PEERING THROUGH THE FOG: A PROPOSAL FOR VETERAN CRITICAL

THEORY

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

As veterans return from Post 9/11 conflict and service, many will choose to enter institutions of higher education. The current scholarship on student veterans is predominately descriptive or assessing particular policies or procedures. As student veteran scholarship grows, researchers need to explore the experiences of student veterans in an additional dimension—a critical dimension. Moreover, scholars need a unified language with which to speak.

This project examines the tenets of five critical theories (feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability theory, and border theory) and evaluates how they interact with the current literature on student veterans if repositioned for this unique population. What comes of this interaction is veteran critical theory—eleven suggested tenets of a new critical theory that recognizes and works to emancipate marginalized or otherwise oppressed men and women who have served in the United States military.

Though the theory is housed within the context of higher education, the tenets are not restricted to this environment. The implications of this work include an extension of critical scholarship that includes veterans and potential applications of veteran critical theory outside of higher education—in workplaces, families, and communities.

DEDICATION

       This work is dedicated to my late grandfather, Curtis Allen Rogers, who served as a lieutenant in the United States Naval Reserve in World War II. A mathematician in his later years, his task during his service was to fix navigational equipment on ships. Aligned with this spirit, I hope my thoughts give future researchers a little direction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Finally, I acknowledge the men and women who have served or are serving in the armed forces. While I do not claim to be *your* voice, I hope to be *a* voice that advocates your best interests.

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INTRODUCTION

The Phaeacian sailors deposited the sleeping Odysseus on the shore of Ithaca, his

homeland, to reach which he had struggled for twenty years of unspeakable

suffering. He stirred and woke from sleep in the land of his fathers, but he knew

not his whereabouts. Ithaca showed to him an unaccustomed face; he did not

recognize the pathways stretching far into the distance, the quiet bays, the crags

and precipices. He rose to his feet and stood staring at what was his own land,

crying mournfully: "Alas! and now where on earth am I? What do I here

myself?" That he had been absent for so long was not the whole reason why he

did not recognize his own country; in part it was because goddess Pallas Athen[a]

had thickened the air about him to keep him unknown "while she made him wise

to things." Thus Homer tells the story of the most famous [homecoming] in the

literature of the world. (Schuetz, 1945, p. 369)

When Odysseus awakened on Ithaca after years fighting the Trojan War, Homer

writes that Pallas Athena "[e]nshrouded the hero with a fog." Writing about World War

II veterans, Scheutz (1945) notes that these warriors did not have the same protective fog

while adjusting or readjusting to "home." As veterans return from Post 9/11 conflict and

service in a time of conflict, Athena has still not offered the necessary fog for some

veterans to get their bearings or navigate civilian life. A second reading of Athena's fog

provides a second protection for the home (nation, community, institution) that may not

be prepared for the warrior's arrival. It is in this second reading I am most interested.

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How do we (read civilians in higher education) respond to returning veterans? In what ways are we privileged? How do we as institutions of higher education acknowledge, combat, or profit from this privilege?

I am not a veteran. My only relative to serve was my late grandfather who fixed navigation equipment during the Second World War. I was always told to respect men and women in uniform, but they were rarely more than characters in an action movie. When I started teaching at a community college in 2004, I learned that many of my students had served in Iraq or Afghanistan. I teach developmental mathematics at a large two-year college in Texas. In the 90s they would have called my class "remedial." We now call it "developmental." It is not surprising that I have veterans in my classes as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* pointed out that in the 2007-2008 academic year, 17% of veterans would need at least one remedial course ("Characteristics of First-Time", 2011). Some of my student veterans have excelled in my class. Others have failed or dropped out. Some have come to me for help. Some have ignored my pleas for them to see me after class. In these ways they are much like my other students. However, in many ways they are different. Margie, a 23-year-old African American veteran with wild braids and a pink Moped, is not like my other students. She came to me after class and said the GI money she needed for books would be paid the fourth week of class. Our summer class was five weeks long. David, a young white Navy veteran, discharged with disability is not like my other students. My class was the third time he took developmental mathematics. The first two classes he had to drop because of complications resulting from his disability. Kevin, an older African American veteran, was simultaneously

taking night classes while serving as the financial aid advisor for veterans at the college. There were many days when he was too ill to come to class, but I would see him on campus. He knew that if he did not do his job, the veterans our school had enrolled would not be able to pay rent or buy books. He withdrew. Michael, a married veteran with three kids, was full of anger and resentment. He made an A but never smiled while in my class. George, a recently-divorced student veteran was kind and helpful to other students. He came by my class last semester to tell me he was accepted into a four-year school and doing well. The students who I teach and who taught me are why I care about veterans. The need for a better way to talk about veteran research, veteran experiences, and veteran service in higher education is why I have taken on this project.

Some veterans do not need an Athenian fog to adjust to the world. Some do. In the same way, some institutions do not need a fog to prepare a better place for veterans. Some do. My work is a step towards both creating and clearing the fog surrounding veterans as they begin or continue in higher education. Because I believe that in many cases, the fog that enshrouds is a fog of civilian privilege, my work is critical in nature.

Literature Overview

While highlights of a handful of veterans do not tell the full story of Post 9/11 veterans in higher education, numbers help. The government spent over 10 billion dollars on veterans' education in 2011. Eight billion was from the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Fain, 2013). In a 2009 report, student veterans accounted for 4% of the total undergraduate population in the United States (Radford, 2009). In 2012 and 2013, both of these numbers have grown. Their ubiquitous presence and the investment our nation

is making are only two reasons why we should be talking about veterans in higher education. Additional reasons include a needed effort to serve all student subpopulations in our colleges and universities (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008; Pattillo, 2011); an understanding of the transitional state of financial aid, student support, and counseling services as institutions welcome more student veterans (Rumann, Rivera, & Hernandez, 2011; Persky & Oliver; 2011); and a responsibility to serve those who have served our country (Brown & Gross, 2011; Hamrick & Rumann, 2013). From the Morrill Land-Grant Acts of 1862 and 1894, through the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 and the Montgomery GI Bill of 1984, to the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2010, our nation has encouraged veterans to seek higher education during and after service. As Post-9/11 wars raise student veteran numbers at all colleges and universities, these institutions must respond.

Researchers studying the student veteran population have asked the right questions: What are the experiences of returning veterans? (Livingston & Bauman, 2013; Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell, 2009); What services are currently being offered at college and universities for student veterans? (Abel, Bright, & Cooper, 2013; DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011); What are the social and academic needs of returning veterans in educational environments? (Iverson & Anderson, 2013; Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, & Fleming, 2011). However, they have not found the right way to answer these questions. Current literature on returning veterans from Post 9/11 wars is raw. The theories we use to make meaning of qualitative data are too broad. The models used to track veteran experiences are important but in early development (Diamond, 2012;

Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, & Fleming, 2011). The scholarship on student veterans is currently incomplete. These facts are not an indictment of current research as much as they are an acknowledgement of the infant state of what we know about veteran student experiences. Early queer theory was not done by people who recognized "queer" as an identity. Instead, early research on homosexual communities was researched as deviance and with psychological models of insanity. It was not until "homosexual" was accepted as a viable, sustainable identity that theories privileging queer knowledge and identity were considered. Disability theory stemmed from a medical model. People with disabilities were considered "broken" or "ill." Theories involved "fixing" the disabled community. It was not until the social model arrived that researchers started to consider how we must critically look at the world and ask how the world should adjust to the presence of the uniquely- and differently-abled. There is both a legal and social definition of student veteran: one is a legal (often financial-aid-based distinction) and the other is an identity that veterans choose to disclose or hide, to express or mute. Institutions of higher education respond to both of these definitions. I am interested in how their responses are formed, the unspoken context of these responses, and how institutional decisions (also person-level decisions) oppress or marginalize veterans in the context of higher education in the United States of America since September 11, 2001.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to construct a lens through which veteran issues can be viewed, one that understands the unique nature of veteran populations, uncovers

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covert and overt forms of oppression veterans may face, and undermines a power structure in higher education that privileges civilians over veterans. In short, the study of student veterans needs a critical theory that explores the ways in which veterans are marginalized, forgotten, underserved, or misunderstood—a theory that seeks to emancipate veterans from a homogeneous, civilian stranglehold, enrich our understanding of veterans' experiences, and train educators, student services, administrators, and researchers to serve veterans better. I call this theory veteran critical theory.

Research Objectives

This study has one major project with five steps. Each of these steps can be read as an objective of the overall project. The first step is to review the literature on veterans and higher education, focusing on Post 9/11 veterans in particular. From this review, 13 pieces of literature will be selected as representative data points for what we "know" about veterans in higher education. The second step is to create questions for five critical theories (feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability theory, and border theory) that guide an inquiry experiment in the milieu of case review (Lucas, 1974). The third step (objective) is to "plug" the data (veteran scholarship) and questions (critical theories) into one another and observe their interaction. The fourth objective is to cull these previously recorded interactions for notable, profound, or provocative interactions. From these interactions (grounded in policy archaeology) I begin to piece together a critical theory for veteran scholarship. My fifth and final step is to test this theory on extant veteran data.

Research Questions

The research questions that guide this study follow:

1. What has been said of Post 9/11 veterans in higher education, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current conversation?

2. What happens in the interaction of representative veteran scholarship and current critical theories?

3. What are the characteristics and tenets of a usable and sustainable critical lens through which to view veteran issues? In short, what might a veteran critical theory be comprised of?

4. What does veteran critical theory look like when applied to data (in this case interview data)?

Chapter Summaries

The organization of this dissertation follows the multiple steps of the larger project of theory creation. The following summaries offer insight into the different steps

Chapter II: Veterans literature

of the process. Chapter II explores what has been written about veterans and higher education. The chapter is separated into four sections. The first section recounts the relationship between the military and higher education, starting with the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 and ending with the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2010. The second section examines what has been written in the academy (journal articles, books, edited collections, theses, dissertations, and research-based reports). The

third section covers popular media including the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, national media outlets, local media, and publications for veterans and their families. The fourth section explores policies, bills, and laws that affect veterans in higher education. A final overview discusses how these three arenas of veteran "knowledge" interact with one another. This section gives special attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the current conversation.

Chapter III: Critical theories

Chapter III explores the history, major tenets, and applications of five critical theories: feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability theory, and border theory. Each section provides information on the theories' beginnings, early applications, transformations over time, and major tenets. The purpose of this chapter is to ground the proposed questions in Chapter V within the literature on various critical theories.

Chapter IV: Methodology

Chapter IV walks the reader through the five major steps of the overall project. This chapter offers supporting scholarship for the methodological decisions that were made as well as explains the epistemological, ontological, and methodological stance of the researcher. In summary, the project seeks to cull representative and qualitative data-heavy literature on Post 9/11 veterans, apply tenets of five critical theories to the literature, determine which of these tenets rings truest, recast these tenets in a new critical theory suited to veterans, and test the theory on veteran interview data.

Chapter V: "Plugging in" the theories

Chapter V provides the data for the "plugging in" process, the process by which I connect both current veteran scholarship and five critical theories. The chapter is organized by theory; each section introduces a theory and its connected questions. The chapter includes the "conversation" between the texts and the theories. A summary at the end of each theory discusses the applicability of each theories' tenets to the context of veterans in higher education. Additionally, the chapter briefly considers how the theories can be used "as is" to understand the experiences of student veterans in higher education.

Chapter VI: Writing veteran critical theory

Building on the resonant and dissonant questions of the Chapter V, Chapter VI imagines what a veteran-appropriate theory would look like. Using policy archaeology and the useful tenets from Chapter V, I write the tenets of veteran critical theory. Chapter VI also chronicles the ways in which I tested for resonance with the some members of the veteran research community.

Chapter VII: Conclusion

Finally, Chapter VII summarizes the process and product of the project as a whole, explores limitations of the project, and suggests future applications of the veteran critical theory. In particular, the pedagogical value of the method and the value of the critical theory are discussed.

Chapter VIII: Future considerations for applying veteran critical theory

Chapter VIII applies the newly created veteran critical theory to interviews conducted with graduate student veterans. The chapter suggests through example how veteran critical theory can be applied to qualitative data as a coding method.

Describing the experiences of returning (homecoming) veterans, Schuetz (1945) suggests that

> "the homecomer's attitude differs from that of the stranger. The latter is about to join a group which is not and never has been his own. He knows that he will find himself in an unfamiliar world, differently organized than that from which he comes, full of pitfalls and hard to master. The homecomer, however, expects to return to an environment of which he always had and-so he thinks-still has intimate knowledge and which he has just to take for granted in order to find his bearings within it" (p.369).

While many veterans return with ease to the higher education community, some do not. veteran critical theory works to understand the ways in which veterans are explicitly or implicitly marginalized or oppressed. Veteran critical theory seeks to change the question from "what's wrong with veterans?" to "what's wrong with the way we (civilians in/and/or higher education) treat veterans?" Veteran critical theory hopes to change the conversation about "broken warriors" to a conversation about "broken systems." In short, this project takes a step towards service, prompted not only by what veterans have done for us, but in response to what we (civilians in/and/or higher education) have done and not done for veterans.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW (STUDENT VETERANS)

Even in the most remote part of the world, wherever there are American soldiers,

news of educational planning and benefits during the postwar era has been

disseminated. The question is whether educators at home will have a thorough

understanding of the problems of the American soldier… (Washton, 1945)

They want teaching improved; they want more visual aids used; they want more

discussion hours provided; they want more clear-cut statements of course

objectives and requirements; they want more attention given to the veteran's

adjustment to study habits, at the beginning of his college work (Justice, 1946).

Colleges and universities are facing perhaps the greatest challenge in their

history as a million veterans seek the ways of higher education in America.

These deserving students of the sophisticating experience of war and military

service will certainly challenge many of the sacred and accepted practices of

college training (McDonagh, 1947).

The boys who go back to the campus can honestly, I believe, do more for us than

we can do for them. They are mature; their eyes are open; their feet are under

them. They will judge the maturity of our campus life, the purposes of our

program, and the good sense of our methods. To fairly meet their challenge we

must move up, not down. We must put away childish things. We must expect our fledglings from the sheltered life of home to follow these strong, strange men and to grow up a little faster in association with them. And we should be pleased to see that happen. The shallow sophistry of the new crop of Freshmen from the city high schools will give way before the calm, amused glance of the veteran. The assimilation that results should be something a little better than we had. Our colleges—and in some measure our high schools—should feel to their very core the pleasant shock of this infusion—if they prove wise enough to submit to change and growth. (Grinnell, 1946 qtd in Pattillo, 2011)

As veterans were returning from the European theatre in the mid-1940s, ready to take advantage of the G.I. Bill, there was a call to reconsider how higher education institutions welcomed "Johnny" home. Today, our call is the same. As of 2006, 80% of America's college and universities had enrolled veterans from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Woo, 2006). Five years and several deployments later, we are closer to a ubiquitous presence of veteran students. While almost seven decades separate the quotes from Grinnell, McDonagh, Justice, and Washton from our current understanding of student veterans, there is surely a familiar echo in their words and in ours.

The purpose of this literature review is to summarize and organize the work that researchers, private authors, journalists, and policy makers have done on Post-9/11 veterans who enroll in higher education institutions. Limiting the review to "Post-9/11 veterans" refines the ongoing conversation of veterans and education to a usable article-length manuscript. Additionally, this review serves as a broad net with which we are

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trying to catch all the work that is being done on student veterans; it is unavoidable, however, that some slippery or poorly-cited fish will get loose. For those interested in doing scholarly work on the "deserving students of the sophisticating experience of war" (McDonagh, 1947), this review should help situate their own research. For those practitioners, faculty, administrators, and staff who work with veterans, this review should help introduce you to what is being said, who is saying it, and why they are saying it. Finally, for the veterans, families of veterans, and friends of veterans (among which we should all hope to be counted), this review will give some clarity about what researchers have said, what knowledge those interested in serving veterans better have access to, and lastly, what veterans have said. Perhaps, this will allow reflection, context, and even some guidance. It is my personal hope that this review at least gives solace that if a grateful nation is defined by the people who seek to serve returning veterans, our nation is more and more grateful by the day.

This literature review is organized into four areas of interest: the history of veterans and higher education, scholarly conversations, popular media, and policies. While virtually every article on student veterans has some mention of the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act or the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, this important content puts the other voices into a proper context. The largest portion of this review will be dedicated to scholarly conversations. In that scholarly work synthesizes what we know and interrogates what we do not, it is our richest source of new knowledge.

Additionally, because of the high number of qualitative, interview-rich research articles, scholarly works are often most representative of a student veteran voice. Popular media consists of what national media outlets produce, how these outlets form or reflect public opinion, and what issues these outlets deem most important. Non-scholarly works by veterans or veteran supporters in the form of self-help, process, or encouragement books are included in this section. Finally, the fourth section represents the federal, state, and institutional policies that regulate the relationship between veterans and higher education. Only by understanding them as a whole can we hope to evaluate them as separate pieces. A final section of this article further explores how these four areas of interest interact with one another and offers insight into un-researched areas, trends in popular media, and what policies may be rising on the horizon. The following figure gives a pictorial demonstration of how the different areas of research interact both with themselves and with each other. This interaction is modeled in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Model of Literature Interactions

History

Scholarship

Popular Media

Policy
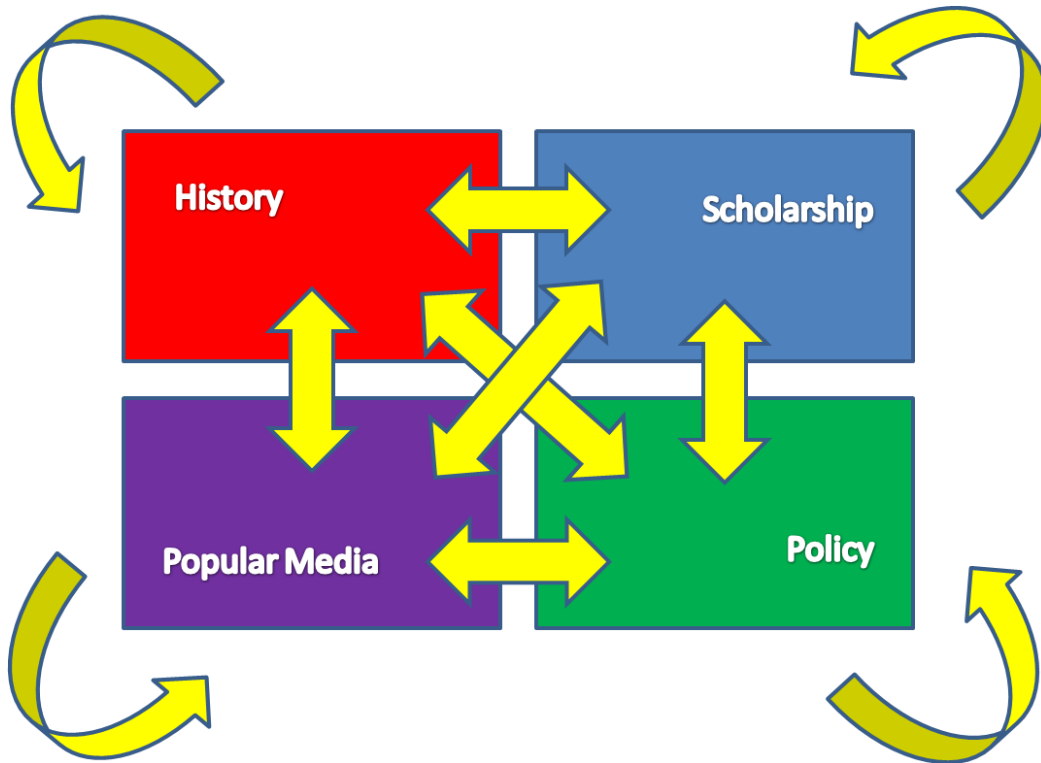
Research Method

In gathering articles and books for this review, I limited my search to the last 12 years (2002 to present). This limit helped to focus the research on Post-9/11 student veterans and their experiences. The only notable exception to this limitation was information gathered on the history of veterans and higher education. While the scholarly work on Post-9/11 veterans is still small, it is steadily growing. Yesterday's

dissertation writers produce today's articles. For this reason, I included masters' theses and doctoral dissertations in my search. I used search terms including "veterans," "higher education," "student veteran," and "Post-9/11." Search engines included Google Scholar, ProQuest, ERIC (Ebsco), Academic Search Complete (Ebsco), and Education Full-Text (Wilson). As is the case with all researchers, footnotes and endnotes led me to several additional articles and books.

Looking Back: The History of Veterans and Higher Education

It is important to any research project that focuses on veterans in higher education that adequate time is spent putting the unique relationship of veterans and universities and colleges into context (Persky, 2010; Lackaye, 2011; Capps, 2011). For research on veterans in American colleges and universities, this context usually begins with a discussion of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 or the 1944 Serviceman's Readjustment Act. The former establishes the charge of land grant institutions to serve the state (and nation), commenting on early military training programs at select land grant institutions. The latter trumpets the first nationwide matriculation of veterans into higher education. A thorough discussion of how either have shaped the current climate of veterans returning to higher education is not only beyond the scope of this article, it has been done (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 2005; Thelin, 2004; Olson, 1974; Altschuler & Blumin, 2009; Rumann, Rivera, & Hernandez, 2011). My treatment of both the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 and the 1944 Serviceman's Readjustment Act will briefly highlight the importance of both and make way for other (less discussed) parts of the history of veterans and higher education. Though a terse walk through

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history, this first section of the literature provides important insight into how the relationship between veterans and institutions of higher education was forged and refined.

