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College ROTC Cadets' Perceptions of Gender Fairness With Selective Service Registration

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Abstract

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MSS, U.S. Army War College, 2012

MMAS, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2001

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The U.S. Selective Service System currently excludes women from the talent pool based upon the DoD's 1981 ban on women in direct combat. The DoD has removed the exclusion and has implemented a gender-neutral policy standard for assignments. However, there appears to be a misalignment of national security policy as it relates to gender fairness that impacts Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) participants in particular. Using Durkheim's functionalism theory as the theoretical foundation, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine institutional differences in policies regarding justice and gender among ROTC participants who are between 18 and 26 years of age in a Middle Atlantic University. Data were acquired through 10 interviews with ROTC members. These data were inductively coded and then subjected to Moustakas and Van Kaam's thematic analysis procedure. Key results included evidence that current policy is misaligned with gender enfranchisement, effective social change requires inclusion of both genders in registration, and a standards-based approach to equality is important to both men and women. This group of future military leaders wants the repeal of male only registration and the inclusion of female citizens as an expression of full citizenship and increased social equity. Further research using this methodological framework in different geographical regions and among different generations could add depth to the current body of knowledge. The implications for positive social change with new Selective Service registration policy would change the process towards registering all young adult citizens in the event of a national emergency which would be the codification of fairness and value for all citizens in public policy.

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This work is dedicated to the visionaries, the idealists, the storytellers, and the dreamers who dare to challenge the status quo in society. Their actions often inspire and lead others to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals who may never know the depth of their sacrifice—Arthur and Dr. Louvenia Peavie, the late Pastor Jimmy Terry, Bart T. Dixon, Suzanne Ball, the late Andrew Jackson Kendrick, James E. "Big Daddy" Smith, Paul Bontrager, Kevin West, and Dr. Peter Schifferle.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The right of individual choice as it relates to enfranchisement of social change is challenging the conventional national security talent management policies in the Selective Service System and the U.S. Army. The demography of the U.S. armed forces, particularly the Army, has often mirrored the social norms of the society. This reflection is often subject to change after major inflection points during the end of warfare or violent conflict. The institutional military and civilian leaders of the defense department, often under Presidential mandate, have spearheaded transformational change that open opportunities for upward mobility previously closed to disenfranchised members of the society.

The U.S. national security manpower policy was at such an inflection point based upon the recent defense department decision to lift the ban that excluded women from assignment to direct combat units (Holmes, 2012). The U.S. Selective Service System, which manages emergency manpower for the military in the event of a national crisis, currently excludes women from the talent pool, based upon the Defense Department's 1981 ban on women in combat. In contrast, the U.S. Army was transforming to a gender-neutral policy for career talent management in light of lifting the ban. In an attempt to build a better society, the voices of the 18 to 26-year-old college students who are likely impacted by the misalignment of policy and potential social change implications of the Selective Service and the U.S. Army needed to be explored to potentially influence policy directions that are inclusive of their perspectives. This situation is a classic

misalignment of national policy--the Selective Service excluding women and the Army including women in direct combat.

Background of the Problem

The Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1981 influenced U.S. President Jimmy Carter to review the Vietnam draft registration policies of 1975 and renew the Selective Service System (Londoño, 2013; U.S. Government Selective Service System, 2014). Both references provided information on how public policy was intertwined with U.S. laws that legalized the exclusion of women based upon the society's understanding of the nature of war and national security interests (Londoño, 2013; U.S. Government Selective Service System, 2014). Based upon this interpretation, the Selective Service System continues to hold men accountable in the society for compliance of registration, regardless of prison time or being disabled (Ben-Porath, 2011; Griego, 2014; Horowitz & Levendusky, 2011).

The U.S. Supreme Court, the highest court in the country, upheld the policy of male only registration based upon the Defense Department's main position supporting the combat exclusion of women. The role of women on the battlefield has changed since the Supreme Court decision, and "in the last 12 years, more than a quarter of a million women served in Iraq and Afghanistan, of whom approximately 150 were killed in action and another 800 were wounded" (Cone, 2013, p. 29). Who serves and who does not in a time of national crisis is a controversial issue in U.S. society that has been manifested in the Selective Service registration and DoD policies. The appearance of a policy misalignment impacts the young men and women who have decided to prepare

themselves as officers to serve in the military through the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) system. There was a gap in the literature for addressing the question of gender fairness in combat due to the exclusion policy in the past. A phenomenological approach used by a researcher that addressed the perspectives of ROTC participants was a start towards filling this literature gap in civil military relations. A view of the U.S. Army's landmark change on gender fairness from the perspectives of future military officers can inform public policy influencers with rich information on their experience that was emblematic of their perspective.

The perspectives of the participants are at the core of the phenomenological design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In terms of civil military research conceptually, there are three streams of ideas that could help explain the phenomena in light of the establishment of the all-volunteer force: a nexus of the influence of politics, society, and the military, especially as it relates to the composition of the officer corps. Several scholars have cited seminal research on the roles of civilians, citizenship, and the military (see Huntington, 1981; Janowitz, 1964; Moskos, 1977; D. R. Segal, Bachman, Freedman-Doan, & O'Malley, 1999).

Although some scholars have varying perspectives on the concept of citizenship rights and obligations, especially concerning national participation, research on the role of women in national defense has been limited. Sociologists have focused on individual behavior and civic engagement and have researched how adults decide to volunteer (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Kelty, Kleykamp, & Segal, 2010; Lee & Pritzker, 2013). The current gender exclusionary policies of the Selective Service System may not mirror the

perspectives of future military leaders most affected by the policy. In fact, there was a gap in the literature as to if the influence on mandatory service and gender are correlated along generational lines (Putnam, 2001). Putnam's (2001) research on volunteerism and the degradation of society in particular showed a correlation of perspectives and beliefs about society along generational cohorts. Social capital of women, in particular in U.S. society, has increased, by evidence of increased opportunities in the workforce. This was an area of further research as it relates to individual citizens' decision-making to volunteer to join the U.S. Army. A national survey was conducted on mandatory military service, but it was based on surveys done between 2001 to 2003 (Simon & Lovrich, 2009). After a decade, there was a need to revisit the perspectives of young citizens relative to this issue.

The idea that conscription was a solution to the unrepresentative nature of the All-Volunteer Force has ebbed and flowed in contemporary research (Geva, 2011; Horowitz & Levendusky, 2011). Horowitz and Levendusky (2011) conducted research on conscription by using a sampling of U.S. households based upon a hypothetical scenario. Although insightful, a phenomenological study based upon the real perspectives of college students who will become future military officers could be more relevant for gaining understanding of their perspectives.

There are recent institutional studies of future military officers who surveyed cadets on the perception of a civil-military gap (Ngaruiya, Velez, Clerkin, & Taylor, 2014; Sondheimer, Toner, & Wilson, 2013). This gap was based on ideological differences on the level of political conservatism between cadets and their civilian

classmates. By studying the present perspectives, the Sondheimer et al. (2013) study alluded to the future composition of the force. The survey-based study relied on self-assessment of cadets at the Military Academy (Sondheimer et al., 2013). In this study, I used in-depth interviews rather than surveys to delve deeper into exploring an understanding of the participants' perspectives of gender fairness and opportunity. The composition of the all-volunteer force in the military and the gender perspectives in society all became part of the study's conceptual framework.

In recent scholarly research focused on the concept of conscription and the call to national service, the perspectives of women in these studies were not addressed due to the previous legal ban of women in combat (Klingler & Chatagnier, 2014; Pfaffenzeller, 2010; Reingold & Lenkowsky, 2010). Now that the ban has been removed, the research gap should be filled with their perspectives on enfranchisement to fight in direct combat and national defense. This study helped provide a voice for a greater understanding of future leaders. This research was important for the potential advocacy for the abolishment of the Selective Service registration policy based upon greater understanding of the students. Future studies may be needed to explore regional differences in student perspectives as well.

Problem Statement

There was a problem in U.S. civilian-military relations, which was being expressed as a misalignment in the defense policies relating to gender enfranchisement and national security. The lack of coherence in the talent management of women in particular was reflective in the different gender fairness policies of the U.S. Selective

Service System and the U.S. Department of Defense. The Selective Service System, which provides manpower of 18 to 26-year-olds in the event of a national crisis, currently excludes women based upon gender only (U. S. Government Accountability Office, 2012). However, the U.S. military, which was to receive the manpower should the emergency arise, has recently eliminated exclusions to service based upon gender. Exclusion continues to exist in direct contrast to the fact that the U.S. Army, which was to receive the manpower in an emergency, has removed its service limitations based upon gender (Lopez, 2014; Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2012).

The appearance of a misalignment between the Selective Service and the Department of Defense on gender fairness challenges the public trust in institutions and may reflect a difference in social norms among generations. This problem has negatively impacted coherence in the national service participation plans of the all-volunteer force used in lieu of conscription (Horowitz & Levendusky, 2011; Reingold & Lenkowsky, 2010). There was a potential for erosion in the public trust of governance in society if the misalignment was left unexamined and misunderstood (Defense Advisory Committee on Women In the Services 3, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The research design was qualitative using a phenomenological method. The purpose of this study was to understand 18 to 26-year-old college ROTC students' perspectives on the current gender exclusive Selective Service Registration policy from a college in the Mid-Atlantic. The central focus of the study was an exploration into the perspective of the ROTC cadets. Young people are volunteering to serve their country as

a full member of society with the opportunities, responsibilities, and risks associated with that commitment, despite some national defense manpower policies that infer that gender supersedes their enfranchisement to serve in crisis based upon a 1981 Supreme Court decision. Today's potential misalignment in national defense policy may be reflective of two divergent ideas on gender fairness: (a) 20th Century social norms on gender that ban women from selective service registration, and (b) 21st Century social norms that advocate more gender neutrality in military career fields and talent management. As a unique culture on a college campus, I explored how these young people reconcile this dichotomy in their social interactions in order to improve the community of interest's understanding of social equity and full citizenship.

Research Question

In this research study, I ask one primary question: How do college ROTC students between 18 and 26 years of age from a Mid-Atlantic university describe their perspectives about gender exclusion for Selective Service Registration?

Theoretical Framework and Model

A structural functionalist perspective applied to women in direct combat policy has led to a review of social justice theories and the selective service registration law. The key theoretical foundation was based on social justice theories as it relates to gendering full institutional citizenship in the U.S. Selective Service structure, and by extension society as a whole. The societal whole has been described by some social scientists in terms of structural functionalism, which takes the position that society is made of parts, each with a function that interacts towards equilibrium (Boundless, 2015; Durkheim,

1986; Kalu, 2011). I contend that one's view of balance or fairness in social equity parlance is based on perceived societal norms for role identification and functions. By current public policy, young men and women's societal norms for participation in Selective Service were based upon gendered identity roles and functions.

A key function of the U.S. Selective Service Registration was the granting of full citizenship to males 18 to 26 years of age. Federal Student Aid requires Selective Service Registration as a precondition for loan/grant consideration and the appointment of federal jobs requires registration as well (Cowen, 2006; Moskos,1977; U.S. Government Selective Service System, 2014). This unequal obligation based on gender has been characterized by a former U.S. President as the foundation for unequal rights (Natelson, 2013). In light of the Defense Department lifting the ban on women in direct combat, Congress has not passed legislation to remove the exclusion of women from Selective Service registration. This Congressional inaction on policy reinforces unequal citizenship rights and obligations based on gender functions, which highlights a broader growing gap between military service and citizenship.

Civil-military relations theory attempts to describe the current state of relations between the civilian control of the military service as an institution and the composition of the citizens that make up that force. With the current state of perpetual war, a strain on the all-voluntary-force has led some to question the underlying foundation of the citizen soldier and his/her relationship with the state. The all-voluntary-force was not designed for war, which raises the specter of mandatory service or conscription to meet the demand. In the most unflattering characterization,

the military draft …negates man's fundamental right, the right to life, and

establishes the fundamental principle of statism—that a man's life belongs to the

state, and the state may claim it by compelling him to sacrifice it in battle. (Rand,

1967, p. 256)

The current state of civil-military relations is a reflection of less than 1% of the

population it serves. Congressional membership was disconnected from military service

being the central obligation of national citizenship.

This dichotomy has been addressed by two prominent civil-military relation

theories, institutional and convergence theories, from the seminal works of Huntington

(1981) and Janowitz (1964) respectively. Institutional theory explores the contrast

between the attitudes and values of military personnel, mostly conservative, with

civilians who tend to be more liberal relative to the function of the institution. The

separation from the society and emphasis on the professionalism of the military in its war

fighting functions are key elements of the theory in practice.

In contrast to institutionalism, convergence theory minimizes the differences

between the culture of the military and the civilian society it serves in order to respond to

conflicts that require more than a military force as a solution. Aspects from both civil-

military relation theories are relevant for describing the military institution. Based upon

the convergence of several pressures that influence policy, pragmatism may be at the

core, a phenomenon that is the result of the convergence of society, military, and the

nature of war.

The three elements of society, military, and nature of warfare are the tensions by which the theoretical foundations were applied. Durkheim's theories on society treats the norms, values, and structures as interrelated parts of society ("Durkheim, Emile," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, n.d.). For the purpose of this construct, society includes nonmilitary citizens, civilians, and the public policy makers in the country. The military is the all-volunteer-force that includes uniformed members of the armed forces and nonuniformed civilians associated with the Department of Defense and Homeland Security. The nature of war is defined as the characteristics that distinguish the kind of adversary, the environment, and prevailing tactics ("War, The Philosophy of," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, n.d.).

First, society upholds the principle of individual choice as sacrosanct to its national identity and ethos as a democracy. The society's views on gender roles have been blurred towards a more egalitarian opportunities; however, there are differing views on mandatory service generally along generational lines (Adres, Vanhuysse, & Vashdi, 2012). The U.S. society has been against conscription and a military draft, but there is some support for the idea of national service (Belfield, 2014; McBride & Lee, 2012).

Second, the military itself as an institution is an all-volunteer-force as an alternative to conscription and a military draft. It is a market-driven force in the sense that members decide if they want to join, rather than a national commitment or obligation (Armor & Gilroy, 2010; Moskos, 1977; Reingold & Lenkowsky, 2010). The institution is civilian controlled, occupational, and professional (Feaver, 2005; Moskos, 1977). As a public institution, it has been used as a platform to initiate social change in the society

(Armor & Gilroy, 2010; Prividera & Howard III, 2014; Segal, 1995). The social capital of women has risen, and I contend that this is due to their visible combat service during the last decade of war (see Kelty, Kleykamp, & Segal, 2010). The U.S. Army just released their intention to move towards a standards-based force and is soliciting for women volunteers to attend Ranger School (an elite physically and mentally demanding leadership course; Cone, 2013). Historically marginalized segments of the society have used the military, particularly in times of war, to prove their right to full citizenship (Bailey, 2009; Ben-Porath, 2011; Geva, 2011; Merry, 2012).

Third, the nature of warfare in the 21st Century is characteristic of the following factors that represent a change from 20th Century warfare. The adversary is called a terrorist, and the environment of conflict has been characterized as a noncontiguous battlefield (Barry, 2013; Brownson, 2014; Cone, 2013; Eager, 2014). This is significant because there is no front line, emblematic of where direct combat could likely occur. Therefore, the 20th Century rear lines of a linear battlefield, where noncombat personnel (where women were more likely to serve) were presumed to be safer, do not exist. The adversary's tactic that has killed and wounded more U.S. and coalition service members has been the improvised explosive device (IED). The IED is typically discovered when a vehicle runs over it. The U.S. weapon of choice has been an unmanned or remotely piloted armed aircraft system, commonly called a drone. The indiscriminate impact of both the IED and the drone are characteristic of the nature of this warfare. The nature of warfare emblematic of today's operations are environments where both women and men

in service are more likely to be in direct combat, while conducting indirect military functions like logistics, intelligence, and transportation.

This kind of warfare has been distant from the society, and the adversary has been called in national security circles as a nonexistential threat against the American way of life. The perpetual nature of the conflict has become a litmus test of sorts for support for mandatory service from some in the society who advocate bringing back the military draft for social justice.

For context, the United States has not had an existential threat since World War II. The convergence of particular factors in society or Durkheim's functionalism may help explain the current policy alignment (Hebding & Glick, 1981, p. 10). Three main factors, the primacy of the individual in society, the all-volunteer military, and the nature of the war, serve as foci. The convergence of the theoretical factors may help researchers understand how the phenomena of policy misalignment between the Selective Service System and the Department of Defense continues to exist in the public domain.

