronze Star Medal is only available to service members deployed in a combat zone. Therefore, an officer who has not deployed to an active combat zone will not have an opportunity to receive a Bronze Star Medal. Similarly, all Infantry officers are given the opportunity to attend Ranger School, but officers from other branches such as the Medical Service Corps or Logistics, do not have the same blanket opportunity.

Because these metrics cannot be compared across branches and units, military awards, skill badges, and tabs are compared within each branch represented in the 2ABCT data set, which is unit specific. Only branches that had a minimum of five respondents were used for

⁷ Unit refers to different organizations within the military. A unit refers to the company, battalion, or brigade a soldier is assigned to.

comparisons. Branches that were examined are Armor, Engineers, Field Artillery, Infantry, Logistics, and Military Intelligence.

Job Sequence

Job sequence is a binary variable that examines if the army is retaining or losing officers with disproportionate levels of experience. As the career timeline unfolds, officers have windows to complete key development jobs throughout a 20-year career. There are no “key development” jobs for Lieutenants. However, there are important jobs that give Lieutenants experience to prepare them for company command—the first key development job in a 20-year career. The jobs that Lieutenants and Captains can do to prepare them for company command that give them a wide array of experiences are platoon leader, company executive officer, and battalion or brigade staff officer. Therefore, each Captain in the 2ABCT data set was asked to fill out how many months they have served in each of the previously mentioned duty positions (see questions 10 thru 13 in Appendix A). Captains who have served a minimum of six months in all four duty positions (platoon leader, executive officer, staff officer, and company command) are coded as job sequence complete. Captains who have not are coded as a job sequence incomplete. Each job sequence population is cross-tabulated against career plans to examine if the army is losing disproportional levels of experience.

Job sequence is not a direct measure of performance but it does measure a degree of experience which is nevertheless important to have throughout a 20-year career.

Deployments

Information about deployments provide variables that also examine if the army is retaining or losing disproportionate levels of experience. Much like job sequence, total number

of deployments, total months deployed, or deployed location (combat zone versus non-combat zone) is not a direct measure of performance. However, it does measure a facet of job experience which is nevertheless important to future officer performance. After all, there is no better experience in preparing for combat operations than having already conducted combat operations.

Each Captain in the 2ABCT data set was asked three questions regarding their deployment history: 1) How many deployments, regardless of type and length, they have completed. 2) How many total months deployed time do they have. 3) Where have they deployed, by location and for how many months (see questions 16 thru 18 in Appendix A). Captains were grouped into Captains that have deployed to a combat zone and those have not⁸. Combat experience was cross-tabulated with career plans to see if a disproportional number of Captains with deployed combat experience are leaving the U.S. Army. Furthermore, the average number of months deployed to a combat zone will be calculated for each group and similiarly cross-tabulated with career plans. The same thing was done for all deployments regardless of type (combat or non-combat) to examine if overall deployment experience is being retained.

Methods of Data Analysis

Univariate statistics were generated for all study variables described above. Bivariate statistics were generated for the study variables mentioned above against the proportions of Captains in the 2ABCT data set that plan on leaving and staying in the Army. Using the 2ABCT data set these two groups were compared for differences in relation to OER scores, military awards, skill badges and tabs, job sequence, and deployment experience. Since theses data were collected from a probability sample of U.S. Army Captains, a difference of means test and a

⁸Deployed combat experiences are only counted for Captains that have deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. Deployment experience counts for any non-accompanied overseas expeditionary operation.

difference of proportions test were used, where appropriate, to identify significant differences between the groups. Table 4.3 lists the variables that will be analyzed in relation to RO2.

Table 4.3 lists the variables that will be analyzed in relation to RO2.

| | Dependent Variable | (X ₄) Performance Characteristics | Method |
|----------------|--------------------|---|---|
| 2ABCT Data Set | • Career Plans | • OER Score | • Difference of means |
| | • Career Plans | • Ordinal OER Category | • Difference of Proportions |
| | • Career Plans | • Military Awards, Skill Badges, and Tabs | • Aggregate Military Awards, Skill Badges, and Tabs by sub-population |
| | • Career Plans | • Deployment Experience | • Difference of Means and Difference of Proportions |

Table 4.3: RO3 data sets and variables.

Research Objective 3: Variables and Method of Analysis

Research Objective 3 (RO3): Identify correlates of retention and attrition among U.S. Army Captains.

The goal of RO3 is to examine how select demographic characteristics, facets of service history, and perception of the organization environment in the army are correlated with Captain career decisions.

Dependent Variable 1: Career Plans

2ABCT Data Set: Same as RO1 and RO2 (See Appendix A, questions 1&2).

Independent Variable Set 1: Demographics

2ABCT Data Set: Demographic characteristics analyzed include: marital status (binary), dependents (binary), and highest degree earned (binary). Marital status and number of

dependents are hypothesized to increase retention rates of Captains because of the benefits package the comes along with military service. This benefits package includes free healthcare for service members and their families, access to tax-free shopping at the post commissary and post exchange (PX), and the ability to transfer Post 9-11 GI Bill benefits to dependents. Regarding the number of dependents, it's theorized that greater the number of dependents the higher the likelihood of a Captain staying in the Army for a 20-year career. Highest degree earned is reasoned to be negatively correlated with the retention of Captains as advanced degrees can be leveraged for economic gain in the civilian labor force. The military does not have a regulation that specifically states advanced degrees (anything beyond a bachelor's degree) are required for promotion to field grade and general officer ranks in the army.