The 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act was not the first public land endowment program in the United States (Alexander & Thelin, 2013). According to Williams (1991), before the Morrill land-Grant Act, over six million acres had been dedicated to education, the first being the Land Ordinance of 1785. Land was also used to honor Revolutionary War soldiers and encourage westward expansion. Thus, land had been given for education and land had been given for military honor. What made the 1862 act notable was how it linked the government, the military, and higher education. As Thelin (2004) explains, the "A&M" that was included in many of the Morrill Land-Grand Act colleges' names referred to the "'useful arts' [of] agriculture, mechanics, mining, and military instruction" (76). Thelin (2004) continues "the 'military' component of the 'A&M' designation has been given less attention by historians than agriculture, mechanics, and mining" (78). This military instruction, however, along with an obligatory training regiment was the first intersection of government, the military, and education. Reserve Officer Training Corps programs as well as a military presence on campuses made early fluidity between service and scholastics palatable.

During World War I, Alexander and Thelin (2013) explain that enrollment in higher education, specifically by males, was declining. This decline actually jeopardized some schools' ability to keep their doors open. President Wilson saw an opportunity to use higher education institutions for the profit of the war effort and opened Student

Army Training Corps units at 525 different universities (Alexander & Thelin, 2013, p. 6). Additionally, some universities (like Texas A&M University) "offered the entire facilities of the College to the federal government for war training purposes" (Dethloff, 1975, p. 272). During World War II, universities again became necessary training grounds for the military, and "dormitories, lecture halls, laboratories, gymnasia, dining halls, and athletic fields provided the necessary space, structures, and equipment for these new programs and nontraditional students" (Alexander & Thelin, 2013, p. 8).

After World War II, American colleges and universities saw unprecedented growth. Thelin (2004) notes that in 1939-40 "total student enrollment at all colleges and universities was just under 1.5 million' (261). Within a decade, the enrollment would grow 80%. The following decades it would continue to increase until in 1970 student enrollment reached 7.9 million (Thelin, 2004, p. 261). This steady growth can be attributed to many things including the stabilizing of curriculum, the increased value of higher education among legislatures and the public, and even a tradition of philanthropic partnerships. However, the most powerful of these shaping catalysts was the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944.

The GI Bill

From the outset, it is important to understand that the GI Bill (known also as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act or Public Law 346) was not an altruistic measure to give returning veterans opportunity. President Roosevelt was concerned about "adjust[ing] wartime production to a peacetime economy…and avert[ing] the civil strife of disgruntled military veterans who arrived home without jobs or good prospects"

(Thelin, 2004, p. 262). The context of the GI Bill sheds light on how the bill affected

institutions of higher education. Returning veterans were offered $300 towards tuition

and fees with a $50/month subsistence allowance (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009). The fact

that no part of the GI Bill directly addressed the institutions themselves is telling of how

little foresight the administration had on how the bill would change universities.

It is also important to note that education benefits were not the sole focus of the

Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. The act was actually comprised of six

different categories:

1. Funds were used to create "hospitals and other rehabilitation facilities" in

order to serve veterans with "nervous disorders and tuberculosis."

2. "[S]ervice personnel would receive mustering-out pay of up to $500,

depending on length of service."

3. "To assist veterans who wished to resume their education… [t]he Veterans

Administration would pay tuition and fees" to educational institutions along with

a subsistence allowance.

4. "Government-backed loans" were provided to veterans. These loans were for

either $7,500 (home) or $12,500 (farm) and could cover 95% of the appraised

value of the home or farm.

5. "[A]ll activities related to employment" were placed "under the purview of the

Veterans Administration."

6. Lastly, "the American Legion authorized payment to unemployed veterans of up to $25 a week for a maximum of fifty-two weeks." (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009, p. 55)

The fact that the GI Bill is now synonymous with educational benefits is a testament to the incredible impact that the bill had on veterans matriculating into higher education in the 1940s and the decades following. "Under the World War II legislation 2,232,000 veterans attended college at a cost of 5.5 billion dollars" (Olson, 1973, p. 596). These numbers not only represent an incredible investment in veterans; they also represent an incredible investment in higher education. In addition to a flood of new students, higher education was also changed by the kind of student that was entering. Veterans brought age, experience, and diversity, all of which disrupted doctrines of *in loco parentis* at most institutions. Blimling and Miltenberger (1990) discuss how at the resident level, returning veterans overturned traditional notions of the university's responsibility to protect its students. "[Veterans] were older, more experienced, and more serious about their studies. Many campus restrictions designed to 'parent' students were out of place when applied to veterans" (Blimling & Miltenberger, 1990, p. 27). Veterans left an indelible mark on how universities view students.

At the same time that WWII veterans were filling classrooms, "a distinctively American institution" (Thelin, 2004, p. 260) was born. The birth of the junior (or community) college and increased post-war enrollments would promise to be an important relationship. President Truman's Commission on Higher Education of 1946 called for "the establishment of a network of public community colleges that would

charge little or no tuition, serve as cultural centers, be comprehensive in their program offerings with emphasis on civic responsibilities, and serve the area in which they are located" (Rumann, Rivera, & Hernandez, 2011, p. 52). Even today, community colleges accept more veterans than any other institution of higher education (Radford, 2009).

The changing bill

After World War II the GI Bill was adjusted to meet the needs of Korean veterans. The Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 (also called the Korean GI Bill) made two significant changes to the World War II GI Bill. Tuition and fees were paid for 36 months of education instead of the 48 months enjoyed by WWII veterans. Additionally, the tuition money was paid directly to the veteran as a part of their monthly stipend, "the effect of the changes was that the benefit no longer completely covered the cost of the veteran's education" (VA History, n.d., p. 16).

In 1966, Congress passed the Veterans' Readjustment Benefits Act (called the Vietnam GI bill). The bill afforded education benefits for veterans for each month that they served. Veterans were required to have served at least six months to be eligible. The benefit levels were raised in 1967, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, and 1977. Of all the bills offered to veterans, the Vietnam GI Bill was the most popular, serving 76% of those eligible. The Korean Conflict veterans (43.4%) and World War II veterans (50.5%) had more eligible veterans that either chose not to take advantage of benefits or did not have proper access to knowledge about benefits. After a 20 year history of military benefits, it is easy to assume that whereas WWII veterans were happy to accept new benefits,

Vietnam veterans were expecting benefits. Additionally, the Veterans' Readjustment Benefits Act extended benefits to all military personnel.

In 1973, as the Veterans Education Assistance Program, veterans' benefits changed again. Most notably, in 1984, Gillespie Montgomery introduced a new bill that would afterwards be known as the Montgomery GI Bill. This bill required a partial forfeit of pay for 12 months by each serviceman. Upon conclusion of service, the serviceman was them offered a monthly stipend as a full time student that would cover tuition, fees, and some living expenses.

The GI Bill today

The history of the GI Bill in all its many stages is a complicated reflection of veteran needs, veteran demographics, social conscience, political maneuvers, and budgetary restrictions. The most recent changes in the GI Bill are specifically for Post 9/11 veterans. "The Post 9/11 GI Bill provides financial support for education and housing to individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate service after September 10, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days" (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2012). The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays "full tuition and fees directly to the school for all in-state students," a housing allowance for those who are enrolled more than half-time, an "annual books and supplies stipend of $1,000 paid proportionately based on enrollment," and a "one-time rural benefit payment for eligible individuals" (The Post-9/11 GI Bill, 2012). These benefits are afforded for three years or 36 months of education and are "payable for 15 years following…release from active duty" (The Post-9/11 GI Bill, 2012).

Understanding the GI Bill both functionally and historically allows us a lens through which to view the veteran-higher education relationship. If these benefits were not offered, the ability of veterans to take on the opportunities of higher education would be severely limited. The affordances of GI Bills from 1944 to present, instead, make veterans a permanent demographic of colleges, universities, and trade schools.

Apart from the history of GI educational funding, the environments to which veterans returned (welcomed and unwelcomed) offer insight on the success of veterans enrolling and re-enrolling in institutions of higher education. The general consensus of how veterans "re-adjusted" to civilian life parallels public opinion of the war fought. Heralded as our nations "greatest generation," WWII veterans came back to build homes, start jobs, raise families, and take advantage of the generous GI Bill provided. Their return has often been depicted as a ticker tape parade. On January 12, 1946 the Victory Parade in New York City did honor 82nd Airborne Division James "Jumpin' Jim" Gavin to represent the end of WWII. This was not, however, the welcome that all WWII veterans received.

While WWII veterans enjoyed a nation at war, Vietnam veterans fought a war that "this nation waged…with one hand while denying it with another. The national indecision affected the conduct of the war and attitudes towards its veterans. When the war ended, the nation sought to forget it all. The soldiers were left to bear the worst by themselves" (Muller and Scruggs in Bonoir, Chmplin, and Scully, 1984, vii). Vietnam Veterans on the other hand, are often considered the ongoing casualty of an unwinnable war. Historians have taken issue with this depiction, arguing that "not only have most

Vietnam veterans adjusted well, but some of them are now better adjusted than before going to Vietnam." (qtd in Brende & Parson, 1985, vi).

   For all soldiers, there is a time of transition. The needs, protocols, and community of one place are disrupted, a new set of needs, protocols, and community is established, and then, ultimately, this new set is disrupted, depositing the soldier "back" into a (sometimes) familiar environment with new needs, protocols, and community. For an insightful look at the history of the GI Bill and how it has affected veterans, Vacchi and Berger (2014) both trace the growth of student veterans with the evolution of the GI Bill and discuss how the student veteran has changed in response to the war their service is associated with. All, however, agree that though training is given to soldiers that enter the military, sufficient preparation is not given to soldiers as they exit the military. Schuetz, writing about the experiences of Vietnam veterans explains that when Odysseus returned home to the shores of Ithaca, Pallas Athena "thickened the air about him to keep him unknown 'while she made him wise to things'" (qtd. in Brende & Parson, 1985, 45). As Post 9/11 GIs return, the air is not properly thickened. There is no time to adjust or "be made wise" to the world around them. Instead, veterans try to make meaning of surrounding situations using an aggregate of the needs, protocols, and community they remember from before the war and during the war. This process is sometimes successful. Sometimes, it is not. It is important to recognize that no generation of soldiers is wholly broken or wholly adjusted. This diversity of experience and transition is the lesson to be learned from history.

Scholarly Conversations

Many studies have reported a lack of research on Post-9/11 veterans as they enter higher education (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010; DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008; Bauman, 2009; Barry, Whiteman, & Wadsworth, 2014). Both dissertations and academic journals have begun to fill this gap (chasm). However, there is still more work to be done. As a researcher, this presents fertile ground for new work and an opportunity to reflect on what has been said. This section contains all scholarly books, edited collections, journal articles, and chapters that help identify veterans' needs and veterans' experiences. Many of the authors currently writing about veterans' experiences in higher education have first publications that stem from their dissertations on the same issue (Persky, 2010; Rumann, 2010; Bauman, 2009; Livingston, 2009) or are still currently graduate students (Vacchi, 2012a, 2012b, 2014). Because the lion's share of research is being done by new scholars, I will treat dissertations and selected theses as additional scholarly work. This section is organized into four units: kinds of scholarly work, theories and models, characteristics of veterans, and student services.

Kinds of scholarly work

Qualitative

The vast majority of current research literature is qualitative in nature (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Mitchell, 2009; Bauman, 2009a/b; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010; Capps, 2011; Diamond, 2012; Kato, 2010). Researchers are investigating small cohorts of individuals that usually share similar characteristics to evaluate the experiences of a particular population. Populations considered are students who served in Iraq or

Afghanistan (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Mitchell, 2009), undergraduate students serving in the National Guard and Reserves (Bauman, 2009a/b), and community college student veterans (Kato, 2010) to name a few. Rea (2011) interviewed ten participants—five veterans and five non-veterans. His work explores both the veteran experience and how non-veterans perceive the veteran experience. Livingston (2009) similarly conducted interviews with 15 participants to discover "the process of student veteran enrollment" and to generate a theory "which explains and offers some practical prescriptive benefits to higher education constituent groups" (p. 40). Anderson (2012) interviewed 22 veterans to understand their experiences at a large public university. Her work creates fertile ground for more research on how the military's class-leveling system does not always translate into the campus community. Other researchers explore multiple actors in a particular location to evaluate how a particular institution works with its veteran students. Persky (2010) and Persky and Oliver (2010) look at multiple staff members, administrators, and students to understand how one community college serves veterans students. Other case studies include Li's (2011) evaluation of the University of Hawaii-Manoa; Brito, Callahan, and Marks's (2008) conference presentation on an instituted three semester transition course sequence; Lokken, Pfeffer, McAuley, and Strong's (2009) research on how the state of Minnesota came together to serve veterans; how Appalachian State applied existing laws to serve veterans (Johnson, 2009); and how the University of Western Florida has been able to effectively work with student veterans (Ford, Northrup, & Wiley, 2009).

Additional work has been done on specific questions. Ly-Turnball's (2010) and Lolatte's (2010) dissertations focus on the decision making process of Post 9/11 veterans when choosing to pursue higher education and determining the proper path. Lolatte's inclusion of veterans' comments is particularly notable as over half of his data section is block quotes from interviews. Hammond (2013) interrogates how identity perceptions affect veterans' experiences (re)entering higher education. Hammond (2013) also incorporates large block quotes from his participants. This dedication to veteran voice resonates as a dedication to veterans more than a data presentation tool. These student quotes are the truest litmus test for how we are serving veterans.

The benefit of this qualitative data is that we are hearing the voices of students. The majority of the qualitative work offered is rich in student quotes. In Hamrick and Rumann's (2013) edited collection of essays, they make space for veteran students to reflect on their experience as student veterans. The majority of quotes are presented in dissertations and edited out in journal articles. I argue that these articles would be strengthened if more quotes were included. Current qualitative studies have between 10 and 25 participants.

Quantitative

While little quantitative work is being published on student veterans, dissertations have done descriptive studies, and looked for trends in student veteran statistics. Barnes (2011) evaluates institutions of higher education in the state of Texas and their ability to "assist veteran transition and persistence" (1). While Barnes (2011) shows that many (49%) institutions have programs dedicated to veteran students, it is

often not enough. Notably, Barnes (2011) found that "two-year colleges responded to student economic and social needs more effectively than four-year institutions" (68). Barnhart (2011) uses quantitative data to explore the "relationship between academic and social integration and persistence for veterans in two-year colleges" (1). He found that after surveying many veterans and two-year nonveteran students, there is not a significant relationship between social integration and persistence. This, of course, challenges what much of the literature says and what Tinto (1975) and Bean and Metzner (1985) predicted. Pattillo (2011) reintroduced a 1946 student opinion questionnaire originally given to WWII veterans by the Educational Testing Services. The questionnaire attempted to evaluate whether or not the experiences of the returning veteran were significantly different than the traditional college student. Pattillo (2011) found that veterans are significantly unique from non-veteran students at Auburn University. Quantitative research has also been used to determine how veterans and civilians compare in specific metrics. Unfortunately, these metrics are usually trying to show (validate) a deficit assumption of alcohol abuse, suicide, or social failure. Whiteman and Barry (2011) compare alcohol consumption patterns for both service members and civilians. While most of their data showed little difference, they concluded that veterans drink to cope more than civilians. This practice has implications on drinking frequency and psycho-social behavior.

Quantitative pieces are more frequently connected with behavior and mental health than general experience. This trend parallels what is presented by educational psychology and nursing journals (quantitative) and student affairs journals (qualitative).

Though there is crossover in both, the majority of the work that seeks to understand an entire experience is qualitative and interview rich. The work that seeks to predict a particular characteristic of veterans is quantitative. Recently, Metcalfe (2012) offered a logistic regression of enrollment characteristics of student veterans with and without disabilities. Metcalfe's work helps us to better understand the characteristics within the student veteran community. She found that student veterans with disabilities "had a significantly lower GPA, were more often male, tended to favor certain academic majors over others, more often enrolled in bachelor's degree versus associate degree and certificate programs, and had a lower risk of attrition based on their index of risk" (Metcalfe, 2012, p. ix). This quantitative data helps administration and researchers better understand the student veteran population. Additionally, new scholarship by Alfred, Hammer, and Good (2014) links the conformity of veterans to masculine expectations and norms to lower psychological well-being. The sporadic and disconnected nature of these quantitative pieces is a fair depiction of the student veteran research community since 2001. Most researchers seem to attempt to connect their area of interest with the student veteran population, resulting in a rather disconnected meta-story of veteran research.

One set of outliers in disjointed quantitative works is the descriptive work by government agencies and foundations. Veteran statistics are not easy to come by. Difficultly prying information from (often necessarily) unwilling government departments and raking through student data that does not discern veteran and civilian has become a specialized field within veteran research. The most cited works in this set

are McBain (2008); Radford (2009); McBain, Cook, Kim, and Snead (2012); Cook and Kim (2009); Steele, Salcedo, and Coley (2010); and Lang and Powers (2011). As all researchers need to contextualize their work, the vast majority of current scholarship includes these descriptive demographic studies.

Arts-based research

One kind of research that has yet to be seen in the literature is arts-based or arts-informed research on/by student veterans. Arts-based research usually comes after a particular group or issue is sufficiently considered with traditional methods. Art-based research then offers an additional (often more visceral) treatment of the same group or issue. Stout's (2005) work on the poetry of the First and Second World Wars shows what art can come from "calamities" (xi). Larry Heinemann's Vietnam era novel *Paco's Story* which trumped *Beloved* for the National Book Award and Donovan Campbell's *New York Times* Bestseller *Joker One: A Marine Platoon's Story of Courage, Leadership, and Brotherhood* are further examples of how the public resonates with stories of war. The photo-narratives, autoethnographic poems, drama, and reflective prose that can come from veteran experiences (specifically student veteran experiences) could help researchers and the researched understand student veterans in a new way.

Theories and models

The majority of work on veterans is grounded in some theory. Though some theories seem appropriate to the topic and method of inquiry, others seem nothing more than a convenient way of considering information that does not fully resonate with the data. The theories used to understand the experiences of veterans are predominately

rooted in veteran identity or the transition from boots to books, soldier to students, or some other such alliterative word play.

Identity

Multiple dimensions of identity

A model that recurs through veteran research is Abes, Jones, and McEwen's (2007) multiple dimensions of identity model. Baechtold and De Sawal (2009) use the model to understand the unique experiences of women veterans returning to higher education. Rumann and Hamrick (2010) explain that Abes, Jones, and McEwen's (2007) model of multiple dimensions of identity, a reconceptualization of Jones and McEwen's (2000) model, emphasizes individuals' meaning-making and identity self-perceptions in light of multiple, concurrent social identities such as "woman," "student," and "veteran." The original model (Jones & McEwen 2000) is a Niels-Bohr atom-like structure depicting an inner core (self) and concentric rings (identities). Rotating points of saliency show how important a particular identity was to a person at any given time. It is important to note that Jones and McEwen (2000) founded the model on the research of 10 undergraduate women and were particularly interested in how their marginalized or oppressed identities were negotiated. Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) take the research further by incorporating both contextual influences and the process of meaning-making. The new model considers how a person adjusts their multiple dimensions of identity based on both contextual influences and their capacity of meaning-making. This more complete model is used by both Baechtold and De Sawal (2009) and Rumann and

Hamrick (2010) as it incorporates the context of female, veteran, and student identity and how all are negotiated in response to context.

Transition

Schlossberg's transition theory

Without question, the most cited theoretical model being used to understand veterans' experiences in higher education is Schlossberg's transition theory. So ubiquitous is her influence that she was asked to provide commentary for DiRamio and Jarvis's (2011) consideration of "Student Veterans and Transition." Rumann and Hamrick (2010), DiRamio, Ackermann, and Mitchell (2008), Wheeler (2012), Livingston (2009), and Ryan, Carlstrom, Hughley, and Harris (2011) are just a sample of qualitative research that grounds its understanding of veterans' experiences in Schlossberg's idea of transition. Schlossberg (1981) "postulates three major factors that influence adaptation to transition: (1) the characteristics of the particular transition, (2) the characteristics of the pre- and post-transition environments, and (3) the characteristics of the individual experiencing the transition" (5). Current literature on veterans returning to classrooms considers their transition to war from the classroom as well as their transition back to school. Schlossberg's (1981) definition of transition seems to be the thread that runs through each of the treatments. Schlossberg (1981) writes that "a transition can be said to occur if an event or non-event results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behavior and relationships" (5). Ryan, Carlstrom, Hughley, and Harris (2011) advocates Schlossberg's 4S model of transition which considers situation, self, support,

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and strategies. Ryan, et al. (2011) suggests that application of the 4S model can help advisors better prepare veterans for the transition into (civilian) educational environments. DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) pair Schlossberg's early work with later work of Chickering and Reisser (1993) to evaluate transitions as a sequence of moving in, moving through, and moving out. This same sequence is used by Barnes (2011) to understand how Texas institutions work toward meeting the needs of veteran students. This organization is a useful way of timelining transitions for more in-depth analysis of how transitions work at multiple stages. While the idea of using transition theory is useful, I think that it underestimates the magnitude of the change in "roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions" present in returning veterans (Schlossberg, 2004, 3). In fact, Schlossberg (2004) argues that the "bigger the change, the greater the potential impact and the longer it may take to incorporate the transition and move on" (4). I argue that researchers that depend too heavily on Schlossberg incorrectly substitute transition for what should be transformation. Veterans are no longer civilians, and they are certainly not civilians in transition. This attitude is antagonistic towards veterans and works to complicate veterans' returns. If we accept that veterans are a unique population, we must also accept that research must be identifiable with this population's unique characteristics.

