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# Embeddedness and turnover intentions in extra roles: a mixed-methods analysis of the United States Marine Corp Reserve

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# Embeddedness and turnover intentions in extra roles

## A mixed-methods analysis of the United States Marine Corp Reserve

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**Abstract**

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the drivers of turnover intention in extra roles.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This mixed-methods study began with a qualitative analysis of interviews of US Marine Corps reservists, which identified drivers of turnover and suggested a predictive model and hypotheses, tested with a subsequent quantitative analysis.

**Findings** – The results show that relations, meaning, and role conflict predict embeddedness in the US Marine Corps Reserve (USMCR), which is negatively related to turnover intentions. The sub-dimensions of the three drivers are clarified.

**Research limitations/implications** – The research contributes to understanding the antecedents of embeddedness and turnover in extra roles. It also highlights extra roles as a source of role conflict. This study was limited to the USMCR, one extra role. All participants in the qualitative phase of the study were male officers. Although the quantitative study included enlisted and officers, men were still more strongly represented. The results should be replicated across different types of extra roles and should include different job types and personal characteristics.

**Originality/value** – This study develops and tests a predictive model of embeddedness and turnover in the understudied context of salient extra roles. It clarifies antecedents of embeddedness in an extra role context and indicates that salient extra roles may be an additional source of role conflict in people's lives.

**Keywords** Embeddedness, Turnover, Extra roles, Role conflict

**Paper type** Research paper

Much is known about what drives turnover in organizations. However, organizational behavior research has generally focused on primary work or home roles and has neglected other roles in which individuals engage such as volunteer work, second jobs, and community, religious, and leisure activities. Role scholars acknowledge that most individuals hold three or more salient roles at any given time (Roccas and Brewer, 2002) and participation in extra roles may impact important life decisions (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000). Further, many organizations rely on members or employees contributing in an extra role capacity (Kim *et al.*, 2007). These extra roles may be an additional source of role conflict affecting individual and organizational well-being (Hambrick *et al.*, 2013; Simmons *et al.*, 2016). Extra roles thus deserve greater attention (Kossek *et al.*, 2012). This study extends the literature by examining drivers of turnover in extra roles through a mixed-methods investigation of turnover intention in the US Marine Corps Reserve (USMCR).

A role is the set of activities performed in relation to others in a social group such as a work organization or a family (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Kahn *et al.*'s (1964) study of the effect of role ambiguity and conflict on job satisfaction was among the first to explore the influence of roles in organizational life. Boundary scholars drew from Oldenburg and Brissett's (1982) notion of the "third place" to conceptualize roles that exist outside of the primary work and home domains, highlighting the importance of understanding extra roles (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000). A salient extra role is a role that is integral to how an individual defines him or herself, creates social ties with others within the role, and specifies a set of role-related activities, tasks, and/or duties (Callero, 1985), in which the activities, tasks, and duties are external and additional to one's primary work and home roles.

Extra roles are important to organizations and individuals. Many organizations rely on contributors acting in extra roles. For example, reservists make up 38 percent of the total US military force (www.marines.com, accessed March, 2017) and 5 percent of charitable non-profits have no paid staff, relying on volunteers (www.councilofnonprofits.org, accessed December, 2016). At a personal level, over 7 million Americans hold at least two jobs (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015a). Another 62.5 million Americans engage in volunteer work each year (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015b). According to a 2014 study, 26 percent of respondents participate in small-group religious activities on at least a weekly basis (Pew Research Center, 2014). Finally, many people devote tremendous time and energy to the pursuit of athletic goals. Over 9 million Americans report being frequent runners, with over 550,000 individuals dedicating hours of training to complete a marathon (Running USA, 2014). Similarly, roughly 1 million Americans participate in triathlons each year, with over three-quarters of these triathletes spending between six and twelve hours per week training year round (USA Triathlon, 2009).

Although many individuals are engaged in extra roles, organizational behavior research has largely neglected extra roles (Kossek *et al.*, 2012). There are various types of extra roles (e.g. volunteer work, second jobs, and leisure and religious activities), which may differ across characteristics (e.g. paid vs volunteer, work vs leisure, etc.). The fact that extra roles are "extra," however, suggests some similarities. While it is beyond the scope of this study to create a typology of extra roles, Stebbins' (1982, 1992) work on "serious leisure" differentiated between amateurism, hobbyist pursuits, and career volunteering. Although Stebbins did not provide a comprehensive delineation of extra roles, neglecting, for example, second jobs and religious activities, his studies did show extensive overlap among the motivations for joining and participating in several types of extra roles. The most prominent of these were rooted in either self-interest (e.g. personal development or financial gain) and/or public-interest (e.g. altruism, helping). This suggests that there are similarities between the motivations for participating in various types of extra roles and also between the reasons for exiting. To date though, little research has specifically focused on the causes of turnover in salient extra roles (Alfes *et al.*, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2007).

This research examines turnover intentions in the USMCR and contributes to the turnover literature in at least three ways. First, this study contributes to research on turnover by identifying drivers that explain turnover in extra roles. Our analysis highlights three key categories that appear to drive turnover cognitions in extra roles: relations, meaning, and role conflict. Additionally, our findings suggest that the embeddedness framework is particularly relevant to the study of extra roles, which expands understanding of embeddedness beyond the primary work context and demonstrates the utility of the embeddedness construct for research on extra roles. Finally, this study contributes to the literature on role theory by showing that a salient extra role can be an additional source of role conflict that the literature has yet to fully explain.