Independent Variable Set 2: Service History

2ABCT Data Set: Facets of service history analyzed include number of deployments, total number of months deployed, combat deployment (binary), USMA Graduate (binary), and OCS graduate (binary). As cited by Tilgham (2007) the number of deployments is positively correlated with retention rates for the first deployment, no effects on retention for the second deployment, and negatively correlated with retention for three or more deployments. Based off of this argument, it is hypothesized that the total months deployed and combat deployment will not influence retention rates, as it is not the amount of time an officer is deployed but rather the number of times deployed that affects retention. Furthermore, much like with initial service obligation retention (USGAO, 2007), it is hypothesized that commissioning source will negatively influence retention rates, with USMA graduate having the greatest negative influence and OCS graduate having a lesser negative influence. It is argued that USMA graduates, on average, have greater economic opportunities outside of the military when compared to ROTC

and OCS commissioned officers. Furthermore, OCS commissioned officers are expected to have the lowest retention rate because OCS commissioned officers have already agreed to serve prior to receiving a commission. As a reminder, OCS is a commissioning program for current active duty service members, meaning its graduates initially enlisted prior to receiving their commissions.

Independent Variable Set 3: Perceptions of Organizational Support

2ABCT Data Set: Perceptions of the Organizational Support (POS) analyzed include: 1) Whether a Captain believes that their senior ranking officers and branch manager is/are supportive of their career plans. 2) Whether a Captain believes that he/she can manage their army career in a manner that best supports their career goals. 3) Whether a Captain believes that their Officer Evaluation Reports accurately reflect their job performance (see questions 4 thru 7 in Appendix A). These data were collected by answering multiple choice and short answer questions about feelings of support from an individual's senior officers, the army as a whole, and their ability to manage individual careers (See Appendix A questions 4-7a).

As discussed in the literature review, perceptions of stronger organizational support should be positively correlated with higher retention rates. Furthermore, perceptions of supervisor support should be positively correlated with perceptions of organizational support. Through the process of personification, employees attribute key individual's actions as an embodiment of the organization and not individual action. In this variable, senior officers and branch managers represent these organizational individuals. Therefore, it is hypothesized that individuals who have positive perceptions regarding their interactions with their senior officers, their evaluations given by senior officers, and their branch managers will have higher perceptions of organizational support and therefore, we should find higher rates of retention

amongst those individuals than those with negative perceptions. As noted above, perceptions are measured by asking officers if they feel their senior officers and branch managers support their career plans and whether their evaluations accurately reflect their job performance.

Methods of Data Analysis

Multivariate logistic regression analysis was used to analyze the statistical relationship between a Captain's career decision to remain in versus leave the army and the three sets of independent variables. The conceptual model is specified as follows:

$$CD_i = f([DC_i],[SH_i],[POE_i])$$

Where CD_i is the career decision of the i th Captain, $[DC_i]$ is a vector of variables measuring a Captain's demographic characteristics, $[SH_i]$ is a vector of variables measuring a Captain's service history, and $[POE_i]$ is a vector of variables measuring a Captain's perceptions of the organizational environment in the U.S. Army. Table 4.4. lists the variables specified under each vector.

Logistic regression analysis is an appropriate technique for analyzing these relationships because a Captain's planned career decision is measured as a binary variable [1=stay in, 0=leave]. The effects of the independent variables on the choice of remaining in the army can be estimated through the following equation:

$$\text{Log}[(P(Y=1)/(1 - P(Y=1)))] = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k$$

Where:

$\text{Log}[(P(Y=1)/(1 - P(Y=1)))]$ is a logarithm of the odds that a Captain plans to remain in versus leaving the army; and

$\beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k$ are the estimated effects of each independent variable on the log of the odds that Captain plans to remain in versus leaving the army.

A block model approach was used for the logistic regression analysis. Each vector of independent variables was analyzed separately. A full model containing all three vectors of independent variables is estimated. This approach allows insight into how the relationships between each type of independent variable and the career decision are affected by the statistical control of the other types of independent variables.

| Variables and Sub-Variables | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of Variable (or Vector) | Variable |
| Demographics | Marital Status (binary) [0=not married, 1=married] |
| | Dependents (binary) [0=no dependents, 1=dependents] |
| | Highest Degree Earned (binary) [0=bachelor's degree, 1=Master's or Ph.D.] |
| Service History | Number of Deployments |
| | Total Months Deployed |
| | Combat Deployment (binary) [0=no combat deployments, 1=combat deployment(s)] |
| | USMA Graduate (binary) [0=non-USMA graduate, 1=USMA graduate] |
| | OCS Graduate (binary) [0=non-OCS graduate, 1=OCS graduate] |
| Perceptions of Support | Perceived Senior Ranking Officer Support (binary) [0=feelings of non-support, 1=feelings of support] |
| | Perceived Branch Manager Support (binary) [0=feelings of non-support, 1=feelings of support] |
| | Perceived Individual Career Management Ability (binary) [0=not able to manage a career, 1=able to a manage career] |
| | Perceptions about Accuracy of Evaluations(binary) [0=OER does not reflect performance, 1=OER reflects performance] |

Table 4.4: Independent Variables for Logistic Regression Analysis

Chapter 5 - Findings

As presented in Chapter 3, my research question is does the U.S. Army have a high-performing officer retention problem. Using the research methods described in Chapter 4, this study uses inferential statistics, based on a cluster sample, to provide empirical evidence that answers the research question. The literature on U.S. Army officer retention examined as a part of the study provides no such quantitative evidence to support claims that the U.S. Army is losing its "best." Keeping my research question in mind, the research methodology, and the literature review on U.S. Army officer retention, I present the results of each of my research objectives below.

Research Objective 1: Describe the Pattern of Attrition and Retention Among U.S. Army Active Duty Captains.