A framework offered by DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) adapts Astin's (1977) framework of inputs, environment, and outputs to the veteran student experience. Inputs considered include academic readiness, gender, race, sexual orientation, age, and disability status to name a few. The environment evaluated includes the people that

student veterans interact with, the culture of the institution at which student veterans are studying, the policies, procedures and administration of the institution, and (understated by DiRamio and Jarvis) the classroom environment. The outputs DiRamio and Jarvis's (2011) adaptation consider are the peer groups and social adaptation experienced by student veterans. For clarification, DiRamio and Jarvis's (2011) adapted model of I-E-O is written as I-E-O-v, the "v" representing veterans.

Role-exiting theory

A useful and little-cited theory is Ebaugh's (1988) role-exiting theory. The theory considers the process of people as they exit particular roles and consider new ones. The theory was used by Ly-Turnball when considering how veterans choose whether to attend institutions of higher education after service. The theory has four stages: "first doubt, seeking alternatives, turning points, and creating the ex-role" (Ly-Turnball, 2010, 4). The only limitation of the theory is that it is founded on a person consciously exiting one role in search of another. It does not properly accommodate those veterans who left the service before they were ready.

Attrition theory

Barnhart (2011) uses Bean and Metzer's (1985) Conceptual model of Nontraditional Student Attrition to understand the academic persistence of veterans and found that the theory largely treated veteran and civilian students equally. Barnhart's work is a good example of how application of a theory does not always result in significance between veteran and civilian populations. These similarities, of course, are a finding in itself as they help researchers more liberally apply extant theories to

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understand veterans, all the while acknowledging that there are some characteristics of this special population that need particular attention.

Generated models

Some researchers have generated their own theories and models from their work with veterans. Livingston (2009) introduces the Student Veteran Academic and Social Transition Model in his dissertation work. The model contains three components of veteran transition: cornerstones (military influence and invisibility), auxiliary aid (campus support), and environment (campus culture) (Livingston, 2009, p. 80). Diamond (2012) used grounded theory to develop a new model applicable to veteran students in transition. The Adaptive Military Transition Model is a visual model that helps veterans to understand their transition and to put that transition in juxtaposition to other student veterans in transition. The model is an arc that represents "Passage." The ends of the arc are "Adaptation" and "Arrival." The pitch of the arc represents the transition of the veteran (higher pitches being better acclimated students). The model is a useful tool in helping veterans map their own experiences and learn to discuss them with support staff and fellow veterans. One critique of these models is that they do not adequately consider environmental factors outside of the campus (family, friends, or work environment).

Hammond (2013) suggests a Combat Veteran Conceptual Identity Model that "explains the ongoing negotiation of identity that combat veterans are experiencing while enrolled in college after their combat deployment and discharge from the military" (136). Hammond's model allows a more fluid and diverse transition experience than does the linear model suggested by Ackerman et al. (2008) (Hammond, 2013, 136).

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Bauman (2009a, 2009b) considers the process of mobilization to transitioning back into higher education. His model uses pictures to denote four phases of identity: Setting the Stage, Hurry up and Wait, In the Box, and Coming Home (Bauman, 2009a, 85). His most provocative image is the "Coming Home" image of a student with a camouflaged face. Bauman explains that the figure "has returned to civilian attire. However, the camouflage coloring has moved to the figure's head, depicting the mental elements related to this phase" (Bauman, 2009a, 134).

Summary

Carnes (2011) employs Astin's (1977) student involvement theory to better understand how veterans understand culture shock and reverse culture shock. Bauman (2009a) criticizes the use of Astin as an appropriate model because it fails to understand those students who are still highly involved in the military in capacities away from the campus. As more researchers explore the applications of different models, more researchers will identify the proper uses and the limitations of each of these models. Many who disagree with the use of Schlossberg's 4S model, appreciate the moving in, moving through, moving out adaptation. The problem of applying current models to veterans is that while they will sometimes resonate and even accurately predict, they are borrowed and incomplete until taken apart and reconfigured with sole consideration of the veteran student. We are all in a flexible moment of research that requires grace and patience. What seemed useful yesterday may not be appropriate tomorrow. Such is the plight of all researchers charting new territory in the 21st century. Knowledge dispersal is immediate and therefore more quickly reconsidered.

Characteristics of veterans

Alison Lighthall (2012), a military health consultant, offers ten things that educators, administrators, and any member of the higher education community should know about veterans. Her observations prove to be a useful way to begin a discussion about what we understand about veterans. Moreover, her observations are borne out through the limited but extant literature on student veterans. Using her ten "things" as a structure, we can embark on a thorough exploration of what academics have thus far observed about student veterans. While Lighthall writes her article as a descending "Top-Ten List" *a la* David Letterman, I will present each observation as a subtitle. While these observations are not exhaustive, they are useful in constructing conversations about things we think we know about veterans.

Student veterans are a highly diverse group—as diverse as America itself

Several studies focus on particular demographics within the student veteran population. There is growing research on the intersection of race and veteran status, gender and veteran status, and disability and veteran status among returning and matriculating higher education students. As DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) note "like other subpopulations in college, student veteran status serves as on overarching microenvironment, which may be further subdivided into mini or micro groups based on race, gender, disability, age, and sexual orientation" (29). These multiple groups are also not mutually exclusive as veterans often identify themselves in multiple ways.

Race

Those studies that evaluated race or ethnicity focus on African American or Latino populations. Radford's (2009) descriptive study on how the new G.I. Bill will affect veterans notes that when comparing veteran statistics to traditional student statistics, military students are "more likely to be African American or "other" than non-military students" (8). Kenner's (2011) dissertation, "Integration of Racially and Ethnically Diverse Modern Day Military Veterans in American Higher Education," uses Tinto's (1975) work on student integration and persistence to evaluate how ethnically and racially diverse veterans negotiate higher education. Kenner (2011) concluded that "balancing the rigors of college with their personal responsibilities outside of the classroom coupled with being racially and ethnically diverse made it difficult for [participants] to acclimate to an institution that was more accommodating to traditional Caucasian students" (67). In a short research brief, Robinson (2012) considers the multiple challenges faced by African American veterans as both a minority and a non-traditional student. She calls for "facilitators of educational programs, across all contexts and institutional types [to] make an intentional effort to support student veterans through policies, programs, and services," but clarifies that these "initiatives should consider their multiple identities and focus on their identities as African American nontraditional students with military experiences" (2). One case study, presented at the 2008 Conference on Issues Related to Higher Education and Returning Veterans, explored the experience of one Hispanic veteran student as he navigated his way into higher education. The study, however, was more of an evaluation of the

efficacy of a three course transition program for returning veterans than it was a consideration of how the multiple identities of a Hispanic student veteran shape his re-entry, persistence, or success. In fact, the only consideration that was given to the participants race was that Hispanic veterans are more likely to suffer from PTSD and challenges with readjustment (Brito, Callahan, & Marks, 2008). With the exception of Kenner's (2011) work, there are no large-scale qualitative or quantitative studies that focus on the experience of veterans of color as they return to higher education. What little work is being done focuses only on African American and Latino veterans and neglects Asian American, Native American, or Indian American veterans' experiences.

Gender

While most studies recognize that male and female veterans experience both the military and transition to non-military life in different ways, rare dedication is given to the unique experiences of men or the unique experiences of women. Pattillo (2011) uses quantitative data to describe a "typical Auburn University male student veteran" and a "typical Auburn University female student veteran." Baechtold and De Sawal (2009) and DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) are the only scholarly works that uniquely wrestle with the challenges of women veterans as they return to higher education. Iverson and Anderson (2013) dedicate much of their chapter "The complexity of veteran identity: Understanding the role of gender, race, and sexuality" to women veterans. No current research explores the experiences of student veterans that do not identify as male or female. However a small number, an estimated 300,000 of 26 million veterans nationwide, identify as transgendered (Bendery, 2012). Moreover, Grant, Mottet, and

Tanis (2011) report as many as "20% of adult transgendered people in the United States are military veterans" (Iverson & Anderson, 2013, p. 94). These veterans often struggle with getting benefits after service, especially in cases of name change. As GI Bill benefits continue to attract veterans to higher education, these bureaucratic issues must be considered. Tied closely to the subject of gender are notions of masculinity and femininity. Alfred, Hammer, and Good (2013) explored college-attending veterans and their conformity to masculine norms. They found that there was a close association between veterans who conformed closer to masculine norms and lower psychological well-being.

Sexuality

Though much work has been done on women veterans returning to classes, there is very little work on veteran students that identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Only Iverson and Anderson's (2013) work on how the masculine, white, heterosexual institution of the military affects how female, multi-raced, GLBT student veterans negotiate higher education. As the military does not officially track sexuality, the numbers of gay and lesbian veterans and current servicemen and women are largely unknown (Iverson & Anderson, 2013). Even after the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," many servicemen and women were wary of publicly "outing" themselves. This becomes even more complicated as they are discharged (Meyer, 2003), and often veterans are reticent to use veteran-based support services as they fear they will once again be closeted or silenced (Garland, 2007).

Disabilities

Much attention in recent scholarship has considered how veterans with both mental and physical disabilities could best be served by institutions of higher education. However, as DiRamio and Spires (2009) warn "It is important that campus personnel, including faculty members, understand that many veterans have more than one difficulty that affects their learning and may have multiple disability diagnoses" (82). In a descriptive study on wounded warriors, Vance and Miller (2009) report that out of a sample of 267 enrolled veterans with disabilities, 1, 201 disabilities were noted. This is an average of over four disabilities for each veteran. Issues of how disabilities and veteran status meet in the context of higher education are best addressed in a special issue of the *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*. Madaus, Miller, and Vance (2009) begin with a discussion of how veterans with disabilities have been treated, accommodated, and neglected since WWI. They also note that though the "challenge of any student with a disability in postsecondary education is significant… Veterans with disabilities bring with them not only the difficulties associated with acquired physical and mental challenges but the additional burden of adjusting to the affects [sic.] of combat, many after multiple tours in combat zones" (14). Vance and Miller (2009) also reported that 75% of the veterans with disabilities were women (this may result from a belief that female veterans may be more open to speaking about their disabilities than men [Vance & Miller, 2009]).

Age

   While no current study evaluates the ways that different age groups of veterans are experiencing higher education, most of the qualitative work done shares a theme of disconnect between "traditional" college student and student veterans. Even when those ages are similar, veterans often express annoyance and frustration with the ostensibly mundane and frivolous concerns of traditional students. In DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell's (2008) work on understanding the experiences of 25 students who served in Post 9/11 wars, one marine explained that fellow students "whine over nothing...They sit in a sheltered dorm room and do homework. It's not too hard. You hear people complaining and you're just like, why are you complaining?" (87).This student veteran's frustration echoes what Grinnell called "the shallow sophistry of the new crop of Freshmen" who should "follow these strong, strange [veterans] and to grow up a little faster in association with them" (Grinnell, 1946 qtd in Pattillo, 2011). DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) offer that "while the ages of the participants in this study were not drastically different from other students, there exists a difference in level of maturity that comes from wartime military service" (87).

Academic classification

   What we think we know about student veterans is actually what we think we know about undergraduate student veterans. There is no research that looks at the unique experiences of graduate student veterans as they transition in higher education. Research is either housed in community college environments that do not have graduate students or the research focuses on college students (one or two of whom may be in a

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graduate program). Vacchi (2012a/b) argues that because only 10% of student veterans are graduate students, no attention should be given to this special population. For the same reasons that attention should be given to all other sub-sections of the student veteran population, I argue that graduate students deserve our attention as well. Especially as graduate students will become future administrators and faculty members of higher education institutions, their experiences will inform how they help to serve other veteran populations.

Veterans do not see themselves as victims. Ever

Connelly (2012) notes that "veterans are not looking to get singled out to receive special privileges" (p. 16). Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) explain that "none of [their] participants expressed regret at having been in combat; [the veterans] were proud of their service" (p. 8). As students services begin to focus more on veterans, there is a dangerous trend of promoting a deficit view of student veterans (Vacchi, 2012a). Understanding that veterans rarely resonate with a disempowering or victim mindset is important in considering how services are structured, how services are advertised, and how services are ultimately used.

They can feel very alone on campus

Several things can separate student veterans from staff, faculty, and fellow students. Vacchi (2012a/b) notes that "veterans are in an awkward position as soon as they depart military service, and one of the most awkward places for a student veteran is on a college campus" (p. 18). Returns are awkward because of veterans' ages, experiences, priorities, and conditioned temperaments. A recurring theme in the

literature is that veterans miss the routines of military life (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010).

Student perspectives change after being in war. The mundane class for traditional

students is an opportunity for veterans. The maturity of veterans often disconnects

veterans from their peers. Even veterans that return to a peer group can feel isolated by

differing values, life experiences, and priorities (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 442).

Military life also offers a strategic and interconnected community. One participant in

Rumann and Hamrick's interviews with veterans commented "Once you come back

here, you have to remember people are independent and are not chained to you" (p. 445).

These "chains" can be limiting but they also serve as support mechanisms. The

independence of traditional college students can be a social obstacle for men and women

conditioned to live in community, often in conditions where "community" meant life or

death. Feelings of loneliness are often exacerbated by irritation or annoyance towards

college peers who may exaggerate problems or become easily overwhelmed by

situations that veterans think are rather innocuous (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell,

2008). Finally, as student veterans and traditional students do not share the common

experiences of war, both student and veteran student misunderstanding may lead to a

feeling of isolation or abandonment (Ryan, et. al. 2011). Kim and Cole (2013) add to this

conversation by offering that insight on levels of veteran engagement in higher

education. Their work is a powerful assessment of how student veterans are using (are

engaged with) student services offered on campuses. They found that student veterans

are less likely to participate in experiential learning, are more likely to engage in

community service, are more likely to spend time preparing for class, and are more

likely to speak to an instructor about grades (Kim & Cole, 2013, p. 1-2).

They are often unaware of their own traumatic brain injuries

Indeed, many of these returning soldiers, in an effort to "save face" or perpetuate

a heroic reputation, will not reveal struggles with alcohol, anxiety, depression, or stress

(Vacchi, 2012a/b). Additionally, many are unable to navigate the sometimes difficult

waters of self-disclosure, documentation, and application that accompany disability

offices or student counseling services. This protective maneuver leaves many veterans

without the proper support to adjust to the new environments of higher education and

changed hierarchies of power, value, and authority. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI) result from concussive blasts by explosions. TBI

and MTBI has become the "signature injury" of Post-9/11 veterans (Emmons, 2006 cited

in DiRamio & Spires, 2009). An increased use in improvised explosive devices (IEDs)

makes this trauma unique to wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Because the symptoms of

TBI (sleep disorders, depression, and anxiety) can often be associated with getting

adjusted to new surroundings and because symptoms do not show for many months after

a brain injury, many veterans remain mis- or undiagnosed (DiRamio & Spires, 2009).

Baechtold and De Sawal (2009) note that women are even less likely than men to be

properly diagnosed with TBI.

There are things you should never say to a student veteran (but they still hear them every day)

Student veterans are forced to endure faculty, staff, and student comments and questions that violate the privacy of veterans, a respect for diverse veteran opinions, and the honor of their service to the United States. While Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) note that offensive questioning rarely happens, student veterans still receive discouraging and uninviting comments from faculty and fellow students. One student interviewed recalled how a sociology professor "referred to the American soldier as a terrorist" (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008, p. 89). Additionally, some students were asked very specific, even graphic, questions about their time in service, questions that many veterans "found difficult to respond to" (Ackermann, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell, 2009, 11). Student questions included "Did you kill anyone over there?" and "Did you see anyone get blown up?" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 447).

Female veterans suffer deeply, and almost always in silence

Many descriptive studies (Radford, 2009) explain why it is important that we understand the experiences of female veterans. In 2009, though women made up just 7% of the armed forces, they represented "27% of all military undergraduates" (Radford, 2009, v). As men and women are returning to non-military life, a disproportionate number of women are enrolling or re-enrolling in institutions of higher education. As women in the military has been a long standing research interest (Zeigler & Gunderson, 2005; Jeffreys, 2007), it follows that literature surrounding women's experiences as student veterans would quickly follow as troops started returning to colleges and

universities. Baechtold and De Sawal (2009) explore the growing numbers of women veterans, the mental health problems of these veterans and how they affect women differently, the complex development of women's veteran identity, and ways that practitioners can meet women veterans' unique needs. Above all, Baechtold and De Sawal call for a greater understanding of the multiple identities that women veteran students negotiate and how each identity must be acknowledged and understood. As women are also more likely to victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment, Baechtold and De Sawal (2009) call for student affairs professionals to be prepared for stress and anxiety that may not be discussed, mental health issues that may not be known, and highly negative experiences that may not be divulged. DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) dedicate a full chapter to "women warriors" and their unique transition into higher education. DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) explore the nature of being a parent and a student, the aftershock of living in a male-dominated world, the development of identity and voice in the college and university setting, and, finally, coping mechanisms. DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) conclude "higher education can support female student veterans in a number of ways by capitalizing on the strengths that these women bring to the college environment" (p.79). Quantitative reports show that women are more likely to succeed at two-year colleges (Barnhart, 2011). No large qualitative study has to date focused on the experiences of women veterans re-enrolling in higher education. The stories of female veterans are usually part of larger qualitative studies that include men or practitioner-oriented studies that focus on mental health issues or the effects of sexual assault. Women veteran students, however, have found a place in the national media.

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Gloria Hilliard (2010) notes that women veterans are "nearly four times as likely as men to end up homeless" (par.2). Obviously, any added identity will alter our understanding of, ability to serve, and self-identification of women veteran students.

They often want to go back to the war zone

Some research suggests that veterans desire to return to a war zone where "camaraderie exists" (DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell, 2008, Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell, 2009). Many veterans return without a sense of direction (Bauman, 2009a/b). In war, they were purposeful members of a driving machine. At home, they are often displaced, lost, lonely, and confused. Charles Wittington, an Iraqi war veteran wrote in an in-class essay (later published by his school paper) that he wanted to return because war (and killing) was a "drug" (DiRamio and Jarvis, 2011).

Combat trauma is an injury, not a mental illness

The current language that is used to discuss veterans who sustained combat trauma (including PTSD and TBI) often implies a chronic, pervasive, even terminal state. A higher percentage of veterans are returning from Post 9/11 wars than have returned from other wars. These successes, however, came at the cost of many veterans returning with some kind of disability or injury (Kraus & Rattray, 2013). While many veterans suffer deeply and will spend many years recovering, it is imperative that campus communities, including but not limited to counseling services, understand that injury is injury, healable or adaptable to by degrees over time. DiRamio and Spires (2009) charge academic institutions to be leaders in the way America supports and helps rehabilitate soldiers with physical and mental trauma.

To succeed, veterans need your understanding, compassion and respect

DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) suggest that assistance comes in non-role dependent and role-dependent sources of support (p.15). Staff, counseling services, and administrators charged with the "role" of providing support must be consistent, educated, and able. However, students, faculty members, and administrators acting outside of the purview of their role can still support veterans through non-role dependent encouragement and assistance, similar to what one may expect from a friend or family member.

Student veterans are one of America's greatest untapped human resources

Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) consider veterans a "potential campus resource" based on the fact that many have had "leadership experiences and confronted difficult challenges, challenges that have matured and, perhaps, hardened them" (p. 12).

In addition to Lighthall's ten "things," two more characteristics need to be considered.

Veteran students benefit from the support of other veterans

In an effort to encourage and profit from the cohesion and connectedness of military men and women in the field, institutions of higher education must find ways to encourage veterans to associate with one another (DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011). DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) use the idea of *Gemeinschaft* (community built on social interaction) (Toennies, 1957) to explain how in an environment where the identity of the whole is more important than individual identity, without the "whole," student veterans often feel

out of place, isolated, or washed out. Many veterans will use campus veterans

organizations as a way to re-identify with *Gemeinschaft*. These organizations serve as a

way to connect new students to a campus veteran community, support current students,

and to encourage an ongoing process of healing and reflection in a safe place for

returning veterans (Summerlot, Green, and Parker, 2009). Student veteran organizations

also give student veterans an opportunity to continue leadership development, engage in

community service, and experience a social side of university life that may be more

appropriate for their age, family situation, and/or maturity (Hawthorne, Bauman, &

Ross, 2013). Other veterans may depend on individuals for help. Often wary of non-

military student service personnel or unwilling to divulge challenges to someone who

"doesn't understand them," veterans will choose to rely on fellow veterans (Livingston,

Havice, Cawthon, & Fleming, 2011). The need for these connections is not, however,

limited to organizations or individuals. Staff, faculty, and administrators who have had

military experience represent an invaluable resource to student veterans attempting to

negotiate higher education, especially as these resources are often few and far between

(Rumann & Hamrick, 2013).

Student veterans are a unique population

Borne out in both quantitative (Pattillo, 2011) and qualitative methods (Rumann

& Hamrick, 2013; Bauman 2009a/b), veterans are unique. They are different. They are

what Pattillo (2011) refers to as an "atypical sub-element of the current student body"

(Abstract). DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) write "they possess unique characteristics

stemming from personal experiences that few college administrators, faculty members,

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campus staff, or traditionally aged students can claim for themselves or, perhaps, empathize with or relate to" (p. 1). This unique status, however, comes with a call. "Given what we have learned about assisting the members of special needs student populations to achieve their educational goals, it would be a disservice to treat veterans as if they were invisible" (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell, 2009, p. 12).