This paper is organized following the two phases of the mixed-methods design. After reviewing the literature and presenting the research design, we describe the methods,

analysis, and findings of the Phase 1 – qualitative analysis. Next, we integrate the Phase 1 findings with the embeddedness construct (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001), which was suggested by the qualitative analysis. Then, we present the predictive model, hypotheses, methods, analysis, and findings of the Phase 2 – quantitative analysis. We conclude with a discussion of the implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

## Study setting

The setting for this study was the USMCR. There are approximately 100,000 dedicated Marine reservists (www.usmcu.edu/historydivision accessed September, 2016). Marines can serve as obligors, those who have signed a commitment for a specific period of service, or as non-obligors, those who serve at their own discretion (Armed Forces Reserve Act, 1952). The USMCR includes three categories, Retired Reserve, Standby Reserve, and Ready Reserve. The Ready Reserve is further divided into the Selected Reserve and the Individual Ready Reserve. Members of the Selected Reserve are obligated to attend training drills, usually one weekend a month and two weeks each summer (Department of the Navy, 2009). Participants were non-obligors from the Selected Reserve (SMCR). These reservists were required to attend training drills but could end their affiliation with the Marines at their discretion.

Along with reservists, the Marine Reserve includes active duty Marines assigned to the Reserve to facilitate annual training and mobilization in the role of Inspector and Instructor (I&I). I&I are responsible for site support, reservist training, and community relations. Reservists in the SMCR interact frequently with active duty Marines in the I&I role.

The USMCR provided an excellent setting for studying turnover in extra roles. The motivations for participating in the Reserve are varied (see Volkmann *et al.*, 2014). Because reservists are paid, some join for financial benefits (e.g. financial gain). Some join to contribute to the greater good (e.g. altruism) or to gain a sense of fulfillment (e.g. personal development). Some join because of a sense of calling (e.g. helping). Finally, some reservists join for the sense of enjoyment that comes from military training (e.g. satisfaction). The motivations of USMC reservists are representative of the motivations that Stebbins (1982, 1992) identified for engaging in extra roles. Although Stebbins did not address turnover, reasons for joining and exiting are likely related, suggesting that the turnover intentions of reservists are representative of those across other roles.

## Research design

This study utilized a mixed-methods, exploratory-sequential design (Creswell and Clark, 2011; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The research team included civilian faculty, a PhD student, and both Reserve and active duty military officers. In Phase 1 (qualitative analysis), we employed an inductive approach (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin and Straus, 2008). We analyzed interview data to identify drivers of turnover among USMC reservists. Consistent with an adapted grounded theory approach (Lofland and Lofland, 1995), we then iterated between the data, emerging themes and existing literature (Corbin and Straus, 2008). In the final stage of Phase 1, we compared our findings to extant literature (Corbin and Straus, 2008; Eisenhardt, 1989). We concluded that there is a strong conceptual fit between our findings and the job embeddedness construct and integrated our findings with this construct to develop and test a predictive model.

## Phase 1 – qualitative study

Although, with few exceptions (e.g. Alfes *et al.*, 2015; Allen and Mueller, 2013), research has not given much attention to turnover in extra roles, turnover in primary work roles has held the attention of scholars for decades (Hom *et al.*, 2017). This literature provided sensitizing concepts (Charmaz, 2006; Bowen, 2006), which guided our qualitative analysis and provided

a foundation for comparison of the Phase 1 findings with extant research (Corbin and Straus, 2008; Eisenhardt, 1989).

Sensitizing concepts were provided by the most frequently studied theories of attitude-driven turnover: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, person-organization fit, and job embeddedness (see Holtom *et al.*, 2014; Hom *et al.*, 2017). Job satisfaction is the extent to which one likes or is content with his/her job (Spector, 1997). Organizational commitment represents identification with and involvement in an organization (Porter *et al.*, 1974). Person-organization fit is the compatibility between person and organization that occurs when entities provide what the other needs and/or the two share similar fundamental characteristics (Kristof, 1996). Job embeddedness represents "the diverse influences that connect a person to a job so that he or she has strong reasons to remain in that job" (Holtom *et al.*, 2014, p. 398). Additionally, and particularly relevant to this study given the focus on extra roles, research has also shown that role conflict between work and home roles may contribute to turnover as well (Amstad *et al.*, 2011).

*Data collection*
We analyzed interviews of 30 participants. The interview team included two active duty military officers and one civilian researcher. We initially conducted six semi-structured telephone interviews with two current and four former USMC reservists. Because we were interested in drivers of turnover, we purposefully selected (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) reservists that had exited the Reserve, identifying them through a snowball sample (Yin, 2011). Initial participants included one non-commissioned officer[1] and five officers ranging from mid to commanding levels. All participants were men, had served in the Reserve for between 3 and 22 years, and ranged in age from 24 to 45. We asked reservists to describe how they came to join the Reserve, how their experience in the Reserve met or did not meet their expectations, how being in the Reserve affected finances and other roles (i.e. home and civilian job), and how they came to leave the Reserve. We followed a written semi-structured interview guide with broad open-ended questions, but allowed participants to drive the interview. Interviews lasted from 45 to 90 minutes and were recorded and transcribed, resulting in a total of 49 pages of transcribed text.

We began analyzing the data as we conducted the interviews. The original six participants contrasted their perspectives with those of their colleagues who were still in the Reserve, leading us to focus subsequent interviews on current reservists in order to collect data on motivations for staying and leaving. Two civilian researchers attended a Reserve training drill where they interviewed an additional 24 participants. These reservists ranged from low-level to commanding level officers. All participants were men, had been in the Reserve for 2 to 25 years, and ranged in age from 24 to 47.

The second round of interviews occurred in quiet spaces during breaks and was focused on the key themes identified from the initial interviews. These more focused interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. Because we interviewed in an active training environment, we could not make recordings. One researcher focused on guiding the interview while the other took detailed notes. Following each interview, the researchers compared their individual recollections and reviewed the notes for accuracy. These interviews resulted in 105 pages of typed text.