Table 5.1: Bivariate Difference of Proportions for Officer Career Decisions on Selected Independent Variables

| Variable | ORSA Data Set (n=1243) | | 2ABCT Data Set (n=75) | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| | % of Officers Leaving the Army | % of Officers Staying in the Army | % of Officers Leaving the Army | % of Officers Staying in the Army |
| Dependent Variable Binary Career Decision | 13.3% | 86.7% | 34.7% | 65.3% |
| Independent Variable | % of Officers Leaving the Army are: | % of Officers Staying in the Army are: | % of Officers Leaving the Army are: | % of Officers Staying in the Army are: |
| Married | 69.2% | 75.2% | 65.4% | 71.4% |
| Have Dependents | 55.9% | 51.9% | 65.4% | 69.4% |
| Have an Advanced Degree (Masters or Ph.D.) | 7.7% | 16.1%*** | 30.8% | 16.3% |
| Have at Least One Combat Deployment | 91.3% | 89.3% | 61.5% | 63.3% |
| USMA Graduate | 26.2% | 31.3% | 11.5% | 26.5% |
| OCS Graduate | 34.9% | 25.3%** | 19.2% | 24.5% |
| White | ..... | ..... | 88.5% | 89.9% |
| Male | ..... | ..... | 92.3% | 93.9% |
| Hispanic | ..... | ..... | 4.2% | 4.3% |
| Job Sequence Complete | ..... | ..... | 30.8% | 24.5% |

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table 5.1 displays the difference of proportions for officers that plan on staying in the army versus those that plan on leaving the army for both the ORSA and 2ABCT data sets. Overall post-CCC Infantry Captains in the ORSA data set had a retention rate of 86.7% for FY 2017. Post-CCC Captains in the 2ABCT data set had a retention rate of 65.3%.

The ORSA data set provides two statistically significant proportional differences of the characteristics of post-CCC Infantry Captains that leave the army and those that stay in the army. Proportionally 16.1% of post-CCC Infantry Officers that remain in the army have an advanced degree as opposed to only 7.7% of post-CCC Infantry Officers that were voluntarily leaving the army in FY 17. Proportionally 34.9% of Post-CCC Infantry Officers that were voluntarily leaving the army in FY 17 were OCS graduates as opposed to only 25.3% post-CCC Infantry Officers that remained in the army. Thus, as a characteristic of each population, the army is retaining a disproportionately lower percentage of OCS graduate Infantry Officers and retaining a higher percentage of Infantry Officers with advanced degrees.

The 2ABCT data set found that of the officers sampled a higher proportion of officers remaining in the army are married, have dependents, have at least one combat deployment, graduated from the United States Military Academy (USMA), graduated from Officer Candidate School (OCS), White, male, and Hispanic compared to those leaving the army. However, none of these proportions were found to be statistically significant meaning inferences cannot be drawn from this sample and applied to describe the characteristics of the overall population post-CCC Captains who stay or leave the army.

Between both data sets no statistically significant relationships were found between marital status, having dependents, being deployed to a combat zone, and graduating from the

United States Military Academy. Meaning, based on this data none of these characteristics are likely to be more associated with either population of officers.

The pattern of percentages for officers who have advanced degrees and are OCS graduates in the 2ABCT data set is the opposite of the ORSA data set. The 2ABCT data set found that a lower percentage (16.3%) of officers with advanced degrees plan on staying in the army compared to those that plan on leaving the army (30.8%). The 2ABCT data set also found that OCS graduates are retained at a higher rate (24.5%) compared to those that plan on leaving the army (19.2%). Neither finding in the 2ABCT data set was found to be statistically significant, however, the pattern of percentages are opposite of the statistically significant percentages in the ORSA data set.

Table 5.2: Bivariate Difference of Means for Officer Career Decisions on Selected Independent Variables.

| Independent Variable | 2ABCT Data Set | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| | Average for Officers Leaving the Army | Average for Officers Staying in the Army |
| Number of Dependents | 1.62 | 1.61 |
| Age | 30.24 | 31.71 |
| Total Months Deployed | 18.54 | 20.63 |

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table 5.2 displays the differences of means for 2ABCT post-CCC Captains on quantitative variables. Of the officers sampled in 2ABCT data set, post-CCC Captains that planned on staying in the army were 1.47 years older and had 2.09 more months deployed than post-CCC Captains that planned on leaving the army. The number of dependents in each subsample was relatively the same. However, none of the differences of means were found to be

statistically significant indicating inferences cannot be drawn from this sample and used to describe the characteristics of the overall population of post-CCC Captains who stay or leave the army.

Table 5.3: Bivariate Difference of Proportions for Most Important Reason for Leaving or Would Cause you to Leave the Army

| 2ABCT Data Set | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Response | % of Officers Leaving the Army | % of Officers Staying in the Army |
| Bureaucracy | 7.69% | 16.33% |
| Family | 34.62% | 49.94% |
| Other Life Goals | 23.08%* | 4.08%* |
| Frequent Deployments | 7.69% | 8.16% |
| Weak Role Models/Commanders | 7.69% | 0 |
| Limited Opportunity in the Military | 0 | 2.04% |
| Medical Discharge | 0 | 2.04% |
| Higher Education | 3.85% | 0 |
| Other | 11.54% | 10.20% |

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table 5.3 displays the differences of proportions for how post-CCC Captains responded to what is their most important reason for leaving the army if they planned on leaving the army, and the corresponding hypothetical for officers who planned on remaining in the army. Of the 2ABCT post-CCC Captains planning on leaving the army, 23.08% of the respondents stated that other life goals was the most important reason for leaving the army as opposed only 4.08% of officers staying in the army. Furthermore, the differences between each population's response regarding other life goals was found to be statistically significant.

Overall, for the officers surveyed in the 2ABCT data set, family was the number one response given by both sets of officers. For officer's staying in the army, frustration with bureaucracy (16.33%) was the second most cited response followed by frequent deployments

(8.16%). For officers leaving the army, other life goals (23.08%) was the second most cited responses followed by bureaucracy, frequent deployments, and weak role models/commanders all tied for third (7.69%). However, other than “other life goals,” none of the differences of proportions were found to be statistically significant meaning inferences cannot be drawn from and used to describe the characteristics of the overall population post-CCC Captains who stay or leave the army.