Policies in the public domain are subject to scrutiny and evaluation. The public trust is like a structure that is subject to the balancing forces that are the result of society's assessment of public policy (Norman-Major, 2011). The outcome of public policy implementation is judged on the basis of being fair, just, and socially equitable, like the funnel that meters the flow of ideas from the convergence (see Figure 1). Table 1 is an adaptation from the gender analysis framework found in Kumar (2016, p. 104). Table 1 shows a comparison of the relevant public policy positions, their theoretical foundations, and the leading principles of gender analysis. The corresponding premise

and role outcomes in the table represent societal norms in equality and equity. In this study, I explored the perceived societal norms of 18 to 26-year-olds relative to gendered Selective Service Registration to understand the current state of social equity and fairness.
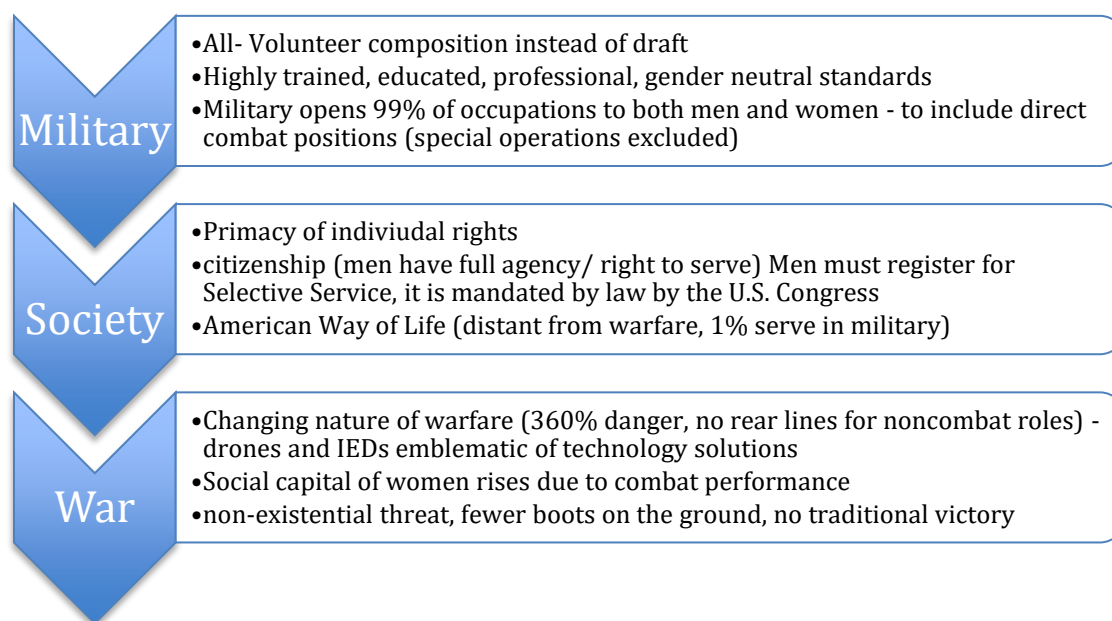
Figure 1. Theoretical framework: Societal factor convergence—functionalism theory.

Table 1

Comparison of Public Policy Through a Gender Analysis Framework

Public institution	U.S. Department of Defense	U.S. Congress
Public policy / Law	Combat exclusion of women lifted (gender neutral)	Selective Service registration (male only)
Political philosophy	Liberalism	Conservatism
Social theories	Rawls-Justice as fairness	Durkheim-Division of labor
Capital focus	Economic	Social
Key interest	Individual opportunity	Collective solidarity
Principles	Equality first • Men and women are equal • Should have equal access to rights based on equality principle	Equity first • Men and women are different • Should have access to rights and resources based on equity principle
Premise	Equality will lead to equity	Equity will lead to equality
Outcomes (Roles)	Leads to role competition	Leads to complement roles

Nature of the Study

The qualitative paradigm was the most appropriate method to collect rich descriptions and discover meanings in the words of the participants. The design that was focused on understanding the participants' perspective was a phenomenology framework. The nature of the study comes from an interpretive paradigm that addresses data analysis and interpretation of participant responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Exploring the propensity to serve by race, class, and gender is an integral part of understanding social power and equity in the real world. Although the design has its strengths in terms of interpretive research, it can be a challenge by long hours of fieldwork and potential limitations derived as an outsider/participant/observer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Types and Sources of Data

The participants were selected based upon the following criteria: (a) They were college ROTC students in a Middle Atlantic state, (b) they were interested in talking about gender fairness and the selective service registration, and (c) they were willing to participate in an in-depth interview concerning their experience. The site of a college was chosen because male students who are between 18 and 26 years old have to comply with Selective Service registration in order to receive federal aid of any kind; therefore, they are likely to have a perspective on the gender exclusion policies. In addition, college students are not a vulnerable population like former prisoners who have to comply with Selective Service Registration within 6 months of release from incarceration (Griego, 2014; U.S. Government Selective Service System, 2014). The qualitative approach to sample size allowed me to explore the perspective of a specific cultural group. I planned

for 10 participants. The sample size could be as small as one, if the richness of data is available to support answering the research question (Creswell, 2012; Maxwell, 2012; Patton, 2001).

The data collection strategy was semistructured face-to-face interviews. The educational setting was advantageous for research in this area because previous researchers have shown evidence of causal relationships between higher levels of education and volunteerism in the United States (Gustavsen, 2013; Wilson, 2012). Therefore, the combination of the educational setting and the participant's interest in volunteerism may result in a positive development for the data collection strategy.

The role of the researcher is articulated in this dissertation. The steps the researcher plans to take to reduce bias is to first conduct a reflexive analysis with the technique called epoche or bracketing (Creswell, 2012; Maxwell, 2012). I documented my thoughts about the paradox and set them aside to reduce bias. The interview research protocol was the same for each of the participants. I asked open-ended interview questions. I used a face-to-face in-depth interview technique to capture the participants' perspectives more deeply. After transcription, I shared the transcripts of the interview with the participants for member checking in order to increase the validity of the analysis. This was a naturalistic study; therefore, I gave much attention to describing a rich narrative of the collegiate ROTC student's perspective on gender fairness and national defense policies in the 21st Century.

Definitions

To assist in the exploration of the social and civil military literature and to assist in more effective communication, the following concepts are defined for clarity. Every culture or subgroup has jargon that tends to define the group and invariably separate outsiders from inclusion. For organizational purposes, the following terms are included in alphabetical order.

Direct combat: Department of Defense policy prohibits women from assignment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground (Egnell, 2013; Hagel, 2013; Haider-Markel, Jorgensen, Doan, & Portillo, 2014). A 1998 Government Accounting Office report on ground combat and women includes the definition of direct combat as engaging an enemy on the ground with individual and crew served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and with a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile forces personnel (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 1998).

Gender equality: Equality means that the different behaviors, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered, valued, and favored equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Equality is the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's gender in opportunities (International labor Office, 2007; Kumar, 2016).

Gender equity: Equity means fairness and justice for men and women in the distribution of responsibilities and benefits. This may include equal treatment or

treatment that is different but that is considered equivalent in terms of rights, obligations, and opportunities (International labor Office, 2007; Kumar, 2016).

Gender neutrality: The development of physical standards for occupational specialties previously closed due to gender. The focus is to ensure personnel are assigned to units and positions that maximize their potential based on military necessity and each service member's ability, not constrained by gender restrictions where possible. (Brownson, 2014; Egnell, 2013; Haviland, 2013).

Military Selective Service Act: Requires virtually all male U.S. citizens worldwide and all other males residing in the United States ages 18 through 25 to register with the Selective Service System within 30 days of turning 18 years of age (Londoño, 2013; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012).

Rostker v. Goldberg: The United States Supreme Court case in 1981 considered the constitutionality of the male-only draft under the Act and upheld the Military Selective Service Act excluding women from registering (Brownson, 2014; Panetta announces end of ban on women in combat, 2013).

Selective Service System: An independent agency in the executive branch responsible for (a) maintaining a database that enables it to provide manpower to DoD in a national emergency, (b) managing a program for conscientious objectors to satisfy their obligations through a program of civilian service, and (c) ensuring the capability to register and induct medical personnel if directed to do so (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012).

Social capital: The value of a relationship that provides support and assistance in a given social situation that is often found in human networks (Lin, 1999; Lin, Cook, & Burt, 2001; Putnam, 2007; Scott & Carrington, 2011).

Assumptions

Three assumptions were made in the design of this research; these three assumptions were critical for the study. The first critical assumption is that the population of ROTC college students would share enough unique attributes to be considered a cultural group with their own beliefs and value systems. The next two assumptions were germane to the integrity of the study. The second assumption was that the participants would be forthcoming with their views on gender fairness in warfare, even if their perspectives were controversial. The third assumption was that my presence as a researcher in their environment would not negatively alter the quality of the data collected.

All three assumptions were necessary in the context of the study because the core question concerning the perception of policy misalignment was exploring social truth for individuals as well as communities. The natural tendency was to avoid unpleasant realities concerning the nature of warfare and the potential limitations on opportunity that may undermine the goal of gender neutrality in public policy.

Scope and Delimitations

Young adult students designated for the future of the profession of arms were at the epicenter of the study. The Selective Service Registration System with the federally mandated requirements based upon gender served as the starting point for identifying the

scope of the population of interest. By design, the age range for obligation to comply with the federally mandated registration requirements is 18 to 26 years old. This age range coincides with the typical age range of collegiate ROTC students. Although the study was designed to capture this population's perspective, it was not designed to address this population in a general fashion. The study did not address transgender citizens. This study was scoped to focus on a limited population by geography, population, and participant desire to share their personal views on a controversial subject.

Limitations

The researcher as the data collector was both a potential strength and limitation. The qualitative tradition using a phenomenology framework derives validity through understanding meaning from rich descriptions from the experience of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). This study was grounded on the assumption that the participants were willing to share their perspectives on the subject of gender neutrality in light of an experience that they have not had, which is potential direct ground combat. Although ROTC cadets are trained on ground combat tactics for leadership training, it was a limitation of the design of the study. Design limitations relating to experience in direct ground combat can be mitigated by rich descriptions of the participant's core values and beliefs about the equity of mandatory service and opportunity (Laureate Education, 2013). Furthermore, the descriptions revealed if there are commonly held perspectives among ROTC cadets pertaining to gender neutrality in both warfare and the society.

Applying procedures that protect and safeguard the data, the participants were the litmus test for ensuring quality, trustworthiness, and credibility. Out of the three, I

contended that the most important element is credibility because the central focus of the study was to seek greater meaning and understanding about a paradox in public policy from the participant's perspective. Without credibility, the research loses its relevance as a tool to positively impact social change. In addition, I used member checking to ensure the capture of the participants' perspective accurately. This technique addressed this weakness of design. I audio recorded the interview, then, I provided the participant the opportunity to review the transcription of the data to ensure credibility from the participant's perspective.

Significance for Social Change

The composition of the U.S. military has often reflected the changing social norms in the society. The U.S. Selective Service System, which manages emergency manpower for the military in the event of a national crisis, currently excludes women from the talent pool based upon the Pentagon's 1981 ban on women in combat. Recently, the combat exclusion ban has been removed, and the U.S. Army is transforming to a gender-neutral policy for talent management. National service participation is a contentious issue in the society that is reflective in the Selective Service Registration and Department of Defense manpower policies. This paradox in national security policy for some 18 to 26-year-olds' ROTC student perspectives will be explored as a culture for better understanding and to influence social change with policy.

Social justice and the meaning of full citizenship in society are integral to the nation's perspective on democratic governance (Egnell, 2013; Mariner, 2014; Mitchell, White III, & Ritschel, 2014). It is the people's opinion that shapes the public policy of

institutions. The arguments for the proper role of women in society is changing, and today's 18 to 26-year-old college students who have volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army should share their perspectives on their experience with the role of gender in national security policy.

I pursued this study because it provided a voice from a segment of society who is being groomed to become the future institutional leaders of the profession of arms. This research was important for policy influencers who may advocate for more regional studies across the country or change in the Selective Service System based upon the findings. The data from the study may show that the student's perspectives on gender are aligned with their parents, who may view women as incompatible with the physical demands of direct combat. In contrast, the data may indicate that the parents view women as equals in the environment of direct combat. This study could begin to fill a gap in the understanding of this phenomenon and open the door for more discoveries on the potential implications of a gender-neutral society.

Summary

In this study, I sought to explore the perception of a policy misalignment between the Selective Service Registration System and the United States Army as it pertains to gender bias in career assignments in light of the recent lifting of the ban on women in direct combat. In Chapter 2, I explore the literature that scopes the theoretical foundation for gendered policy and framework for the convergence of factors that has the propensity to lead to a more pragmatic approach regarding gender fairness in national security policy.

The comparison of public policy through a gender analysis framework table depicts the phenomenon of the study in context. The model discussion includes an examination of the interplay between the military as an institution for change, societal pressures that define the American way of life, the nature of 21st Century war, and social capital of women in particular. In Chapter 3, I describe the qualitative research design and methodological instruments for interviews. In Chapter 4, the results of the study are presented and in Chapter 5, I summarized the implications for future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There appears to be a misalignment between the nation's public policy on gender fairness relative to the Selective Service System. The appearance of a misalignment between the Selective Service and the Department of Defense on gender fairness challenges the public trust in institutions and may reflect a difference in social norms among generations. In this study, I explored the perspectives of college students between 18 and 26-years old with gender fairness and mandatory service in Selective Service Registration.

In this literature review, I explore some of the relevant work within the multidisciplinary subjects of military sociology, society, and warfare in the 21st Century as it relates to gender equality and national defense policy. In alignment with the focus of this study, I sought to find the foundational theories from which the current paper would build upon in order to begin to satiate the gaps specifically regarding the Selective Service System exclusion of women registration. In addition, other foundational scholarship included the growth of social capital in the lives of women within the greater culture of the society and in the all-volunteer military as well. The convergence of these forces in national security currently has led policy makers towards a pragmatic approach to implementing social change.

This study is organized to explore the literature search strategy, an analysis of the existing literature on selective service policy, to include relevant analysis on citizenship and civic duty as it relates to the mandatory component of the current policy for men. The concept of national service is explored, and the nature of the all-volunteer force as the

solution to the nation's aversion of another draft after the experience of the Vietnam War

was foundational as a starting point for exploring the current civil military relations gap

in society. I organize the rest of the review in the following major headings: (a) literature

search strategy, (b) conceptual framework, (c) review related to key concepts, and (d)

summary and conclusions. This literature review is grouped primarily by similar concepts

and areas of interest rather than by a historical or methodological construct.

Literature Search Strategy

I used the Walden University Library resources to the fullest extent possible to

find current academic scholarship relative to studies conducted within the last 5 years

regarding the U.S. Selective Service System. I primarily used EBSCO, Thoreau,

Academic Premier, Political Science Complete, and SocIndex search engines from the

Walden Library site. I started with a general search for academic articles related to the

selective service system. Other keywords used in this search were *mandatory service,*

national service, compulsory service, military draft, and *selective service registration*. As

a secondary strategy, I used Goggle Scholar from the Walden University Library site to

find articles. This technique was helpful when I had the digital object identifier or DOI. I

used Boolean identifiers like AND and OR in my search. I also used search engines like

Goggle and Bing to search the Internet. I used a multidisciplinary approach to explore

academic journals in subjects in Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Leadership,

Education, Military Science, and Public Policy.

Outside of Walden University Library resources, I used the Pentagon Library

System located in Alexandria, Virginia and the Prince William County Public Library

System primarily for use of the interlibrary loan service, which facilitates the exchange of books among public libraries. After references were found, I used the Zotero database tool to place the articles in folders by area of interest for consistent retrieval. I did not limit the search to a set number of articles to artificially bind the study. I was interested in exploring the gaps in existing literature that would be found primarily because of the previous studies' almost exclusive focus on men in the defense of the nation as a rite of passage to manhood. What I found was a preponderance of the literature on Selective Service as it relates to the equality of socioeconomic representation of the draft and the importance of social capital in adult decisions to volunteer to join groups and participate in civil society. There was limited research specifically on women in college ROTC; however, there were several articles regarding women and the direct combat exclusion to explore this area of interest.

Theoretical Foundation

Foundational theories include social justice contract theories of functionalism, structural functionalism, distributive, pluralistic, and circumstantial justice. Significant critical perspectives like civil-military, feminism, and global justice inform some of these theories. Within the context of the public policy positions, political philosophy perspectives like liberalism and conservatism were explored. Additionally, gender analysis principles of equality and equity are applied to the institutional policy positions of the gender phenomenon.

My theoretical foundation was based on applying a functionalist perspective of societal factors interacting to create a view of the whole. Social facts are ways of acting,

thinking, and feeling that are characteristic of a group or society (Durkheim, 1893, 1986; Hebding & Glick, 1981). According to functionalism theory,

> Man is only a moral being because he lives in society, since morality consists in solidarity with the group, and varies according to that solidarity. Cause all social life to vanish, and moral life would vanish at the same time, having no object to cling to. (Durkheim, 1986, p. 331)

Group norms and the closeness of the relationships to each other and his/her strength of solidarity in the society influence individual behavior.

From the functionalist viewpoint, society and human interaction are characterized by harmony, cooperation, balance, and consensus. The collective solidarity is more important than individual interest regarding what values, attitudes, beliefs and expectations (VABE) are considered best for society. This theoretical disposition in social justice theory has been linked to Durkheim's (1893) work espousing the virtue of distributive justice in society based on differences in labor. Durkheim stated, "Only certain kinds of differences attract each other. They are those which, instead of opposing and excluding, complement each other" (Durkheim, 1986, p. 55). This appreciation for social differences was at the core of gender equity VABEs that undergirds the conservatism political philosophy that aligns with the continuation of the male only registration for Selective Service for the good of the society.

Critics of the functionalist perspective include feminist scholars who contend that the theory promotes an exclusive heterosexual male who has patriarchal views of society particularly regarding the female's role (Kumar, 2016). Commenting on the Rawlisn

social contract insufficiency for appreciating the contributions of women, Bojer (2002)

stated that it is important to consider that it is a biological fact for both men and women

that "there is a probability of exactly one of being born a helpless infant, from the womb

of a women" (p. 396). Advocates of functionalism see this fact as evidence that men and

women are different, and they each play an organic role in the society that should

appreciate the difference and view it as a unique good for the society (Cladis, 1994;

Durkheim, 1893). Critics see this arrangement as support of the nation by continuing the

society through procreation (Bock & James, 1992). Others offer an ethical argument

against the efficacy of the functionalist perspective because it does not include the unique

contributions of women in particular who more often than not care for children and the

aged from the home(Larrabee, 2016). The contribution to society was safeguarded by the

protection that males 18 to 26 years old would provide in the event of a national

emergency that requires their participation.