*Data analysis approach*
We employed a grounded, comparative approach to analyze the data (Corbin and Straus, 2008; Eisenhardt, 1989) using Excel to support our analysis (see Meyer and Avery, 2009). The researchers who conducted the initial interviews did the initial coding of each of the first six transcripts beginning with instance-by-instance coding (Charmaz, 2006) using reservists' own words as codes and meeting with other team members to review the

transcripts and emerging codes. Following this, we began focused coding, refining the codes through successive passes, comparing pairs of coded transcripts to each other and our emerging insights, and adding to, combining, and eliminating codes. This resulted in 79 segments of text from one to ten lines long, grouped into eight categories (intra-unit relationships, inter-unit relationships, identity, military activities, impact on career, impact on family, monetary incentives, and education). At this point, we conducted additional interviews at the training event.

We coded the additional interview notes beginning with the previously identified eight categories. We discussed discrepancies until we reached agreement that the codes accounted for the data and also that no new concepts were emerging. We continued cycling through the data and discussing our impressions. Through constant comparison of the coded passages to each other and to the emerging themes, we reduced the eight categories to three final themes.

*Exploratory analysis*
Our analysis suggested three key drivers of turnover decisions among reservists: relationships, meaning, and role conflict. We identified a fourth theme, compensation, which was not associated with turnover intentions. Positive relationships contributed to desires to stay in the Reserve, while the absence or reduction of such relationships contributed to desires to turnover. A sense of meaning contributed to desires to stay, while the absence or reduction of meaning contributed to intentions to turnover. Finally, perceptions that the Reserve role enhanced one's civilian career contributed to desires to stay in the Reserve, but perceptions of conflict between civilian and Reserve roles and home and Reserve roles contributed to expectations of leaving the Reserve. Table I shows the themes with examples.

*Relationships*. Our analysis suggested that intra-unit and inter-unit relationships influenced reservists' turnover intentions. We use intra-unit relationships to reflect the relationships among fellow members of a reserve unit. In contrast, inter-unit relations represent relationships between reservists and members of other organizational units, principally the I&I staff. As mentioned previously, the I&I staff are active duty support personnel responsible for assisting and instructing Reserve units.

Intra-unit relationships negatively influenced reservists' desire to turnover. All participants mentioned the draw of relationships with their colleagues. One explained, "One of the coolest things about it is you were able to get to know guys and their families and hang out with them, go to drill." Another noted, "You know, the best part about being in the Reserve […] was the dudes that I met there and the times we spent in the field." Further supporting the importance of relationships, reservists noted that as colleagues left, their own desires to remain with the Reserve decreased and the lack of these important relationships contributed to turnover. As one explained, "Well, I'm with a group of my buddies today, I'll stick around, but if it's all fresh faces, I don't know if I'll stay around with them."

Inter-unit relationships were most frequently a source of frustration. This frustration seemed to increase as reservists advanced in the USMCR. As one explained, "You know, I don't know how many times I reached out to commanders or to some of the staff NCOs [Non-Commissioned Officers] at various locations and asked them to do something for me, just to hear, 'Hey, sir, I'm swamped.'" All reservists who had left the Reserve noted feeling less respected, or perceived as lesser Marines than those on active duty. As one concluded, "If I had felt like I got the respect that I rated as a staff sergeant in the Marines, the experience that I had and everything, I'd probably keep going."

*Meaning*. Our analysis suggested that a sense of meaning, derived from identification with the Marines and opportunities to participate in military work and training, contributed to desires to stay. Most of the interviewees noted that individuals stay in the Marines because "they liked being Marines" or "like the idea of being part of the Marine Corps."

| | Present/positive | Absent/negative | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Intra-unit relationships | One of the coolest things about it is you were able to get to know guys and their families and hang out with them, go to drill […] | It gets to the point where once your buddies leave […] then the new guys start coming in and then you start picking up a stripe here and there, it kind of loses the fun factor | Relationships |
| | You know, the best part about being in the reserves […] was the dudes that I met there | One of the factors that might have kept me in was if a lot of those other guys would have stayed in too […] | |
| Inter-unit relationships | Well, if I'm with my buddies […], I'll stick around […] | […] but if it's all fresh faces, I don't know if I'll stay. | |
| | | "[…] if I had felt like I got the respect that I rated as a staff sergeant in the Marines, the experience that I had and everything, I'd probably keep going" | |
| | | I just felt like we weren't shown the respect that was due for the experience level that our Marines had" | |
| Identity | There's also, of course, the intangible side, the pride, the honor that goes with service | | Meaning |
| | […] guys that stayed just liked being Marines | | |
| | They [that stay] like the idea of being part of the Marine Corps | | |
| | "I didn't have a career in mind but I wanted to do something that was meaningful" | | |
| Military activities | | I think they are still joining with the possibility of going to war and then, you know, they get three years into it and then it just shuts off and it's like, "My motivation's gone. What am I doing here?" | |
| | I knew there was going to be a war and I didn't want to miss it […] | No one's deploying or anything. I mean, that's the game and that's […] [you] want to go experience that" | |
| | As long as it's fun I'll stay there. | I wasn't having a whole lot of fun anymore | |
| | I got to do what I wanted to do with the Marines and get that training […] | You guys are giving us new gear, but you're not giving us any training on how to use it, so it's pressuring when you tell me, hey, set up the, you know, high performance [wave phone] network. Well, I don't know how to use the damn radio that uses it, so how do you expect me to use that? | |
| | | Guys […] want to go do things and then we're lacking the money for it, so they're not getting what they expected | |