Research Objective 2: Examine the Difference in Performance Characteristics of Captains Who Plan on Leaving the U.S. Army Versus Those That Plan on Remaining Until Eligible for Retirement.

Table 5.4: Crosstabulation with Column Percentages of Career Decision by Ordinal OER Category

| | | Ordinal OER Category | | | | Total |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------|
| | | Low Performer | Low Average Performer | High Average Performer | High Performer | |
| Plan on | Count | 9 | 15 | 13 | 12 | 49 |
| Staying in the Army | % within Ordinal OER Category | 56.3% | 71.4% | 65.0% | 66.7% | 65.3% |
| Plan on | Count | 7 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 26 |
| Leaving the Army | % within Ordinal OER Category | 43.8% | 28.6% | 35.0% | 33.3% | 34.7% |
| Total | Count | 16 | 21 | 20 | 18 | 75 |
| | % within Ordinal Category | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

$\chi^2 = .942$

Table 5.4 displays the contingency table with column percentages for surveyed 2ABCT post-CCC Captains by the career plans and ordinal performance categories. Officers categorized as Low Performers, based on self-reported Officer Evaluation Reports (OERs), have the lowest retention rates (56.3%) in the sample. Officers categorized as Low Average Performers have the highest retention rates (71.4%), followed by High Performers (66.7%), then High Average Performers (65.0%) in this sample. This indicates that of the officers sampled, Low Performers are more likely to plan on leaving the army than any other ordinal category. However, a χ^2 value of .942 is not statistically significant meaning conclusions drawn from this sample cannot be generalized to the entire study population.

Table 5.5: Bivariate Difference of Means for Average OER Score by Career Decision

| Average OER Score | | |
|-------------------|--|--|
| | Average for Officers Leaving the Army | Average for Officer Staying in the Army |
| Average OER Score | 2.4519 | 2.5194 |

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table 5.5 displays the difference of means for average OER score between post-CCC Captains survey in 2ABCT who plan on leaving the army versus those who plan on staying in the army. Officers who plan on staying in the army have a mean OER score of 2.5194 which is 0.0675 points higher than the mean OER score of officers who plan on leaving the army in the sample. However, the difference of means between the two populations was found to be statistically nonsignificant, meaning inferences cannot be drawn from this sample and applied to the overall population.

Based on the data from the 2ABCT survey and results in tables 5.4 and 5.5, it can be stated that this study does not provide empirical evidence that the “best,” as categorized by OER scores, are leaving the army at a disproportionately higher rate. Simultaneously, the study does

not provide empirical evidence that the “best,” as categorized by OER scores, are being retained in the army at a disproportionately higher rate.

From a standpoint of job experience, tables 5.1 and 5.2 show there is no significant difference in means or proportions between each population of post-CCC Captains due to the total number of months deployed or being deployed to a combat zone. Table 5.1 shows there is no significant difference between officers who plan on leaving the army and those that plan on staying in regard to proportion who have spent a minimum of 6 months as a platoon leader, executive officer, staff officer, and company commander. These results do not provide conclusive empirical evidence that the army is losing a disproportionately higher amount of officers with deployment, combat, or job experience.

Table 5.6: Branch Comparison of Military Awards by Career Decision

| Career Decision and Branch | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Military Award | Leave the Army (# of Officers) | | | | | | Stay in the Army (# of Officers) | | | | | |
| | AR* | EN* | FA* | IN* | LG* | MI* | AR | EN | FA | IN | LG | MI |
| | (6) | (4) | (2) | (1) | (4) | (2) | (11) | (3) | (9) | (10) | (5) | (4) |
| BSV* | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| BSM* | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1 | ..... |
| PH* | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... |
| MSM* | 2 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| ARCOMV* | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... |
| ARCOM* | 17 | 11 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 27 | 12 | 31 | 35 | 13 | 12 |
| AAM* | 17 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 22 | 12 | 16 | 28 | 16 | 5 |

*abbreviations in Appendix B

Table 5.7 Branch Comparison of Skill Badges and Tabs by Career Decision

| Career Decision and Branch | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Skill Badges and Tabs | Leave the Army (# of Officers) | | | | | | Stay in the Army (# of Officers) | | | | | |
| | AR | EN | FA | IN | LG | MI | AR | EN | FA | IN | LG | MI |
| | (6) | (4) | (2) | (1) | (4) | (2) | (11) | (3) | (9) | (10) | (5) | (4) |
| CIB* | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 3 | ..... | ..... |
| EIB* | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 8 | ..... | ..... |
| CAB* | 3 | 1 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1 | ..... | 2 |
| CMB* | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... |
| EFMB* | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... |
| Pathfinder | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... |
| Air Assault | 3 | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | ..... |
| Parachutist | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ..... | ..... | 3 | 1 | 3 | 10 | ..... | 1 |
| Diver | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| Ranger Tab | 2 | ..... | ..... | 1 | ..... | ..... | 2 | ..... | ..... | 9 | ..... | 1 |

*abbreviations in Appendix B

Tables 5.6 and 5.7 display the difference in military awards, skill badges, and Tabs between six branches on the army and individual officer career plans. Due to the small number of officers in each category, significance tests were not conducted. Both tables are used to display the overall pattern, from the 2ABCT survey of how "decorated" each subsample is as a metric of experience. Overall, 19 officers planning on leaving the army from six separate branches are compared to 35 officers who plan on leaving the army from the same six separate branches. There are a greater number of total military awards, skill badges, and tabs for officers who plan on staying in the army versus those leaving the army. In this sample, from an job experience standpoint, the army is not losing a disproportionately higher amount of experience, as measured through military awards, skill badges, and tabs.