Student services

Overall, the bureaucratic hurdles that veterans must jump through to get from the field to the classroom are not easily jumped (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell, 2009). From the Veterans Administration to the individual and often different policies and procedures at the campus level, veterans are often awash in information without clear direction. Unfortunately, those charged to pull veterans out of this mire are often as confused as the veterans. This section offers insight into what current research says about veterans' experiences with financing higher education, transferring credits, navigating student services, orientation programs, and entering classrooms. Each section also includes suggestions for practice made by researchers.

Finances

Involved in a complicated and often time-consuming battle with red-tape, finance officers at many universities and colleges are overwhelmed, understaffed, and underprepared for the volume and special circumstances of their student veterans (Rumann & Hamrick, 2009). The generous nature of the Post 9/11 GI Bill makes college a financial possibility for many veterans. However, if funds are not disbursed in a timely manner or veterans are not fully aware of what funds they should be receiving, the

process can be emotionally as well as financially taxing. On a personal note, I have purchased textbooks for my student veterans because their financial aid was not disbursed for books and supplies until late October for a fall semester. This student's struggle is unfortunately not unique. Other students who rely on stipends for food, rent, gas, and healthcare are in an even more precarious position than those without books. In 2009, 57% of surveyed institutions had some form of financial aid counseling for veterans (Cook and Kim, 2009). In 2012, 67% of surveyed institutions had financial aid/tuition assistance service for student veterans (McBain, Kim, Cook, & Snead, 2012). The rise in service programs is a clear marker that universities and colleges are becoming more aware of the need for veteran-specific financial aid counselors.

Transferring credits

Credit transfer is a challenge for all transferring students but offers a unique roadblock for veterans. Not only do veterans often have several different transcripts, they also have several courses through their military experience that may or may not be accepted (Mikelson & Saunders, 2013). At the community college level, Persky (2010) notes that several veterans interviewed were frustrated at the transfer process, citing inconsistencies in how many credits would be transferred, failure of institution level advisors to assess what experiences would "count" for academic credit, and an unfocused and generalist staff that did not serve the specific needs of veterans. National publications like *A Transfer Guide: Understanding Your Military Transcripts and ACE Credit* (American Council on Education, 2011) will prove useful to advisors helping student veterans or student veteran seeking to make sure their credit is fully accounted

for. State programs like Texas' "College Credit for Heroes" also work with institutions, departments, faculty, and students to make sure that student veterans are translating military service into proper credits and certifications (College Credit for Heroes, 2014).

Navigating student services

No clear consistency exists in campus support services for veterans (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell, 2009). While some veterans laud their campus programs for being helpful, even going above and beyond what was required of the program administrators, other students claim to be dismissed, disrespected, or misadvised. Re-enrollment in itself can be a difficult process for veterans, and many veteran students are frustrated that there is not a more streamlined process for veterans returning to complete their degree (McBain, Kim, Cook, & Snead, 2012).Student veterans also make support difficult when they do not identify as veterans or they do not identify specific problems they are facing. The self-sustaining and proud environment of the military can keep veterans from reaching out for assistance even when assistance is offered (Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, & Fleming, 2011).

Orientation programs

Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) report that student veterans are requesting orientation programs. Persky and Oliver (2011) note that their participants recommend creating "an orientation specifically for veterans and a first semester veterans' learning community" (p. 115). These orientation programs offer valuable information to returning veterans, offer a transition moment into the campus community, help veterans identify allies and fellow veterans, and give veterans a safe space to seek

support that they may not otherwise look for. According to McBain, Kim, Cook, and Snead (2012) fewer than half of interviewed higher education institutions has an orientation program specifically for adult learners or veterans. These orientations were more often offered by institutions that had a dedicated office for veteran affairs (p. 36).

The classroom

While universities and colleges are educating staff members, empowering new administrators devoted to veterans affairs, and enabling counseling services to work with student veterans, faculty must also understand how their roles as community members, mentors, and teachers can be used to serve veterans. DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) call for a reconsideration of curriculum that allows for student veterans to incorporate their unique experiences into the classroom. If space cannot be made in the syllabi of the current classroom, then many argue that new classrooms must be created that encourage reflection and offer orientation and support to incoming student veterans. These courses, reserved for student veterans, also offer a space for student veterans to forge friendships and support systems. In addition to curriculum changes, research calls for training programs for faculty members (Connelly, 2012). This training can include sensitivity training, how to accommodate student veterans with particular forms of lasting trauma, and ways to encourage student veterans' participation while respecting student veterans. Lafferty, Alford, Davis, and O'Connor (2008) offer five suggestions for faculty and staff working with veterans: curb your anxiety, curb your politics, channel your curiosity, remember that "It's not about you," and respect their privacy (p.8-9). When teaching veterans with PTSD, Blevins Sinski (2012) encourages faculty to consider classroom

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layout, give special attention to seating requests, make sure all directions are clearly written and disseminated, and be careful not to put student veterans "on the spot" without talking to them about it beforehand. Additional suggestions on focused learning environments are offered by Minnis, Bondi, and Rumann (2013). They argue that the creation of small cohorts of veterans allow veterans to socially integrate into the academic community and build lasting and meaningful relationships with faculty members. As an extension of these environments, they suggest learning communities whether fostered by a set course path or a campus space devoted to veterans would increase integration, and as Tinto (1975) would argue, persistence. Overall, faculty must respect that student veterans are a special population that may need special attention and that ultimately the faculty member's goal should be to reach *all* students.

A trend of all student service reports is that partnering helps. This partnership can be at a department level, a campus level, a state level, or at a national level. Lokken, Pfeffer, McAuley, and Strong (2009) discuss the benefits of two university systems, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, and a student veteran organization joining together to meet the needs of student veterans in the state of Minnesota. The partnership helps identify veterans, include veterans in assessment practices, address legal issues, and align services across the state. At the university level, Appalachian State University re-implemented veteran-friendly transition processes from the 1990s and brought administrators together to consider how current veterans can be served (Johnson, 2009). Finally, the University of West Florida takes advantage of its geography to partner with military installations located in Pensacola, Florida. These partnerships have aided in

transitions of veterans, enrollment of active-duty servicemen and women, as well as a healthy dialogue about what both veterans and active-duty students need to be successful (Ford, Northrup, & Wiley, 2009).

Student services for veterans are growing (McBain, Kim, Cook, & Snead, 2012). The hope is that the programs that are growing are truly serving veterans. It is too early to determine if many of these programs are successful. All we have to evaluate them are the experiences of veterans interviewed, and internal evaluations that often do not see the light of day. An unfortunate statistic, discussed later in this review, is the fact that the new service established by the most participating universities in McBain, Kim, Cook, and Snead's (2012) study was a marketing and outreach strategy to recruit veterans. While the top can be spun both ways, this signifies that not all "veteran-friendly" programs are being initiated for the sole benefit of veterans.

Popular Media

While administrators, faculty, and researchers hear the scholarly conversation, a louder voice is provided by popular media. What news outlets like National Public Radio, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* say about veterans as they return to college has become the collective knowledge. These stories are often very personal accounts of student veterans—student veterans combating trauma, financial difficulty, or transition problems. Vacchi (2012a) argues that popular media often exaggerate the experiences of a handful of student veterans and do not adequately show the majority of successful, well-transitioned student veterans on campuses. While Vacchi makes an important point that

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"exaggerating the challenges of student veterans is not only disingenuous but can also encourage campus members to keep their distance from veterans" (p. 16), it is also important to note that qualitative and quantitative research (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, Bauman, 2009a/b, Persky, 2010, DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell, 2008, Pattillo, 2011) has shown that many veterans students are struggling and need additional support. While it is unreasonable to think that an exhaustive overview of all national, regional, and local attention on veterans in the classroom is possible within the purview of this review, this section contains multiple examples and dominant themes of these publications.

Other publications included in this section are self-published or mass-published "self-help" books that focus on empowering student veterans to make the most of their transitions, counseling family members and friends of veterans on how to support their veterans, and advising university officials, faculty members, and students on what they should expect when working with veterans. These books are often written by scholars and practioners. However, their self-publication often leaves them out of the scholarly conversation. They are also usually not peer-reviewed or rigorously examined, but their content (in some cases) is the most relevant and clear of all written work on returning veterans. These publications are also written with the student veteran in mind—readable and applicable.

Magazine, newspaper, and online publications

An effort to capture all journalism that has covered veterans and their individual and collective returns to higher education is similar to an effort to document all tabloids

that have ever mentioned Elvis Presley or all books that have used the word potato. As Post 9/11 veterans enroll in higher education, their presence on campus and in popular news outlets has risen exponentially. This section is organized into three subsections of investigative journalism. As veterans returning to college is a salient issue for people in the field of higher education, what journalists are saying in periodicals that cater to higher education faculty, administrators, and staff is important. The first subsection considers what the *Chronicle of Higher Education* has written about veterans and education. The next subsection considers what national news outlets have written. The final subsection explores what state and local media (including state, city, and campus newspapers) has said about veterans and higher education.

The *Chronicle of Higher Education*

While "the *Chronicle*," as it is referred to in many academic circles, is not the only investigative reporting with a focus on higher education, it is certainly the most read. Also, because of its audience and the careful nature of its reporting it stands apart from other national publications. The *Chronicle* has an academic air that gives more authority to its voice.

A general search on the *Chronicle*'s website using the search term "veteran" rewards the searcher with over 2500 articles. Unfortunately, many of these may repeat articles, are blog articles, or articles discussing veteran administrators or teachers. As my goal is not to present an exhaustive analysis of *Chronicle* articles but a snapshot of what the *Chronicle* chronicles, I will present the articles (not blog posts) from 2010 to 2011 that relate to veterans. Though a short span, the collection of media that comes out

daily is too much to be presented in full. 2010-2011 follows the Post 9/11 GI Bill in its

early applications and marks a historic period of growth among researchers and

institutions of higher education on the importance of recognizing and serving student

veterans. These articles can be separated in a variety of ways. I have distributed them

into seven themes: finances, for-profits, student characteristics, campus needs,

classroom, academic needs, and miscellaneous.

Finances

Most of the articles on finance either dealt with students' ability to pay or

changes in how tuition assistance was structured. Nelson (2010) reports that

disbursements of Post-9/11 benefits have mostly been delayed. In personal

conversations with students who are veterans, this is not always the case. As recently as

2012, veterans have complained about how housing allowances are often not given until

three months into the semester. The article also explores how changes in the payment

system and what the GI Bill can be used for may affect disbursement schedules in the

future. Bill S. 3447, a bill proposed to improve financial assistance to Post-9/11 veterans,

was passed by the Senate in December 2010 and signed by the president on January 4,

2011 (Kiley, 2011). As of November 2010, many financial aid programs were getting

comfortable with changes in the GI Bill. This has eased veterans' navigation of the

program and the tight budget on which many veterans live (Kiley, 2010). The Marine

Corps cut tuition assistance by an astounding 80% in 2011 (Field, 2011a). While the

Department of Defense claims that most of the aid can be made up for by other federal

aid programs like the GI Bill, the move strains the relationships some institutions have

with the government, especially those that require a certain percentage of aid to come from private or nonfederal sources (Field, 2011a). While many returning soldiers can use the GI Bill and other federal monies to make up the loss, this sets a dangerous precedent for future cuts to military educational aid.

For-profits

Sewall (2010) reports that as of 2010 "Among the 15 institutions that enrolled more than 1,000 students who used the GI Bill's benefits from October [2009] to May [2010], seven were for-profits and five were community colleges" (par. 3). Simultaneous articles about the rigor and ethics of for-profit institutions make this a concerning statistic. The money that for-profit institutions bring in from veterans benefits is staggering (Eaton, 2011a; Eaton 2011b). Though fewer than 10% of university and college students are enrolled in for-profit institutions, 36% of federally distributed money for veteran college benefits was paid to these institutions (Field, 2010). Field's article is one of many raising important questions about whether or not for-profit institutions were taking advantage of veterans who may not know the benefits or detriments of attending such an institution. The private sector, of course, turns the conversation to praise the men and women of the armed forces and their family members who have chosen to pursue higher education. This conversation is continued in 2011 as the accreditation process of for-profit institutions was called into question. Kelderman (2011) discussed how these for-profit institutions have historically transferred accreditation from purchased flailing nonprofit colleges and how 90% of their funding is federal funding, not including GI Bill money used by veterans and their families.

Carlson (2011) explains that enrollment in some low-residency nonprofits (with multiple online classes) does not allow veterans to earn housing allowances. This is just another example of how the triangular relationship of higher education, government, and veteran assistance is complicated.

Field (2011b) reports on proposed changes to the 90/10 rule that determines whether or not for-profit institutions can receive federal aid. According to the rule, only 90% of revenue can come from federal student aid, and veterans benefits are not currently considered federal aid. If GI money were to be included in the 90%, most for-profits would lose the ability to offer federal student aid (Field, 2011b). Unfortunately, this 90/10 move may not benefit students as some for-profits are simply raising their tuition to force a gap that must be paid out of non-federal dollars (Blumenstyk, 2011b). Many universities are envisioning online degree programs, and online courses to both serve students and attract students that may choose a for-profit option. Veterans are an oft-targeted demographic by schools looking to boost online enrollment (Blumenstyk, 2011)

Student characteristics

Hoover (2011) shares the experiences of David Curtis, a student veteran, ten years after 9/11. Curtis recounts why he joined the military, his experiences in Iraq, and re-entering the classroom. He says that he can "always pick out the veterans. It's their tattoos, their build, the way they walk" (Hoover, 2011). While these human-interest stories are plentiful in most popular media, they are rarer in the *Chronicle*. According to a national report by the National Center for Veterans' Studies at the University of Utah

and Student Veterans of America, almost 50% of student veterans have thought of suicide and an alarming 20% have planned to kill themselves (Lipka, 2011a). Lipka (2010) reports National Survey of Student Engagement Data that traced how veterans spend their time. Veterans spend more time caring for dependents and working than nonveteran peers. Additionally, veterans are reported to have less engagement with faculty. All of these articles point towards a need for richer engagement of student veterans and faculty.

Campus needs

Kelderman (2010) explores the new ways in which institutions need to prepare themselves for discrimination as campuses are diversifying. Specifically, regarding accommodations provided to students with disabilities, many campuses must make adequate adjustments to physical and policy landscapes. Veterans, many of whom return with disabilities or need of accommodation, are a special population to consider. Fogg (2010) reports that community colleges are looking for ways to "lighten the load" as they have seen an increase in students who are coming in with pre-existing anxiety and depression issues. Student veterans have also increased counseling services' workloads at two-year colleges. Lipka (2011b) traces the growth of Sacramento State University's Student Veteran Success Program, a student support center for veterans. The program grew out of external funds and student need. Programs like this are becoming common practice as more and more institutions recognize their responsibility to serve student veterans and attempt a "veteran-friendly" designation for marketing and recruiting purposes. Lipka (2011a) notes a unique program introduced by Sacramento

State University, stickers that faculty and staff can put on doors to identify their offices as "safe places" for veterans. This has been done for many years in an attempt to serve GLBT students. Lipka (2011b) also offers advice from large grant winners in the state of California on how to grow veterans programs. Visibility is key to developing a presence and reputation for serving. 2013 saw the millionth veteran take advantage of the Post 9/11 GI Bill (Sander, 2013b).

Classroom

Articles relating to the classroom often consider curriculum and how teachers interact with students who have served in the armed forces. Gonzalez (2011) reports how Goodwill is working to support the job-training curriculum at two colleges in North Carolina, Texas, and Washington D.C. These partnerships are aimed at helping "those most in need—including single parents, veterans, people with criminal records, returning adult workers, and those with only a high-school diploma" (Gonzalez, 2011, par.12). While these partnerships are important to understand, perhaps more important is the how we see veterans and what groups we associate them with. Some research treats veterans like a marginalized demographic (African American, LGBT) while other consider veterans an economically disadvantaged population. Goldberg (2011) explained that she could no longer teach military history at the University of Texas at Arlington because the emotional and psychological needs of her students were too much. Schmeling (2011) responded to Goldberg's article by asking that faculty become trained in ways to better understand and support veterans and that clear boundaries are set in the classroom. Bellesiles (2010) discusses the importance of being sensitive to veterans and veterans'

family members who may be in college classrooms. This is particularly important when teaching courses that deal directly with the politics of war or war itself.

Academic needs

Marchand (2010) comments on a national survey of incoming freshmen, citing their concern about paying for college; she notes that many incoming students (39%) think they will need tutoring in college, a significant cost. Of the 595 incoming freshmen who identified themselves as veterans, 36% said that they would need tutoring in mathematics. As veterans are disproportionately enrolling in developmental classes (particularly mathematics), this is a critical concern for what the GI Bill will and will not cover as additional educational expenses. The *Chronicle* reported that in the 2007-2008 academic year, 17% of veterans needed to take at least one remedial course (Characteristics of First-Time Undergraduates Who Took Remedial Courses in 2007-8, 2011). Twenty percent of non-veteran students needed to take at least one course, giving the impression that not as many veterans need remedial education. These statistics are, however, five years old and do not take into account the drawn-down forces in either Iraq or Afghanistan. Brainard (2011) summarizes a UCLA report that claims veterans students are less prepared for the academic challenges of college and often require developmental classes and extensive tutoring.

Private schools

A new concern has admissions boards and university presidents alarmed. Though veterans do not make up a substantial part of any school's student population, few veterans have found their way into the elite private schools. At Princeton, for example,

there is one (not one percent, just one student). These low numbers are forcing some

private elites to reconsider admissions processes for veterans, a dangerous step to take as

annual admissions are often highly contested and competitive (Sander, 2013a).

Miscellaneous

   Li (2010) conducted an interview with a Virginia art professor whose bronze

sculpture of Stalin and its subsequent home in the National D-day Memorial angered

community members, some of whom were veterans. While the article does not

specifically mention student veterans, it is important to consider how faculty actions may

incite student veterans and then thoughtfully consider whether or not those moments are

important to protect as they represent academic freedom or should be disavowed as they

seem to be targeting a particular student population. Reiss (2011) argues that the age

limit for Rhodes Scholars should be changed to accommodate student veterans who wish

to apply.

These articles, again, provide only a glimpse into what trade-specific periodicals

discuss. A collection of 2008 articles or 2012 articles would lean towards what policies

are being enacted during that time as these articles leaned toward the new GI Bill

provisions and the 90/10 debate.

National news outlets

National Public Radio (NPR) has released several news stories about veterans

returning to education (Abramson, 2012a; Abramson, 2012b; Abramson, 2012c), the

majority of which are discussing for-profit institutions "taking advantage" of student

veterans. The *New York Times* (*NYT*) also has produced many articles in the last three

years (a search using the terms "veterans" and "education" yielded 4,460 articles between January 2010 and December 2012). Many of these articles are also dedicated to examining for-profit institutions of higher education—how much revenue they make on veteran students, how they recruit veteran students, and whether or not their students should have access to federal aid (Lewin, 2012; Lipton, 2010; and Patraeus, 2011). Other articles consider the growth of the GI Bill and its effects on veterans choosing to return to colleges, universities, and trade schools. Some articles trace the experiences of particular veterans, giving the reader a sense of those veterans' experiences (Wallis, 2012; Foderaro, 2010). Finally, generalist articles discuss the needs and experiences of veterans at a state or national scale, citing government or non-profit reports (Hamilton, 2011; Pérez-Peña, 2012).

The *Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*) did not have as many articles as NPR or *NYT* that were tailored to veterans and education. While the publication has published many pieces on the experience of soldiers in foreign theatres and their returns (Phillips, 2012), articles on veterans returning to higher education are rare. *WSJ* comments, like NPR and *NYT*, on for-profit institutions, but the majority of its attention to veterans is how veteran benefits affect multiple generations of veterans and tips on how veterans can manage money.

The national media stage is dominated by concerns over for-profit institutions and the national bills set to limit "predatory practices." However, all national media outlets take time to explore the experiences of veterans returning to education, validating that there is a nation-wide interest in the welfare of the returning veteran.

Many websites, run by for-profit and nonprofit organizations, run ratings for universities around the nation. The ratings usually give the user an idea of how "veteran-friendly" the campus is. Militaryfriendlyschools.com offers a state-by-state analysis of both virtual and traditional universities, complete with student veteran reviews. Militarytimesedge.com offers a similar ranking that lists four-year, online, and two-year colleges that are "best for vets."

While not necessarily a national publication, an important blog that reviews national media has grown since veterans have returned to classrooms. The Student Veterans of America website offers commentary on many of the articles that are published nationally. Michael Dakduk, SVA's Executive Director, responds to these articles in a section titled "Latest News." His critiques often explore the insensitive or ire-inducing language used by authors or assumptions and false data that represent veterans poorly.

State and local news

Cities and states run articles that mention what is happening in the national conversation about veterans and education, but more often than not, their articles revolve around local veterans and local institutions. Stories about men and women who have served and are enrolling in undergraduate and graduate programs offer inviting prose that eventually asks questions about how America is supporting troops or what other services should be available (Siegel, *Dallas News*, 2012). Some publications consider how statewide or citywide policies and procedures can serve veterans in education (Veterans Face Issues in Higher Education, *The State Journal*, 2012).

Campus papers rarely consider more than the stories of their own student veterans (Ruffin, 2014; McDougald, 2013; Schotzclaw, 2010). These articles often shed light on what experience(s) the student veteran has had on campus and what the transition has been like. Some articles highlight new facilities offered to student veterans or what administrators are doing to create new facilities (Hardy, 2012; Cissell, 2012, Grubaugh, 2014).