The political philosophy that aligns with the public policy that lifts the ban on

women to compete for opportunities in the military in a gender-neutral assignment

environment is called modern or political liberalism. Rawls (1993, pp. 24-25) presented

an abstracted concept of justice that considers that principles of a just society would be

fair as long as rational choices are made behind a "veil of ignorance," which blinds one's

knowledge of gender, race, and other talents. Therefore, once the veil is lifted, each

person should have as much equal opportunity as possible to be a fair and just society.

This equal opportunity principle supersedes all other principles, including the difference

principle, which is aligned with social equity and distributive justice theory described

earlier with equity first principles (Matthews, Ender, Laurence, & Rohall, 2009;

Ridgeway & Correll, 2004).

In contrast to liberalism, the political philosophy associated with maintaining the

male only selective service registration law in distributive justice theory is conservatism.

Conservatism favors tradition in the face of social change and as a political philosophy

tends to seek to preserve the status quo or to reform society slowly ("Conservatism,"

*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosoph*y, n.d.). Rooted to conservative VABEs is the

ideology of the nuclear family. Naples (2013) argued, "The nuclear family model, which

includes a male breadwinner and female caretaker, not only structures social policy but

also shapes institutions' and the wider public's imaginary of what constitutes an

appropriate or legitimate family" (p. 140). The current registration law is a reflection of

this social model that protects women 18 to 26 years old in particular/society from

potential harm during a call to military duty or national emergency. The marital contract

and the primary responsibilities for childcare due to motherhood become the goods for

society. These protect arrangements and human production arrangements between the

sexes have been codified by institutional norms as an equitable arrangement for society

worth conserving.

The critical perspectives of conservatism are rooted primarily in socialism and

liberalism thought that argues that the social contract theories are flawed because they do

not account for women's real opportunities, especially in nonwestern countries. The

structures of what is a just and fair society varies by cultural experiences and are beyond

the scope of this paper. However, works in the Rawlian liberalist tradition attempt to

address social justice by accounting for the capabilities that represent good human

development rather than a focus on what is good for society (Brooks & Nussbaum, 2015).

In addition, in the United States, the social contracts are inherent, not just because men

will never be able to fully compensate the cost for care for the young and old that

typically has become exclusively the domain for women (Shafi, 2014). After describing,

contrasting, and critiquing theoretical perspectives on social justice, another approach is

to overlap the theories into a social justice model that reflects a pluralistic approach.

A pluralistic perspective views social justice from modern democratic societies

that acknowledge that individuals hold multiple VABEs about gender and other talents as

situational. Miller (2003) described a "pluralistic and circumstantial theory of social

justice that is built around those principles of justice that people actually hold" (p. 6).

Social justice is about the distribution of both good advantages and bad advantages in

society by social institutions primarily for citizens. Social justice advantages include jobs,

money, honor, education, security, medial care, and childcare. Some of the disadvantages

include dangerous work, military service, and other hardships (Miller, 2003, p. 10).

Furthermore, citizenship focuses on the role of trust, assurance, and stability.

Miller (2003) argued that shared national identity is forged by shared norms, beliefs, and

or commitment. Miller's exclusive identity argument for citizenship has been challenged

by global justice advocates who view social justice principles in a more universal,

unbounded context (Føllesdal, 2009; "Sen's Capability Approach | Internet Encyclopedia

of Philosophy," n.d.). Social justice or the perspective of fairness shifts based upon the

context of the judgment of values, attitudes, beliefs, and expectations. Citizenship status plays an important role in shaping those judgments in a democratic society.

Full agency or first class citizenship status was granted institutionally by the government and obligates citizens to compliance. "The duty of justice also requires the citizen to comply with the results of these institutions, namely, particular laws and political practices, in so far as they are legitimate" (Føllesdal, 2009, p. 82). Individual participation is the defense of the state; especially during war has been a catalyst for social and economic change that often leads to more justice for disenfranchised people in the United States history. This situational fact is why the current societal factor convergence is particularly relevant as a theoretical foundation for the study of gender in public policy.

The theoretical framework depicts a convergence of three main social factors being the military institutional evolution towards the market-centric all volunteer force, the societal norms towards individual choice, and the elusive nature of warfare characterized by the U.S. military action in Iraq and Afghanistan. These factors start within the milieu of seminal military sociology works by (Huntington, 1981; Janowitz, 1964; Moskos, 1977; Segal et al., 1999). These works are often associated with civil-military relations, which is part of national security policy. The civil-military theory perspectives are foundational in institutional leadership education, which is embedded in the military commissioning sources to include Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs on college / university campuses.

Huntington's original work was published more that 50 years ago and it described the military institution as a profession in society with the primary functional imperative of security of the nation rather than social imperatives. Huntington states "in its theories of man, society, and history, its recognition of the role of power in human relations, its acceptance of existing institutions, its limited goals, and its distrust of grand designs, conservatism is at one with the military ethic" (Huntington, 1981, p. 93). In social justice theory parlance, this perspective would align more with the political philosophy of conservatism and the social justice theories found in distributed justice and gender equity. Huntington's perspective on the role of the military in society and social justice would align with maintaining the status quo of a male only Selective Service Registration law.

By way of comparison, Janowitz (1960) work analyzed two trends in sociological makeup of the military professional, the absolutist and the pragmatist. The absolutist perspective was on existential total war, characterized by nuclear war, in contrast to the more pragmatic limited wars of choice like the war on violent extremism. Janowitz views on the military institution's integration with society regardless of the type of warfare is evident is earlier work as well. Janowitz (1959) stated, " the need to fight limited wars or strategic wars instantly, with the available mobilized forces, tends to increase reliance on a professional military establishment…that is an integral part of the larger society" (p. 46). The society tends to rely on the public institution of the military as an extension of itself regardless of whether it is fighting total war or limited pragmatic wars.

The professional military establishment or institutional policies are not separate from the society that it serves. Earlier in this work Janowitz (1959) who was an advisor to

President Truman on the desegregation of the Negro in the military after WW II, wrote about how the military must foreshadow developments in civilian society and respond more rapidly to social change. In addition, he wrote that the "the efficacy of the selective service system assumes public sentiments which insist on an equal distribution of risks" (Janowitz, 1959, p. 48). Although he does not specifically speak to gender equality or social justice in his work circa 1960, he does make it clear that the military institution should be an equal opportunity for service and risk as it reflects the social norms of the society. Within the context of the U.S. pragmatic conflicts of the 21st Century, the Department of Defense has lifted the ban on the direct combat exclusion of women, reflecting the equality principles of social justice and military necessity. This reflects an alignment with social norms that is more closely associated with political liberalism.

The study's primary focus regarding the phenomenon is gendered institutional policy, and secondarily is the perception of the gendered participants who are most affected by the public policies. The researcher contends that the phenomenon of institutional differences in policies regarding social justice and gender is a reflection of theoretical differences in political philosophy and social justice theories about equality and equity. Changing societal factors about the military, society and war, in particular are parts of the context for understanding what may be an incongruence or misalignment of public policy.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

The phenomenon of institutional policy and social justice concerns with gender has been applied in previous research. Although in some studies the term used to describe

the institutional policy phenomenon was organizational justice and the application of

distributive justice perceptions related to gender (Altinkurt, Yilmaz, & Karaman, 2015;

Choi, 2011). Both studies used different quantitative frameworks (e.g., meta-analysis,

survey) to measure perceptions of organizational justice and used gender as a variable in

their analysis, although their findings were contradictory regarding gender's influence on

perceptions. This proposed qualitative study benefits from these frameworks by building

upon studies that establish that gender is a variable in perceptions that impact levels of

trust in institutions. This study seeks to understand from the participants why and how

they perceive institutional justice thorough specific public policies regarding gender

equality and equity.

Social Science researchers have approached the study of the phenomenon of

gender in terms of describing the influence of theoretical frameworks of functionalism in

societal institutions, group identity social capital, organizational justice, social contract

theories and political philosophies. The tendency of recent studies has been to try to

quantify or measure perceptions in order to understand individual behavior (Altinkurt et

al., 2015; Choi, 2011). The inherent strength in this approach has been to provide

quantifiable evidence that a gender phenomenon exits regarding perceptions of justice.

Using a quantitative approach, several studies quantified the degree by which

perceived justice in the organization was predicted to influence employee attitudes,

towards management and their jobs. Justice perceptions was further defined along three

forms, distributive, procedural and interpersonal (Altinkurt et al., 2015; Choi, 2011).

Both studies explored how gender differences affect justice perceptions and although

they reached different conclusions on the significance of gender, the study findings found that women show higher levels of trust in management than men when they perceive procedural justice, whereas men show higher levels of trust than women when they perceive distributive and interpersonal justice (Altinkurt et al., 2015; Choi, 2011). The strength of the study approach is the quantification that a phenomenon exists.

The weaknesses inherent in the quantitative approaches are that numbers may fall short of actually understanding individual perceptions and gaining insights on why a perception exists rather than merely measuring that it does. Altinkurk (2015) stated, "further meta-analytical studies are recommended to determine the relationship between organizational justice and other variables" (p. 43). Another weakness in the quantitative approach is the limitation of choice based upon preselected variables contained in an instrument like a survey.

The study was conducted in Turkey, and perceptions of organizational justice were examined on the level of distributive justice, which represents perceived fairness of an outcome. This research study examined the effect of the overall perceptions of organizational justice, however, a stated limitation was the affect of cultural differences regarding the perception of organizational justice and gender (Altinkurt et al., 2015). The findings may not be generalizable to populations outside of the cultural framework of their society values, attitudes, beliefs, and expectations regarding gender and social justice.

Culture

The ROTC in particular represented an activity that allows multiple cultures to interact. Taylor (1871) classically defined culture "that complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, morals, law, custom, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" ((Hebding & Glick, 1981, p. 52). This definition of culture was foundational in terms of researching the relevance of the problem in civil military relations theory, and social capital theory within the context of consistency in public policy. The appreciation of culture became the focal point for researching the factors that may influence the rate of social change in both the external culture of the society, and the micro or sub culture of the collegiate Reserve Officer Training Corps, which represents the interconnectedness of the civilian and military social norms regarding the role of gender.

Military Institution

Huntington's (1981) work originally published in 1957 provided voice to scholars and practitioners on the military as a profession and the societal and functional imperatives for existence as an institution for the society. Huntington (1981) posited "the military institutions of any society are shaped by two forces: a functional imperative stemming from the threats to the society's security and a societal imperative arising from the social forces, ideologies, and institutions dominant within the society" (p. 2). Although some scholars may be critical of the current relevance of the work, several authors find his work key to exploring the role of the military officer in regard to the security of the democratic republic and civil-military relations (Burk, 2002; Nielsen,

2012; Nix, 2012). Effective civil-military relationships made public policy regarding decisions of national security less contentious and volatile.

Selective Service

The issue of who fights the nation's wars has always been a theme in exploring the relationship of the military and the society. Conscription and the draft characterized military service as an obligation of the citizen towards the state (Janowitz, 1964). Geva (2011) argued that at the very origin of the Selective Service System in 1917, the composition of who served and who did not was not based on equality. "It should come as no surprise, then, that Selective Service drew from existing social inequalities and often exacerbated them further" (Geva, 2011, p. 600). Selective Service registration is an expression of the civil-military relationship in society.

Socioeconomic factors and gender norms throughout U.S. history reflected who served and who did not. Moskos (1977) made the case after the establishment of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973 that the military as a profession was trending towards free market influences like self -interest and increased pay as motivation and deemphasizing traditional military values associated with obligation and full citizenship. (Korb & Segal, 2011, p. 81)"argued that the failure of military and political leaders to activate the draft during the sustained conflicts of the last decade represents a moral outrage and reinforces a disturbing trend in which the military goes to war while the country as a whole does not" (p. 81). The changing societal factors and gender norms continue to reflect the dynamic tensions between who serves and who does not.

Conceptually, the voice of women in particular has been muted in the discussion of national service obligation of citizenship and conscription because of the decades long exclusion of women in direct combat positions (Klingler & Chatagnier, 2014; Pfaffenzeller, 2010; Reingold & Lenkowsky, 2010b). This ban has been lifted and there is a research gap that should be filled with their perspectives on national defense and what it means to be enfranchised to serve as well. Currently, Selective Service Registration is an expression of full citizenship in U.S. society based on national service obligation for men only.

Social Equity

The role of social equity and the meaning of full citizenship in U.S. society are addressed by some scholars as integral to our nation's perspective on democratic governance (Egnell, 2013c; Mariner, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2014). The concept of fighting for one's country is addressed as a right, as aspirational for many segments of the society. A German researcher raised a countervailing perspective on equity when he posited that as women became able to serve in the armed forces and are accepted fully as equal citizens, they should expect to be subject to conscription, unless they are to be treated as a privileged caste (Pfaffenzeller, 2010). In the United States, the composition of the military in and out of conflict has been germane to the ongoing meme that serving was a duty and obligation of full citizenship.

The All Volunteer Force was established to moved the composition of the military from compulsory service designed to maximize the pool of available manpower towards a model based upon individual choice (Bailey, 2009). Bailey (2009) stated "the volunteer

force raised questions about the meaning of citizenship and the rights and obligations it carries; whether liberty or equality is the more central American value; what role the military should play in American society not only in time of war, but in time of peace" (p. 1). The volunteer force idea was rooted in the very fabric of themes that supported the premise that individual liberty and choice is central to prosperity and American free markets.

In contrast, the military draft became symbolic of a nonprofessional force that often pulled from the men least capable of evading the assignment. Aside from the military institutional manpower changes from a resource-based force to a market based force, the impact of the double standard of how only males in the society are held accountable for national security is realized on segments of the society with the least social capital. Incarcerated men must register to the Selective Service System within six months of being released. Even disabled males between the ages of 18-26 must register for Selective Service (Griego, 2014; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012). This policy upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court was based on the military's exclusion of women in combat. This is a perspective that suggests that men are valued to protect the country as warriors regardless of moral or physical abilities, challenges the current status quo on gender fairness, empowerment and military service.

The military's exclusion of women in combat has been lifted and the services are undergoing validation measures of standards for some direct combat occupational assignments. The former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey, has stated his belief that the institution of the military has created separate classes of military

personnel and that this separation has supported a culture of inequality based upon

gender. Dempsey has been quoted stating that "when you have one part of the population

that is designated as warriors and one part that is designated as something else, that

disparity begins to establish a psychology… I believe the more we treat people equally,

the more likely they are to treat each other equally" (as cited in Brown, 2013, p. 3).

Although the statement was made in the context of reducing sexual assaults in the

military, it is indicative of the leadership underpinning the direction the military services

are going in regard to gender fairness. The disconnected nature of 21st Century warfare

provided plenty of data to support the sense that the American way of fighting particular

adversaries is suited for a more gender-neutral approach to military assignments.

21st Century Warfare

The historical event that marked the beginning of an era of conflict in the Middle

East was epitomized by the downing of an American passenger jet into the towers of the

World Trade building, the fields of Pennsylvania, and the Pentagon building. The U.S.

War on Terror would be characterized as a war against the American Way of Life

(National Commission on Terrorist, 2011, p. 331). The adversary was a non-state actor, a

term in military parlance that identifies the adversary as operating outside the Treaty of

Westphalia structure of diplomatic recognition and international legitimacy. The 9/11 act

of terror was sponsored, motivated and led by a group that called themselves Al Qaeda.

For the scope of this paper, it is important to note that the adversary's network

operated in ungoverned spaces in several countries, and they used asymmetric tactics and

procedures to negate the military power of western military force. Rather than meet on a

prescribed field of battle, similar to the actions of Iraq in the 1992 Gulf War against the U.S. military, Al Qaeda choose to cloak their activities in the shadows of the civilian populace. The adversary's network conducted suicide bombing attacks using women and children, they mined the roads with explosives, and filled vehicles with high explosives in order to sabotage the legitimacy of an anemic sovereign state. In the last five years, other groups too numerous for the scope of this paper to name vied for power and control of the population and the revenue generating assets of the country. In response the U.S. coalition has attempted to build up the capability of the military of the sovereign governments in order for them to stand up as the U.S. led coalition stood down and supported with remotely piloted aircraft, air strikes, advisors and trainers.

Due to the nature of the adversary, and the instruments of national power (diplomacy, information, military, economic) that the US decided to employ, an old doctrine with a new approach was applied called counter insurgency. It was a type of warfare that was characterized as a battleground for the "hearts and minds" of the populace or inhabitants of an area (Krepinevich, 2005). The U.S.-led coalition built schools for both boys and girls in countries not accustomed to formally educating both sexes, it built infrastructure for civic services and institutions, and it provided humanitarian assistance to improve the quality of life for the people who were caught in the middle of the warring factions.

The challenge of exporting our values and solutions on a culture that considered the American presence on their soil was an affront to their religious beliefs. The wartime experience in both Iraq and Afghanistan required "culturally astute leaders" (Bailey,

2009, p. 256). There were no front lines in the classic sense of linear battlefield geometry.

Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was quoted "battle is nowhere and it is

everywhere right now; everyone is in a combat zone. We've got to understand what that

means and roll it into the future" (McSally, 2011, para. 8). The environment was not safe

and the degree of being in danger came from both inside and outside the compound, like

a 360-degree area of insecurity.

The performance of U.S. service women in the military conflicts in Iraq and

Afghanistan are shaping perceptions on gender equality and equity. The culturally astute

leaders of American ground troops fought with an all volunteer force that was mostly

"married with children by 62% in 2000 with 4% single parent soldiers and by 2008 over

10% of the force were single parents with more than 22,000 duel-uniform marriages"

(Bailey, 2009, p. 256). This trend lead researchers like Goldstein (2003) to state that "war

is central to cultural definitions of gender—that there is a process of reverse causality

whereby the war system influences the socialization of children into all gender roles (p.