Table I.
Influencers of
retention decisions

**Table I.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Impact on civilian career | Positive | |
| | I was able to kind of find out what I wanted to do basically for the rest of my life | |
| | Well, with the reserves and what really attracted me about it was you're not tied down to it, if you will, to the extent that you can go to school and you can have another career and you can really find your niche in the world | |
| | Those guys have, in general, you know, in aggregate, have a lot higher level of practical life experience and education | |
| | Negative | Role conflict |
| | It definitely affected my civilian career. I feel like I spent too much time making my Marine Corps career the focus of my efforts in my life in general and I regret it | |
| | If I was in right now, there's no way I could do it. My civilian job is different and I'm just too busy. I really couldn't be in right now. It wouldn't work | |
| | The other thing is that I had a full-time job and I, you know, moved into a management position in 2011, so my job became a lot more demanding | |
| Impact on family | I didn't want to travel, because that was the biggest thing for me was for me to be here for my family and my career." | |
| | There's always something. You know, you're family wants to do something or your kid has something, it's always on a drill weekend and it just gets old | |
| | Drill becomes so much of a burden at that point, you know, that when family stuff is coming up and everything, you finally go, "Okay, I can – I've done my time. I can be done with it, you know" | |
| | It was like pulling teeth for them to let me go to my own wedding I had a daughter in March and so a lot of focus was on the family, that helped seal the deal of influencing me to get out" | |
| Monetary incentives | Neutral/no effect | Compensation |
| | I don't think I've ever really heard any of them tell me that they've done it just for the money or some other benefit | |
| | He just really loves being there, so re-enlisting for him, I think he even got a little bit of a bonus, but re-enlisting for him was a no – brainer So it's definitely not a financial thing. I mean, to stay in the reserves you've just really got to want to be there, and that's the bottom line, because there's really no financial benefits or health care benefits. There's really nothing other than just wanting to be there | |
| Education | Guys graduating from college finish up their contract and, I mean, they've got their full-time jobs, you know, laid out, so they just leave the Marine Corps Reserves behind | |

As one explained, "There's also […] the pride, the honor that goes with service." Those who had left the Reserve attributed the decisions of their colleagues who stayed in the Reserve to the importance of being a Marine to those individuals.

Reservists also derived a sense of meaning from opportunities to be engaged in military work and training. For example, one reservist explained, "I wanted to do something that was meaningful." Another noted, "I knew there was going to be a war and I didn't want to miss it, so I joined the Reserve."

Reduced opportunities for military work and training contributed to intentions to turnover. One reservist noted reduced opportunity for military work, "No one's deploying or anything. I mean, that's the game and that's […] kind of [what you] want to go experience." And, "[the war] just shuts off and it's like, 'My motivation's gone. What am I doing here?'" Reservists described military training as personally rewarding and fun and, similarly, noted that reduced opportunities for military training contributed to turnover, "I kind of see guys that want to go do things and then we're lacking the money for it, so they're not getting what they expected." This frustration reduced reservists' perceptions of their ability to be engaged in purposeful work and their sense of meaning.

*Role conflict.* Our analysis suggested that difficulties balancing the demands of the Reserve with civilian jobs and family responsibilities also contributed to turnover. Although some reservists perceived benefits to their civilian careers from their Reserve duties, benefits seemed to diminish as reservists advanced in their Reserve and civilian careers. For example, one noted benefits, "I was able to kind of find out what I wanted to do basically for the rest of my life." But, "If I was in right now, there's no way I could do it. My civilian job is different and I'm just too busy […]. It wouldn't work."

The reservists we interviewed described difficulties balancing their Reserve and civilian duties. For example, many reservists received military-related phone calls and e-mails throughout the day while at their civilian jobs. As one explained, "You get emails and phone calls throughout the day at your civilian job saying, 'Hey, you need to do this stuff today for the Marine Corps.'" Another noted, "It [the Reserve] definitely affected my civilian career. I feel like I spent too much time making my Marine Corps career the focus of my efforts in my life in general […] and I regret it."

Reservists similarly explained that Reserve demands created conflict at home. One expressed his frustration, "There's always something. You know, your family wants to do something or your kid has something, it's always on a drill weekend and it just gets old." All of the reservists noted that work outside of the drill weekend was required and took time away from family. Additionally, reservists noted that drills made it difficult to attend family activities such birthdays and other special occasions. As one explained, "It was like pulling teeth for them to let me go to my own wedding."

*Monetary incentives.* Reservists did not consider monetary incentives to have a substantial influence on their decisions to stay in or leave the Reserve. As one explained, "It's definitely not a financial thing. I mean, to stay in the Reserve you've just really got to want to be there."

### Discussion of Phase 1 findings

Through the course of our analysis, we compared our evolving understanding with extant literature. Ultimately, we found that the three themes we identified: relationships, meaning, and role conflict, were most congruent with the underlying logic and components of the embeddedness construct. We briefly summarize this comparative analysis below.

There was minimal alignment with job satisfaction as many reservists noted enjoying their work in the Reserve, but nevertheless intended to leave. There was at best moderate alignment with organizational commitment as reservists expressed some degree of affective

commitment in terms of a sense of pride from being a Marine and normative commitment in the form of obligation to their peers, but none expressed feeling any obligation to the Marine Corp as a whole and continuance commitment was irrelevant as reservists explicitly noted that the loss of financial rewards was inconsequential to their decisions and no other feelings of loss were discussed. Similarly person-organization fit provided an insufficient framework as it is primarily concerned with on-the-job fit, whereas issues with off-the-fit were far more salient. Finally, role conflict was indeed very relevant, but as we elaborate further, we came to conceptualize role conflict as a manifestation of off-the-job fit (or lack thereof) and thus integrated it to the more holistic conceptualization of fit that the embeddedness framework provides.