Books

This section only offers a sampling of available books for veterans. As more and more veterans return home, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, veteran support organizations, and veterans write books on how to transition from a military environment to a civilian environment, specifically one as unique as that of higher education. To make it clear from the offset, these books are no less valuable or influential than scholarly publications mentioned in the "Scholarly Conversations" section of this review. Indeed, they are very different animals. These books are about dissemination of knowledge and not synthesis of knowledge. These books have a final aim at informing, training, and preparing, not setting a stage for debate and future research. It also needs to be said that the authors of these books are often clinical psychologists, higher education professors, or retired military with extensive experience in the field of counseling veterans (often with much more experience than those writing articles featured in the "Scholarly Conversations" section). The place of these books in a section entitled "Popular Media" is not a demotion as much as it is a definition. These are the books that student veterans are reading.

The books currently being published usually contain between 200 and 300 pages. Their titles cater to a soldier's taste, including phrases like "war zone," "once a warrior, always a warrior" and "courage after fire." The covers of these books picture veterans (often diverse in age, gender, and race) smiling, hugging loved ones, with mortar board, or in business attire.

Finally, each of the books often starts with an address to veterans, thanking them for their service, honoring those who have made the "ultimate sacrifice," and wishing them luck as they transition out of the military. In *Courage After Fire* (Armstrong, Best, & Domenici, 2006), Senator Bob Dole offers these opening remarks:

> In battle, courage means sacrificing our own well-being for our fellow soldiers and for our country. After battle, courage means concentrating on and being honest with ourselves, using all the tools we can gather to lead the best life we can, and, by example, giving something to those who will follow in our footsteps. I thank you for your service to our country, and I sincerely encourage you now to focus on your own well-being (Dole, 2006, p. 3)

In *Educating Veterans in the 21st Century* (Herrmann, Hopkins, Wilson, & Allen, 2009) and *Progress in Educating Veterans in the 21st Century* (Herrmann, Hopkins, Wilson, & Allen, 2011), the authors connect with the reader who could be a veteran by explaining that they are each retired military, they have served student veterans in some capacity during their post-war careers, and that they completed their education with the help of the GI Bill. Both of their books are dedicated (respectively) to "all who have served; especially those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and those who returned with

medical problems that continued, sometimes known or unknown to others, long after

their discharge (Herrmann, et al., 2009)" and "to all veterans… [and] to all veterans who

ever wanted a college degree but did not get one because they needed assistance"

(Herrmann, et al., 2011). Slone and Friedman (2008) dedicate their book to "all of the

brave women and men who have been, will be, or are deployed to the Middle East

during the Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom conflicts, and

their families who also sacrificed."

The selected books cover broad-range transition and education-specific

transition. Hay, Rorrer, Rivera, Krannich, & Krannich's (2006) *Military transition to*

civilian success: The complete guide for veterans and their families offers advice

predominantly on veterans seeking employment after service. Veterans are coached

through getting organized, creating a network, interviewing, and starting their own

business among other things. *After the war zone: A practical guide for returning troops*

and their families (Slone & Friedman, 2008) focuses on the general mental health of

returning veterans, helping them cope with transition, tragedy, and trauma. Similarly,

Hoge (2010) offers advice to veterans on coping with combat stress, PTSD, and mTBI.

Armstrong, Best, and Domenici (2006) also offer general advice on coping with

transition, relating to friends and family, and dealing with grief and loss.

One disjunction between the authors of many of these books and current veterans

is time. While their service, decorations, and experiences help to connect the authors

with returning veterans, the authors often relate the veteran's situation with their own.

In some cases, this may be appropriate, but in others Vietnam and Korean War vets must

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acknowledge that the war that was fought and the places veterans are returning to are notably different. Books like *Best boot forward: What veterans need to read for their transition to succeed* (Emre, 2012) are written by veterans of Post 9/11 wars and may be able to give advice that resonates with the unique veteran that is currently coming home. Emre offers a particularly readable advice book on what to expect when returning to the classroom and then the work force. He weaves educational advice with economic, personal, and vocational advice using chapter titles like "Is School for Fools" and "Clown Shoe U: 'For-Profit' Colleges" (Emre, 2012). Characteristic of self-published works Emre offers that his book gives practical advice that other (more academic) books may not. He writes in his prologue that "within [this] book you will not find any of the usual photocopied resume [*sic*] templates, organizational listings and boring sugarcoated pep talk that have come to embody much of the transitional assistance literature that's currently available. What you will find instead is relevant and up to date information from one of your own—a post-911 veteran who has been in your boots and tells it like it is" (Emre, 2012, p. 10).

Some series are also beginning to note veteran needs and offering veteran-specific publications. David Cass's *The strategic student: transitioning from high school to college academics* (2011) was followed a year later by *The strategic student: Veteran's edition: Successfully transitioning from the military to college academics* (2012). It is still rare, however, to find books that focus on academic transitions alone. Renza and Lizotte (2010) help veterans and their families navigate government benefits in *Military education benefits for college: A comprehensive guide for military members,*

veterans, and their dependents. Only Herrmann, et al. (2009, 2012) gives practical

advice on returning to college after military service that is grounded in the current

literature and highly readable. The simple design (white letters on a blue cover) and

typeface (large, sans-serif font) highlight that this book is more of a functional manual

than a story. Herrmann, et al. explore choosing colleges, financing colleges, campus

cultures, transferring credits, health issues, and problems reported by veterans. In their

2012 update, they re-examine these themes and add a section titled "What it Takes to be

a Good Educator of Veterans." For any practioner, veteran, or researcher who wants a

broad and thorough introduction to what needs to be considered when working with

veterans as they return to higher education, Herrmann, et al.'s work is unmatched.

A final series that needs attention is Astor, Jacobson, and Benbenishty's (2012)

four-part series on working with the children of veterans in K-12. The series provides

advice to parents, pupil personnel, school administrators, and teachers. The first of its

kind, this series foreshadows similar series for university administrators, teachers, pupil

personnel, families, and veterans. The four books are published by Teacher's College

Press but are cited here as they are slightly outside of the purview of this literature

review and are branded and organized as coaching resources more than academic

resources.

Policies

What the second and third horses of this review report or respond to, and what

the first horse of this review is shaped by, is the fourth horse—policies. From the Morrill

Land-Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890 through the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944

to the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Both federal and state bills have been passed that affect veterans. Some are rather innocuous like Texas House Bill HB1514 which allows veterans to get a "veteran" distinction placed on their driver's license. Some, however, like HR4057, a bill designed to increase transparency in how colleges and universities serve veterans, may significantly change the landscape of higher education. In an effort to be as thorough as possible, this section will be divided into two subsections: federal laws and state laws. This section is meant to be a peppering of federal and state policies that affect student veterans. It is outside of the purview of this work to provide a comprehensive list of all legislation that affects student veterans. Instead, I will focus primarily on the federal laws that influence how student veterans are treated, the bills from 2011 and 2012 that have either passed or are stopped at some point in the legislative process, and select state bills that have either passed or been proposed.

Federal laws

Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974

The VEVRAA established veteran status as a protected class by the United States. The act gave priority to veterans for Department of Labor job training programs, mandated that organization in contract with the government "take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified covered veterans," and established that the United States had "an obligations to assist veterans of the Armed Forces in readjusting to civilian life" (Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974. (1974)

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The Higher Education Relief Opportunities Act for Students (HEROES) Act

of 2003 (Public Law 108-76)

The HEROES Act provides protections for military who are receiving Title IV financial aid. The hope of the act is that no undue stress or financial hardship is undertaken by students because of their military involvement. The act gives the Secretary of the US Department of Education flexibility in whether or not to waive or modify provisions of federal financial aid during times of war.

Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) (Public Law 108-189)

An update of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940, the SCRA provides "various financial, civil, and legal protections to servicemembers, including National Guard members, as they are called to active duty" (McGrevey & Kehrer, 2009).

Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) (Public Law 100-48)

The Montgomery GI Bill (known as Chapter 30) was an update of the 1952 and 1966 changes in the GI Bill. An important thing to note about the MGIB was that it paid beneficiaries in one lump sum. Housing expenses as well as tuition were in one check. As Caspers and Ackerman (2013) note, this indirectly encouraged veterans to seek low-cost education, thus increasing personal and family budgets with benefit money.

Supplemental Appropriation Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-252)

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, a provision of the 2008 Supplemental Appropriation Act, was far more generous than its preceding bills and also started paying tuition and fees directly to the universities and colleges. This shift made more expensive institutions attractive, and the increase in housing allowances and living stipends made attending

school without paid employment possible. The Post-9/11 Bill (Chapter 33) pays full tuition and benefits at public schools and up to $17,500 annually at private institutions (Caspers and Ackerman, 2013). Another change from the MGIB is that veterans do not have to pay into the system from their base pay (McGrevey & Kehrer, 2009). MGIB student veterans were charged $1200 out of base pay to enroll in the Chapter 30 program.

H.R. 4057: Improving Transparency of Education Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2012

Passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, this bill directs the VA to "develop a comprehensive policy to improve outreach and transparency to veterans and members of the Armed Forces through the provision of information on institutions of higher learning" (H.R. 4057). The bill would track and make available accreditation, post graduation employment rates, and other institutional information to veterans; limit how institutions can recruit student veterans; give assistance to institutional entities that are charged with submitting reports required by the bill; and limit the amount of awards and bonuses paid to employees of the VA. The bill currently awaits House approval of Senate changes and presidential signature.

H.R.1383: Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act of 2011

Now law, H.R. 1383 preserves the higher tuition rates paid to non-public institutions for student veterans prior to the maximum of $17,500 enacted by the Post-9/11 GI Bill. This bill particularly aids those students who began coursework before the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2008.

S.2116: Military and Veterans Education Protection Act

The Military and Veterans Education Protection Act, referred to committee in February of 2012 would consider revenues from military and veterans education programs as part of the Federal revenues that for-profit institutions are allowed to receive. The 90/10 rule that currently determines whether or not proprietary institutions receive federal financial aid (90% federal/ 10% non-federal) does not include GI Bill money as part of the 90% federal revenue. If this bill were to pass, many for-profit institutions would either stop receiving federal aid or revisit how students are allowed to pay. Similar bills (HR 3447 and HR 3764) were referred to committee in 2011. S. 2032, the Protecting Our Students and Taxpayers Act, asks that 10% be raised to no less than 15%.

H.R. 6123: Fulfilling Our Promise to Student Veterans Act of 2012

Also referred to committee, HR 6123 gives the Secretary of the Army the authority to correct "erroneous Army College Fund benefit amounts" (HR 6123). S. 2179, the Military and Veterans Educational Reform Act of 2012, also offers instruction on how oversight of laws affecting student veterans should be changed.

H.R. 6101: Student Veteran Academic Counseling Enhancement Act

Republican Judy Chu (CA32) proposed this bill that seeks to improve educational counseling services available to veterans. The bills calls for a counselor for every 100 covered students in different geographical areas. Veterans would be required to meet with educational counselors once each term. Finally, the bill proposes a complaint tracking system that student veterans could use to report problems at different

institutions. These complaints would be made public and searchable by student veterans.

S. 2296: Protecting Financial Aid for Students and Taxpayers Act

S. 2296, referred to committee, restricts how educational institutions use federal monies. The bill proposes that no federal money can be used for "advertising, marketing, or recruiting purposes" (S.2296). A response bill to what many have called predatory veteran recruiting, the bill would mainly affect for-profit institutions.

S. 2241: GI Bill Consumer Awareness Act of 2012

The GI Bill Consumer Awareness Act asks for publications by government departments about educational institutions encompassing benefits including transferability of credits, average tuition and fees, debt aggregated by students, default rate, and the number of veterans enrolled. The bill is designed to help veterans have the proper information necessary to make the right college decision. The bill is out of committee and reported.

Executive Order 13607 (2012)

Though not a law, EO 1307 was a presidential order that made "serving service members, veterans, spouses, and other family members" a national priority. The order contained five sections that addressed policy, Principles of Excellence for educational institutions, implementation of the Principles of Excellence, strengthening compliance regulations and processes, and general provisions for the order. The policy piece specifically targeted misleading recruitment campaigns by colleges and universities that are not prepared to support veterans. Additionally, the order requests more information

to be made available to service members, veterans, and their families. The Principles of Excellence includes provisions to make the financial aid, class registration, application, and graduation a more stream-lined and user-friendly process. The Principles of Excellence are then attached to various entities (Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Secretaries of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Education) that are charged with particular duties. The fourth section considers ways that compliance mechanisms can be better evaluated or adjusted to serve veterans. Finally, the fifth section (and perhaps the most important section) reminds readers that the order is "not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person" (EO 1307: Sec. 5). While protecting the nation and its entities from lawsuits, this section also remind the reader that Executive Orders are not laws and the suggestions of the president are simply suggestions.

The benefit of the order was that it increased conversations about veterans and education and supported much of the legislation that attempted to curb deceptive and predatory collegiate marketing campaigns.

State laws

Ohio Senate Bill 367

The bill both works to enhance service and support to student veterans while simultaneously developing a "policy to award academic credit to veterans for training received while in the military" (Ohio SB 367). Credit for service is an important topic

raised by accreditation organizations, state governments, and academic administrators. The bill calls for training of personnel and counseling services to better serve veterans. Though just out of committee, Ohio Senate Bill 367 represents an *en vogue* legislative agenda shared by many states.

The Hinson- Hazlewood Act

Listed as Subchapter B: Section 54.203 of the Texas Education Code, the Hazlewood Act provides exemptions from tuition and some fees for qualifying veterans or surviving dependents. These exemptions do not apply if the veteran or dependent is receiving other educational aid (i.e. Chapter 30, Chapter 33). The exemptions also only apply to veterans who were Texas residents at the time of their entry into the Armed Forces. Recent changes in the act give further clarification regarding who dependents can be (must be under 25, making satisfactory progress, a biological, adopted, step or otherwise legally dependent child). The act is becoming a financial burden on many larger campuses as the number of Hazlewood students jumped from 9,882 in the 2009-201 school year to 22, 583 the following year (Rohr, 2012). The challenge of Hazlewood is that it is not funded by the state; instead, it is taken from non-Hazlewood student tuition payments.

New Mexico S.B 136

S.B 136, "Veterans' In-State Tuition Act," requires honorably discharged veterans to be charged only resident tuition at state institutions of higher education. This bill and many like it either waive residency requirements completely or shorten the length of time a veteran must be in the state before receiving resident eligibility.

Tennessee H. Res. 2961

Many bills adjust tuition at state-supported institutions. Other bills, like TN H.B. 2961 affect administrative processes at state-supported universities and colleges. TN H.B. 2961 (now Chapter No. 788), allows combat veterans the opportunity to register at Tennessee colleges and universities before the general population. These privileges are a way to serve veterans with disabilities as well as those veterans who need specific courses or course times to better transition into the college environment.

Arizona H.B. 2602

A bill proposing veteran supportive campuses determines what it means to be a "veteran supportive campus" and a requirement to report the number of veterans enrolled at each institution. The bill clarifies what constitutes an "Arizona veteran supportive campus:" an annual campus survey identifying veterans needs, a steering committee that includes veterans, sensitivity training for faculty and staff, orientation programs for veterans, peer mentoring, outreach to local military bases, "one-stop" resource and study centers, and community-based support for veterans and veteran centers.

For a more complete list of state laws, please see Appendix C. The state laws presented show how state legislatures are seeking ways to serve veterans, how service is usually financially related, and how efforts to serve veterans often result in more campus level bureaucracy.

Connections

The history of veterans and higher education relates to all three other literatures in a symbiotic way. First and foremost, history provides context and the socially constructed narrative in which all other literatures are incubated. The policies formed are responsive polices to what is observed, but they are also responding to the policies that have previously been enacted. History informs policy and legislative agendas. Additionally, history is formed by these policies. The Hinson-Hazlewood Act, for example, offers tuition payment for Texas veterans whose GI Bill has been depleted (CITE Hinson-Hazlewood). However, it was the historical (and policy) response to World War II veterans that initiated financial service in tuition payments as a national value. Outside of the context of a historical responsibility to financially assist veterans who choose to pursue higher education, it is possible that a 21st century government would not have initiated such support.

As history can be considered a constructed history, the place of popular media and public opinion can be said to shape and be shaped by history. There are specific historical actions to which the public will respond. These actions, then, give the public something to respond to. However, how they respond can shape how that action is viewed and what place it has in history. World War II veterans and Vietnam veterans both returned after a war. However, public opinion of the two wars made the experiences of these two veteran groups different. Public opinion is driven by historical events, but history can be written by the pen of the populace.

Academics, regardless of how objective they try to be (if that is even one of their goals) select history to evaluate or to contextualize their research. Even this literature review is not complete. There are things that I spend more time on. There are things that I neglect. Even an attempt at an exhaustive review of literature would miss something. Academics make choices. These choices value and devalue history. Even the history we read was written by someone who made choices. When academics write history, they "write" or construct history.

Research has an authorial hand on history, but it also interacts with public opinion and policy. Policy is often based on research (not as often as most researchers would like). Nonetheless, work done on women veterans and veterans with PTSD and mTBI have encouraged several new steps in student services to meet the special psychological and counseling needs of these veterans. A policy was created based on research. Additionally, research often responds to policy. An evaluation of how veterans are using the GI Bill or what proposed services are useful to veterans responds to enacted policy and thereby shapes future policy. Public media and researchers too are simultaneously influenced and influencing. What outrages the public drives research agendas. What researchers concern themselves with drives policy that informs public opinions.

No arena of research stands alone. They inform one another, they critique one another. They shape and shift while moving at full speed. This literature review is a still frame of the current conversation about student veterans. Tomorrow will surely see movements in one or all of these areas. As higher education strives to serve *all* of their

students better, it is important to listen to the full conversation: history, academia,

popular media, and policy.

CHAPTER III

FIVE CRITICAL THEORIES

This chapter explores five critical theories: feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability theory, and border theory. The beginning of the chapter focuses on an introduction to critical theory and then the rest of the chapter expands on each theory (its history, early applications, and tenets). As shown in Figure 2, both their interaction and isolation is important for this exercise in theory building.

Figure 2: Critical Theories
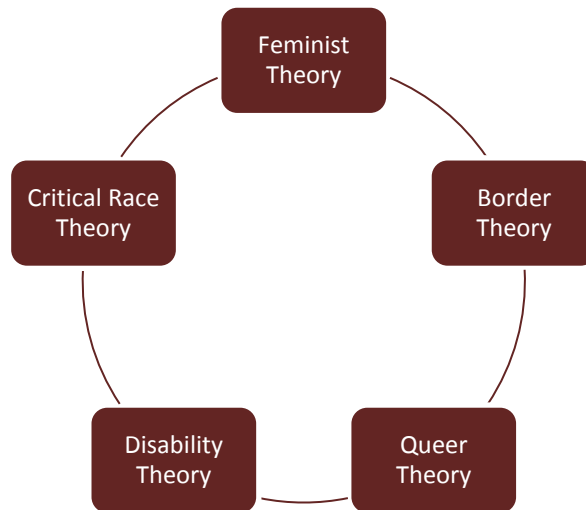
To give a healthy history of all critical theories is not only a Sisyphean task (as that boulder has already been rolled and rerolled), it is out of the purview of this work. However, in moving towards veteran critical theory, it is important to evaluate critical

theories that have stemmed from identity politics as both descriptive and prescriptive. We must understand their origin, early history, and major tenets in order to properly construct an equally applicable and sustainable way to discuss the challenges facing returning veterans.

What follows is a highly abridged but necessary look at the origins, tenets, and early applications of five critical theories that deal with marginalized or otherwise oppressed groups. The review begins with a discussion of critical theory (writ large) and its early history in the hands of Kant, Gramsci, Habermas, the Frankfurt School and the Chicago School. Next, I provide a short introduction to identity politics as they are used to inform the "kind" of group that is served by a critical theory. Finally, I visit feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability theory, and border theory, chronologically exploring origins, tenets, and example applications of each.

Origins of Critical Theory

Rush (2004) defines early Marxist-infused critical theory as "an account of the social forces of domination that takes its theoretical activity to be practically connected to the object of its study" (p.9). He continues by clarifying that "critical theory is not merely descriptive, it is a way to instigate social change by providing knowledge of the forces of social inequality that can, in turn, inform political action aimed at emancipation" (Rush, 2004, p. 9). Built on Kantian notions of the critique of reason, critical theory then is not limited only to addressing the needs of marginalized or oppressed groups, it is founded in a critique of the original reasoning that placed them in such a state- the perilous play between our responsive and empiricist understanding of

the world and meta-principles on which we may be consciously or unconsciously acting. It is not enough to speak of the boy in the well, we must also work to understand what, or who put him there in the first place (perhaps, additionally considering what or who kept him there).

Gramsci offered foundational ideas on both hegemony and counter-hegemony that informed the Frankfurt school (which included Horkheimer, Adorno, and Benjamin). Malott (2011) explains that "Gramsci focused on the role of culture as the central hegemonic tool needed to convince people that situations and arrangements (i.e. the labor/capitalist relationship) that harm them are actually beneficial saving them from even more detrimental conditions" (p.136). To be able to enact a social move, there must be both understanding of the mechanics of movement and the mechanics of friction. Gramsci's work provided the conceptual framework for negotiating how culture (read organizations) works to reify norms that ultimately may be destructive.