410). This interpretation is key to why the performance and participation of women in the

21st Century style of warfare is significant.

The demographics of the all-volunteer with the increased dependency of both men

and women in the force placed a burden on readiness, deploy ability and morale.

Readiness is defined as "the ability of units and joint forces to fight and meet the

demands of the national security strategy" (U.S. Government Accountability Office,

2009, p. 4). According to the gender integration research by King (2013) "female

participation especially in proportional terms remains minor; in contrast to some ethnic

minorities, women constitute just over 50 percent of the population in all western nations, and yet typically only about 10 percent of the armed forces are female (King, 2013, p. 386). McSally (2011) argued that women make up 14.6 percent of the U.S. military and more than 255,000 have deployed and fought in Iraq and Afghanistan; more than 120 have died and over 700 wounded. Many have earned combat medals of valor, yet there is this fiction that they were not to be assigned to direct combat units (Brownson, 2014; Eager, 2014; Hagel, 2013; Haviland, 2013). Some researchers contended that performance of the combat role of women in Iraq and Afghanistan in particular, may have marked an historic moment in gender definitions, not only in the armed forces but in civilian society itself (Brown, 2013; Egnell, 2013; Goldstein, 2003; McSally, 2011).

Social Capital of Women

The concept of social capital has been linked to the ideas of Marx because of the assumptions of class, power, and dominance of institutions (Hebding & Glick, 1981; Lin et al., 2001; Marx, 2008). According to (Lin, 1999) social capital is the investment in social relations with an expected return. Putnam (2001) argued that the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value. He posited that the most important dimensions of "social capital was the distinction between bridging (or inclusive) and bonding (or exclusive)" (Putnam, 2001, p. 22). Bridging social capital provides a network of support for people and from people who tend to not share similar characteristics. Bridging social capital allows one to get ahead in life, and it is the interaction of a diverse group of people brought together to facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit. Senior male leaders in the combat arms dominated enclave of the military institution reaching out to

female cadets to consider joining the profession of arms as equals by challenging the status quo in assignments (Brown, 2013; Cone, 2013; Dempsey & Panetta; 2013; Haviland, 2013).

In contrast, bonding social capital is a network of associations that provide support and mentorship because of the similar bonds that you have in common. This kind of social capital is associated with joining groups that are bonded by sharing the same religion, gender, or ethnicity. There is a strong comfort and ease associated with the interaction. Perhaps the most extreme manifestation of this idea was the proposal by Cloutier (2007) to advocate implementing all-female platoons that would fight as a cohesive unit and could be designed around their strengths (Cloutier, 2007; Skaine, 2011).

Social capital perspectives may differ along generational alignment. Sociologists refer to this phenomenon as "intercohort change because it is detectable only along generational lines" (Putnam, 2001, p. 34). Putnam (2001) contended, "social capital, is the value of a relationship with another person that provides support and assistance in a given social situation" (p. 2). Civic engagement or participation is the context by which social capital theory has been applied to explain individual behavior decisions (Breuskin, 2012; Ebert and Okamoto, 2013; Putnam, 2001, 2007; Reid, 2010).

King (2013) challenged Putnam's critique that the decline of social capital is due to a generational failure of baby boomers to champion family responsibilities. King (2013) posited that professionalism in civil society, emboldened by a diverse complex globalizing influence is changing social capital in terms of inclusiveness and adaptability.

According to King (2013) "professionalism refers above all to a complex of competences and distinctive corporate identity, which binds the members of the military together, committing them mutually to their duties" (p. 443). The issue of institutional inclusion moves beyond "likeness" and moves towards a convergence of standards and expectations in professional civilian society (King, 2013). The social capital of women in fighting the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan has risen based upon skills, performance, and competence.

Studies Related to Theoretical Framework

Due to the design of the theoretical framework, the literature review for specific studies was limited. However, the researcher did locate studies that broadly related to the three themes independently, rather than capturing the convergence of the rise in individualism in society, the All-Volunteer Force military composition, and the public's opinion of fighting the Wars in the Middle East since September 11, 2001. The conflicts engaged by the U.S. military since 2001 have been characterized by the following phases; war against radical Islam, global war on terror, and countering violent extremism. (Klingler & Chatagnier, 2014; McNulty, 2012)

The first theme is the rise of individualism in society against the concept of duty and obligation of citizenship to the state that military service represents. Klingler and Chatagnier (2014) conducted a public opinion survey of the U.S. veterans who make up one-tenth of the U.S. population based on the premise that the political opinions of veterans tend to be more conservative than the general public. The authors stated "citizens are defined by their willingness to take responsibility for the security of society,

subordinating their own desires to that of the public and its legitimately chosen officers, and they are exclusively identified through voluntary service" (Klingler & Chatagnier, 2014, p. 677). Using a duty-based theory of citizenship, they proceeded to compare public opinion using the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), a national stratified sample survey of more than 30,000 Americans. The authors tested three hypothesis: a) veterans will identify more strongly than the general public with conservatism and the Republican Party, b) veterans will be more likely than the general public to support fiscally conservative and socially liberal policy positions, c) veterans will be more likely than the general public to support the use of military force.

The social policy issue their study explored that relates to my theoretical framework was twofold; the opinion of citizenship for illegal immigrants and the military policy issue concerning setting a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq. The researchers recommended future surveys to inquire about the individual decision to serve (or not) and to explore perspectives concerning peacetime versus wartime service. Their recommendations for future research is where my study begins to fill a gap in the important role of how college students begin to rationalize their perspectives on individual choice and decide to serve voluntarily in the military.

The theme about the composition of the force and the nature of 21st Century warfare is captured in the following study. The public opinion of women fighting in ground combat was addressed in a study conducted by an assistant professor at the United States Air Force Academy with the assistance of several cadets. The goal of the project was to determine the cadets' knowledge of the existing rules restricting women from

serving in combat and their opinions of women serving in various combat roles

(McNulty, 2012). This project was called the 2010 USAFA and West Point Cadet

Opinions. The cadets surveyed 106 USAFA cadets and 57 West Point cadets, and also

interviewed 26 cadets and a dozen service members. The survey was inconclusive on

establishing if the cadets understood Department of Defense policy on assigning women

in combat (McNulty, 2012, p. 127).

The project findings indicate a possible difference in culture between the Service

academies regarding the opinion that women should be engaged in ground combat.

According to McNulty (2012) "among USAFA cadets 41.90% thought women should be

engaged in ground combat…[contrasting against the opinion that]…40.35% of West

Point cadets did not think women should be engaged in ground combat" (p. 128).

Another finding was the opinion of "the overwhelming majority of cadets that believed

that the war on terror alters women's roles in combat" (McNulty, 2012, p. 129). The

significance of this study as it relates to the conceptual framework is the unique position

that cadets have on the pulse of public opinion as they embark on the military careers in

the context of the ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This survey project was imbedded in a larger study, which McNulty (2012)

sought to give voice to the reality of the importance and utility of the Army and Marine

Corps' Lioness Programs in Iraq and Afghanistan, which matured into Female

Engagement Teams that were attached to all male infantry units for specific missions.

This study conducted interviews of women assigned to these duties that had recently

returned from deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan and had served in ground combat

positions. This documentation of the Army and Marine service woman's reality of combat is the context by which my theoretical framework portends that this reality converges with a popular mythology concerning the separation of gender roles in 21st Century combat operations (Harris, 2014).

Military operations are providing the context by which gender roles are being reconsidered based on demonstrated capability. McNulty (2012) conducted a telephone interview with a retired Marine Corps General who provided his professional critique about the use of Female Engagement Teams in Afghanistan. According to McNulty (2012) "he stated that the roles of women in the military should not be determined by his generation's biases and beliefs, but rather, by what women are capable of doing in today's operations" (p. 151). The convergence of rugged individualism in society, the professionalism of the All-Volunteer Force, and the cultural demands of the 21st Century war required the military services to relook its combat exclusion policies. By extension, the Selective Service System's exclusionary policies should not be exempt from careful consideration.

Synthesize Studies Related to Research Questions

The primary research question explores how collegiate ROTC students 18-25 describe the equity of the Selective Service Registration Policy in the 21st Century. The researcher related several studies that used the military cadet as the subject of their study on perspectives on military composition and gender roles (Matthews, Ender, Laurence, & Rohall, 2009; Silva, 2008; Sondheimer et al., 2013). Matthews, Ender, Laurence, and Rohall (2009) study compared the attitudes of collegiate ROTC cadets, United States

Military Academy cadets and non-military affiliated college students on a variety of roles that women may serve in the military. It was a quantitative study that compared the trends of a previous study conducted 15 years earlier by earlier researchers.

Using a survey derived from the General Social Survey of 1985, they modified the instrument to consist of 185 multiple-choice questions (Matthews et al., 2009). Their findings were a litmus test for the degree of change in the attitudes of the future officer corps. Military Academy students were the least tolerant, or accepting of women in non-traditional career fields. Women were more egalitarian in their thinking than men overall, and ROTC cadets indicated that they were more accepting of women in career fields normally associated with men (Matthews et al., 2009). Their research was focused on opinions / perspectives specifically on nine jobs typically viewed as male dominated professions in the military.

Investigating the reasons for such perceptions is where my study would begin to fill a gap in knowledge. According to Matthews et al., (2009) "documenting perceptions, stereotypes, and tensions regarding gender in the military is informative but further investigation is needed regarding the reasons for such perceptions and their direct and indirect implications" (p. 250). Gender fairness was still hindered by the perceptions that women were not perceived as equals in all assignments (Matthews et al. 2009). Their research predated the decision to lift the ban on women in direct combat, and the authors did not address the research gap associated with the mandate of the Selective Service System registration for male only citizens in the country.

Political philosophy of military cadets influences the perceptions of gender justice in the military. Sondheimer, Toner, and Wilson (2013) conducted a study on the political perspectives of cadets as an underlying premise for the future composition of the military force. Their study was focused on understanding the liberal versus conservative propensity of cadets at the United States Military Academy (USMA, West Point and Army) and the growing trend towards conservatism in the officer corps. It was a survey based quantitative study that relied on the self-assessment techniques of the participants. The researchers were interested in investigating if the subculture of future military officers perceived themselves different from the broader American society.

They found that future officer corps perceived themselves to be more conservative but writ large they held moderate political views (Sondheimer et al., 2013). The authors recommended future research into the origination of perceptions of the military as being politically conservative and why. In addition they recommended research into the socialization into military culture. Sondheimer et al., (2013) posited that this line of inquiry is especially important in the realm of policy. This study similar to my planned study sought the participation of future leaders of the military, however, their research was not specific on addressing the knowledge gap of exploring the perception of gender fairness and combat roles.

A review of relevant research on young adults on mandatory military service relied on survey data collected among 18,000 citizens in 18 major U.S. metropolitan areas each year from 2000 to 2003 (Simon & Lovrich, 2009). The quantitative study analyzed an archival data set of surveys using a multinomial logistic regression model to

calculate the odds that a respondent will hold a particular view regarding mandatory military service for young men only (Simon & Lovrich, 2009). A key component of their study was the influence of the advent of the War on Terrorism on public opinion. The authors concluding findings reported a likely area for further research are "new concerns for social equity, debated in a much more complex setting of where justice and responsible citizenship may properly reside for contemporary U.S. society" (Simon & Lovrich, 2009, p. 383).

Silva (2008) conducted a study specifically on how female ROTC cadets negotiate the tensions between masculine military culture and traditional femininity. Using interviews and gathering data from two college settings, the researcher was able to capture some of the contradictions and complexity with changing social norms within the participants experience as ROTC cadets and college students (Silva, 2008). Silva (2008) argued that "as long as women are committed to upholding gender as a system of differentiation—and the superiority of masculinity therein—their ability to transform the hierarchal structure of gender in meaningful ways will remain limited" (p. 3). This study used a qualitative approach to conduct interviews and code themes from the participants' responses.

Silva cited several scholars like Moskos (1988) who viewed women's military participation as essential to achieving full equality with men, noting that the military is a core institution in the United States and that only by participating in it can women realize the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship (p. 940). Silva (2008) argued that the military may express a gender-blind ideology, but its gendered structure and history raise

the question: "to what extent are masculinity and maleness implicitly built into" the very notion of soldiering" (p. 965). This argument is important to the debate concerning full equality and citizenship of women in research.

Silva interviewed 38 ROTC students, 25 women and 13 men, with a third of her sample coming from each service branch (Navy, Army and Air Force). Silva's research focused on uncovering the internal contradictions of women maintaining their femininity while maintaining a masculine military ethos that defy central cultural understandings of women as weak, passive and sexual in a contemporary American college culture. This work was an exploration of the culture of ROTC manifested through the perceptions and beliefs of the meaning of doing gender in an institution that espouses a gender-neutral status as a cadet.

<div align="center">**Why Study Approach Is Meaningful**</div>

The young people most affected by the current misalignment of national security policy should examine the Selective Service Registration Policy that excludes 50% of the population from consideration based on 20th Century political and social norms. The extension of this policy was the basis for the exclusion of women from direct combat positions in assignments. McSally (2011) stated a policy that excludes the majority of the population from even being considered to serve in over 220, 000 military positions is inefficient and only decreases military flexibility.

The overarching reason why the study approach was meaningful was because of the recommendations of scholars who have written about the need for future research to solicit the perspectives of cadets; leaders who are at the precipice of social change.

ROTC cadets balance the complexity of expectations, roles and norms of the society at large, the college, and the military; the cadets' chosen profession. Bailey (2009) posited that the most significant inquiry concerns "the fairness of having a small number of Americans to bear the heavy burden of military defense while the rest of the nation was asked no sacrifice" (p. 259). American men are sent a message that they are valued by their country to protect the security of the nation should the national emergency need arise when they reach the age of adult responsibility which usually begins at 18.

In contrast American women are given a contradictory message at best, concerning their value as citizens as young adults. The 21st Century military was at an inflection point with conducting the longest wars in its history by an all-volunteer military without Selective Service mandated drafts. Gender integration was about maximizing the military effectiveness of our forces with leadership and professionalism. In a dissenting opinion from the Supreme Court case concerning combat exclusion, Justice Marshall stated "the court today places an imprimatur on one of the most potent remaining public expressions of ancient canards about the proper role of women" ("Rostker v. Goldberg | US Law | LII/ Legal Information Institute," 1981, p. 98). The exclusion from registration in Marshall's opinion "categorically excludes women from a fundamental civic obligation" ("Rostker v. Goldberg | US Law | LII/ Legal Information Institute," 1981, p. 98). Institutional policies are a reflection of perceived outcomes of gender roles in the society at a particular time in history.

This study attempted to give voice to the developing leaders in the profession concerning their perspectives about this incongruence in national defense policy. King

(2013) argued, "professionalism, for all its failings and inadequacies, may be becoming both the means of competing and the basis of solidarity in the increasingly diverse and fluidly globalizing world in which all are now living" (p. 445). The Secretary of Defense organizational assignment policies regarding women are challenging the historic norms of the military profession, and by doing so are reimagining the concept of equality for this generation.

Summary and Conclusions

The foundations for the literature review builds from the social contract theories on justice that includes scholarly theoretical works by Durkheim and Rawls regarding equity and equality concepts. Organizational justice theories exploring the relationships in a social context maintain that the perceptions of justice should be the "first virtue of social institutions" (Capeheart & Milovanovic, 2007; Choi, 2011; Murphy, 1999; Rawls, 1993; "Rawls, John | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy," n.d.). Perceptions of justice were a reflection of the political philosophy, societal factors, capital and gender. However, the phenomenon of gender differences in public policy theory was institutional. Institutional /organizational justice was aligned with the principles of social change in the society concerning values, attitudes, beliefs and expectations often centered on gender roles.

The review of the literature regarding the United States' current policy on gender fairness relative to the Selective Service System and the Army reflected some complexity concerning the proper role of women in the society. Some of the relevant work regarding gender in particular was explored within the multidisciplinary subjects of military

sociology, society, and warfare in the 21st Century specifically as it related to gender equality and national defense policy. In alignment with the focus of this study, the review explored the foundational theories from which the current paper was built upon.

The review of literature reveals gaps specifically regarding the Selective Service System of exclusion of women, the growth of social capital in the lives of women within the greater culture of the society, and the all volunteer military as well. The convergence of these forces in national security currently has led policy makers towards a pragmatic approach to social change as evident by no redress by the U.S. Congress to change mandatory Selective Service for males only (Burrelli, 2013).

This study may begin to move the conversation forward by providing voice particularly to the cadets who are living engendered in two cultural social norms. Previous studies relating to the conceptual framework factors addressed individualism, the composition of the all volunteer military, and the nature of 21st Century warfare as narrow inquiries of survey. The limitation of such research was in the quantification of the data. What was needed was an understanding of the individual perspectives according to the previous literature, which was best explored via a one on one interview. More studies on this issue were quantitative surveys rather than qualitative, which has led to the recommendations for future research to explore the reasons why the data suggests that there may be a generational change on the role of women in national defense. The next chapter addressed the research method chosen to explore this inquiry.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction to Research Method

In this study, I explored the perceptions of college ROTC students from 18 to 26 years old from a Mid-Atlantic university on gender exclusions from Selective Service using a qualitative method and phenomenology framework. Qualitative research is appropriate to seek understanding and meaning of human perceptions from the participants' point of view (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 7). The goal of the study was to explore the value-laden perspectives of young adults who are living through transformational change in public social policy relative to gender fairness and full agency in society. The tools to gain the richness of the perspectives involve asking open-ended questions, listening, and reflecting on what is heard, written, and seen from the participants (Moustakas, 1994, p. 59). The understanding derived from the study can provide policy makers with information that would improve the understanding of what the experience of being a young person living the paradox of gender fairness and policy change in society feels like.