*Phase 2: hypotheses development*
Mitchell *et al.* (2001) introduced job embeddedness, which shifted attention from why people leave organizations to why people stay. Job embeddedness is composed of the fit between a person's job and other important facets of life, the links or ties an individual has with co-workers and institutions, and the personal sacrifice that would need to be made if an individual were to leave his or her position. The greater the fit, links, and sacrifices associated with one's position, the more embedded an individual is in his or her organization. One of the primary contributions of embeddedness theory has been to recognize the influence of both work and non-work influences on turnover (e.g. on-the-job fit and off-the-job fit). Hence, job embeddedness represents a broad constellation of influences that act "like a net or a web in which an individual can become stuck" (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001, p. 1104), which reduces the likelihood of voluntary turnover (Crossley *et al.*, 2007; Lee *et al.*, 2004) and has been shown to explain unique variance in turnover beyond traditional determinants such as job attitudes and job alternatives (Jiang *et al.*, 2012; Lee *et al.*, 2014). In line with previous findings in more traditional contexts, we expect that embeddedness decreases turnover intentions in the Reserve:

*H1.* Embeddedness is negatively related to turnover intentions in the Reserve.

The Phase 1 findings suggest that role conflict may contribute to individuals' decisions to leave the Reserve. Role conflict occurs when the pressures and expectations of one role are incompatible with the pressures and expectations of another role (Kahn *et al.*, 1964; Katz and Kahn, 1978). Inter-role conflict is a specific form of role conflict that arises from membership and participation in different roles. While the vast majority of research on inter-role conflict has addressed only the work and home roles, e.g., work-to-home conflict and home-to-work conflict (Byron, 2005; Casper *et al.*, 2007) scholars have long noted that individuals hold multiple other roles concurrently (Burr, 1972; Marks, 1977; Kossek *et al.*, 2012). Hence, investigations of role conflict across the work-home interface have failed to fully consider the influence of salient extra roles as an additional source of inter-role conflict.

For instance, individuals serving in the USMCR are confronted with the added difficulties of functioning effectively in a third, yet very salient, life role (i.e. the Marine Reserve role). As such, traditional perspectives of work-home conflict, in which time and job stressors stemming from one's primary occupation impede functioning and effectiveness at home, are incomplete representations of the issues reservists encounter when trying to juggle the competing demands of their lives. Rather, our exploratory findings suggest that the demands of the Marine role can often spill over into both the primary (civilian) work role and the home role to negatively impact the reservist's ability to meet the demands of these roles and become a significant source of strain in their lives (Kahn *et al.*, 1964; Maslach, 1982). As such, we propose two distinct forms of inter-role conflict that arise from this specific extra role – Marine-to-home conflict (MHC) and Marine-to-civilian work conflict (MWC) – and expect that the extent to which reservists experience these types of inter-role conflict will have strong influence on their turnover decisions. More specifically, because experiences of MWC and

MHC indicate the extent to which the Marine role is incompatible with reservists' other life roles, we suggest that MWC and MHC represent a lack of fit within this context and will diminish embeddedness in the Reserve:

*H2.* Role conflict is negatively related to embeddedness in the Reserve.

Links represents the second component of embeddedness and consists of the formal and informal connections between the individual and other people and institutions. Within the Reserve context, our preliminary findings suggest that links may be determined by intra-unit relations (with other reservists in the unit) and inter-unit relations (with active duty Marine Corps staff). Active duty staff members serve as representatives of the organization as a whole. Previous research has noted the influence that perceptions of organizational support have on motivation and turnover decisions (Maertz *et al.*, 2007; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Moreover, in much the same way that quality relationships with leaders (e.g. leader-member exchange) may influence commitment to an organization and organizational goals (Bauer *et al.*, 2006), we can expect the quality of the relationship between reservists and the active duty staff to be a prominent factor in the degree to which individuals feel psychologically tied to the organization.

Our Phase 1 findings also suggest that relationships with fellow reservists play an even more integral role. The positive effects of constructive relations with co-workers and perceptions of co-worker support have been well-documented. The expansive literature on teams and team functioning has repeatedly noted that positive relations among team members can engender greater commitment, citizenship behavior, and overall satisfaction (Chen *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, fellow reservists serve as a support network and a form of social and professional capital that can provide career-related and psychosocial support. Our exploratory findings indicate that reservists often feel a genuine sense of camaraderie and enjoy not only professional relationships, but extensive personal relationships with one another as well. These relationships create bonds between unit members and both their fellow reservists and the USMCR. As such, the strength of these connections increases the psychological links one has with the organization and further embeds individuals in the USMCR:

*H3.* Relationships is positively related to embeddedness in the Reserve.

Our Phase 1 analysis also suggests that a sense of meaning is a primary reason that reservists not only join, but remain tied to the organization. Many reservists derive a great deal of pride in serving in the USMCR and those reservists who strongly identify with the Marine role are very committed to the organization. For these reservists, leaving the USMCR would cause psychological strain as it would entail giving up, or abandoning, a major element of their self-identity. Relatedly, many reservists also find working for the Marine Corps to be very personally fulfilling and meaningful. In this way, we suggest that leaving the Reserve for these individuals would entail great personal sacrifice, the third component of embeddedness.

Sacrifice entails the loss of psychological or material benefits. Although our qualitative analysis indicated that material benefits (e.g. financial incentives) play a limited role, retention decisions appear to hinge on the psychological benefits that individuals attain by serving in the Reserve. A vast array of research has noted the overwhelming benefits of psychologically meaningful work on individual motivation and work-based outcomes, including engagement with one's work and commitment to the organization (e.g. Dik *et al.*, 2009; Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008; Mowday and Spencer, 1981). Within the context of the Marine Reserve, our preliminary analysis found that opportunities for meaningful military activities fostered feelings of purpose and significance for reservists. Hence, leaving the Reserve would deprive individuals of these unique and meaningful opportunities that they cannot experience elsewhere.