Research Objective 3: Identify Correlates of Retention and Attrition Among U.S. Army Captains.

Table 5.7: Binary Logistic Coefficients for Regression of Officer Career Decisions on Selected Independent Variables

| Independent Variable | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Demographic Variables | | | | |
| Officer is Married | .713 | ..... | ..... | .958 |
| Officer has Dependents | -.276 | ..... | ..... | -.109 |
| Officer has Advanced Degree (Masters or Ph.D.) | -.953 | ..... | ..... | -.910 |
| Service History Variables | | | | |
| Officer Graduated from USMA | ..... | 1.209 | ..... | -.1408 |
| Officer Graduated from OCS | ..... | .460 | ..... | -.287 |
| Officer has Deployed to a Combat Zone | ..... | -.237 | ..... | -.552 |
| Total Number of Deployments | ..... | -.032 | ..... | -.008 |
| Total Number of Months Deployed | ..... | .027 | ..... | .041 |
| Perceptions of Organizational Support Variables | | | | |
| Officer Believes They Can Manage Their Career | ..... | ..... | .022 | .124 |
| Officer has Feelings of Senior Rater Support | ..... | ..... | .570 | .509 |
| Officer has Feelings of Branch Manager Support | ..... | ..... | -.126 | -.397 |
| Officer Feels Their OER Box Checks Reflect Their Performance | ..... | ..... | -.084 | -.039 |
| Intercept | .553 | -.002 | .443 | 1.080 |
| -2 Log Likelihood | 93.928 | 92.708 | 95.549 | 88.000 |
| Chi-Square | 2.876 | 4.096 | 1.255 | 8.804 |
| Negelkerke R ² | .052 | .073 | .023 | .153 |

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table 5.8 displays the results of the multivariate logistic regression analysis. Multivariate logistic regression analysis yields results that show there is no systematic influence of the selected demographic, service history, and perceptions of organizational support variables that influence individual officer career decision making in the sample population. Using a block model approach, each of the Chi-Square values for the model and each of the independent

variables were found to be statistically insignificant. The Nagelkerke R^2 values, which ranged from .023 to .153, suggest that the selected variables provide little explanatory power in regard to what determines an officer's career decisions. The totality of these results suggests that in the sample population, the selected independent variables do not influence retention in a systematic manner.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

This chapter is divided into two main subsections-- a discussion section detailing the findings of this study and a conclusions section. The discussion section is further broken down into discussion about the overall findings of the study, limitations of this study, changes that I would make if given the opportunity to reconduct this study, and future research.

Discussion

Overall Findings

In regard to my primary research question, the results of this study suggest that the U.S. Army does not have a high performing officer retention problem. Simultaneously, this study also does not provide empirical evidence that would support a claim that the army is retaining a disproportionately higher number of high performing post-CCC Captains. Overall, these findings suggest that the army is not losing nor retaining high performing officers at a disproportionately higher rate compared to any other group of officers.

Research Objective 2 provides the main support for these findings since it shows that of the officers sampled in the 2ABCT data set, low performing officers, as measured by their self reported OER scores, have the lowest retention rates of the post-CCC Captains surveyed. Furthermore, the ORSA data set in Research Objective 1, found a statistically significant difference in the proportions of post-CCC Captains with advance degrees remaining in the army compared to those that were leaving the army. This suggests that from an education standpoint, at least in the Infantry Branch, the army is retaining more educated officers.

Research Objective 1

The two statistically significant findings in the ORSA data set from Research Objective 1 suggest the army is retaining a greater proportion of Infantry Officers with advanced degrees and

losing a greater proportion of Infantry Officers who commissioned from OCS. Furthermore, the 2ABCT data set produced findings, though not statistically significant, that were counter to the ORSA data set. Speculative reasons for the differences in these two findings are discussed below.

The difference in the two data sets regarding education can be attributed to the 2ABCT data set surveying officers across multiple branches in the army, including medical and legal fields, both of which require their officers to have advanced degrees. Additionally, the response to the survey of not planning to stay in the army until eligible for a 20-year retirement may capture a wider group of officers who plan on leaving compared to those in the ORSA data set who had actually submitted paperwork to leave the army. Taken together the reason for an opposing percentage pattern in the 2ABCT data set may be attributed to officers planning on leaving the army, just not in the next year (meaning they have not submitted paperwork to do so).

It can also be speculated that Infantry Officers with advanced degrees may not have the same economic opportunities outside that army when compared to officers from other branches, such as the medical and legal fields. It can also be speculated that the type of person who becomes an Infantry Officer is intrinsically motivated to achieve and therefore, may seek and find opportunities for advanced education as a marker to distinguish themselves from their peers. If this is the case, then it would be expected that Infantry Officers may earn advanced degrees and remain in the army versus using their advanced education for economic opportunities outside the army.

The difference in the two data sets regarding officers commissioned from OCS is much more nuanced than education. The only speculative reason I can give as to why Infantry Officers

commissioned through OCS are leaving the army at higher rates than the officers surveyed in the 2ABCT data set is due to job-specific factors. Specifically, OCS commissioned Infantry Officers may leave the army at higher rates due to the physical demands and risks of serving in the Infantry. The rate of OCS commissioned Infantry Officers leaving the army compared to USMA commissioned Infantry Officers leaving the army is counter to what was expected. However, it should not be a concern for the army promotes officers through a centralized board process that looks at individual performance in the army as selection criteria for future promotion and assignments not commissioning source.

The results regarding the most important reason officers leave (or would leave) the army found that “other life goals” was the only significant difference between the two sub-populations (those leaving and those staying). These findings provide valuable insight as to why Research Objective 1 found few statistically significant differences in the characteristics of each population. It is posited based on these findings that the characteristics of each population of officers (those that leave and stay in the army) are not significantly different because individual officer career decision making is a not a product of past experiences but rather a product of future planning.