In what could be read as a rather flippant definition, Buchanan (2010) writes that "critical theory is interested in why human society (in its eyes) failed to live up to the promise of the enlightenment and become what it is today, unequal, unjust, and largely uncaring" (p.101). More functionally, Creswell (1998) offers that "central themes that a critical researcher might explore include the scientific study of social institutions and their transformations through interpreting the meanings of social life; the historical problems of domination, alienation, and social struggles; and a critique of society and the envisioning of new possibilities" (p.80).

Perhaps the most appropriate definition for the work intended in this theory creation experiment is the laundry list of descriptives that Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) provide. They define a "criticalist" as a researcher or theorist that abides by the following assumptions:

that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; that the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; that language is central to the formation of subjectivity (conscious and unconscious awareness); that certain groups in any society are privileged over others and, although the reasons for privileging may vary widely, the oppression that characterizes contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable; that oppression has many faces and that focusing on only one at the expense of others (e.g. class oppression vs. racism) often elides the interconnections among them; and, finally, that main stream research practices are generally, although most often unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race, and gender oppressions (p. 140).

These three definitions vary widely, offering anecdotal, functional, and descriptive approaches to what critical theory is. More important than what it was, was intended to be, or was touted to be, is what it is. Critical theories, for the purposes of

this work, are paradigmatic "nets" (Bateson, 1972 qtd. in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) that hold a subjectivist epistemology (knower and known are inexplicably linked), a materialist realist ontogeny (multiple truths exist) and a naturalistic methodology (knowledge is gathered from interactions in the natural world) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.33). These paradigms are many. They seem to appropriately materialize when enough has been written about the oppression of a particularly defined group of people (or animals in the case of critical animal theory). What follows is an exploration of five critical theories including their origin, generally agreed-upon tenets, and sample applications. The theories considered are feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability theory, and border theory. The theories chosen all represent how we respond to marginalized groups of people: women, African Americans, queer persons, persons with disabilities, and people who "live" at different borders, respectively. The breadth of this list seeks to engage theories with both long (feminism) and short (border theory) histories. Additionally, the choices address particular groups with largely definable characteristics (queer theory and border theory being most inclusive and therefore less definable). Critical white studies, Latino/a critical theory, critical legal theory, Asian critical, and many other theories were left off the list in the interest of conciseness, and my preferences towards and projected applicability of particular theories. If inclined, the reader may apply any one of the above theories to understand how I participated in marginalizing or oppressive behavior in my selection. However, this would be done unless I created an exhaustive list, which is outside of the purpose of this study.

Critical Theories of Interest

Feminist theory

Feminism or feminist theory is a theory engendered in inequality based on gender. The theory questions a male-dominated, masculine, and often misogynist society. Feminist theory questions the hierarchy of man over woman and supports actions that contribute equal rights (First Wave) and equal status (Second and Third Wave) to women.

Many would agree that feminism, being rooted in a question about the subjugation and mistreatment of women, has been around since women were first subjugated, since women were first mistreated. Surely this history follows us back to the first hearth. The first voice to resonate in male-dominated discourse was that of Mary Wollstonecraft. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Wollstonecraft (1792 in Lynch (2009)) "[pled] for [her] sex" (p. 5). Writing for the opportunity to be educated and have a vote, Wollstonecraft critiques the way that men "have been more interested in making [women] alluring mistresses, than loving wives or rational mothers" (p. 10). She continues that "civilized women of the present century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inspire love, when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition, and by their abilities and virtues exact respect" (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 10). Wollstonecraft offers both a critique and charge, her critique clear, her charge then becomes a dare to men—to allow women the education, freedom, and power that men "protect" them from and see if women as a sex are collectively ruined.

Another mother of feminist thought, also from a Western tradition, came in the form of Simone de Beauvoir. In his 1952 preface to the English translation of *The Second Sex*, Parshley notes that the

> central thesis of Mlle de Beauvoir's book is that since patriarchal times women
>
> have in general been forced to occupy a secondary place in the world in relation
>
> to men, a position comparable to in many respects with that of racial minorities
>
> in spite of the fact that women constitute numerically at least half of the human
>
> race, and further that this secondary standing is not imposed of necessity by
>
> natural "feminine" characteristics but rather by strong environmental forces of
>
> education and social tradition under the purposeful control of men (Parshley in
>
> Beauvoir, 1952, vii).

It is important to note that both Wollstonecraft's and Beauvoir's critiques of women's position do not trouble the gender dichotomy of man and woman. Instead they lodge most of their commentary in the existence of this dichotomy and how one "side" of it is unfairly privileged. Beauvoir (1952) writes of this balance that "the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity" (p. xv).

Butler (1990) differs from both Wollstonecraft and Beauvoir as she questions not only the hierarchy of man over woman, but the gender definitions themselves. Building on Foucault's consideration that "The deployment of sexuality…established the notion of

sex" (qtd. in Butler, 1990), she scrutinizes, even troubles, the notion of heterosexuality and thereby gender. Her argument is that we are gendered because we assume a particular sexual relationship to one another. Her project then, is to re-imagine what those gender lines look (or do not look) like if the impetus of heterosexuality is removed. While her strategy disrupts how we see gender it is also used to disrupt how we see sexuality (see queer theory).

From the furnace of these women and many writers in league with them (male, female, and alternatively gendered), feminist theory has questioned male domination; empowered women; questioned how assumptions about gender, race, and class collude to oppress; and set the stage for a new politics of identity. Though the applications are many, Buchanan (2010) offers these four guiding principles:

> (i) elucidate the origins and causes of gender inequality; (ii) explain the operation and persistence of this state of affairs; (iii) delineate effective strategies to either bring about full equality between the sexes or at least ameliorate the effects of ongoing inequality; and (iv) imagine a world in which sexual inequality no longer exist (p. 165).

These four principles are certainly not exhaustive. They are guiding. As critique and social questions become more interdisciplinary and multi-faceted, the principles of feminist theory both braid with and work against principles of other theories.

Critical race theory

Critical race theory is the collected effort of several scholars who worked to "create a theory that, while grounded in critical theory, was responsive to the realities of

racial politics in America" (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995, p. xxvii). The term was coined to "make it clear that [their] work locate[d] itself in the intersection of critical theory and race, racism and the law" (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995, p. xxvii).

As a collection of several ideas, critical race theory has many parents. Most notable among these are Derrick Bell and Cheryl Harris. Bell (1979) both instigated scholarship critical of civil rights "victories" in America and simultaneously drew the blueprint for one of critical race theory's most accepted tenets when he criticized the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision by questioning what whites had to gain from the ruling. This consideration of interest-convergence would later become an important tool to critique legislation and policies that seemed altruistic but were ultimately reifying racial inequity or further promoting those that enjoyed privilege. Harris (1993) "posited that racial identity and property are deeply related concepts" (p. 1709) and then explored how this position would explain or illuminate decisions made in *Plessy v. Ferguson* and *Brown v. Board of Education* (I and II). In *Plessy*, the plaintiff argued that robbing Homer Plessy of his seat on a rail car was robbing him of property—not only the physical seat, but the privilege of whiteness that first earned him the seat (Harris, 1993). In *Brown I*, Harris (1993) argues that the court, while refusing "to extend continued legal protection to white privilege…declined to guarantee that white privilege would be dismantled" (p.1751). This move added value to whiteness. De jure privilege became de facto privilege, the second more valuable as it is both easily abused and difficult to erase.

Born out of critical legal studies and incubated in the minds and pens of law students, critical race theory has a distinctly legal flavor (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995, p. xxvii). Because of this, the tenets that comprise critical race theory are more pronounced and agreed upon by critical race theorists than other critical theories. While this list is flexible, generally accepted tenets follow Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, and Crenshaw's (1993) *Words that Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*:

1. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is endemic to American life.

2. Critical race theory expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy. Yosso (2005) offers that these "neutral" views promote deficit-thinking and "deficit-informed research" (73).

3. Critical race theory challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/historical analysis.

4. Critical race theory insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing law and society. Yosso (2005) develops this further by "recognizing that the experiential knowledge of People of Color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing and teaching about racial subordination" (74).

5. Critical race theory is interdisciplinary.

6. Critical race theory works towards the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression. (p.6)

Another dimension of critical race theory, adopted after this initial publication, was

Harris's notion of whiteness as property. Some scholars choose to address this issue

within the first or second tenets offered by Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, and Crenshaw

(1993). Additionally, scholarship includes the recognition of racial microaggressions as

part of the CRT literature. Introduced by Pierce (1970), microaggressions are the "subtle,

stunning, and unconscious put-downs of those in inferior status (e.g., people of color) by

the group of superior status" (Lau & Williams, 2010, p. 313).

Critical race theory was introduced into the sphere of education, most notably, by

Ladson-Billings, claiming that "CRT [is] an important intellectual and social tool for

destruction, reconstruction, and construction: destruction of oppressive structures and

discourse, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially

just relations of power.

Queer theory

More than any other critical theory, the history of queer theory is a history of

names. Both race and gender are often quickly if not wisely assigned phenotypically by

the general public. They both contain generally accepted descriptors that "empower"

people to identify. The labels are usually assigned without turmoil, though their

assignments usually lead to both racism and sexism (some would argue the assignments

themselves are both racist and sexist). Same-sex relationships, confidences, trysts, and

interest are not 1) always easily identifiable, 2) accepted as natural or at least our current

construction's best representation of natural, and 3) definable apart from oppositional

definition. The lineage of pederast to sinner to abomination to aberration to criminal to

poof to faggot to homosexual back to faggot to gay to queer is marked by both historical events and intellectual shifts. Most importantly, though, the change in names is marked by changes in power.

An introduction to queer theory is challenging as it both is so ubiquitous that it requires a brief history of the world and so ephemeral that it slips from definitional grasp (by design). Jagose's (1996) *Queer Theory: An Introduction* works to both trace the embedded history of queer theory while describing its motivations and applications. However, Jagose is careful to recognize that to "identify [queer theory] as a significant school of thought…is to risk domesticating it, and fixing it in ways that queer theory resists fixing itself" (2). Thus even those seminal histories of queer theory are careful not to claim too much.

What we can say about queer theory (or at least what I am confident saying) is that the theory hangs on two hinges, the critical nature of the theory itself and the population it seeks to serve. Early movements (1950's) towards critically considering hegemonic and heteronormative institutions began during what Jagose (1996) calls the "Homophile movement." Organizations like the Daughters of Bilitus and the Mattachine Society were formed and served the lesbian and gay communities, respectively. As Jagose explains, "the Mattachine Society's political task was to foster a collective identity among homosexuals who, recognising the institutional and hegemonic investments in their continued marginilisation, might consequently be energized and enabled to fight against their oppression [sic]" (p. 25). These organizations sought representation, political power, and freedom from the dominating discourse of

psychological and medical deficiencies that was so often used to "educate" the public,

bolster religious objections, and anchor an already slow-moving ship of sexual progress.

From its early stages, queer theorists recognized ways that the (then differently named)

queer community was manacled and envisioned ways to free them.

The second hinge of queer theory is the population it serves and, indeed, how

queer theory serves it. The late 19th century sought freedom for what was then defined

as homosexuals. Apart from more idealistic notions of freedom from oppressive gazes

or freedom of identity, these early homosexuals were fighting to stay out of prisons.

Their main goals were to fight sodomy laws and keep homosexuality off of the list of

maladies doctors and clinicians were "fixing." However, after these initial strides were

made, the difficulty in defining the marginalized class "homosexual" started to show.

Homosexuality, a closed parentheses to the constructed idea of heterosexuality (Butler,

1990), put the two sexualities into visual if not political opposition. Not wanting to be

defined as a negation of normality, people started adopting the terms "gay" and

"lesbian." However, even here, acts and identity gave way to confusion. To emancipate

a community, it was thought, the community needed to be defined. But how can one

define a community when the very definitions used are oppressive or when the nature of

definition is a cultural, societal, or political danger? From this schism of constructed

identity and important new works by Foucault (1978), queer was brought into the

limelight. What Foucault (1978), Sedgewick (1990), and Butler (1990) argued was that

sex, gender, sexuality, and performance of sexuality were all constructed and could

therefore be deconstructed. Butler (1990) questioned the notion of "compulsory

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heterosexuality" (p. xi), asking not for permission to identify as homosexual, but questioning the right of the heterosexual community to own the privileges they do. Queer serves as a term that "holds" all identities, even those in transition. This brand of criticism differs from early advocates of gay rights by refusing to privilege the normalization of the gay identity. Instead, queer theory post-Butler works to deny definition to terms like gay, straight, hetero, homo, lesbian, and even queer. In lieu of fighting for a seat at the table, the queer agenda post-Butler disrupts the idea that a table even exists. To use Foucault's term, queer theory challenges the then-used construction of history or *episteme* and how it views same-sex acts, performances, and identities (if they even exist outside the *episteme*). This approach, of course, does not go without critique. While "queer confounds the categories that license sexual normativity" others argue this confounding and perhaps confusion fails to consider or reflect on the meaningfulness of particular terms like "lesbian" or "gay" (Castle 1993); reinforces heteronormativity by positioning queer as "everything but" (Edelman 1994); and is ultimately counter-productive to an emancipatory agenda as the new definitions "only serve to fuel existing prejudice" (Watney 1992).

Queer then becomes both a catch-all for those who do not align to the norm by sex, gender, and sexuality, and at the same time it suggests a critique that there should never be a norm to align oneself to. The problem with this, of course, is that the heteronormative world stills sees the constructed norm and is not confounded by the slippage in sexual signs, signifiers, and the signified. For all intents and purposes, the

navel gazing of the post-structuralists binds the minds of the emancipators and re-envisions freedom while still sitting in the cage.

Seidman (1996) argues from a sociological perspective that queer theory is no longer the attempt to critique society and emancipate homosexuals as it may have been in the mid-20th century. Instead, queer theory is "a study of those knowledges and social practices that organize 'society' as a whole by sexualizing…bodies, desires, acts, identities, social relations, knowledges, culture, and social institutions." Queer theory sets the cube of our sexual society on point so that no face or even edge is fully grounded. That grounded corner then becomes where we can both enter the conversation and draw out change.

The sociological approach to gay and lesbian studies informs queer theory but does not necessarily work in tandem with researchers that claim more emancipatory goals. Mary McIntosh (1968) left the conversation of "nature vs. nurture" (the question of whether people are born or become gay) and instead began to question the presence of homosexuality as a "role" or identity in society. She posited that the role was created to account for sexual deviancy and reaffirm the heterosexual norm. Almost casually she notes that sexuality is a choice as it exists innately (both homosexuality and heterosexuality) within everyone, but society calls us to name ourselves—to function in our "role." As sociologists, both Seidman and McIntosh are limited in the application of their work to the human rights and dignity of those they refer to. One of the many problems with this viewpoint is that it disables the "socially deviant." Both gender wars and race wars can affirm presence based on pigmentation, features, and even hair

texture. Sexuality as it an expressed identifier can be hidden and therefore questioned. Social role theory puts homosexuals at a disadvantage in that they must argue both for acceptance and essential existence. This approach by both McIntosh and Weeks broadens that lens of queer theory (questioning the social construction of it all) but narrows the emancipating application of the theory. The functional perspective, however, can be seen as a blinder. The sociological approach makes a sweeping generalization about the essential nature of queerness and that it is all constructed choice. This creates a sexual blindness that echoes colorblindness. Kirsh (2000) notes that queer theory is actually failing its set goals by both reifying the dominant power's authority and disbanding alliances and thoughtful communities in favor of individualization and personal identification and freedom.

As a way to take queer theory out of the ivory towers and into the "real" world, many scholars are calling for a re-envisioning of how queer theory can work to enact social change. Kirsh (2000) calls for a rebuilding of communities arguing that a deconstruction of identity avails personal freedom and self-expression but "it is in communities that social change begins in embryonic form" (p. 122). Of course, this community creation and indeed the acceptance of the minority term buys into at least a partial acceptance of a structure or rigidity that queer theory often tries to destroy.

A final criticism of queer theory that is useful for understanding the trajectory of the discipline rests in its ubiquitous state and multiple applications. In her critical introduction to queer theory, Nikki Sullivan (2003) evaluates the application of queer theory to community, fetishisms, and race. She explains that her vision is to avoid

"focusing narrowly on sexuality and/or sexual practices," but, instead, "[considers] critiques of normalizing ways of knowing and being" (p. vi). This broad brushstroke again raises the same concerns that Kirsch (2000) considers. We must ask whether or not queer theory can still serve its original functions as a critical, emancipatory theory and simultaneously be used as a tool to disassemble society/culture/knowledge/power.

For the purposes of this project, the general tenets of queer theory are best summarized by Smith (2003)

> (1) all categories are falsifications, especially if they are binary and descriptive of sexuality; (2) all assertions about reality are socially constructed; (3) all human behavior can be read as textual signification; (4) texts form discourses that are exercises in power/knowledge and which, properly analyzed, reveal relations of dominance within historically-situated systems of regulation; (5) deconstruction of all categories of normality *and* deviance can best be accomplished by queer readings of performative texts ranging from literature (fictional, professional, popular) to other cultural expressions (geographic distribution, body piercing, sit-coms, sadomasochistic paraphernalia).

Disability theory

While most critical theories matriculate to notoriety as an aggregate of several independent researchers separated by both time and distance, disability theory has a more discrete parent. Disability studies spread through several fields, most notably education for the last half of the 20th century. However, disability theory, a critical approach to understanding, critiquing, and overcoming the various ways that disability,

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culture and society relate, came from a 1972 meeting by the Union of the Physically

Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), an exclusive organization for people with

impairments (Oliver 2009). This idea was further solidified by their 1976 publication of

the Fundamental Principles of Disability wherein they argue against the individual or

medical model of impairment (that people with disabilities are deficient in one or more

respects) and, instead, propagate a social model where "it is society which disables

physically impaired people." UPIAS furthers the argument by claiming "Disability is

something imposed on top of [their] impairments by the way [they] are unnecessarily

isolated and excluded from full participation in society." In a clarifying finality, UPIAS

asserts the critical nature of their theory by stating that "Disabled people are …an

oppressed group in society," and as "disabled" is defined as disadvantage caused by

"Social organization which takes no or little account of people who have physical

impairment, physical disability is …a particular form of social oppression." (UPIAS

1976, pp. 14-15)

For all practical purposes, disability theory is the tool that the social model of

disability uses to critique how society and culture attend or do not attend to the needs of

people with impairments. An abridged explication of the social model is offered by

Oliver (2009) in three general points.

> First, it is an attempt to switch the focus away from the functional limitations of
>
> people with an impairment on to the problems caused by disabling
>
> environments., barriers and cultures. Second, it refuses to see specific problems
>
> in isolation from the totality of disabling environments: hence the problem of

unemployment does not just entail intervention in the social organization of work and the operation of the labour market but also in areas such as transport, education and culture. Third, endorsement of the social model does not mean that individually based interventions in the lives of disabled people, whether they be based on medicine, rehabilitation, education, or employment, are of no use or always counter-productive (p. 45).

Provocatively, Oliver (2009) distinguishes illness and disability by writing that "illness is caused by disease and disability is caused by social organization" (p. 44). Oliver's work, along with many others, is an attempt to move away from deficit-oriented , normalizing treatments of the disabled. Instead, he imagines a world where those with impairments are free to engage socially and civically in all respects of society.

Within disability theory, there are several issues to which attention must be given. In a Marxist critique of "normalization" (the efforts of the "abled" to "fix" the "disabled"), Oliver (2009) explains that disability is not a reality as much as it is a product "like motor cars or hamburgers" (p. 90). Indeed, he argues that "disability is nothing more or less than the set of activities specifically geared towards producing a good- the category disability" (Oliver, 2009, p. 90). Within this larger critique, Oliver argues that perpetuation of a deficit notion towards people with impairment and the oppression experienced by this same population are, in fact, an institution fed by capitalism and nurtured by "ablism" and the normative status quo.

Disability theory can also be a lens with which to view and critique language. Pothier and Devlin (2006) explore how people within the context of disability are

referred to by a myriad of names including "disabled persons" and "persons with impairments." This latter, person-first, term has recently come into vogue as it identifies the person first and the impairment second. Also, this nomenclature works to fight essentializing "persons with disabilities" as wholly disabled. Though there are dissenters that feel this language "is an inappropriate means by which to dismember disability from self" (Pothier & Devlin, 2006, p. 3), a legal critique offers that person-first language asserts personhood and establishes both demographic presence as well as political agency.

Another complication of disability theory is that physical representation is not always indicative of disability identity or impairment. Gilbert and Majury (2006) argue that a postmodern critique of "hidden" disabilities (in this case infertility) trouble the definitions of impairment and disability and potentially disadvantage the person in question by subjecting them to the gazes of both the medical and social models simultaneously. From a different perspective, Gere (2005) discusses the "passing" of her daughter. Cindy, a person with complications due to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome does not suffer the same stigmas as other people with impairment. She can easily "pass" for a person without impairment. Gere explains both her experience as the mother of a person with an impairment and the experience of Cindy "coming out" in different situations. Gere criticizes the society that calls for her daughter's confession but also questions the Lacanian gaze as a litmus test of ability as well as the "reality" of the body. Thus disability theory works to critique social constructs of all disabilities, those seen and unseen.

In quite a beautiful way, disability theory emancipates a marginalized group to exist as members of and not detriments to a collective whole. As Simi Linton (1998) writes, " Disabled people are a group only recently entering everyday civic life…We have come out not with brown woolen lap robes over our withered legs or dark glasses over our pale eyes but in shorts and sandals and overalls and business suits, dressed for play and work—straight forward, unmasked, and unapologetic " (p. 57).