I sought to promote a public dialogue about a future where all citizens may equitably contribute, grow, and achieve their maximum potential. Public policy that excludes based upon gender may or may not be consistent with the research participants' perspectives on social factors that influence their behavior relative to full agency in society (Boundless, 2015; "Durkheim, Emile, " *Internet Encyclopedia of* P*hilosophy*, n.d.). Exploratory research with the research participants regarding the phenomenon addresses a knowledge gap in social identity and civil military literature.

Research Design and Rationale

The methodological approach of the study includes (a) the methodology justification for the study, (b) the population sample and criterion for selection, (c) the recruiting strategy to gain access to the population, (d) the trustworthiness of the qualitative study, and (e) ethical considerations because of the sensitivity concerning the implications regarding gender fairness and power in society.

My research study had one primary question: How do college ROTC students between 18 and 26 years of age from a Mid-Atlantic university describe their perspectives about gender exclusion for Selective Service Registration?

Social constructivism from the sociology discipline and phenomenology from philosophy as explained by Patton (2002) are theoretical traditions of qualitative inquiry that may guide the researcher to discover meaning based upon the participant's perceptions of a phenomenon in society. The reason I provided the specificity of age was because the U.S. Selective Service Registration Policy is designed to only require young males and potentially females between the ages of 18 and 26 years to the mandatory requirements to register. The specificity of age is germane for the alignment of the phenomenological approach to this particular study. Using the nation's ongoing engagement with the War on Terrorism since September 2001 as context, the present qualitative study addresses this gap in public policy literature with regards to college ROTC student perspectives on gender fairness and mandatory selective military service registration.

The theoretical framework for the present study was influenced by applying civil-military relations theory to the composition of the military and the nature of war and applying a theory of society or functionalism as explained by Durkheim (1936) and Cladis (1994). In addition, the framework includes some reflections of antisocietal interpretations found in symbolic interactionism as described by Denzin (2008). The age of a person may influence their perspective on social values and behavior.

I aligned the assumptions about the phenomenon of gender in public policy theoretically with converging social factors associated with norms, structures, and values. Norms, structures, and values are represented respectively as the primacy of individualism in U.S. cultural norms, the changing structure of the military institution, and the social capital value of women in society. My research addressed a significant gap in public policy literature regarding the interaction of human behavior, social structure, and norms as expressed through perspectives of gender fairness and mandatory national service registration. The composition of the all-volunteer force of the military has a direct correlation with the establishment of the Selective Service Registration system (Rostker & Yeh, 2006).

Philosophical Worldview

Postpostivism, as described by Patton (2001), guides discovery of knowledge with an appreciation that a social phenomenon can be explained by a researcher in the context of the participants' perspective without seeking absolute objectivity through measurements. The theoretical framework may have aspects of postpostivism; however, social constructivism as articulated by Creswell (2009) and Patton (2001) holds

assumptions about knowledge that address the primacy of participants' views, particularly in qualitative research, which seeks meaning in context of social, cultural, and historical perspectives. The multiplicity of views based upon the use of open-ended questions is largely inductive, and my intent was to make sense or interpret the meanings. A significant social constructivism worldview is consistent with the methodology of the research design.

Interpretive phenomenology, as explained by Moustakas (1994), is a scientific study that allows the participants' views of things to be the beginning of reflection for possible meanings in order to achieve understanding of the essences of the experience. This is an interpretive approach of phenomenology that collects data, but instead of reducing the reported experiences from individuals into patterns and themes, the researcher looks for the psychological or sociological factors that influenced the response without prejudgments (Moustakas, 1994).

Quantitative and mixed method approaches were not chosen because the goal of the study was to explicate the phenomenon in terms of the participants' value-laden experience, relationship, and understanding of a specific, definable phenomenon (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Moerrer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). According to the Walden University Research Center transcript on methodology, "Phenomenology is most typically used when very little is known about how people experience a particular phenomenon" (Laureate Education, 2013). I sought as much depth on human perceptions on a continuum of inquiry concerning the quality of known information.

Role of the Researcher

My role consistent with the research tradition of phenomenology was to gather, organize, and analyze perceptions from people who have experienced a phenomenon. Based upon the nature of the qualitative study, I served as the data collection instrument, and "evidence from phenomenological research is derived from first-person reports of life experiences" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 84). Using this design required deliberate actions to manage researcher bias through careful construction of interview questions. The first step to reduce bias that I discuss more in methodology was to conduct a reflexive analysis of myself with the technique which is called epoche or bracketing (Creswell, 2012; Maxwell, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). I conducted the interviews to negate having to train research assistants to collect the data.

As a retired active duty service member of 28 years, I assumed that the status of a veteran rather than an active duty member would help establish trust with the participants. In addition, the change in status would help remove any sense of power or obligation that some participants may have felt if I had been an active duty member. The approach to the project was from the perspective of a public policy doctoral student interested in exploring perspectives of gender fairness and social change regarding selective service registration. Building and maintaining a sense of trust with each participant was important for the quality of data. I used multiple venues to solicit participants. I contended that it might be important to recruit outside of any military official at the college to avoid any misconceptions concerning an implicit or tacit

obligation of their participation. This consideration was key to help diffuse any professional power relationships with supervisor or instructors.

In the event that I perceived that any researcher bias was influencing the study, I captured the perceptions in a research journal and conducted reflective analysis to identify and explore the meaning in order to set it aside. In the event that I could not put the bias aside, I reexamined the efficacy of revisiting assumptions and returning to the institutional review board to consider changing the study to descriptive phenomenology using the Duquesne school or tradition. The key difference between interpretive and descriptive phenomenology schools is how data are analyzed (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2001). The descriptive approach reduces the reported experiences from individuals into patterns and themes in order to develop a composite experience using data analysis only of the participants (Laureate Education, 2013). The Duquesne tradition does not involve epoche or bracketing to minimize bias through self-reflection, which is in direct contrast to the interpretive approach as described by Moustakas (1994). The management of research bias is addressed further in the methodology section regarding participant selection and instrumentation.

I anticipated no ethical issues based upon the environment, population, or adult age of the research participants. I used a $10 Amazon gift card as a small incentive because the research study should appeal to the participants in a manner that should negate its necessity. Although no direct benefit to the individual, a participant's perspective may benefit society. I did not use the senior officers of the program to solicit participants for fear of undue pressure, which potentially could influence data quality.

Cadets in the program would be far better at inspiring their peers to consider participating in the study.

Methodology

Purposeful Sampling

This strategy allowed me to select participants who were knowledgeable with a phenomenon of interest. Patton (2001) described the "logic and power of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in-depth understanding" to illuminate the research question (p. 46). Since the study topic involved fairness concepts, I strived for an equal number of participants who self-identified themselves as male or female because the distinction may be germane to in-depth understanding. The participants were selected based upon the following criteria: (a) they were college ROTC students, (b) they were 18 to 26 years old, (c) they were interested in talking about gender exclusion and mandatory Selective Service Registration, and (d) they were willing to participate in an in-depth interview concerning their perspectives. I used purposeful sampling with phenomenology to use my best judgment as explained by Groenewald (2004) to find initial participants who have experienced the phenomena to be researched.

After receiving Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval number for this study, 07-24-17-0229932, I used social media to find potential participants. Potential participants in college ROTC programs were solicited because students who are between 18 to 26 years old have to comply with Selective Service registration in order to receive federal aid of any kind; therefore, they are likely to have experienced the gender exclusion policies. In addition, college students within that age range are not a vulnerable

population like former incarcerated males who are required by law to comply with Selective Service Registration within 6 months of release from incarceration (Griego, 2014; U.S. Government Selective Service System, 2014).

Participants were informed to contact the researcher via email indicating their interest in the study. I used the informed consent letter to help establish that they meet the criteria for the study. I used the participants' school email address as verification to confirm that they are college students at the university. The intent was to find a sufficient number of students who volunteered to participate in the study.

The qualitative approach to sample size was focused on depth of understanding and richness of data to support answering the research question (Maxwell, 2012; Patton, 2001). Based upon the sampling strategy and research intent, I recruited a total of 10 college ROTC participants ranging in age from 18 to 26 consisting of 7 men and 3 women. The number participants can vary depending on factors like saturation.

Saturation occurred at ten participants when the researcher determined that no new perspectives, or ideas were being explored based upon the participant's data. The rationale for the range was based upon the praxis in the field using phenomenology on people's perceptions. The main goal of this strategy was to capture major variations although common themes may emerge. If I had reached saturation prior to assessing ten people I intended to use fewer (e.g., eight or nine). This approach had a high tolerance for flexibility, which was inherent with qualitative research design (Miles & Saldaña, 2013; Patton, 2001). The value of the phenomenology study results, lies in the transferability (Laureate Education, 2013).

Data Collection Instrumentation

A small researcher derived demographic questionnaire was included in the study, which took participants less than five minutes to complete. In the tradition of a phenomenological study I used semi-structured open-ended questions that are part of an in-depth interview protocol (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). I was both researcher and interviewer as I conducted face-to-face interviews as the main source for data. Then I provided participants the opportunity to member check their transcriptions. I used video technology like Skype or Facetime with the telephone/ personal computer as a backup if in person face-to-face interview was not feasible. The duration of the interview was 30 to 45 minutes with an invitation to conduct a second based upon participants need to express their perspectives in depth. I used the same interview protocol (See Appendix A) for each participant to help minimize bias.

I audio recorded the interviews and transcribed the information using software designed for voice recognition. The raw data was collected after the participant signed the informed consent, audiotape and field note agreements. Participant voluntary status was important as well as an acknowledgment that the participant can withdraw from the study at any time. Confidentiality of information gathered was important for the participants understanding. Establishing and maintaining trust and rapport with participants was essential for obtaining perspectives that go beyond the surface responses for political correctness.

Filing and Storage

After the interviews have been transcribed, I emailed the transcript to the participant for the purpose of accuracy of their perspective. This technique of participant involvement was known as member checking (Carlson, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Miles & Saldaña, 2013). The data was kept secure in a locked cabinet to which I alone have access. I electronically filed the documents on a password-protected computer for 5 years as required by Walden University.

Data Analysis Plan

The semistructured interviews were the foundation of the participant's narrative of the phenomenon. The narrative was the basis of the phenomenological analysis in the tradition of Moustakas (1994), which was described as an empirical process by Patton (2002, p. 482). This empirical process of phenomenological analysis consists of five steps: bracketing, phenomenological reduction, horizontalization, imagination variation and composite description (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). These steps broadly become the outline of the data analysis plan.

Specifically, I used the method of analysis based on Moustakas' (1994) modification of Van Kaam's method of analysis of phenomenological data (p. 120). The complete transcript of each participant was reviewed and a preliminary grouping of expressions was listed. This step was called horizonalization (Moustakas, 1994). The data went through a process of reduction and elimination based upon specific requirements in accordance with the model. The outcome was to derive horizons of the experiences of the phenomenon that are invariant constituents. The horizons were then grouped and

clustered for theme identification. The themes were then used for a textural description of the phenomena using verbatim statements from the participants individually. Structural descriptions were molded which include the textual, invariant constituents and themes. From this description, a composite description based upon the group was developed to capture the meaning of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility or internal validity was established through triangulation of data collection, and member checking to help achieve accuracy of the participant's perspective. Triangulation according to Patton (2001) included reflexivity in the researcher's perception of the phenomenon, which includes self-awareness of the researcher's intention about those studied (pp. 494-495). The design of the research as explained by Maxwell (2013) specifically would seek to minimize validity threats by "evidence, not methods" (p. 128). The multiple methods, interviews, essays, and transcription were mere tools to ascertain the deep essence of the phenomenon of the participants' perspective.

I used the evidence derived during the study to address threats to validity. According to Moustakas (1994) citing Husserl, phenomenological approaches rely on the participants' verbatim transcripts, and the challenge of ensuring that my perception does not influence the participant's perception of his or her own experiences (p. 57). The internal validity was inherent in the truth of the participant's words regarding their perceptions of the phenomenon.

Transferability (External Validity)

I planned to use the strategy of thick description and the variation in participant

selection to address transferability. By design, the study's focus on depth of experience

should provide complex data behind the attitudes, core values and beliefs of the

participants of the study. The small number of 10 participants was appropriate for this

kind of study, however I originally sought 12 to 15 participants (Creswell, 2012; Denzin

& Lincoln, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). The purposive sampling technique sought variation

in the participant selection that included both men and women in college ROTC between

the ages of 18 to 26 years old. I was specifically looking for the experiences of men and

women but did not address the experience of transgender or transsexual students (Rands,

2009). Selective Service Registration policy currently required citizens who were born

male to register regardless of sexual identity, and likewise, genetically born female

citizens are excluded from registration (U.S. Government Selective Service System,

2014). However, I was open in the phenomenological sense to see the phenomenon

through those perspectives if a potential participant decided to self identify.

Dependability

I used audit trails and an interview protocol (Appendix C) to help establish

dependability. Triangulation of data was another strategy that helped with dependability

of data analysis. The convergence of conclusions was consistent from the participant's

perspective and if not, an explanation was presented as an outcome of the study. The key

or underlying issue with dependability was consistency among the procedures and if by

design the research questions and features of the study design are congruent with them

((Miles & Saldaña, 2013, p. 312). Coding of the data was reviewed and revised throughout the research process to address the validity threat of dependability. As described by Creswell (2007, pp. 170-172) I followed a template for coding a phenomological study. Dependability was addressed by obtaining the same results from the same participants.

Confirmability

Member checking for their perceived truth was the foundation of quality. Miles and Saldaña stated that what the qualitative study quality relies on "truth value" (p. 312). Guba and Lincoln (as cited by Creswell (2007) offered a perspective on validation, which involves alternative terms for qualitative researchers to address for trustworthiness. Confirmability was addressed by sharing the results of the study in different areas of the country or universities, but the study would only be generalizable if future research were conducted on a larger sample population quantitatively. I relied on the participants to provide credibility to the study by sharing their perspectives with similar populations.

Expert Panel

In the qualitative tradition, an expert panel of three professors of military science was held to receive feedback regarding the interview process and the ease and clarity of understanding the research question and interview protocol. As explained by Maxwell (2012), pilot studies would allow the researcher to test ideas and methods and explore the implications. I tested out the language, meaning and understanding of the interview questions, and the time it would take a participant to get through the interview protocol. In keeping with the expert panel procedures, I did not analyze any data that was

collected. This process helped increase internal validity by increasing my understanding of the phenomenon and how it may or may not have aligned with my assumptions embedded in my theoretical framework. I sought feedback from the participants in the expert panel about question clarity and procedural techniques used in the main study.

Since the participants are all over the age of 18, I sent a letter of informed consent to each of the potential participants. The plan was to conduct semi structured one-on-one interviews in the same manner as the main study (Appendix C). After transcription I conferred with each of the participants to gather their feedback about the expert panel with the intent to make any necessary changes to the interview protocol to increase clarity or understanding.

Ethical Procedures

Informed Consent. Participants received a small incentive and their involvement was voluntary, with aspirations that their perspectives will benefit ROTC students and the community of interest regarding Selective Service Registration and gender fairness. The study participants were not identified by their real names, and were assigned an alias, or code. Collected data was shared with participants, and members of the research committee. The study data was considered confidential data and would be locked away for five years and destroyed at the end of five years in accordance with Walden IRB policy.

Risk to the participants in the study was minimal based upon my assessment. The study was not biomedical and the participants were not minors. Some participants may have found the subject of gender fairness and selective service controversial. There were

no physical tests as part of the study. Slight psychological or sociological discomfort was possible because some questions may trigger emotions that make them feel uneasy. The interviews were conducted over the phone.

Summary

Chapter 3 described the research methodology in the study. Based upon a review of current literature and the theoretical underpinnings of Durkheim on society, college ROTC students may have a unique perspective on gender exclusion and selective service registration. The goal of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore those experiences using thick descriptive language. An expert panel was conducted after IRB approval to validate the interview tool because it was researcher designed. Feedback from participants from the pilot study had the potential to inform changes to procedures or research protocols in the main study. Data collection included transcribing the researcher's structured interview data. The research design used Moustakas' phenomenological research approach as modified by the Van Kaam method of analysis of data to derive a composite description of the phenomenon. Participants were given access to their transcripts to verify collected information. Ethical issues were addressed in the research design and participants were given information with regard to informed consent, confidentiality, and the goals of the study.

Chapter 4 was the narrative of the research study. The narrative explores the themes that emerged from those conversations. The participants' perspective on gender exclusion for Selective Service Registration is personal, revealing and true to their understanding of their values, norms, and social structures in society.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand 18 to 26-year-old ROTC students'

perspectives on the current gender exclusive Selective Service Registration policy from a

college in the Mid-Atlantic. The central focus of the study was an exploration into the

perspective of the ROTC cadets. Using one primary research question, I explored today's

potential misalignment of national defense policy in terms of gender enfranchisement

regarding opportunity and exclusion based upon a 1981 Supreme Court decision, which

banned females from direct combat assignments. The exclusion has been included in

public policy, which restricts participation by gender in Selective Service Registration,

over which the U.S. Congress has oversight. This policy position is in direct contrast to

the public policy direction of the Department of Defense, which has removed the ban on

women in direct combat assignments and is currently implementing gender-neutral

assignment policies that allow previously restricted assignments for male only based

upon gender rather than standards.