Moreover, research has also shown that identification with one's work creates a psychological attachment to the organization and therefore plays an integral role in career decisions and one's desire to remain with his/her organization (e.g. Bothma and Roodt, 2012; Kraimer *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, as previously discussed, leaving the Reserve would force reservists to break this strong psychological attachment and cost them the means in which they enact a primary source of their identity. Conversely, if/when reservists are not provided sufficient opportunities to engage in meaningful exercises or reservists no longer identify strongly with the Marine role, the psychological benefits derived from serving in the USMCR are minimal, and leaving the Reserve entails limited sacrifice:

*H4.* Meaning is positively related to embeddedness in the Reserve.

## Phase 2 – quantitative analysis
### Data and method
*Sample*. E-mails were sent to all SMCR unit members inviting them to complete an online survey. Of the 27,195 sent, 1,758 completed surveys were returned, providing a response rate of 6.4 percent. We then restricted the sample to only those reservists for whom turnover decisions were salient, timely, and plausible. As such, only "non-obligor" reservists were included in the final sample ($n = 570$) because non-obligors are no longer required to drill and are afforded the legal opportunity to voluntarily leave the Reserve in the near term.

We compared participants' demographic information to the SMCR (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2014), finding the sample to be representative: 88 percent male, mean age and tenure were 36 and 9 years respectively, with approximately 74 percent married or living with a spouse/partner. Officers comprised 37.9 percent and enlisted ranks 62.1 percent of the sample.

*Measures*. With the exception of military training opportunities and intra/inter-unit relations, all constructs were measured using existing scales, adapted to reflect the Marine role (e.g. replacing "my organization" with "the USMCR"). Scales for military training opportunities and intra/inter-unit relations were created for this study with the help of subject matter experts (officers from the Marine, Marine Reserve, Navy SEAL, Navy Surface Warfare, and Navy Supply Corp communities) and pilot tested on both active duty and Reserve officers in the United States Navy and Marine Corp. All items were assessed on five-point Likert-type scales.

Meaning was assessed across two dimensions: Marine identity salience and military training opportunities. Role identity salience is the subjective importance that an individual attaches to each of multiple role identities (Stryker, 1987; Thoits, 1992). We adapted three items from Kanungo (1982) to measure Marine role salience. A sample item includes "To me, the Marine Reserve is only a small part of who I am" (reverse scored). Three items were created for this study to assess military training opportunities based. A sample item includes "I currently get to do many enjoyable training exercises in the USMCR."

Relationships was assessed across two dimensions representing "inter-unit" relations with the active duty Marine Corps staff (I&I) and "intra-unit" relations with fellow reservists in their unit. Three items were created to address each dimension. Sample items include inter-unit: "The I&I staff interacts with me in a professional manner," intra-unit: "There is a genuine sense of camaraderie among the reservists in my unit."

Role conflict was assessed across two dimensions to represent interference/conflict stemming from the Marine Reserve role into the home and civilian-work roles, respectively. Eight items (four per dimension) were adapted from scales developed by Netemeyer *et al.* (1996). Sample items include MHC: "The demands of my Marine Reserve role interfere with my home and family life," marine-to-work conflict (MWC): "The demands of my Marine Reserve role interfere with work-related activities."

Embeddedness was measured with the seven-item global embeddedness scale (Crossley *et al.*, 2007), adapted to reference the USMCR. A sample item reads "I am tightly connected to the USMCR."

Turnover intention was measured with two items created for this study, "How likely are you to leave the SMCR at the end of your current obligation" and "How likely are you to re-affiliate in the SMCR once your current contract expires?" (reverse scored). "Affiliate" is military terminology for signing a new contract (i.e. re-enlisting) in the Reserve.

Control variables: we controlled for rank, age, sex, and marital status due to their potential impact on the independent and dependent variables.

*Analysis and results*
Table II shows the descriptive statistics and intercorrelations. We used structural equation modeling with AMOS 23. Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Browne and Cudeck, 1993), comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1980), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) (Hu and Bentler, 1999) were used to assess model fit. Despite concerns over the usefulness of the chi-square goodness of fit statistic (Hu and Bentler, 1999; MacKenzie *et al.*, 2011), we nevertheless also report chi-square values as they are conventionally used to provide a statistical basis for comparison of competing models (cf. Mathieu and Taylor, 2006).

*Measurement model.* We conducted CFA to assess the structure of the measures. Higher order latent constructs were created for meaning, relationships, and role conflict. This five-factor model fit the data relatively well, with fit indices indicating both acceptable and excellent fit $(\chi^2(334) = 1056.7, \ p < 0.001, \ \text{CFI} = 0.93, \ \text{RMSEA} = 0.06, \ \text{SRMR} = 0.07)$ (cf. MacKenzie *et al.*, 2011; Mathieu and Taylor, 2006). Results of chi-square difference tests indicated that the five-factor model exhibited significantly better fit than a four-factor model with the embeddedness and turnover intention (reverse scored) items loaded onto one latent construct $(\Delta\chi^2(4) = 167.7, p < 0.001)$ and a three-factor model with all items for the independent variables loaded onto a single latent construct $(\Delta\chi^2 (7) = 365.5, p < 0.001)$.