This means post-CCC Captains are not leaving the army strictly because of singular experiences in the army. Rather post-CCC Captains are leaving the army because of future planning and goal accomplishment taking into consideration past experiences and likely future outcomes. Taking this logic into consideration then it would make sense that officers leaving the army would state “other life goals” as the reason why they are leaving the army. This suggests that serving in the army and accomplishing a life goal has become mutually exclusive. Based on their past experiences they cannot perceive an alternative future where both serving in the army

and goal accomplishment can happen. This means that, although past experiences may shape future decisions, the career decisions of post-CCC Captains are oriented towards future goals rather than past experiences.

Research Objective 2

Although the primary results of Research Objective 2 indicate that low performing officers have the lowest probability of staying in the army and that OER scores of officers who stay in the army are higher than those that leave, neither finding was found to be statistically significant. However, the results can still be used as empirical evidence that the army does not have a high performing officer retention problem. The results from Research Objective 2 cannot definitively be proven, based on OER scores, that the army is losing a disproportionately higher number of high performing officers. More likely than not, the reason for a statistically insignificant Chi-Square value and difference of means Z-score is due to the small number of cases (75) used in this study. Thus, a larger sample population would likely yield a statistically significant relationship between OER ordinal categories and OER score on officer career decisions. Holding with the current pattern found in this study, a larger study would then likely yield results that would support the findings that the army does not have a high performing officer retention problem. Furthermore, a larger sample for Research Objective 2 may demonstrate that the army is retaining a higher proportion of high performing officers and that the average OER score for officers that remain in the army is indeed higher.

Regarding deployment experience and job experience (measured by both job sequence and military awards, skill badges, and tab) the findings from the study provide evidence that the army is not losing nor retaining a disproportionately higher amount of post-CCC Captains with combat and job experience.

Research Objective 3

The results of multivariate logistic regression analysis indicate that the effects of the demographic, service history, and perceptions of organizational support variables do not play a significant role in individual officer career decision making. Evidence for this claim is provided by both the lack of statistical significance for the effects of all independent variables examined in the model as well as the small Nagelkerke R^2 values.

As with the findings in Research Objective 1, similar findings can be drawn with Research Objective 3. Officer career decision making is more a product of future career planning than a result of past experiences. This means, that officers are not making their career decisions because of their demographic, service history, or perceptions of organizational support, but rather make their decisions with an orientation towards the future, independent of past experiences. This reason potentially explains why no systematic pattern can be found with respect to the selected demographic, service history, and perceptions of organizational support variables influencing individual officer career decisions in this study.

The lack of statistical significance in multivariate logistic regression analysis coupled with a general lack of significance in Research Objectives 1 and 2 leads to the question of why does a narrative of “the army is losing its best junior officers” persist? It can only be speculated as to why this is the case. This narrative may exist to primarily serve junior officers who have decided to leave the army or those that are deciding whether to stay in or get out of the army. A narrative of “the best” are leaving may make it easier for an individual to leave a “team-like” organization that relies on each other to operate successfully without feeling as if they turned their back on others within the organization. Furthermore, this is why it’s easy to find anecdotal evidence of high performing or quality officers leaving the army but its harder to find results that

are replicated across larger populations. Therefore, a narrative of “the best” are leaving coupled with anecdotal proof of this happening, makes it easier for a person to leave the organization and still feel as if they were “one of the good ones” regardless of their actual performance.

Limitations of the Research

The greatest limitation of this research is the small number (75) of Captains surveyed in the 2ABCT data set. The small number of cases significantly impacts the ability to make statistically significant conclusions based on inferential statistics. Therefore, replicating this study with more cases may provide empirical evidence that supports demographic, service history, and perceptions of organizational support having an impact on individual officer career decision making. Additionally, replicating the study with more cases may provide support that there are demographic and service history differences between the population of officers that leave the army compared to those that remain in the army. Lastly, replicating the study with more cases may provide statistically significant results for the proportions of low performing, low average performing, high average performing, and high performing officers being retained in the army.

Furthermore, the ORSA data which provides statistically significant results for the effects of having an advanced degree and being OCS graduate on retention of infantry officers are only applicable to Infantry Officers since this data set does not include officers from other branches of the army. This leads to two possible conclusions however neither one can be proved without examining other branches of the army. The first conclusion is that if job differences between branches have no effect on career decisions, then it can be assumed that these findings would hold true across different branches in the army. Alternatively, if job differences between

branches do have effect on career decisions these findings should vary across branches in the army.

Changes to the study

If I were to conduct this study again there are changes that I would make to the research design. I would first use a mixed methods approach that utilized qualitative methods to derive a quantitative survey. By this I mean, I would first conduct interviews of randomly selected 20-25 post-CCC Captains that plan on leaving and remaining in the army. I would ask questions about why they are making their individual career decisions and what is influencing it. Afterward, I would identify patterns for both populations of officers and use these results to develop a survey that explores these patterns to see if they hold true for a larger population. The survey would then be administered to a larger population of Captains. Ideally, this survey would be administered to post-CCC Captains in more than one Brigade Combat Team at more than one location. This would limit the effects of location and command climate on responses. Furthermore, utilizing a qualitative first approach would allow me to construct a more reliable multivariate model for what effects individual career decision making which should yield higher R^2 values and statistically significant relationships between career decisions and independent variables.