The chapter is organized in the following manner: a summary from the results

from the expert panel, a demographic review of the participants relevant to the study, data

collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and a brief summary.

Expert Panel

The expert panel consisted of three members of the ROTC leadership team,

college professors of Military Science or directors of military education from three

different institutions. Social media was used to locate the email addresses of current

leaders. I specifically sought to obtain five ROTC experts to participate; however, only

three were available. Two of the participants were male, and the one was female. They all

were from secondary public institutions. They were asked to provide feedback regarding

the research question for the dissertation; in addition, they were asked to review the

interview protocol for ease and clarity of understanding the questions. To support their

review, they were sent the informed consent and the interview protocol. They were given

the choice of providing feedback either via written email or 10 to 20 minute conversation.

Over the course of several months, feedback was received from three panel members.

One panel member thought that I should consider more than one long conversation to

capture the perspectives of some of his most passionate cadets due to the provocative

subject matter. Another panel member thought that I should anticipate a qualitative

difference in responses from cadets who have been awarded ROTC scholarships versus

cadets who are not on ROTC scholarships. Overall, the feedback from the expert panel

did not require me to adjust the interview protocol.

Setting

Most interviews were conducted via phone and were recorded for transcription.

Two interviews were conducted face-to-face and were recorded for transcription as well.

To my knowledge, there were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced

participants on their perspective at the time of the study. On a strategic level, the general

public has been sensitized to the Me-Too movement, and from the time that the cadets

were participating in this study, the social focus on gender issues has been raised, and it

may have had an impact on some participants' responses to specific questions regarding violence against women and their sense of equality in the military institution.

Demographics

The 10 demographic questions were asked of each participant after establishing the participant's informed consent and before asking the questions that were specific to their policy perspectives concerning Selective Service registration. Although Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 provide a little more detail to the characteristics of the participants, there are differences and similarities that appear based on demographic questions. Tables 2 and 3 show gender, race and age of cadets. Tables 4 and 5 show political identity and his or her status as a recipient of a ROTC scholarship.

Table 2

A Demographic Table Showing Gender, Race and Ages of Cadets

	Mixed American	African American	Asian American	Caucasian American
Female	0	1 (19)	0	2 (22,24)
Male	1 (21)	2 (18, 23)	1 (20)	3 (20,21,23)

Table 3

A Demographic Table Showing Family Economic Status and Environment

	Mixed American	African American	Asian American	Caucasian American
Affluent			1 (urban)	
Poor		1 (rural)		
Middle Class	1 (suburban)	2 (suburban)		3 (suburban) 1 (rural) 1 (urban)

Table 4

A Demographic Table Showing Political Views and Political Party

	Mixed American	African American	Asian American	Caucasian American
Republican	conservative			1(conservative)
Democrat		2 (progressive)		
Independent /Other		1 (progressive)	progressive	3(conservative) 1 (progressive)

Table 5

A Demographic Table Showing Cadets on ROTC Scholarship and Nonscholarship

	Mixed American	African American	Asian American	Caucasian American
Scholarship	1 Male	1 Female	1 Male	2 Male 1 Female
Nonscholarship		2 Male		1 Male 1 Female

With the exception of one participant, all claimed close family members who had served in the military. None of the participants claimed that they had prior military service before joining the college level ROTC program.

Data Collection

Ten participants provided responses to all of the demographic questions. With the exception of one participant, all six of the interview questions received data from each of the 10 participants. One participant did not want to continue to answer questions after Question 5, which asked the participant what social factors influenced their perspectives

on gender roles in the military. This participant gave his permission to use the data collected to that point of the interview and stated his desire to terminate continuing with the interview.

One data instrument used was the approved interview protocol for all of the participants. Due to the open-ended nature of the questions, the duration of the interviews ranged from 20 to 45 minutes. The variance was due primarily by the willingness of some participants to describe in more detail his or her experience with the primary subject of Selective Service Registration. On two occasions, when a participant had not recalled reading the informed consent letter, I read it to them before continuing the interview. Phone interviews were conducted, and the conversations were audio recorded. There was only one occasion when the voice recording did not function properly; in that instance, the conversation was transcribed from memory and the member verified the accuracy of the transcript.

Data Analysis

The process of phenomenological analysis based on Moustakas's (1994) modification of Van Kaam's method of analysis was used to move inductively from the individual interviews to larger representations of the experience. Each participant's transcript was reviewed, and a preliminary grouping of expressions was listed, which was called horizontalization. This process involved listing every expression relevant to the experience of gender exclusion for Selective Service registration.

The second step in the process involved reduction and elimination of relevant expressions or horizons to determine invariant constituents. These expressions had to

meet two additional criteria, which were determined from the affirmative response from the following: Does the expression contain a moment of the experience that is necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it, and is it possible to abstract and label it? If so, it was a horizon of the experience. Expressions not meeting the requirements were eliminated. The horizons that remain were considered invariant constituents of the experience.

The next step was to take the invariant constituents and cluster them into a related thematic label, which became the core themes of the experience. The core themes were then compared against the record of the research participant for application validation, and the meanings and essences of the experience became the construction of the description for the group as a whole. This last step completed the process. The steps of the process in accordance with Van Kaam's method that involved the use of coresearchers were not used because those steps were not relevant for this study.

Selective Service registration themes included rite of passage to adulthood for males, routine notification of obligation for males, unawareness of females of selective service registration of males, military family influence on service culture, current policy represents the status quo for obligation to protect the country, obligation to protect women in society. A participant stated,

> I just remember that my Dad kept reminding me on my birthday, … Alright, there is a lot of things we have to do, like get your ID and you have to fill out these forms, because now you are a legal adult.

The statement epitomizes how four of seven of the male participants remember the influence of their fathers in characterizing selective service registration as one of the key milestones towards adulthood. The female participants did not have a corresponding experience regarding rites of passage into adulthood associated with selective service registration.

The current registration policy reinforces the theme that men are the protectors in the society, and they have an inherent responsibility to protect the country and an inherent obligation to protect women and children in the society. When the research question addressed follow-up questions regarding the participants' perceptions, conditions for advocating change included the following themes: primacy of equality based upon standards not gender opportunity, universal registration, and repeal of male exclusive registration. The importance of standards in evaluating equality and the concept of fairness was a theme that was relevant from both male and female participants. If females were to be included in the registration, it should be based upon a determination that they meet the physical and mental standards that are required of inclusion.

Specific themes emerged from the data, and some of the themes were aligned along distinct gender experiences because the current registration policy is enforced to support the separation of gender. The impact of the registration policy on males in terms of how they are notified led to the identification of a core theme, which was routine/procedural notification for males. One participant summed up the experience by stating,

I got a letter in the mail, when I was around 17 years old, saying that I needed to

fill this out before a certain date. And it gave me and option to go online and fill it

out, and then they would send me my draft card.

According to the data collected, parents, usually fathers of sons, would often remind

teenage males that they had to sign up for the draft on their 18th birthday. In addition,

these same parents would inform their sons that there would be negative consequences

for them if they did not sign up. Two of the participants shared specific negative

consequences to include eligibility to apply for government financial aid for college.

 In contrast to the male experience of routine notification and knowledge of their

obligation as a theme, two thirds of the female participants were completely unaware of

Selective Service registration for males and the exclusion for females. One female

participant captured the sentiment on registration and stated, "in terms of gender, I

actually did not know until I was informed about this survey." This lack of awareness

was not an outlier among female participants and this theme was further explored in the

results section of the study.

I found some discrepant cases and the outliers were informative. One participant

thought it was hypocritical for females to say they want equality but still want men to

open doors for them. She stated "it is like this double standard and the same thing goes

for the military…we want to be equal, but we also don't want to be part of the draft." In

contrast, another female participant felt strongly that men are the protectors and women

are the primary caregivers in society and "women who are pregnant, or just gave birth to

a child should not have to sign up for war (selective service)". The third female

participant felt that it is wrong not to have women required to register for selective service. She went on to express how the current policy is misguided and needs to be changed.

Authentic individual experiences and perspectives impacted the theme of equality. One of the participants who may have had a different view of the role of women based on parenting described how he viewed the example of strength from his single-parent mother as a living example of why he now believes women should be part of the selective service registration process. This participant shared how his mother worked multiple jobs and raised the family in a way that exemplified gender capability, not weakness. Another discrepant case was from the participant who came from mixed heritage of Chinese and Irish. This participant was passionate about signing up for the selective service registration because his father who immigrated to the United States received an Officer Commission. This participant states "putting my name down for a draft is at the very least, very fair." This participant appreciates the opportunity that our Country provided his father and considers selective service registration as a generational obligation of fairness.

Only one participant made a distinction between the obligation of citizens for service to the nation and the non-obligation of illegal immigrants. This participant thought that illegal immigrants should not only sign up for selective service registration, but he also thought that they should not earn citizenship through service in the military. In terms of analysis, this perspective was considered, but because it was a singular position, it did not become an experience or horizon that was emblematic of the group.

Although all ten participants had relevant experiences regarding gender exclusion for Selective Service Registration, through the process of data analysis only a select few of individual experiences were general enough to become necessary and emblematic of their experience with registration. In addition, because the experience is separated by gender, that separation became a prism by which the data needed to be analyzed. Females and males experienced registration differently because of exclusion, which may have had some impact on how they felt about the current policy and the urgency for social change based upon gender.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The implementation of credibility strategies was important for the study. After recording the interviews, the participants were informed to expect a transcription of the conversation within the next few days. The strategies as described in chapter three included member checking as a key enabler to help achieve accuracy of the participants perspective. Each interview was recorded and manually transcribed using the web based Otranscribe platform, which enabled the transcription process. At the conclusion of the transcribed text, the text was copied to a Word document, formatted and sent to the participant for their validation of the accuracy of the conversation. The participants were informed of the importance of capturing verbatim their responses, to include pauses and thinking phases as evidence of a real conversation. All ten participants validated the transcriptions. On average, a thirty-minute interview would take approximately eight hours to transcribe. In a few cases receiving the email of validation came several weeks later.

The researcher used the strategy of thick description and the variation in participant selection to address transferability. For the participants who were more verbose in their responses that strategy worked as planned, however, for the participants who had less to say, the strategy fell short. Although both men and women participated in the study, their representation was not equal, there were 3 female and 7 male participants. The purposive sampling technique sought variation in participant selection that included men and women in college ROTC between the ages of 18 to 26 years old. The format of the interview protocol provided opportunity for the participant to share and describe which supported the strategy of capturing thick descriptions.

The interview protocol was at the center of the process of establishing dependability. The sequencing of the questions for each interview was the same to help with dependability. The only adjustment to the process was an acknowledgement to the participant that although they may have addressed a particular point in a response to an earlier question, the subject may come up again based upon the interview protocol design. After data collection, the coding of the interviewed data followed the same process to determine relevant expressions.

Member checking was the foundation for quality. The participants' perspective provided the credibility to the study. The researcher understands and accepts the fact that the study would only be generalizable if future research were conducted on a larger sample population quantitatively. The qualitative nature of this study relied on the participants sharing their perspectives with others. The results of the study should be

shared in different areas of the country. This study was limited to participants from colleges and universities in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

Results

The purpose of this study was to understand 18-26 year old College Reserve Officer Training Corps students' perspectives on the current gender exclusive Selective Service Registration policy. With the focus of one central research question, the study results are presented in alignment with the interview protocol of six questions. There is not one response that can describe how college ROTC students describe their perspective because it was as varied as their individual experience; however, there are some themes that have emerged from the data. The first question was focused on an open-ended question about the experience. Participants were asked: How would you describe your experience with Selective Service Registration. The follow-on questions to encourage thick descriptions included how they were informed, and how did they feel about the policy when they were informed of their exclusion as a female or mandatory inclusion as a male. The next follow-on questions asked participants if they believed that the current policy was fair and how they came to understand the concept of fairness regarding gender roles in society?

For male participants, the experience of selective service registration was unobtrusive, routine, and a functional obligation. One male participant recalled his experience which reflects the experience of many of the male participants in this way-- "I remember my Dad telling me that at 18 you have to sign up…You have to get your number, because you won't be able to do anything, you won't be able to apply for stuff.

If they see that you haven't signed up for the draft a lot of bad things can happen." This process was what every male adult is expected to accomplish. For some males it was their coach or their guidance counselor who reminded the young male of their duty or task to complete the registration. This reinforces the theme that it was perceived to be a rite of passage for males into adult behavior.

In contrast to the female participant's experience, there was no perception that the Selective Service process was a rite of passage. The female participants were generally unaware or in one case indifferent to the experience of gender exclusion from the registration. One female participant stated that her parents talked to her about Selective Service Registration and informed her the current policy. She stated that "my parents really discussed it with me then, making sure that I knew that I did not have to sign up for Selective Service". The involvement of both of her parents in the registration discussion was not common for the female participants in particular.

As the discussion moved into how the participants felt about the exclusion or inclusion based upon gender, two of the three female participants commented that the current policy that excludes them based upon gender was sexist. One blamed the sexist state of policy on the fact that the policy was made a long time ago and people were generally sexist back then and it has only been a recent development of empowering women to join the combative arms. In interesting nuance was the fact that this participant was not outraged or offended by the current policy.

In contrast, a second female participant who stated that the exclusion was sexist felt strongly that if a female can meet the same standards that a male can meet, we should

be able to participate, however, she felt that if men "do not want us out there risking our lives, then that's fine". The female participants' response to how they felt about the exclusion was generally more textural and complex than the male responses concerning how they felt about females being excluded.

For the question regarding if participants felt that is was a fair policy, the majority of the participants regarded the current policy as being unfair and their personal understanding of the concept of fairness regarding gender roles in the society was primarily from family influences and social media. According to one participant, although she and her brother were held to the same standard regarding various household chores, her mother instilled in her that because she was female her mother treated her differently than her brother regarding opportunities. From the perspective of the female participant, she believed her mother gave her less freedom because of her gender. One participant recalled how as siblings her mother in particular influenced how she views gender roles in society and fairness. As a young adult this participant thought that being treated differently because of gender was really unfair, which is why she believes the registration policy should be equal, whether you are male or female.

The parental influence on childhood social norms had a direct impact on the participant's current perception of fairness. Social media played a role as well in influencing how young adults internalize social norms and gender. Participant stated "as a young girl, when I would watch television, or play video games with my brother, I would always see men portrayed as soldiers." Even when her friends would role-play house, a female would always play the role of the person who watched the kids and

cooked food, while the boy would go out to work and do some sort of physical job that required strength. This participant went on to share how those images still influence how she views gender roles in society, even at the age of nineteen." With the vast majority, 9/10 of participants having close family members who have served in the military, majority of the participants had a strong sense of service to others because of the association.

Question 2 from the interview protocol asked the participants how they would describe their values and beliefs regarding mandatory registration of men only with Selective Service Registration with follow-on questions. The follow on questions explored how their beliefs and values were socialized and how would they describe their family's values and beliefs regarding Selective Service, particularly the perspective of gender roles and their mother. There was clear delineation in the responses concerning their value and beliefs regarding mandatory registration between most male participants feel that it has been the status quo for men in the society and those who felt that it should be changed to reflect the inclusion of women. Most were not bothered by the current policy and viewed it thought the lens of protecting the society.

Several male participants made references to WWII as a good example of the proper role of men signing up to go to war, while the women stayed at home or filled the need in industry. "I don't' have an issue with it. I am all for it and I do not think that it is necessarily a bad thing that it (registration policy) is all male". There was only one male participant who felt strongly that the current policy was unfair. Most did not perceive it to be unfair because of the precedence set by the past. Another male participant who did not

have a close family member who served in the military described his values and beliefs regarding mandatory registration to his strict rural upbringing. He stated "I was raised in a fairly strict household which respected your elders and respect women, so, I was always taught to hold doors for women and always buy the meal on dates…and it seemed…I don't know if I had a perspective on its fairness, but it seemed like it was my job to respect women more than I would respect men". Oddly enough, most of the participants felt that they shared the same perspective on gender roles in society as their mothers.

Generally speaking, the mothers of the participants were encouraging their sons and daughters to compete as equals in the workforce and on the question of current policy, the mothers according to the participants thought the current policy is not aligned with their beliefs and values. One male participant attributed his values and beliefs to be formed from a self-developed awareness from co-ed sports. This exposure led one participant to value the physical and emotional strength in people, not in one particular gender. He stated "I played some co-ed sports where we had cross-country running for example. And a lot of times the men were faster than the women, but a lot of times I was getting beaten by girls who were half my size. And I think a lot of girls can do an incredible job..." This participant's belief system was changed because of his experience of working closely with women in a competitive environment.

The alignment of the participant's values and beliefs and their family's values and beliefs regarding selective service was not significant. Even in families with very conservative beliefs regarding the role of women, the daughters in particular were encouraged to compete outside traditional boundaries. The limit for some parents, and

participants, was on the question of mandatory registration of both genders versus some optional voluntary status for female citizens. This half-step position towards social change become more prominent with the question of universal mandatory service as well, which was explored in Interview Question 3.

Interview Question 3 explored how participants described their beliefs concerning national service and citizenship. The follow on question asked the participants if they believed that there should be universal national service to the nation as an obligation of full citizenship. The participants were evenly split on this question, five were advocates and five were against the premise of universal national service as an obligation for full citizenship. The advocates were generally unified in the reasons why they believed it would be a good policy decision. The reasons for centered on uniting the individual members of the society to a collective experience of service and sacrifice, which would intern build more connected communities. A participant stated, "citizenship is like being part of a community, …and national service is a keystone concept to being a citizen in whatever form that may be, whether it is military or community service." Conceptually half of the participants questioned were in favor of national service.