Convergent and discriminant validity: all items loaded above the conventional cut-off value of 0.60 (Chin, 1998) indicating adequate item reliability. Table III shows the construct (composite) reliabilities, average variance extracted (AVE; Fornell and Larcker, 1981), and the square root of the AVE, with values indicating adequate convergent and discriminant validity (Chin, 1998; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Taken together, the analysis of measurement model fit and the convergent and discriminant validity tests provide strong support for retaining the five-factor model for further analysis.

*Structural model.* Results of the structural model are summarized in Figure 1. The structural model fit the data relatively well $(\chi^2(403) = 1103.4, \ \text{CFI} = 0.94, \ \text{RMSEA} = 0.05, \text{SRMR} = 0.06)$. Additionally, because this model is supported by existing theory pertaining to embeddedness and the findings reported in Phase 1, it was retained for hypothesis testing. *H1* was supported as embeddedness was negatively related to intentions to leave the Selected Marine Corps Reserve $(\beta = -0.48, \ p < 0.001)$. *H2-H4* were also supported as role conflict $(\beta = -0.16, \ p < 0.01)$, relationships $(\beta = 0.12, \ p < 0.05)$, and meaning $(\beta = 0.56, p < 0.001)$ were all significantly related to embeddedness. These findings support our conceptualization that conflict, relationships, and meaning comprise a profile of embeddedness in the USMCR and play integral roles in reservists' turnover decisions.

**Discussion**
This study makes several contributions to the literature. It identifies drivers that explain turnover in extra roles, while also expanding our understanding of embeddedness beyond

| Variables | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Rank | 10.97 | 5.92 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Age | 35.36 | 7.52 | 0.58** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Sex | 1.06 | 0.23 | 0.01 | −0.03 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Marital status | 1.22 | 0.42 | −0.20** | −0.24** | 0.04 | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Turnover intention | 2.21 | 1.35 | −0.01 | 0.03 | 0.04 | −0.07 | | | | | | | |
| 6. Embeddedness | 3.29 | 1.09 | −0.11** | 0.03 | −0.07 | 0.01 | −0.38** | | | | | | |
| 7. Inter-unit relations | 3.54 | 0.88 | 0.15** | 0.14** | 0.03 | −0.07 | −0.19** | 0.17** | | | | | |
| 8. Intra-unit relations | 4.21 | 0.75 | 0.12** | 0.18** | −0.06 | −0.04 | −0.18** | 0.35** | 0.25** | | | | |
| 9. Military activities | 3.25 | 1.03 | 0.25** | 0.23** | 0.02 | −0.04 | −0.21** | 0.31** | 0.34** | 0.34** | | | |
| 10. Marine identity | 2.61 | 1.00 | −0.14** | −0.03 | −0.03 | 0.11* | −0.22** | 0.54** | 0.12** | 0.26** | 0.29** | | |
| 11. MHC | 3.37 | 0.95 | 0.19** | 0.17** | −0.07 | −0.16** | 0.22** | −0.20** | −0.23** | −0.04 | −0.12** | −0.21** | |
| 12. MWC | 3.07 | 0.97 | 0.14** | 0.09* | −0.03 | −0.01 | 0.16** | −0.20** | −0.26** | −0.11* | −0.13** | −0.23** | 0.67** |

**Notes:** $n = 570$. Sex: (male = 1, female = 2), marital status: 1 = not married/living with partner, 2 = married/living with partner. *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$

**Table II.**
Means, standard
deviations, and
correlations

| | Average variance extracted | Internal consistency | Square root of AVE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Turnover intention | 0.69 | 0.8 | 0.83 |
| Embeddedness | 0.59 | 0.89 | 0.75 |
| Relations | 0.56 | 0.71 | 0.75 |
|   Intra-unit relations | 0.70 | 0.87 | 0.84 |
|   Inter-unit relations | 0.62 | 0.82 | 0.79 |
| Mean | 0.63 | 0.77 | 0.79 |
|   Military activities | 0.71 | 0.83 | 0.84 |
|   Marine identity | 0.58 | 0.73 | 0.76 |
| Role conflict | 0.73 | 0.84 | 0.92 |
|   MHC | 0.70 | 0.92 | 0.84 |
|   MWC | 0.68 | 0.91 | 0.82 |

Table III.
Convergent and
discriminant validity
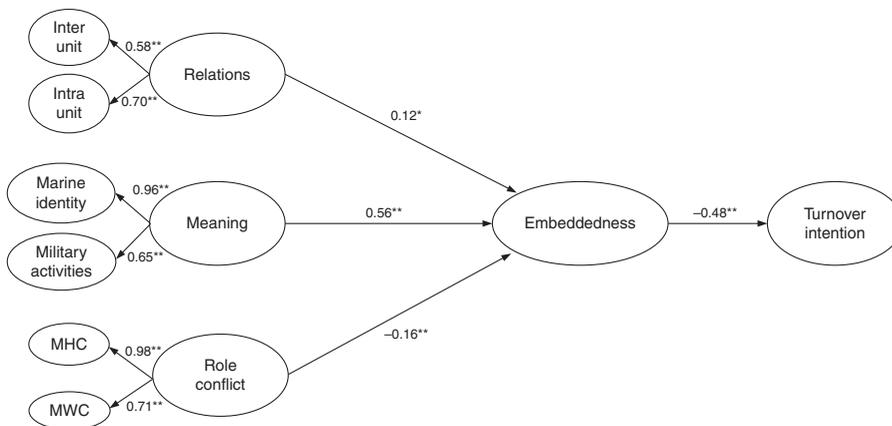


Notes: Control variables and the item indicators for the six dimensions not shown.
$*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.01$

Figure 1.
Structural model

the primary work context. Further, it shows that salient extra roles can be an additional
source of role conflict that impact functioning in people's lives.