Future Research

Future research on army officer retention should focus on individual officer career decision making from two perspectives- past experience influence on career decision making and future planning on career decision making. Based on the lack of significance of demographic, service history, and perceptions of organizational support on individual career decision making, coupled with the statistically significant response of "other life goals" as the most important reason for leaving the army, future research should examine how past experiences versus future

plans influence career decisions. This study indicates that past experiences do not influence career decision making; rather, individual officers make career decisions based off of future plans and goals. However, this was not the focus of this study so future research would need to be conducted to verify this claim.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature on U.S. Army officer retention has claimed that "the best" are leaving the army. However, these claims have not been backed by empirical evidence. This research examined the question of "does the U.S. Army have a high performing officer retention problem?" Utilizing data collected from an in-person survey administered to 75 post-CCC Captains stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas, this study provides empirical evidence that the U.S. Army is not losing a disproportionately higher number of high performing officers. On the other hand, this study provides empirical evidence that the U.S. Army is not retaining a disproportionately higher number of high performing officers either. It is speculated that a narrative of "the best" junior officers leaving the army exists because it helps serve the decision making of individual officers who are leaving or may leave the army.

Utilizing two data sets this study has found evidence that the Infantry Branch, in the U.S. Army is retaining a greater proportion of post-CCC Captains with advanced degrees and is simultaneously losing a greater proportion of OCS commissioned officers in FY2017 (see table 5.1). However, other demographic and service history variables, such as marital status, having dependents, total number of dependents, age, being deployed to a combat zone, total months deployed, commissioning through West Point, and serving in a multitude of junior officer positions have no influence on individual officer career decisions. Simply put, the army neither retains nor loses officers at disproportionately higher rates due to any of these factors.

Furthermore, multivariate logistic regression analysis provides additional evidence that selected demographic, service history, and perceptions of organizational support do not influence individual officer career decision making.

These results coupled with the statistically significant results of officers leaving the army stating “other life goals” as the most important reason for leaving the army provides evidence that officer career decision making is the product of future planning rather than past experiences. This would indicate the army policy aimed at retaining high performing officers should focus on creating incentives that facilitate individual goal accomplishment. Specific policies cannot be developed from this study as exactly what “other life goals” means as it was not explored in this study. Future research on this topic is needed examining past experience-based, career decision making versus future planning, career decision making.

Lastly, regarding bureaucracy, this study provides support that bureaucracy does not play a significant role in post-CCC officer career decision making. Therefore, the results of DOPMA legislation in the 1980s may be of concern to the military. However, the results of this study suggest that the impacts of increased military bureaucracy are not significantly impacting officer retention.

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Appendix A - 2ABCT Survey

I. Career Plans:

First, I want to ask you several questions about your career plans.

1. In the near future do you plan on ETS'ing from the U.S. Army before you are eligible for retirement? (check one)

- Yes
- No

SKIP TO QUESTION 2

1a. Have you submitted your Release From Active Duty (REFRAD) Packet to Human Resources Command (HRC)? (check one)

- Yes
- No

1b. Briefly describe your future plans outside of the U.S. Army

1c. What is your reason(s) for leaving the U.S. Army? Check all that apply

- Frustration with the U.S. Army Bureaucracy
- Family
- Other Life Goals
- Higher Potential Income
- Frequent Deployments
- Limited Opportunity in the Military
- Pace of Military Promotions
- Weak Role Models / Commanders
- Higher Education
- Better Leadership Opportunity
- Medical Discharge
- Involuntary Separation
- Other: _____

1d. Of the reasons for leaving checked in question 1c, which is the most important in your decision to leave? (List the number of the reason in the blank space)



SKIP TO QUESTION 3

2. In the near future do you plan on remaining in your basic branch until you are eligible to retire? (check one)

- Yes
- No

2a. If you were to leave the U.S. Army, what would be your reason(s) for leaving? (check all that apply)

- Frustration with the U.S. Army Bureaucracy
- Family
- Other Life Goals
- Higher Potential Income
- Frequent Deployments
- Limited Opportunity in the Military
- Pace of Military Promotions
- Weak Role Models / Commanders
- Higher Education
- Better Leadership Opportunity
- Medical Discharge
- Chaptered
- Other: _____

2b. Of the reasons for leaving checked in question 2a, which is the most important in your decision to leave? (List the number of the reason in the blank space)

(Move to question 3)

II. Performance Evaluations:

Next, I want to ask you several questions about your recent officer evaluations.

3. Considering only your last five Officer Evaluation Reports, how many times have you received each of the following ratings from your senior rater? (Check each rating you have received and write the number of times you received it in the blank. Note: Should sum to 5).

Most Qualified: _____

Highly Qualified: _____

Qualified: _____

Not Qualified: _____

4. Do you feel that your senior rater box checks on your five past Officer Evaluation Reports accurately reflect your job performance?

- Yes
- No

SKIP TO QUESTION 5



4a. What is the difference between your senior rater box checks and your perceived job performance? (check one)

- Senior rater over-evaluated my job performance (gave me a better evaluation than I deserved)
- Senior rater under-evaluated my job performance (gave me a worse evaluation than I deserved)

4b. Briefly describe why there is a difference between your self-perceived job performance and your senior rater evaluated job performance?

III. Work Environment

I now want to ask you several questions about the work environment you face in the Army.

5. Do you feel that senior ranking officers are supportive of your career plans either in or outside of the Army?

- Yes
- No

SKIP TO QUESTION 6



5a. Does your feeling of non-support from senior ranking officers affect your level of commitment to your unit?

- Yes
- No

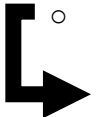
5b. Does your feeling of non-support from senior ranking officers affect your level of commitment to the Army in general?

- Yes
- No

6. Do you feel that your branch manager is supportive of your Army career plans?

- Yes
- No

 **SKIP TO QUESTION 7**



6a. Does your feeling of non-support from your branch manager affect your level of commitment to your unit?

- Yes
- No

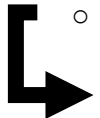
6b. Does your feeling of non-support from your branch manager affect your level of commitment to the Army in general?