There were some caveats even for those who were in favor of universal service and their concerns included not making the participation mandatory, and not allowing universal service to be in the active duty forces of the military because of a concern for readiness. The concern for readiness was not a leading reason for those who were oppose to the universal service obligation. Regarding readiness a participant eloquently stated, "I think our military is so good because it is strictly volunteer based, that means the best of

the best are the ones who are wanting to come in." The participant went on to express their perception that the volunteer nature and selectivity of the composition of the military force has a direct correlation to group performance. Universal service obligation from his perspective would mean a degradation of military readiness and performance.

There was no consensus on the reason for the opposition to universal mandatory service. One participant cited the size of the population of the country as a hindrance to an effective implementation of mandatory service, another believed that people should become citizens first as a prerequisite for service, another thought the volunteer nature of our military forces would be harmed in a way that would affect readiness and finally, and one participant thought the policy was inherently unfair due to religious beliefs of certain citizens. Although many reasons were provided to not support universal service, the word that caused the most tension was the mandatory obligation inherent in the word universal because it contrasts with individual choice, which is ingrained in the cultural identity of the country. A participant stated, "Telling citizens that it is mandatory to sacrifice their life for the country does sound kind of controlling, which does change my views on citizenship in terms of freedom." Although varying perspectives were shared there was general agreement that universal mandated national service required more debate and consensus building.

The fourth question asked the participants if he or she were aware that the Department of Defense recently repealed the direct combat policy exclusion of women. The follow-on questions asked how they became aware that the Defense Department changed towards a gender-neutral occupational assignment policy and how did they feel

about the change in policy. Then the inquiry asked if they thought the change in policy was fair. Finally, the line of questioning asked if they believed the equality first principle would lead to more equity or more competition in the society.

Seven out of ten of the participants reported that they were aware that the Department of Defense had repealed the direct combat policy exclusion of women. Most of the participants reported that they were informed by reporting through news outlets and discussions with their peers in ROTC. When the discussion moved towards their feelings about the policy, the predominant response included a point about the importance of standards and qualifications above equal gender opportunity. The discussion about the primacy of standards was dominant from both female as well as male participants. One participants stated "hopefully the administration of the policy does not become politicalized either in favor of nudging making it easier for women to join regardless of standard or holding them to a standard that is purposely against them." Maintaining high standards and qualifications was a concern for all of the participants.

Both men and women recognized the physical differences between genders but wanted the gender-neutral policy to be centered upon qualifications for the job rather than gender. Another participants stated "I don't think people getting judged based upon their gender with assignments is the right way to go… I think the level of training and how well you do your job should be the thing that separates you from others." Again, most felt that the gender-neutral policy change is fair in principal. The most impassioned response was from an older female participant who shared how the change in policy did not come soon enough for her to realize her dream:

Growing up I wanted to be on the front lines, I wanted to be a Marine Infantry

Officer. When I got accepted into the ROTC program they still had not changed

the policy. So I started focusing on the next closest thing, which was to be on a

ship, and I eventually chose an Amphibious Ship that would carry Marines. And

by the time they put out the new policy it was too late for me to change my mind

and go the other way, but I am glad that people who are coming up in school

behind me will have that opportunity now.

The experience of this participant regarding the gender-neutral policy change was

personal and poignant. She felt that she missed her opportunity to realize her dream and

potential to serve her country in the manner that she chose based upon her ability rather

than her gender.

The follow-on questions regarding the equality first principle and their beliefs

concerning whether the implementation of the principal in policy would lead to more

equity and or competition in the society. Only two of the participants responded by

stating that they believed that the equality first principal would not lead to more

competition in society. Several participants believed that although they could not

comment on the equality first principal in society, they felt that the institution of the

military has historically lead to more equity and competition in society. The example that

one participant shared was the integration of race and class into the military "despite

being seen as a resistant institution". The military has been a leader of integration for our

society and has one of the respected reputations for social change. Most of the

participants believed that competition would improve the society because it would

encourage individuals to be better versions of themselves and that would be a benefit for society.

However, there were responses from two female participants that were critical of the low expectations that society has placed on them regarding competition. "I think that it is common for females to tell themselves that it is okay for me not to do well." The participant was very candid in sharing this belief and went on to share the consequences from her perspective stated, "because the expectation is lower, and if that expectation was taken away, we would work harder, not even to be the same level, but to exceed." Another participant believed that because a lot of people join the military to prove that they do the jobs that men are doing, they are going to work just as hard to prove that they can do it. Overall, the participants believed that the equality first principal would lead to healthy competition for both genders, and that competition would not only be a good development for the military, it would be good for our society as well.

Question five explored the social factors that influenced their perspectives on gender roles in the military. Probing questions included how has the military performance of women in Iraq and Afghanistan influenced their perspective, how has the reports of violence against women in the military influenced their perspective on equality in the military. The concluding questions asked the participants if their perspectives were based on a religious belief system or a political philosophy.

Two of the most cited social factors that influenced the participant's perspectives on gender roles in the military were family upbringing and their interaction with peers in college ROTC programs. One female participant shared "I have a lot of friends who grew

up with the mindset that as a female they needed to be stable, to have a family, and a secure house." Being raised in families with conventional gender roles was the experience of many participants. She expressed how she has challenged herself against that conventional mindset and has decided, "Hey, you do not have to be the one who takes the secondary career, you can do all the same things that men can do in the military." Part of her perspective included the fact that she felt that the military as an institution would treat her the same way as her male ROTC participants.

Several male participants were impressed and influenced by the leadership examples of female ROTC cadets and they attributed their perspectives on gender roles in the military as a direct result of this interaction. One participant stated candidly that he believed that "in most ROTC programs, the females tend to be higher performing than the males, not necessary physically, but in general." He attributed this observation to his belief that females tend to be better than average male because they want to be great leaders. Another male participant shared eloquently how his interaction with female cadets had impacted his perspective.

Growing up I had a lot of female figures in the workplace, who are balancing work-life, even here at ROTC; I have a lot of female upperclassman Cadets who consistently display leadership. Their templates have shaped my view on the value they present to the military.

Family upbringing coupled with their current interactions with each other through the training program were the most prominent social factors that influenced their perspectives on gender roles in the military. The third leading social factor was the

influence of the media, however, the negative influences of gender bias found in the media, especially social media, was counteracted by the their interaction with each other through ROTC, which presented many leadership opportunities for both genders through integrated training and education.

The response to the military performance in particular of women in Iraq and Afghanistan was a validation for those participants who believed that women were just as capable of performance in combat as men. For one participant the performance of women in war has been inspiring. One participant believed that the performance enhanced the fact that she knew that women were capable and this was a validation of the gender-neutral assignment policy direction of the Department of Defense. When asked how the reports of violence against women influenced their perspectives on equality in the military most acknowledged that it is a current problem in the military as well as the larger society.

The most powerful responses came from two different perspectives, one from a male participant who believed adamantly that reports of violence against women in the military was often a result of women "trying to prove something, and because of that they tend to cry wolf a lot more". This particular participant went on to share that he felt the military is doing a great job fighting sexual assault and discrimination by evidence of the mandatory classes and the resources the military has provided to train people on prevention of sexual assault. One female participant shared how there has always been violence against women in the military and violence towards women everywhere, but she thought more women are willing to talk about it. This increase in reporting has not

changed how see feels about the military. She stated that "I have dealt with some experiences that I wish I hadn't in the military, but it doesn't change the fact that I can still do my job and that I can do my job just as well as anybody else can." Her perspective reflected that there is work to be done in our society for equality to be realized in the actions of individual behavior.

Addressing violence against women in the military as an injustice, one male participant believed that it is a leadership and organizational failure. This participant characterized the injustice as a leadership and organizational failure, because "we have other militaries in the world that are able to balance having large female participation with unit cohesion and discipline in terms of sexual assault and those issues". His perspective seemed to support the importance of accountability in individual behavior.

Asking the participants if their perspectives were influenced by a religious belief system was not acknowledged in the affirmative by any of the participants. Several participants shared their religious upbringing as being raised in a Christian or Catholic home, but they believed it had no bearing on their perspectives on gender. One participant however, did share that they grew up with a Muslim father and that he spoke to her about Saudi Arabia and how women are treated as second-class citizens. This participant claimed that despite this belief system that both men and women should be treated equally.

The last follow-up question for asked about their perspectives being influenced by a political philosophy. One participant simply stated that her perspectives are based on a liberal political philosophy. Three participants responded with a philosophy even though

they claimed that they were not influenced by a political philosophy. One participant used

utilitarian theory to support his position that when you compare militaries from around

the world, rather they come from conservative countries like Israel or liberal countries

like Scandinavia, if they can make it work and it complements their capabilities then it is

something we should do regardless of political, philosophical systems or perspectives.

Another male participant, who considered himself conservative, stated "I think this

gender equality situation is very important and sometimes the conservative viewpoint

may not see it in the same way". This participant believed that sometimes political

philosophy is an obstacle to doing what may be morally the right thing to do when it is

aligned with political party labels. To counter the closed mindset associated with political

ideology, he stated "if this was my sister trying to join the military, how would I want her

to be treated, not just following a political view." Perhaps that self-actualizing viewpoint

should be the real litmus test for applying a political philosophy to social change.

Interview Question 6, was a broad open-ended inquiry that asked the participant if

there is anything else that they would like to share about their perspectives on gender

exclusion that had not been asked directly. The four supporting questions asked their

beliefs concerning the fairness of two different public polices concerning gender,

selective service registration for men only should be repealed by Congress, the expansion

of registration for women, and finally should registration be repealed and replaced with

universal national service for full citizenship.

The number of participants who responded to the last question was nine because

one of the participants requested to terminate the interview after question number five. To

the fairness question concerning two different public policies and gender all nine

participants responded with the answer no with the exception of one participant who

stated that he was not enraged with the fact that two different policies existed. This

participant was an advocate of a phased approach towards aligning the policies. Several

participant acknowledged that the differing polices were confusing and contradictory.

One female participant stated "you can't expect women to join the military and feel that it

is totally equal if the selective service is unequal." Another male participant responded

with an observation that the contradiction exposes the idea of equality and inequality

against each other and keeps the debate open whether females could be in combat

missions.

On the next two sub questions regarding repeal, the participants were

unanimously in favor of having our Congress repeal the policy of registration for men

only and expand the policy to include women. Regarding the question of repealing and

replacing Selective Service registration with universal national service for citizenship, the

responses were supportive of the idea by a narrow margin. Five participants believed that

national service would be a positive direction for the country however; one participant

did recommend that baby steps be taken which starts with universal registration of both

men and women for selective service. Another participant was in favor only if national

service was limited to military service only. The four participants who opposed universal

national service for full citizenship posited that low standards would become new

standard if it were mandatory. One participant stated, "I believe that a national

requirement to serve is not a great idea. Some countries use it but I think that it would set

the bar very low for standards." From the vantage point of a participant's experience in a competitive ROTC program, competition makes quality and the lack of competition in military matters may not result in the best production of the military force tasked to defend the country.

Summary

College ROTC students who were generally from middle class socio economic backgrounds described their perspectives about gender exclusions for Selective Service Registration in this chapter through a series of six interview protocol questions. Most were informed of their obligation through their parents and for the male participants it was a routine, rite of passage into adulthood following the expectations of male protector roles in society. Female participants for the most part were not aware of the obligation and for those who were aware, they were offended because of the exclusion.

The College ROTC students almost exclusively came from families that had a close family member who had served in the military and their values and beliefs concerning service was shaped by their family upbringing, especially regarding gender. On the question of national service for full citizenship the participants were evenly divided, however, on the question of the Department of Defense repeal of the direct combat policy exclusion for women, the participants were generally in favor of the gender-neutral occupational assignment policy. The participants were concerned with the impact to standards with the enfranchisement of women in particular to assignments that were previously only open to men.

The participants in this study believed that the most significant social factors that influenced his/her perspectives on gender roles in the military was from their interaction with the opposite gender in ROTC and their family upbringing. Although violence against women is still an ongoing issue in and outside the military, the participants believe in the transformative social institution of the military. The participants generally do not believe that their perspectives are based on religion or a political philosophy. They believe that the two different public polices concerning gender are unfair to both women and men, and that the differing polices are contradictory and confusing. As for actions, the participants believe that Congress should repeal Selective Service for men only. In addition, the participants believe that Selective Service registration should be expanded for women.

The next chapter will describe what was found in comparison to the literature review and will interpret the findings in the context of the theoretical framework. Most importantly, the next chapter will describe the potential impact for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction to Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of the study was to explore the perspectives of college ROTC students between 18 and 26 years of age regarding the current public policy that excludes female citizens from registering with Selective Service. Overall, there were three key findings regarding the registration policy: current policy is misaligned with gender enfranchisement in society, effective social change requires inclusion of both genders in registration, and a standards-based approach to equality is important for both men and women to believe that the change is in the best interest of the defense and readiness of the country. In the next section, I explore the ways findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline in accordance with the literature review.

Interpretation of the Findings

When comparing the key finding that current policy was misaligned with gender enfranchisement in society with the literature review, the result extends the knowledge that Silva (2008) found that focused on uncovering the perceptions of gender in an institution that espouses a gender-neutral status as a cadet. Both male and female participants of this study openly acknowledged that both men and women are fully capable to serve as equals, and this understanding was explicit in the findings. Since 2008, the military services have opened to women some of its most challenging small group leadership courses like the U.S. Army Ranger School. In the last several years, it has been widely publicized that several women have earned the coveted Ranger Tab and

can serve in Infantry officer assignments based upon capability and proven standards based performance, not gender.

Effective social change requires inclusion of both genders in registration to move the society from gender entitlement towards capability. Male participants of the selective service registration study cited the leadership performance of women in their competitive ROTC programs as examples of how perceptions of gender roles, and assignment policy in the military has changed since 2008. The findings also extend the research concerning the question of "to what extent masculinity and maleness" is implicitly built into the very notion of soldering (Silva, 2008, p. 945). Several participants in the selective service study acknowledged that their perspective on gender roles in the military was influenced by the combat performance of women in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This acknowledgment confirms the analysis from the work from Harris (2014) concerning the mythology for the separation of gender roles in 21st Century combat operations. In addition, the selective service study confirms that this generation is determining what the role of women in the military should be based upon what women are capable of doing in today's operations, rather than on another generation's biases and beliefs. This generational assessment builds upon the work of McNulty (2012), who examined the perceptions of senior military leaders on the use of women in operations in Afghanistan.

A standards-based approach to equality is important for both men and women. As discussed in the literature review, several studies used the military cadet as the subject of their perspectives on gender and military composition in quantitative studies (Matthews et al., 2009; Sondheimer et al., 2013). The study on selective service perspectives

attempts to fill a gap in knowledge regarding the reasons why women were not perceived as equals in all assignments. The primary reason was the fact that women are held to different physical standards in general, and they were not even permitted until recently to demonstrate that some women were physically and mentally capable of more. Part of the reason why women were not perceived as equals was the fact that the expectations for achievement based upon gender set a low bar for women. Several female participants from the selective service study shared their belief that low expectations were part of the reason why women were considered less capable than their male peers.

This interpretation also adds to the knowledge area of improved social equity in the context of justice and responsible citizenship found in the research of Simon and Lovrich (2009). Both men and women participants of the selective service study described how they felt that public policy that mandates registration should apply equally for both genders, not just males. This generation of 18 to 26-year-old college cadets, if this sample was representative, appear to believe that the current policy is unfair, and some the research participants believed that the current policy of exclusion is sexist. One female participant expressed how she was offended by the policy's exclusion of her registration participation solely due to her gender.

An analysis of the findings on the public policies within the context of the theoretical frameworks of functionalism suggests the following interpretation. The Department of Defense as an institutional in society performs the function of security, and to best prepare to exercise that function, evidence from the participants from the selective service study suggest that this preparation must include both men and women in

the society equally. The reason for this position most cited by participants is their belief that the nation needs the talent and capabilities of both male and female citizens. The gender-neutral assignment policy in the Department of Defense is aligned with an interpretation of functionalism that supports that registration of both men and women is about recognizing capability and potential in the event of a national emergency.

In contrast, the congressionally mandated male-only Selective Service registration policy was interpreted by the participants as being misaligned in providing the best database of citizens who meet age and citizenship-based criteria to be included. This group of participants viewed the male-only exclusion as outdated for public policy. This interpretation may have been supported by changes in the social capital of women in society. Both male and female participants believed women should have the opportunity to serve in any capacity that was aligned with their individual capability, not gender.

The participant's perspective on functionalism challenged the Durkheim social justice theory that espoused a division of labor in society that was focused on the key interest of collective solidarity. This group of participants rejected the societal functional roles that men fight and protect and women are the family caretakers exclusively. The participants described their function as able-bodied citizens between the ages of 18 and 26 years old was to be prepared to answer their nation's call if the need was required. The data on their perspective from the lens of organizational justice suggests that the policy of inclusion is considered fair because it reflects a policy position that is not discriminatory based upon gender alone.

In contrast to the social justice theory of Rawls, which supports individual

opportunity as a key interest area for fairness, it is important to note that the participants

in this study tended to make individual opportunity as subordinate to meeting the

qualification and standards for the assignment. In addition, the principal of equality first

as a premise that would lead to equity and fairness in society was affirmed by the data to

include the outcome of more gender role competition. The participants believed that both

men and women competing for positions in society would lead to more fairness. The

participants described encouraging more competition between men and women as an

outcome of equality first as a healthy environment. The participants believed that when

the expectation of individual performance is risen, organizationally, the performance

quality will improve in kind, which would benefit society

The political views of the participants were a distinction that made no significant

difference in how they described their perspectives regarding the public policy on gender.