Empirical evidence has shown the predictive validity of embeddedness across many
contexts, including the military (Holtom *et al.*, 2014; Ramesh and Gelfand, 2010; Smith *et al.*,
2011), yet to our knowledge no studies have investigated embeddedness within the context of
extra roles, or more specifically the Reserve. Scholars continue to call for research on
embeddedness in new and emerging contexts in order to develop profiles for the criteria that
comprise embeddedness' sub-dimensions (i.e. fit, links, and sacrifice) across varying contexts
(Lee *et al.*, 2014). Despite a burgeoning literature with regard to the outcomes associated with
embeddedness, comparatively few studies have concerned its antecedents. Hence, the
qualitative study conducted in Phase 1 presented preliminary findings into the Reserve-context
profile, with the ensuing hypotheses and quantitative analysis confirming these relationships.

As such, this study also provides a useful starting point from which to cultivate
continued research on extra roles. Specifically, the profile of embeddedness presented in this
study offers a suitable framework to apply across other types of extra roles. Research
should address the extent to which this profile (conflict, relationships, meaning) generalizes
across other extra role contexts, while further refining understanding of the influence of
extra roles on turnover and also on people's functioning in primary work and home roles.

Similarly, while most studies of embeddedness address the on-the-job component, only a few investigate the off-the-job component (Lee *et al.*, 2014). Ng and Feldman (2007, 2012) extended embeddedness to careers and the work-life interface by incorporating both organizational and community aspects of embeddedness, suggesting the need to better understand embeddedness' association with negative predictors and consequences (e.g. role conflict). Our study not only attends to this need, but has implications for the development of role theory as well. This study has demonstrated that extra roles may be an additional source of conflict and strain in people's lives. Hence, it has introduced extra role-to-work and extra role-to-home as forms of inter-role conflict (and presumably enrichment) on which future research may build in a number of ways. First, scholars might investigate role conflict with regard to other salient roles, such as second jobs and various extramural organizations, in a similar fashion as discussed above regarding embeddedness. Or, research might incorporate salient extra roles into the emerging research on boundary management (e.g. Ashforth *et al.*, 2000; Hecht and Allen, 2009; Powell and Greenhaus, 2010). Promising research has begun regarding the extent to which individuals segment or integrate work and home roles (Kossek *et al.*, 2012). The inclusion of extra roles into this branch of role theory offers a more holistic, and decidedly more complex, avenue for continued research on how individuals manage and negotiate the boundaries of competing roles across the whole-life space.

This study has a number of practical implications as well. Our findings suggest that organizations relying on contributors acting in extra roles should focus on how to better embed these contributors in their organizations. Our research suggests that monetary rewards are fairly inconsequential to extra role contributors and that generating meaningful experiences and relationships are paramount to their retention. Hence, organizations should facilitate meaningful contributions from those in extra roles and provide opportunities for social interactions and personal development. Further, organizations with both individuals participating in extra and primary roles should take steps to minimize conflicts between these groups. Human resources managers in organizations that rely on both primary and extra role contributors should consider how the tasks and status of each group differ and should work to create an organizational culture that recognizes and encourages the contributions of each. Finally, organizations that rely on those in extra roles should acknowledge the impact participation in extra roles may have on other roles, particularly the home role, and take steps to actively help individuals manage their role boundaries effectively.

*Limitations*
Although this study makes a number of valuable contributions, several limitations should be noted. As is typical of exploratory studies, we interviewed a limited number of participants in the first phase of the study and only officers and men. It is possible that enlisted personnel and women might experience, in particular, role conflict differently than did the male officers we interviewed. Although the second phase of the study included both women and enlisted personnel, both phases were limited to a single context. While this tight scope limited potential noise, further research should identify and differentiate between types of extra roles. The findings of this study should be replicated in different extra role contexts and with more diverse populations.

Additionally, despite the strong sample size, the quantitative analysis was conducted on cross-sectional, self-report data which limits our ability to make causal inferences regarding the proposed relationships and presents some concerns over common method. Future research should attempt to use either longitudinal designs and/or objective measures of turnover to replicate our findings with added validity. Additionally, this study did not distinguish effects across the three different dimensions of embeddedness. Although we deemed this appropriate due to the exploratory nature of this study, future research should build from this work to

develop either context-specific measures or a measure that is more applicable to the extra role context and can be easily adapted across specific types of extra roles.

Finally, future research should seek to delineate among the varying characteristics and types of extra roles. We suggest that a particular strength of this study is that motivations for joining the Marine Reserve are representative of many of the motivations for participating in other types of extra roles (e.g. self-interest vs public-interest, work vs play, financial reward vs satisfaction). Because reservists' motivations for serving represent each of these competing drivers, this research provides a fairly generalizable foundation from which research can be enhanced. But, the proliferation of research will be greatly aided by in-depth comparative analyses, which can be used to establish a typology of extra role types. This study offers a step in that direction. Future work specifically focused on delineating characteristics among varying extra role types will facilitate the exploration of extra roles and the interpretation of future findings.

## Conclusion

This study shed light on the value and applicability of the embeddedness framework to organizations other than one's primary job. Perhaps one of the greatest attributes of the embeddedness framework lies in its capacity to provide a useful framework with which to study turnover in multiple contexts. There is tremendous potential for future research to expand the embeddedness framework by applying it to a variety of extra role organizations and pursuits such as volunteer work, community organizations, religious/spiritual affiliations, and/or hobbies. This study adds to this literature by developing a profile of embeddedness in the USMCR context, but we echo the call of Lee *et al.* (2014) to continue exploration and refinement of the specific contributors to embeddedness across contexts.

## Note

1. NCOs include Corporals and Sergeants and, while not commissioned (i.e. holding an officer rank), hold leadership positions in the Marine Corps.

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