- Yes
- No

7. Do you believe you can manage your Army career in a manner that best supports your career goals?

- Yes
- No

 **SKIP TO QUESTION 8**



7a. Briefly describe why you believe you cannot manage your Army career in a manner that best supports your career goals?

IV. Duty Assignments and Accomplishments:

I now want to ask you several questions about your duty assignments and accomplishments in the Army.

8. What type of unit do you currently serve in? (check one)

- Armor Brigade Combat Team (ABCT)
- Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT)
- Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT)
- TRADOC Unit
- Other: _____

9. At a previous duty assignment, excluding professional military education courses, as either a Lieutenant or Captain, what type(s) of unit(s) did you serve in? (If you have served in more than one previous unit, check all that apply and write the number of times you have served in each type in the blank space).

- Armor Brigade Combat Team (ABCT): _____
- Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT): _____
- Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT): _____
- TRADOC Unit: _____
- Other: _____

10. How many total months have you served as a Platoon Leader? (check one)

- Have **not** served as a Platoon Leader
- Have served as a Platoon Leader

 Number of Months: _____ Months


11. How many total months have you served as a Company Executive Officer? (check one)

- Have **not** served as a Company Executive Officer
- Have served as a Company Executive Officer

 Number of Months: _____ Months


12. How many total months have you served as a staff officer on any type of staff (BN, BDE, or Higher)? (check one)

- Have **not** served as a staff officer
- Have served as a staff officer

 Number of Months: _____ Months

13. How many total months have you served as a Troop, Company, or Battery Commander?

- Have **not** served as a Troop, Company, or Battery Commander
- Have served as a Troop, Company, or Battery Commander

 Number of Months: _____ Months

14. Have you received any of the following awards? (Check the awards you have received and write the number of times you've received each award).

- Distinguished Service Cross: ____ Time(s)
- Silver Star: ____ Time(s)
- Bronze Star with Valor: ____ Time(s)
- Bronze Star: ____ Time(s)
- Purple Heart: ____ Time(s)
- Meritorious Service Medal: ____ Time(s)
- Army Commendation Medal with Valor: ____ Time(s)
- Army Commendation Medal: ____ Time(s)
- Army Achievement Medal: ____ Time(s)
- Other Award: Name: _____ and number: _____
- Other Award: Name: _____ and number: _____
- Other Award: Name: _____ and number: _____
- Other Award: Name: _____ and number: _____

15. Have you earned any of the following badges? Check all that apply

- Combat Infantryman Badge
- Expert Infantryman Badge
- Combat Action Badge
- Combat Medical Badge
- Expert Field Medical Badge
- Aviator Badge (Any type)
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal Badge (Any type)
- Pathfinder Badge
- Air Assault Badge
- Parachutist Badge (Any type)
- Parachute Rigger Badge
- Military Freefall Parachutist Badge (Any type)
- Diver Badge (Any type)
- Ranger Tab
- Sapper Tab
- Special Forces Tab
- Other: _____

V. Deployment Information:

I now want to ask you several questions about your deployment experience.

16. How many deployments, regardless of location, type, and length, have you completed?

(A deployment is defined as a change of location from home station to an overseas location with accompanying Temporary Change of Station (TCS) orders).

- Have not deployed
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- More than 5: Write in Number: _____

17. How many total months of deployed time do you have? (Write in total number of months).

- Have not deployed
- Total number of months deployed: _____ Months

18. Where have you deployed? (Check all that apply and write the total number of months deployed in each location).

- Afghanistan: _____ Months
- Iraq: _____ Months
- Syria: _____ Months
- Kuwait: _____ Months
- Kosovo: _____ Months
- Korea: _____ Months
- Europe: _____ Months
- Other: List Country: _____ Months
- Other: List Country: _____ Months
- Other: List Country: _____ Month

VI. Basic Demographic Data:

Last, I want to ask you several questions about your background characteristics

19. What degrees in higher education have you completed? (Write the name of the institution in the blank).

- Bachelor's Degree: Name of Institution: _____
- Master's Degree: Name of Institution: _____
- Doctoral Degree: Name of Institution: _____
- Professional Degree (MD, JD, etc.): Name of Institution: _____

20. What professional military education courses you have completed? (Check all that apply)

- Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC)
- Captain's Career Course (CCC)
- Command General Staff College (CGSC)

21. What is your Year Group?

20_____

22. What is your commissioning source?

- United States Military Academy (USMA)
- Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)
- Officer Candidate School (OCS)
- Other: _____

23. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

24. How would you describe yourself?

- White
- Black or African American
- Native American or American Indian
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Other: _____

25. With which of the following do you identify yourself?

- Hispanic
- Non-Hispanic

26. What is your marital status?

- Married
- Single
- Divorced
- Widowed

27. How many dependents do you have? (Please write in the number next to each type).

Adults: _____

Children: _____

28. What is your age? (Please write in the number in the blank)

_____ Years

29. Are you prior service active duty?

- Yes
- No

30. What is your branch? (Write it in the space provided)

Thank you for your cooperation in taking this survey. Data from this survey is being used to do research on U.S. Army officer performance and retention. All surveys are anonymous and will remain so. Individual responses are anonymous and individual surveys will not be shared with anyone. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Appendix B - Abbreviations

AAM- Army Achievement Medal

AR- Armor

ARCOM- Army Accommodation Medal

ARCOMV- Army Accommodation Medal with Valor

BSM- Bronze Star Medal

BSMV- Bronze Star Medal with Valor

CAB- Combat Action Badge

CIB- Combat Infantryman Badge

CMB- Combat Medical Badge

EFMB- Expert Field Medical Badge

EIB- Expert Infantryman Badge

EN- Engineer

FA- Field Artillery

IN- Infantry

LG- Logistics

MI- Military Intelligence

MSM- Meritorious Service Medal

PH- Purple Heart