Participants who identified themselves politically as progressive, conservative, liberal,

and libertarian or simply independent described the impact of their political philosophy

on their perspectives as minimal. As a group, they all reached consensus on the belief that

the public policy of exclusion of women in selective service registration needed to be

changed.

Finally, when analyzing the findings through the theoretical framework, the data

supported the following interpretive changes to the chart first introduced in Chapter 1 as

depicted in Figure 2. Regarding the military as an institution, the participants' perspective

was inconclusive regarding advocating for mandated national service as a prerequisite for

citizenship. From the perspective of the individuals interviewed, the mandatory aspect of the proposal was cited by participants as being their primary objection to any policy that would be detrimental to the esprit and high performance of the all-volunteer military forces. In addition, some participants believed mandated military service was a concept that was not aligned with the U.S. society's current version of democracy. If a person wanted to serve in the military, they were welcomed to compete for the opportunity against qualifying standards. The conditions of today's wars have changed; however, the social capital of women has risen not only by the combat performance but by the participants' coeducational leadership experiences from competitive ROTC programs.
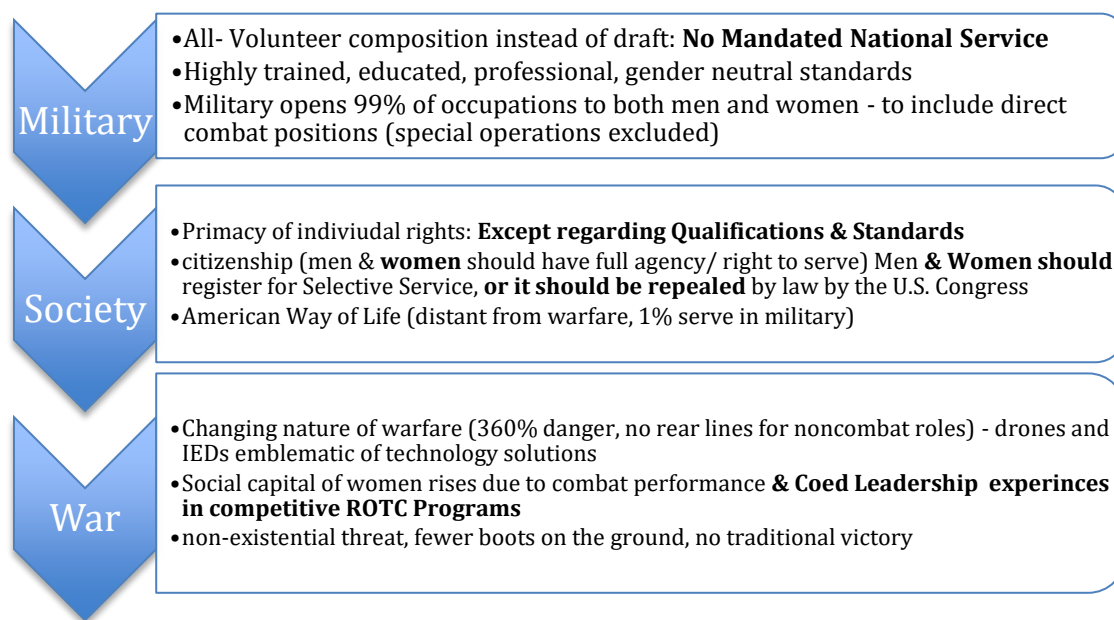
Military
- All- Volunteer composition instead of draft: **No Mandated National Service**
- Highly trained, educated, professional, gender neutral standards
- Military opens 99% of occupations to both men and women - to include direct combat positions (special operations excluded)

Society
- Primacy of indiviudal rights: **Except regarding Qualifications & Standards**
- citizenship (men & **women** should have full agency/ right to serve) Men **& Women should** register for Selective Service, **or it should be repealed** by law by the U.S. Congress
- American Way of Life (distant from warfare, 1% serve in military)

War
- Changing nature of warfare (360% danger, no rear lines for noncombat roles) - drones and IEDs emblematic of technology solutions
- Social capital of women rises due to combat performance **& Coed Leadership experinces in competitive ROTC Programs**
- non-existential threat, fewer boots on the ground, no traditional victory

Figure 2. Interpretive theoretical framework: Societal factor convergence.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of the study is validity. As stated in Chapter 1, the phenomenological approach relies on the thick description of the participants to derive

meaning and understanding from rich descriptions of the experience. All the participants

did not provide the same level of thick description when describing their perspectives

about gender exclusion for Selective Service Registration. This limitation was inherent in

the qualitative tradition and design of the study. By design, the findings cannot be

generalized to represent an entire generation of ROTC students regarding their

perspectives.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research are based on the strength of the current

study's qualitative phenomenological framework, the limitations of the study, and

nonconclusive analysis from select responses from supporting questions using the

research interview protocol. In addition, further research should be pursued on gaps in the

discipline that were not completely satisfied by the limits and scope of this study on the

perspectives concerning gender exclusion with selective service registration. The first

recommendation was from the perspective of strength from the phenomenological

framework.

Further research is recommended using the phenomenological framework in

different regions of the country to see if there are similar perspectives or regional

differences from participants. In addition, generational studies on the same topic should

be pursued to address the assumption that older aged citizens may have a different

perspective on gender exclusion for Selective Service Registration. The parents of

college-aged ROTC cadets in particular may have a different perspective from parents

who have children attending college who are not in the ROTC program. Another

recommendation based upon the strength of the current study would be to interview

college students not affiliated with an ROTC program the same questions to determine

the extent of the influence of ROTC culture on perspectives. The anonymity of the

participants for the study was an inherent strength in the design, which enabled more

candid responses regarding beliefs, values, attitudes and expectations regarding the

proper role of gender in society.

Using the limitations of the current study as a filter, further research that gathers

more thick descriptions of who participants truly feel about gender roles and competition

is needed to address validity concerns caused by less verbose participants in the study. In

addition, I would recommend more female participants in the study because they tended

to be more personally affected by the current policy exclusion and potential inclusion in

the future. The efficacy of co-ed leadership development programs on leadership

development should be researched as well to build upon determining the extent of social

change beliefs systems through the use of ROTC programs. Capturing perspectives of

participants who were raised predominantly in urban and rural regions of the country

prior to attending college ROTC may address the impact of nature versus nurture.

Finally, recommendations for further research using reviewed literature from

Chapter 2. Conducting generational comparisons on perspectives of organizational justice

requires further study. Altinkurk (2005) identified a gap in the quantitative approach to

understanding individual perceptions. Build off the findings from this current study,

which suggests that generationally, this group of young citizens from the ROTC culture

perceived organizational justice in the current registration policy as unfair. To help

determine the relationship between organizational justice and other considerations further study is needed on the perceived fairness of an outcome using cultural differences of groups identified by generational divisions.

In addition, further research analyzing the organizational implications on the convergence of the functional imperative as posited by Huntington (1981) and the societal imperative on the institution of the military. The participants of the current study described their perspectives on the primacy and importance of military readiness as a core functional imperative should be the only criterion for addressing the societal imperative of gender enfranchisement of opportunity. This group of participants was consistent in their assessment that standards must not be lowered to accommodate social change at the expense of the functional imperative of the military organization.

Implications for Positive Social Change

A change in public policy that did not exclude half of the population of citizens based on gender would result in positive social change. On the individual level, the potential for positive social change allows young girls in our society in particular to grow up with the reality rather than the notion that gender alone will not be the criterion by which they are excluded in public policy regarding service. If a child has aspirations to serve her country, her country is not placing roadblocks on her dreams based upon an assumption of her inability to qualify or meet the necessary standards for the assignment. If she wants to commit to the hard work and sacrifice to become a U.S. Marine Infantry Officer, our country's policies based on another generation's bias and thinking should not be standing in her way towards achieving and serving in that capacity.

On a family level where social norms are learned, reinforced and passed on from one generation to the next, an implication for positive social change could be profound. Most participants shared how their values, attitudes, beliefs and expectations concerning gender roles was influenced the most by how they were raised during childhood, even when they may have disagreed with the perspectives of their parents. If siblings are raised to understand that they are equal in their value to be prepared to serve their country if the need presented itself between the ages of 18-25, perhaps it may change how children are socialized for adulthood in a positive way.

On an organizational level, the Selective Service Administration, appears to need to change their catch phase that states that registration is "what a man has to do" and move towards more inclusive language that does not identify potential service to the nation as man's obligation only. The implication for positive change organizationally would likely result in a new branding campaign for the Selective Service Administration to reflect the need to move the process towards registering the best talent of its young adult citizens in the event of a national emergency The change is policy would likely extend beyond implications organizationally and impact society.

On a societal level, Selective Service registration for all citizens becomes an expression of full citizenship in U.S. society based on a commitment to serve nationally if needed. As a society, the change would be a reflection of a new acknowledgement of social equity and value from all our young citizens. The implication for positive social change includes the potential service of young adult women as protectors of our nations way of life if the commitment is required. Full agency as a citizen should require both

sides of the balance equation to actually be perceived as equally weighted: rights and obligation. Perhaps a more positive way to address the implication is to characterize the change as providing equal opportunity and responsibility for all able citizens regardless of gender. As a society the change would reflect the rule of law and policy enacted by our U.S. Congress.

On a policy level, the potential impact of repealing the gender exclusion from law and expanding the requirement for women would be an implication that our laws and policies are a direct reflection of the values and expectations of its citizens. As a nation that espouses the virtues of the primacy and governance of and by the people, the change would imply that our U.S. Congress had the temerity and courage to affirm equality on all of its citizens in the eyes of the law.

The theoretical implications of a policy change would be an implication that our social justice contract values the functionalism theory of Rawls (1993) and his veil of ignorance in the design of policy. The potential impact for positive social change would be an appreciation that this issue of gender equality transcends political labels like liberalism and conservatism in an age of great divide in the society along ideological and political lines. As one participant rationalized his position on the subject of fairness against the backdrop of his own political values, he felt that political labels needed to take a back seat to understanding the right thing to do was based upon how he would like his sister to be treated, which he contended defied the direction of his political affiliations.

Conclusion

Young adults are expressing their desire/need to be held accountable by the society that they were raised and nurtured to honor and protect. Men and women describe the inherent injustice of policies that include one and exclude others based solely on gender, rather than other criteria. Both men and women are looking to our institutions to align themselves to the changing social norms that enfranchise and empower women to take a step forward in practice to register for selective service registration as both a right and an obligation to serve if the need arose. The current database represents the old boys club that has a sign that states in practice no girls allowed for no other reason than gender.

The social equity of women has risen and surpassed the cultural norms of a previous generation that relegated women to exclusive role of child rearing and homemaker while men were expected to answer the call to duty if their nation called. This generation of future military leaders between 18-26 years of age are calling on policy decision makers to address the inequity now, and repeal the current law and expand the inclusion of women in the registration as equal members of the society. For many, their coed leadership experiences at competitive ROTC programs has changed their personal perspectives on the capability and potential of women serving in all military assignments. For those who want to fight and can meet the standards, they should have the opportunity to serve their country in any capacity commensurate to their talent, experience and willingness to learn.

The data was inconclusive on the values, attitudes, beliefs and expectations regarding the issue of mandating national service from citizens as a requirement for full citizenship. Although there was no consensus on the issue from the perspective of participants in this study, there is a need to revisit the broader question concerning the meaning of citizenship in the United States today. What it means to be a citizen is not a static concept and as the demography of the country continues to change, it is imperative that our laws and policies evolve as well to align with our positive social change.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide / Protocol with Demographic Inquiry

My name is Barrett Peavie and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am a 28-year career military veteran who has served in the U.S. Army. I received my commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps and graduated as a Distinguished Military Cadet. My course of study has been in Public Policy and Administration with a specialization in Public Management and Leadership. My dissertation topic is the Study of College Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) student's perspectives on gender fairness with Selective Service Registration.

Your participation is appreciated and can help to begin to fill a gap in literature that did not consider the question of gender in Selective Service because of the longstanding direct combat exclusion of women in the Defense Department. I have your voluntary consent form and your signature that confirms your intent to participate in the study. I would like to remind you that you could stop your participation at anytime during the study. Your responses will be confidential and digitally recorded for accuracy in the transcription. Afterwards, I will provide a copy of your transcribed data to review for accuracy and completeness. This interview should take about 30 to 45 minutes to capture your perspectives. If this time allotment is still acceptable with your schedule, we can proceed.

The research design is qualitative using a phenomenological method. The purpose of this study is to understand 18-26 years of age College Reserve Officer Training Corps students' perspectives on the current gender exclusive Selective Service Registration policy from a college in the Mid-Atlantic. The central focus of the study is an exploration

into the values, attitudes, beliefs and expectations of the ROTC Cadets. Young people

who are volunteering to serve their country as a full member of society with the

opportunities, responsibilities and risk associated with that commitment, despite some

national defense manpower policies that infer that gender supersedes their

enfranchisement to serve in a national crisis based upon a 1981 Supreme Court decision.

The central research question is:

> How do college ROTC Students between 18-26 years of age from a Mid-Atlantic
>
> University describe their perspectives about the gender exclusions for Selective
>
> Service registration?

Date:

Time

Location:

Demographic inquiry (A-K):

A. What is your name?

B. What is your gender?

C. What is your race?

D. What is your age?

E. Are you a scholarship or non-scholarship cadet?

F. How would you characterize your family's economic status growing up?

G. Were you in the military before College ROTC (prior service)?

H. Did you grow up in an urban, rural, or suburban environment?

I.   Did you have a close family member who served in the military?

J.   What is your political party?

K.   What are your general political views?

Interview Questions (1-6)

1.   How would you describe your experience with Selective Service Registration?

   a.   How and when were you informed of your obligation or your non-obligation based upon your gender to sign up for Selective Service? (family member, high school counselor, college application, vehicle driver's license process, college student loan application)

   b.   How did you feel about the registration policy when you were informed of your exclusion as a young <u>woman</u>? (why do you think you felt that way)

   c.   How did you feel about the registration policy when you were informed of your mandated inclusion as young <u>man</u>? (why do you think you felt that way)

   d.   Did you believe that it was a fair policy?

      i.   How was your perspective of justice informed?

   e.   How did you come to understand the concept of fairness regarding gender roles in the society?

2.   How would you describe your values and beliefs regarding mandatory registration of men only with Selective Service Registration?

   a.   Who informed your beliefs and values and how were they socialized?

   b.   Do you come from a military family?

    c. How would you describe the values and beliefs regarding Selective

       Service and your family?

    d. Do you have a different perspective of gender roles than your mother?

3. How would you describe you beliefs concerning national service and citizenship?

  (Can you share a story that describes your experience?)

    a. Do you believe that there should be universal national service to the nation

       as an obligation of full citizenship?

    b. Can you describe how mandatory national service would benefit or harm

       your views (values, attitudes, beliefs, expectations) on citizenship?

4. Are you aware that the Department of Defense recently repealed the direct combat

  policy exclusion of women?

    a. How did you become aware that the Defense Department changed towards

       a gender-neutral occupational assignment policy?

    b. How do you feel about the change in policy?

    c. Do you believe that it is fair?

    d. Do you believe the equality first principle will lead to more equity in the

       society?

    e. Do you believe the equality first principle will lead to more competition

       among men and women society?

5. What social factors influenced your perspectives on gender roles in the military?

    a. How has the military performance of women in Iraq and Afghanistan

       influenced your perspective?

b. How has the reports of violence against women in the military influenced your perspective on equality in the military?

c. Are your perspectives based upon a religious belief system?

d. Are your perspectives based upon a conservative or liberal political philosophy?

6. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your perspectives on gender exclusion for Selective Service Registration that was not asked directly?

a. Do you believe that the two different public policies concerning gender are fair for our society?

b. Do you believe that Selective Service registration for men only should be repealed by Congress?

c. Do you believe that Selective Service registration should be expanded for women?

d. Do you believe Selective Service registration should be repealed and replaced with universal national service for full citizenship?

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate - Facebook Sample

Seeking participants for a Research Study about Selective Service Registration

- **College ROTC Students (both men and women)**
- **18-26 years of age**

My name is Barrett Peavie, a doctoral student at Walden University researching the

perspectives of College ROTC students 18-26 years old on gender fairness and the

exclusion of women from the Selective Service Registration process.

Participation would include completing a demographic questionnaire, which will take

about 5 minutes and participate in an interview, which would take between 20- 45

minutes. Interviews will be conducted via social media as well at a time convenient for

you.

The information from the demographic questionnaire and interviews will be kept strictly

confidential and no one who participates will be identified in any of the study's report. In

addition, the school that you attend will not be identified in the study's report either.

If you would like to participate in or have any questions about the study, please feel free to email me at XXX .

The same information will be made into a page on FACEBOOK and it will resemble the following.

Are you a College ROTC Student aged 18-26 years who has a perspective on the current Selective Service Registration policy?

If so, I would like to invite you to participate in an interview as part of my research at Walden University, School of Public Policy into how College ROTC men and women experience gender exclusion for Selective Service Registration.

- **Participation would include a small demographic survey (5min)**
- **Interviews conducted via social media are strictly confidential (20 min)**
- **Participants will not be identified in the study's report**
- **School you attend will not be identified in the study's report**

Interested? Please get in touch: Barrett Peavie- XXXe@waldenu.edu
                                Doctoral Student at Walden University

Send Message

Research Participants Needed-
College ROTC Students

SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM
OFFICIAL SITE OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Q Search...

REGISTER: It's What a Man's Got to Do. It's quick, it's easy, it's the Law.