Finally, disability theory is not without its critics. While some claim that internal politics of the community of the disabled is too great to be overcome by one theory, others argue that even with a critical lens with which to view social inequities, there is no promise that distribution of knowledge and thereby power will be enough to provide what "disabled people need to know [to understand] and [to change] their lives" (Corker 1999, pp. 627-28).

Foundational tenets of disability theory include the following: recognition that while differences in motor skills, physical ability, and mental aptitude differ, disability in itself is a social construction; recognition that deficit-approaches to people within the "disabled" community are both oppressive and unproductive; recognition that disabilities are not always visible or volunteered; and an effort towards an inclusive society that does not privilege the "traditionally abled."

Appropriate tenets of disability theory include recognizing ways that society is constructed to benefit an "abled" population, recognizing and combating the deficiency attitude towards those with disabilities, questioning the construction of disability, and recognizing the ways that people with disabilities have multiple intersecting identities.

Border theory

Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to define *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 25).

Border theory is a recently constructed theory based largely on the works of Anzaldúa's (1999) *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* and D. Emily Hicks's (1991) *Border Writing: The Multidimensional Text*. Both works serve to develop a way of understanding meaning at different borders. While most of Anzaldúa's and Hicks's work focused on the Mexican-American border, Border studies is not limited to geographic borders. Border theory questions the space where sexual identities meet, where political identities meet, where racial identities meet, and where spiritual identities meet. Johnson and Michaelsen (1997) explain that "the idea of 'border' or 'borderlands' has … been expanded to include nearly every psychic of geographic space about which one can thematize problems of boundary or limit" (p. 1).

Blatter (2007, Encyclopedia of Governance) complicates borders even further by examining four dimensions that the terms "border," "boundary," and "frontier" can mean.

In a first dimension, we can distinguish between perceptions of borders as zones and conceptions of borders as lines. Whereas the former meaning highlights contact and overlap between entities the latter points to separation and clear-cut division between entities. In the second dimension, we can differentiate between

border conceptions that stress flexibility from those that stress stability of boundaries. The former conceive borders as regions of transition and usually as the part that is "in front" of the rest. The latter conceive borderlands as strongholds of tradition and as backward areas. The third dimension is concerned with the importance of borders for the contained entities. Whereas some approaches put much emphasis on the border as being the main determent of what is inside, others put the inside first and see the border only as one of several markers. An example for the former is the notion frontier society, which means that the whole society is strongly influenced by the situation at the front. The fourth aspect differentiates symmetric boundary conceptions that conceive both sides of the border as principally equal from asymmetric conceptions in which there is no basic recognition of the "other" as a similar kind. This perception shows up in sharp ingroup versus outgroup distinctions (e.g., the religious separation of believers and heathens) (par. 2)

Considering these four dimensions of how borders can be treated, it is unsurprising that many of the narratives that come from Border Studies are subject to critique from within the Border Studies community. Castronovo (1997), while writing about both literal and figurative boundaries worries that "accounts of the people and texts who inhabit these liminal spaces tend to coalesce into a single, undifferentiated narrative line" (p. 195). His critique is that this narrative, if given too much power, becomes a heroic narrative that defies the border and its precarious fault line (space). An example is Anzaldúa's (1999) discussion of the plight of the *mestiza*. She writes that

"At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes" (100). Anzaldúa offers this option as one of many, also allowing for a "disengage[ment] from the dominant culture" (p. 101) or finding "another route" (p. 101) altogether. Castronovo argues that in cases of a concrete and transcendent text, the text becomes supreme and even "subversively benefits from [the] limitations and prejudices" (p. 195) that fuel oppression in hierarchal juxtapositions. Border theory is an "oppositional discourse" (Castronovo, 1997, p. 198) that refuses to give privilege to one side of the border over the other. It is in this way that "border texts disturb rigid constellations of power" (Castronovo, 1997, p. 198). Anzaldúa's experience as the "border" of several dichotomies empowers a voice that at once defines and defies the borders she straddles and the territories in which she stands.

Border theory is born out of a need to negotiate multiple identities, multiple cultures, multiple languages, multiple sexualities, and, ultimately, multiple citizenships in the broadest sense of the word. Characteristics of border theory include: (i) a recognition that borders and borderlands exist where competing or complementing cultures (spaces) collide; (ii) a recognition that often one "side" of the border is privileged and that privilege usually results in the oppression of the "other side;" (iii) boundaries and borders are not easily defined and their description is a construction of the narrator; and (iv) personal stories and narratives are highly valued as both a way of knowing and a way of making meaning.

Limitations

While I made an effort to be diplomatic and inclusive in my presentation of each theory, these theories (as presented) are a reflection of my research, my experience with the literature, and ultimately my interpretation of the literature. These intrinsic biases are even more notable considering that I am not a part of the marginalized groups that many of these theories work to emancipate. In fact, in some cases, I am knowingly and unknowingly part of the oppressive structure that these theories address.

I reviewed the literature on each theory in hopes of properly contextualizing each of the representative tenets I suggest. Another researcher may have found different tenets or focused on another angle of these often complex theories. This chapter is an explanation of my experience with each of the discussed theories. These tenets are the limited but useful precipitate of that experience.

Summary

The five critical theories presented in this chapter offer five different but interacting lenses through which to view marginalized or otherwise oppressed populations. Understanding the history and general tenets of the theories helps to place the theories in their appropriate historical and social contexts. The afforded tenets for each theory are not exhaustive and should not be seen as such. In order to properly pave the way for veteran critical theory, we must build on a tradition of critical theory, we must understand the natural progression and spread of critical theory, and we recognize how the today's critical theories can help us write tomorrow's.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This research project contains four intersecting exercises: the production of questions, the application of these questions and their subsequent evaluation, the construction of a new critical theory, and the application of this theory to an existing data set. In an effort to clarify the methods of each line while contextualizing the summative project, I offer an initial methodological commentary followed by a detailed discussion of each step in the process of this project. One theoretical frame (policy archaeology) works with the precipitate tenets of the project to help frame veteran critical theory.

Researcher as Instrument

This is a qualitative study. While this may not prove a particularly startling revelation, it is important to establish my personal research foundations in order to appreciate the way I have approached this research subject. I am a qualitative researcher, trained in qualitative research by Yvonna Lincoln. As a constructivist, I acknowledge a few important premises. I understand that the constructivist epistemology accepts that "[t]he inquirer and the 'object' of inquiry interact to influence one another; knower and known are inseparable" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). We (as instruments) exist in the research. Both the ways I interact with texts and participants and the way I understand that interaction are unique to me based on my experiences, goals, visions, and understanding of the world. In connection with epistemology, the constructivist axiology asserts that research is "value-bound" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Research does

not happen in a vacuum. The facts that I am white, male, middle-class, educated, politically left, and bald all have an effect on how I do research. For the purposes of this project, it is notable that I have never served in uniform. Additionally, I have no close family members who have served in uniform other than my late grandfather to whom this work is dedicated. This fact colors the way I view the armed forces. I teach veterans at a local community college. My experiences with these veterans encouraged this research interest. As a teacher I want to help my students. Consequently as a researcher, I want to help veterans. Even the facts that I believe I *can* help them or that I believe some of them need help are important to consider when contextualizing my work. As a constructivist, I lean on interviews and document analysis for information. While many qualitative works primarily hinge on interview data, this dissertation wrestles first with documents and then incorporates interviews.

The Project

The project (as a whole) was to develop a new critical theory for understanding veterans and institutional responses to veterans that served during Post 9/11 conflict. I call this theory veteran critical theory. While closely tied to critical race theory, I use the name veteran critical theory to privilege the term "veteran" and to establish that the theory is a critical in nature, leaning towards emancipatory goals for veterans.

The process of the project involved five different steps. The first step was to identify 13 article-length, academic works about veterans that are representational of the current literature on Post 9/11 veterans. The second step was to develop a set of questions for five current critical theories (feminist theory, critical race theory, queer

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theory, disability theory, and border theory) that will be used in analyzing the applicability of different critical tenets to veterans in higher education. The third step was to use the questions to "plug-in" different machines of theory into the data of the 13 scholarly works (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). The fourth step was to aggregate the interactions of the scholarship and the theories to lay out the appropriate tenets of veteran critical theory. This step was extended by sharing the tenets with both veterans and Post 9/11 veteran scholars to test for appropriateness and resonance. This process is modeled in Figure 3. The final and fifth step of the project was to apply the new tenets of veteran critical theory to data—in this case, transcripts of graduate student veterans at a large research university in the southwest.

Figure 3: Model of Tenet Production

Tenets Appropriate for VCT
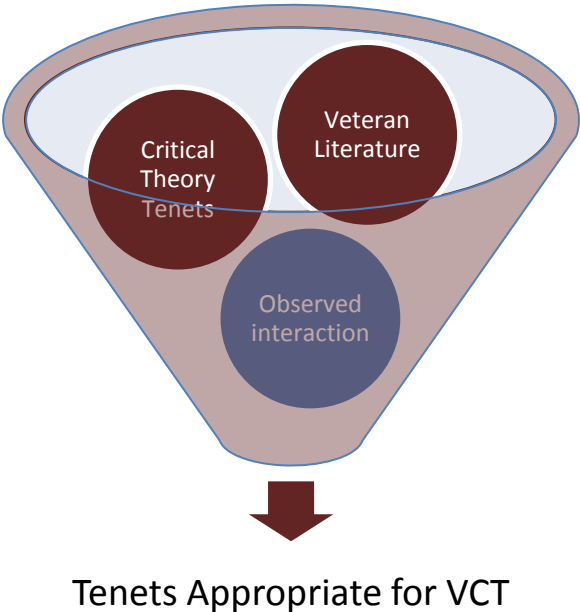
Why Veterans?

There is a natural progression of critical scholarship. Building off the brief summaries of only five critical theories in Chapter III, we can see a sort of winnowing. The marginalized groups with greatest numbers or loudest voices are accepted as worthy of critical scholarship. With Wollstonecraft's compelling writing she ushered in a new way of considering women's rights. Lawrence, Matsuda, Bell, and Crenshaw's work foregrounded new ways to talk about and recognize overt and covert racism. Butler's work provided a cornerstone for queer theory after both the denotation of gender and its various privileges were troubled. In the late 1980s and early 1990s disability theory was born as scholars changed from looking at disability through a medical model and started considering it as a social model. When the "West Wing" character Sam Seaborn was asked why it was important to continue space exploration, he says " 'Cause it's next. 'Cause we came out of the cave, and we looked over the hill and we saw fire; and we crossed the ocean and we pioneered the west, and we took to the sky. The history of man is hung on a timeline of exploration and this is what's next." (Insert citation). The history of all of us is hung on a timeline of *who's* next. I believe veterans are next.

Chang (1993) cites Jerome Culp, saying that he "raised his voice when he proclaimed boldly to the legal academy that [the academy] was in 'an African-American Moment'"(p. 1245). Chang claims that he is the fanfare for an Asian American Moment, a moment charged by productive Asian American scholars, widespread discrimination, and a desire to "speak new words and remake old legal doctrines" (p. 1246). Chang understands that his new moment will bring new responsibilities, new challenges, and

new hope. Chang is motivated by his work in the legal field as well as his own identity, history, and experience as an Asian American. I am not a veteran. I am a teacher. I teach veterans. I see the ways colleges and universities are trying to serve them. I think we can do better. I would argue that in classrooms, in communities, in courtrooms, and at kitchen tables this is also a veteran moment. As Chang set his in motion with an article in the *California Law Review*, I hope to do the same with this work.

Why this Project?

The purpose of this project is two-fold: to serve scholarship and to serve veterans. As Lucas (1974) argued while doing seminal work on research aggregation

> A central argument used in defending basic scientific inquiry is that one does not have to prove the value of any one research project because it fits into a broader process of knowledge acquisition. As the knowledge base grows, it will cumulate and patterns will emerge that will provide a broader understanding of social life. Without that rationale, the burden of proof on each research project to prove its value becomes much more severe. (p.1)

Lucas's argument for the benefit of an aggregate knowledge base is intimately tied with theory creation. As subjects of inquiry cross boundaries of discipline, epistemology, methodology, and researcher agenda, there is a need to aggregate knowledge in a largely applicable, inclusive framework that serves as a base "language" among its scholars. A useful example of this is critical race theory, born from several different projects, led by several different researchers with multiple backgrounds and agendas, critical race theory evolved as a generally accepted set of tenets that evaluate the marginalization of African

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Americans and the systemically racist society in which they operate. These tenets have become the language of CRT scholars. CRT is certainly not an exhaustive way to talk about race but it centers the conversation in a meaningful and productive way. In this manner, CRT provides an aggregate but non-restrictive voice to a particular subject. Similarly, a unified voice and language will help serve veterans. One of Lucas's early critiques is that when considering information and research barriers, "the greatest barrier is between government contract research and the academic community" (Lucas, 1974, p. 1). Though written four decades ago, this problem still persists. Especially in the field of veterans (where much work is being done through Veterans Affairs offices and the Department of Defense), it is important that larger, applicable, and inclusive theories start permeating the literature and informing practice. One example is the term "veteran-friendly." The term used to describe primarily colleges and universities is a case study in itself. What both veterans and administrators believe about this term colors its use. How colleges and universities are rated "veteran-friendly" and to what degree they are friendly is not well-defined. If researchers (government and academic) could collaborate with government agencies, school administrators, and veterans themselves, the naming process and the meaning of that title "veteran-friendly" could be more than an advertising ploy.

Lucas (1974) provides three methods for aggregating research (the propositional, the cluster, and the case survey approach. The case survey approach, most appropriate for analyzing prepared texts where the data itself is not available or qualitative works where the research is not "machine-readable." Lucas (1974) explains that "to distill the

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lessons from …case experiences, the analyst prepares a set of questions to determine the presence and intensity of common characteristics, events, and outcomes contained in each of the case studies." (8). These common characteristics are then analyzed. My project builds off this idea. I subjected 13 scholarly works to a critical treatment through 5 different critical theories. As the scholarship interacted with each theory, commonalities were recorded. After five cycles (one for each critical theory), the commonalities (applicable tenets of each theory to a veteran population) were then aggregated to form veteran critical theory. Veteran critical theory does not serve as final voice on Post 9/11 veterans or veterans in higher education. Veteran critical theory provides a room where researchers, practitioners, and veterans can come and, speaking a similar language, go about the necessary work of understanding, serving, and (where applicable) emancipating veterans.

Data

I incorporate four data sets into my work. The second chapter of this dissertation explores the first data set: the current literature on Post 9/11 veterans and higher education. The articles, books, and dissertations that discuss the experiences of returning veterans, posit new ways to serve this unique population, or evaluate current ways that student veterans are being served comprise the first data set. The second data set includes the seminal works that explore the history, early applications, major tenets, and current applications of five notable critical theories: feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability theory, and border theory. The goal of this research is to construct a new critical theory with which to better understand and serve Post 9/11

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student veterans. A critical component of working with any population group is to allow members (insiders) to evaluate observations or considerations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additional feedback from group members (veterans, veterans who are researchers, and civilian researchers that focus on student veterans) will provide data for my third data set. The fourth data set used is a set of recorded interviews with graduate student veterans. The transcripts explore their experiences as graduate student veterans at a large research university in the southwest.

Step one (veteran literature)

The first step of the process was to create a literature review of veterans and higher education, focusing on Post 9/11 veterans. I incorporated four main sources of literature: the history of higher education and the military; academic work on Post 9/11 veterans and higher education (journal articles, books, chapters, reports, theses, and dissertations); popular media about Post 9/11 veterans and higher education (magazine and periodical articles, non-academic publications, other forms of pop-culture; and government documents (laws, briefs, acts, and reports) that respond to Post 9/11 veterans in higher education.

Lucas (1974) argues that "if a research aggregation is to be more than a token effort to support intellectual and political positions already assumed, then it must convince the reader that the method of aggregation has no hidden bias. It is too much to expect a review to persuade everyone, but it will be vastly strengthened if it makes explicit the rules that were used to do the aggregation. At a minimum, the reviewer may delineate the body of literature he is considering, define his concepts carefully, and show

the results of his review in an objective fashion to support whatever conclusions he might draw" (Lucas 1974, p. 29). Though I believe my bias, my agenda, and my own experiences largely dictate what theories I choose to apply to data and what data I choose to evaluate, I recognize the purpose of Lucas's charge. In order to clearly delineate why I chose the pieces I chose, I created a set of inclusion criteria. From the second section (academic work), I culled 13 pieces that were representational of the current conversation about veterans and higher education. These pieces passed four criteria:

1. The pieces must be published within the last decade (2004-2014). These dates coincide with the return of the first troops from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

2. The pieces must be research-based. Whether qualitative or quantitative, the pieces must be responding to a particular data set (even if that data set is the author's experience or a book). This criterion effectively excluded journalistic pieces and personal commentary. This criterion was also met by publication in a peer-reviewed research journal or an edited collection of research based chapters.

3. The pieces must be well-cited. To find representational pieces, it is important that the works are generally agreed to be foundational or important to the field. The best measure of this (adjusting for time published) is how often the pieces are cited (measured by both internet indices and my own observation).

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4. The pieces must come from diverse authors to ensure that an entire

   conversation is being considered and not observations from one or two

   scholars. No author can appear more than twice in the works selected. An

   exception is made for Vacchi as two of his reviews comprise one piece.

Following is a list of the articles chosen and a brief summary of each article.

Ackerman, R., DiRamio, D., & Garza Mitchell, R. (2009). Transitions: Combat veterans

   as college students. In R. Ackerman and D. DiRamio (Eds.) Creating a veteran-

   friendly campus: Strategies for transition and success [Special issue]. *New*

   Directions for Student Services, 126, 5-14.

   Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell (2009) offer one of the first qualitative

   research projects on student veterans. Focusing on combat veterans, the authors

   trace the experience of the veterans from deployment, through service, and

   finally to transition to higher education. The wealth of this piece is the student

   voices offered in substantial quotes.

DiRamio, D., Ackerman, R., & Mitchell, R. (2008). From Combat to Campus: Voices of

   Student-Veterans. *NASPA Journal, 45*(1), 73-102.

   A predecessor to Ackerman, DiRamio, and Mitchell (2009), DiRamio,

   Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) offers a more thorough discussion of

   Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering's (1989) "Moving in, Moving Through,

   Moving Out" model of transitions, and uses many of the same participant quotes

   to tell the stories of the 25 student veterans interviewed. The piece also offers an

important step in recognizing student veterans as a special group of students and gaining a seat at the student affairs table.

Iverson, S.V., &Anderson, R. (2013). The complexity of veteran identity: understanding the role of gender, race, and sexuality. In F. Hamrick & C. Rumann (Eds.), *Called to serve: A handbook on student veterans and higher education* (pp. 140-166). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Evaluating the multiple identities of veterans, Iverson and Anderson (2013) consider the ways that women, minorities, and LGBT veterans experience marginalization and oppression. Though wider than it is deep, their work is some of the first higher education-related research that considers LGBT veterans or veterans of color within a post-DADT, Post 9/11 context.

Livingston, W., Havice, P., Cawthon, T., & Fleming, D. (2011). Coming home: Student veterans' articulation of college re-enrollment. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 48(3),* 315–331. doi:10.2202/1949-6605.6292.

A qualitative study of fifteen student veterans, Livingston, et al. (2011) build on the tradition of the 4S model (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989) in student veteran research. Their findings include the Student Veteran Academic and Social Transition Model which considers how cornerstones (military influence, invisibility), auxillary aid, the process of navigating reenrollment, and campus culture all influence one another.

Livingston, W.G., & Bauman, M.C. (2013). Activations, deployments, and returns. In F.

Hamrick & C. Rumann (Eds.), *Called to serve: A handbook on student veterans and higher education* (pp. 41-68). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Livingston and Bauman (2013) join forces to explore the activation, deployment, and return cycle of veterans. They emphasize veterans' multiple identities, cautioning that student veterans will identify as a student or a service member. Their work suggests that student often stand on the border of these two identities, never fully expressing one or the other and rarely finding a way to express both simultaneously. Their work also questions Schlossberg's work on trasition as an appropriate theory for student veteran research.

McBain, L. (2008). When Johnny [or Janelle] comes marching home: National, state, and institutional efforts in support of veterans' education. *Perspectives,* Summer, Washington, D.C.: AASCU.

McBain (2008) traces the history of the GI Bill to its present Post 9/11 update. Additionally, she considers the way that the nation, individual states and institutions can work to serve veterans as they return to institutions of higher education. The piece's strength are the largely unanswered questions it asks.

Radford, A. W. (2009). *Military Service Members and Veterans in Higher Education: What the New GI Bill May Mean for Postsecondary Institutions*. Washington DC: American Council on Education.

Radford's (2009) report, sponsored by the American Council on Education, is cited by most research on veterans as a demographic base for student veteran studies. Offering descriptive data and direct quotes from focus groups, Radford

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provides an important step in naming, describing, and understanding a student

demographic that before her work was largely un-researched.

Persky, K.R., & Oliver, D.E. (2011). Veterans coming home to the community college:

Linking research to practice. *Community College Journal of Research and*

Practice, 35, 111-120.

Persky and Oliver (2011) offer a look at a community college case study and

offer practical advice on how to serve veterans, prepare for veteran returns, and

protect instiutions from liability issues pertaining to veterans.

Rumann, C. & Hamrick, F. (2010). Student veterans in transition: Re-enrolling after war

zone deployments. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *81(4),* 431-458.

Rumann and Hamrick (2010) explore the experiences of guard members and

reservists as they make multiple transitions into and out of both service and

higher education. Using Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson's (2006) 4S

model (situation, self, support, strategies), they analyze interview data from six

student veterans.

Ryan, S. (2011). From boots to books: Applying Schlossberg's Model to transitioning

American veterans. *National Academic Advising Journal, 31*(1), 55-63.

Ryan and colleagues (2011) employ Schlossberg's (1995) 4S model in an effort

to suggest best practices for academic advisors. Their work highlights a need to

recognize strengths and weaknesses in student veterans and attempt to take

advantage of the former and minimize the latter.

Vacchi, D. (2012a). Considering student veterans on the twenty-first century college

campus. *About Campus,* 17(2), 15-21.

Vacchi's (2012a) opinion article calls for a reconsideration of the direction of student veteran research. This article (in tandem with Vacchi, 2012b) presents the first departure from a deficit-based approach to student veteran transition and offers the first universally accepted definition of 'student veteran." This piece is important as it both marks a turn in the larger conversation and offers some of the building bloaks upon which the new conversation has been built.

Vacchi, D. (2012b). [Review of the book *Veterans in higher education: When Johnny and Jane come marching to campus*, by D. DiRamio and K. Jarvis]. *Review of Higher Education, 36*(1), pp. 138-139.

Vacchi's (2012b) candid and unrestrained criticism of DiRamio and Jarvis's (2011) effort presents some of the first published critique of extant literature on student veterans. Asking for both more veteran perspectives and a departure from a deficit view of veterans, Vacchi's (2012b) critique paves the way for his contribution to student veteran studies.

Vacchi, D. (2013). [Review of the book *Called to serve: A handbook on student veterans and higher education*, by F.A. Hamrick and C.B. Rumann]. *Review of Higher Education, 37*(1), pp. 132-135.

Vacchi's (2013) review of Hamrick and Rumann's (2013) edited collection questions the appropriateness of producing an "authoritative" handbook on student veterans this early in the history of Post 9/11 student veteran scholarship.

Vacchi lauds efforts to critique deficit models and asks for clarification on some

inconsistencies within the work. Finally, Vacchi calls for more veteran voice.

Step two (creating the questions)

When conducting a case survey approach, it is imperative that the questions

asked are the "right" questions. The fit of the questions is linked to the theoretical model

you are using to understand a particular phenomenon. Lucas (1974) explains that when

selecting what questions to ask of different cases "one cannot ask thousands upon

thousands of questions of each case history, hoping to stumble across those mysterious

factors that have a decisive influence. Some sense of theory is essential to bringing the

inquiry into focus" (20). In this way five critical theories are used to develop the

questions for each cycle of aggregation. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) develop a process of

applying multiple theories to a specific data set that I find very closely linked if not

greatly influenced by the case survey process. Using different theories to evaluate two

"chunks" of qualitative data, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) create questions they use to

interrogate their data. The questions are grounded in the theorists they invoke. To take

a Foucaultian read of their data, they ask " How do power/knowledge relations and

practices produce [their participants'] multiple subjectivities as they venture into the

academy as first-generation professors?" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, 8). When developing

the questions, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) claim to have "crafted a set of analytical

questions that [they] would pursue with the help of each theorist—an image [they]

experienced as having Butler or Derrida or Spivak reading over [their] shoulder and

asking a series of questions" (7). Though an image of the multiple theorists with whom I

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am engaging collectively looking over my shoulder is a bit overwhelming, I created

thoughtful questions grounded in an intimacy with each critical theory.

After the five sets of questions were created, the sets were distributed to scholars

in each theoretical area as well as to a colleague who focuses on veteran research. Their

suggestions and concerns were noted, and the questions were revised. Additionally, the

questions were passed by a colleague with expertise in Lucas's Case Survey approach.

It should be noted that the number of questions for each theoretical framework are not

reflective of their importance or worth to the project. Instead, some theories

(specifically critical race theory) have a larger number of developed tenets that must be

evaluated. An accepted limitation of this research is that only five theoretical

frameworks were chosen. These frameworks were chosen for their promise to the

project, their diversity, and their ubiquity in educational research. In juxtaposition, they

are not universally comparable. Suffice it to say, each theory is considered separately

with the same amount of attention and diligence. The final questions for each critical

theory follow:

Critical race theory

1. In what ways (explicit and implicit) are civilians privileged in higher education?

2. In what ways do programs and policies intended to serve student veterans
   ultimately serve civilians or institutions of higher education?

3. How does civilian status function as a form of property?

4. How do student veterans experience microaggressions?

5. How are the multiple identities of student veterans explored and how does the historical, social, cultural, and scientific context of the current moment add to those explorations?

6. How does the literature about student veterans honor, value, and incorporate the lived experience, stories, and counter-stories of student veterans?

7. How are the policies and procedures aimed at serving veterans too slow or incremental to be effective, and how does a meritocratic and civilian-status neutral approach privilege civilians or oppress student veterans?

Feminist theory

1. What are the origins of inequality in higher education between student civilians and student veterans?

2. How do systems and structures in higher education support inequality between student civilians and student veterans?

3. How are student veterans constructed and written by civilians, institutions of higher education, and policies enacted by both?

4. How do student veterans undermine or contradict expectations? How are they "unknowable?"

5. How do veterans experience multiple identities?

Queer theory

1. In what ways are the categories of civilian and veteran false or socially constructed?

2. How are the actions of veterans read as deviant and who reads them as such?

3. How do the current texts about veterans "form (or reflect) discourses that are exercises in power/knowledge and which…reveal relations of dominance within historically-situated systems of regulation" (Smith, 2003)?

4. How are civilians' and veterans' behaviors seen as textually signifying or performative?

Disability theory

1. In what ways are veterans victims of deficit thinking?

2. How is society constructed to privilege civilians and/or marginalize veterans?

3. How is term "veteran" constructed and who gives it meaning (who has stock in its meaning)?

4. How are veterans more appropriately positioned to inform policy and practice regarding veterans?

5. How do veterans experience multiple identities?

Border theory

1. How do student veterans define and understand multiple borders (geographic, identity, veteran-status, occupational-status, etc.)?

2. How are student veterans navigating allegiances at the student/ non-student, civilian/ soldier, and veteran/ enlisted borders?

3. How do student veterans form a new language in their response to standing at/in/astride a particular border?

4. How do veterans construct and claim a "third country" or "border space" territory?

Step three (plugging in)

A plethora of metaphors describe evaluating interactions between theory and data. Some of the more popular ones include a sieve through which data are passed. Researchers then evaluate what passes through or what is collected in the sieve. Additionally, researchers could engage the loom metaphor, weaving both data and theory together to make a tapestry of meaning. Theories can be called lenses, and when data are viewed through the lens, it is made clearer. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) borrow Deleuze and Guattari's language of "plugging in." Their work is to shape the idea of "plugging in" from a concept to a process. I like the idea of plugging in as it implies an exchange of energy but does not give privilege to data or theory. There is no male and female end of the cord. Instead, the data and theory are plugged in to one another and their interactions are observed. Plugging in can mean giving and/or receiving. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) explain that "Plugging in to produce something new is a constant, continuous process of making and unmaking. An assemblage isn't a thing—it is the *process* of making and unmaking the thing. It is the process of arranging, organizing, fitting together. So to see it at work, we have to ask not only how things are connected, but also what territory is claimed in that connection" (p.1). Jackson and Mazzei (2012) argue *a la* Foucault that text itself does not have meaning until it is "read" in a particular way by a particular person. In the same way this analysis of the scholarship on veterans in higher education is not meant o find out what the scholarship "means." Instead this process seeks to "read" the scholarship with five different set of eyes, to create new

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readings, to assemble through these new readings a new way to read—veteran critical theory.

The practice of this step is far simpler than its explanation. I read through each article with a particular question in mind. I made notes on a PDF through its editing software when I found a particularly interesting moment where the theory (question) and the data (article/book chapter) interacted. After making in-text notes, I summarized the interactions of that theoretical question and the text. These summaries are systematically presented in Chapter V.

Step four (aggregation of data and theory creation)

In order to conceptualize veteran critical theory, I evaluated the interactions of the questions and the texts and determined those questions that were most applicable, salient, or productive. For each question selected, I turned back to the original tenet or theoretical characteristic that prompted the question and rewrote the tenet or characteristic in the context of veterans in higher education. I then grounded the new tenets in fertile critical ground of Foucault's and Scheurich's (1997) Policy Archaeology.

Selecting the questions

Reading through the data provided in Chapter V, I noted the questions that seemed to have the most provocative and productive interaction. It is possible that another researcher (with different biases and life experiences) would find another question more provocative or productive. While evaluating the question/data interactions, I kept the final goal of a new theory creation (primarily devoted to

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understanding veterans' experience in higher education) in mind. Another researcher

with a different agenda may find a different question more useful and add yet another

dimension to veteran critical theory.

Creating new tenets

As each question was traced back to its theoretical source, I considered how the

tenet could be rewritten or newly applied to a veteran context. The new tenet was then

carefully constructed using both the impetus tenet from the original critical theory and

the summary of how it applied (or did not apply) to veterans.

Grounding the tenets

The tenets are disembodied characteristics or observations unless grounded in

larger theories that help us see the need for and purpose of veteran critical theory. The

theoretical framework I use to ground (flesh out) veteran critical theory is Policy

Archaeology.

Policy Archaeology

It is irresponsible to try to "solve" the "problems" of veterans as they return to

colleges and universities without spending appropriate time discussing how these

problems were defined and how the academy was first introduced to these problems. To

consider the foundations of this problem, I turned to Scheurich's (1997) methodology of

policy archaeology. Built on Foucault's early writings on archaeology, *Madness and

Civilization* (1961), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), *The Order of Things* (1966), and *The

Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), Scheurich (1997) used Foucault's notions of *savoir*

and *connaissance* to question not social solutions, but the nature of social problems. His

archaeology, therefore is a play between these ideas. In an interview, Foucault (1994, qtd. in Schuerich & McKenzie, 2005) explained:

> By "archaeology," I would like to designate not exactly a discipline but a domain of research, which would be the following: in a society, different bodies of learning, philosophical ideas, everyday opinions, but also institutions, commercial practices and police activities, mores—all refer to a certain implicit knowledge [*savoir*] special to society. This knowledge is profoundly different from the [formal] bodies of learning [*des connaissances*] that one can find in scientific books, philosophical theories, and religious justifications, but it [*savoir*] is what makes possible at a given moment the appearance of a theory, an opinion, a practice. (Foucault, 1994 qtd. in Scheurich & McKenzie, 2005, p. 846).

The two knowledges (*savoir* and *connaisance*) build upon one another. The idea is that *savoir* eventually leads to *connaisance*. However, there is a way in which we can question *savoir* before it becomes *connaisance*. Using an example from the literature, using Scheurich's interpretation of Foucault, Mawhinney (1993) questions assumptions about school violence in Canada. In response to the "growing problem" of youth violence, Mawhinney attacks the facts of the noted violence and the impetus for taking action. It is not enough to say that there is violence, Mawhinney argues that we must understand the process by which the phenomenon of school violence became a social issue worth addressing. While it is difficult to argue that violence in schools should not be a concern, it is important that we ask how violence is framed within schools, society,

and the legal system. As one response, Mawhinney (1993) notes that violence is often

seen as criminal deviance and reform is focused on the individual instead of the culture

or system that imbued that individual with violent intentions or desires. For a baser

example, consider the young boy who watches hours of Ultimate Fighting on television.

When he gets into a neighborhood fight, his parents scold and punish him, not letting

him play outside. Instead, he continues to watch more Ultimate Fighting. The policy

(unsupervised detention for acts of violence) misses the origination of the phenomenon.

The policy actually exacerbates the social problem by failing to acknowledge the root or

separate the boy from the root of the problem (assuming UFC is the problem and there

are no other contributing factors). Other problems are complicated by assumptions about

what is "right" and what is "wrong." Imagine a young boy who does not want to play

football. A father, a former football player himself, may see this as a social problem that

needs to be "fixed." The *savoir* of the father (the father thinks every boy should play

football) is being used to (in)form the *connaisance* (every boy should play football) that

policy (punishment for not playing football) is instituted to "fix."

Scheurich's (1997) work rolls back the clock to when the social problem was

first called a problem. He asks "by what process does a social problem gain the 'gaze' of

the state, of the society, and, thus, emerge from a kind of social invisibility into

visibility" (p. 97)? Further, "policy archaeology posits that social problems are social

constructions, and [policy archaeology] critically examines the social construction

process" (p. 97). Scheurich (channeling Foucault) argues that the social diseases we

attempt to cure were at one point distinguished as a disease. It is not only prudent but

necessary to ask what/who first named the phenomena as a disease. Sheurich (1997) offers four arenas of study that compose policy archaeology:

Arena I. The education/social problem arena: the study of the social construction of specific education and social problems.

Arena II. The social regularities arena: the identification of the network of social regularities across education and social problems.

Arena III. The policy solution arena: the study of the social construction of the range of acceptable policy solutions.

Arena IV. The policy studies arena: the study of the social functions of policy studies itself (p. 97).

My work evaluates the growth of (faltering) veterans as a social problem, examining how they are distinguished as "at-risk" or "in-need" (Arena I); criticizes the social regularities that work to benefit traditional, civilian students and marginalize veterans (Arena II); and evaluates federal, state, local, and institutional policies as tools to oppress or further victimize/villianize the veteran population returning to higher education (Arenas III & IV).

Whether a "broken" or "diseased" population as some researchers treated them or an incomplete or foreign population as other researchers treated them, the veterans are controlled by the language used to describe them. This language, in turn, shapes public view of the veterans. This public view both reifies the language used and informs policy. Policy then acts to reduce the perceived "problem," thereby giving the problem credibility and solidifying it as a veteran descriptor.

The proposed tenets of veteran critical theory grounded in Scheurich's four arenas of policy archaeology created a powerful critical tool to reimagine how educators, researchers, policy makers, and policy enforcers can serve veterans. A unique part of this process was identifying what Foucault (1973, qtd. in Scheurich, 1997) called "social regularities". These regularities are networks of visibility, politics, and performance that "[constitute] what becomes socially visible as a social problem and what becomes socially visible as a range of credible policy solutions" (Scheurich, 1997, p. 99). The tenets of veteran critical theory aim to trouble these regularities used for constructing (naming) the "problems" of all social groups, in my case, Post 9/11 veterans in higher education.

Sharing and revising the theory

There is no way to determine whether a theory is right or wrong. Good theories have counterexamples. Bad theories resonate in particular circumstances. All we can truly evaluate is whether or not a theory is useful. To test the utility and resonance of veteran critical theory, I sent early drafts of the theory's tenets to both veterans and veteran scholars (some of whom are veterans themselves).

While member checks avail a researcher the opportunity to test the intentionality, correctness, thoroughness, accuracy of summaries, and gain an overall assessment from an"insider" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the researchers to whom I showed my research were not part of the original research being "checked." Therefore, a more appropriate name for the conversations I had with these men and women is "peer debriefing." Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that "Peer debriefing is an effective way of shoring up

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credibility, providing methodological guidance, and serving as a cathartic outlet" (p. 243). While the peer debriefing sessions address credibility more than methodological guidance or catharsis, I tried not to limit what could be gathered from the sessions. In describing the peer debriefers, Lincoln and Guba (1985) write "they ought to be persons of special characteristics; the [research] design should reflect the fact that this problem was given serious attention and should propose particular persons—or kinds of persons—who could best discharge the reviewer responsibility" (p. 243). My limitations as a civilian are not met by seeking the guidance of other civilian and veteran researchers, but they are tempered. Additional peer-debriefings were held with student veterans. Still in progress, this work will be an important addition as VCT grows. All sessions with student veterans have been audio recorded and will be transcribed by me. In this way, as I wade out into the waters of critical scholarship, my subject matter became both my instrument and my vessel. Student veterans are my subject matter, but they are also my protection. This, of course, is not the first time they have protected me. While a summary of the researcher comments are addressed in Chapter VI, veteran response to VCT is reserved for future research.

Step five (applying the theory)

As a final step in theory creation, I applied the new theory to an extant data set about veterans in higher education. In another study, I gathered interview data from 11 student veterans enrolled in graduate programs at a large research university in the southwest. The interviews were conducted with institutional permission in the fall of 2013. Early work on this interview data included presentations at the Association for the

Study of Higher Education (Phillips, 2013) in St. Louis, Missouri and the Veterans Support Conference (Phillips, 2014) in Buffalo, New York. While the data has already been used for one potential publication on understanding the experiences of graduate student veterans, the interview transcripts provide a rich collection of data to be explored using veteran critical theory. The proposed application of veteran critical theory to this data is presented in Chapter VIII. The exploration is presented in article form to serve as an exemplar of how this author believes veteran critical theory can be used to better understand and serve veterans in higher education. Other scholars may read the same data in a different way or apply the theory to different data in a new way. Such is the nature of theory exploration.

Summary

The "action" of this research contains one project with five different steps. After selecting 13 representative texts about veterans in higher education and developing appropriate theoretical questions from five different critical theories, I "plugged' the text and the questions into one another. I used the used the most provocative and productive interactions to begin constructing veteran critical theory. Grounded in Policy Archaeology, capital theories, and identity theory, I refined veteran critical theory. The final step of the project was to apply the theory to an extant data set (a test drive if you will).The minor goal of this work is the creation of a critical theory with which to critique research, policy, and procedure. I call this theory veteran critical theory. The major goal of this work is to serve the increasing number of veterans who populate our

country's classrooms, some of whom were in my classroom, many of whom I could have served better.

Note that I do not believe there is a "right" theory with which to understand veterans in higher education as there is not a "right" theory to understand gay black men or Latinas. There are, however, theories that are more appropriate, representative, and useful than others. I wanted to create the best and most appropriate, representative, and useful theory I could. I call this theory veteran critical theory.

CHAPTER V

"PLUGGING IN" THE THEORIES

The following chapter discusses how the application of different critical theories

(feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability theory, and border theory)

to literature on Post 9/11 student veterans uncovers veterans' experiences with

marginalization and oppression upon matriculating into, returning to, or continuing in

higher education. Understanding *how* these extant theories can be used to explore the

experiences of student veterans ultimately led to the adoption and creation of appropriate

tenets for a dedicated critical theory in support of veterans. For organizational purposes,

this chapter is separated into seven sections. Each of the first five sections briefly

introduces the critical theory being considered (a longer treatment can be found in

Chapter III), explains the guiding tenets I used when applying the theory (plugging the

theory in), explores significant moments of interaction between the literature and the

critical theory being considered, and finally summarizes how that particular critical

theory worked to provide insight into the marginalization or oppression of student

veterans. A second section considers intersectionality and multiple identities, a tenet

represented (in some fashion) by each critical theory. It is important to recognize that

each set of questions reframes each theory's tenets so that the tenets can be evaluated as

useful or not as useful in understanding student veterans.

In the first sections of this chapter, the theories themselves are not being

employed to understand student veterans. For example, in the case of feminist theory, I

am curious how student veterans (women) are marginalized, oppressed, and defined by a

patriarchy (civilian institutions of higher education). I am not investigating how feminist theory can be used to understand the experiences and marginalization of female student veterans. Though this is a noble cause, it is simply outside the productive purpose of this exercise. For those interested, I offer a final section devoted to how each theory can "as it stands" apply to the student veteran population as described by the chosen literature.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory offers a fertile ground for theory creation. Engendered as a legal theory, critical race theory (CRT) offers a clear framework and a series of generally agreed upon tenets. While traditionally connected to the study of African Americans, the easily adjustable tenets of CRT make for useful ways to view a variety of marginalized populations. Chang (1993) has used CRT to inform Asian American Legal Scholarship. Soloranzo & Yosso (2001) explain how CRT has been used to build LatCrit, FemCrit, and WhiteCrit studies (p. 474). It makes sense, then, that CRT would provide useful tools for understanding the oppression and marginalization of another subpopulation: student veterans.

One of the first tenets of CRT is that racism in endemic, systemic, and systematic. The larger critique is that racism is so ubiquitous that those who are the beneficiaries of its privilege are often unaware of the ways in which they are privileged. Delgado and Stefancic (2000) would suggest that racism is "normal, not aberrant, in American society" (p. xvi). Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, and Thomas (1995) explain that early civil rights movements were built on fighting the visible monster of racism.

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Looking back in time, it is not difficult to see the oppression, the brutality, and the violence. In the late 20th and early 21st century, racism is harder to fight as many wrongfully believe it has been vanquished. CRT acknowledges that racism exists in multiple explicit and implicit ways. McIntosh's (1989) invisible knapsack suggests some of the subtle but important ways in which whites are privileged. A few of these include:

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.

2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.

3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.

4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

5. I can turn on the television or open the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented (pp. 5-9).

These conditions are just 5 of 46 such conditions. While some of these may not seem relevant to student veterans, similar conditions exist. For example, as a civilian, I can be reasonably sure that my professors' comments about international politics and the wars in Iraq in Afghanistan will not be directed at me. Additionally, I can be sure that my transfer credit, financial aid, and application process will be as streamlined and efficient as those of all other students. What follows are some of the ways in which the following

question (adapted from this CRT tenet) interacted with selected literature on student veterans.

In what ways (explicit and implicit) are civilians privileged in higher education

The language of student veteran research re-emphasizes that higher education is a civilian space. Researchers find ways for veterans to "fit" in (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell, 2009) or "rejoin" (Persky & Oliver, 2011) a civilian space. Civilians (knowingly and unknowingly) lay claim to the landscape and politics of higher education. The policies, procedures, and culture are suited to a traditional, civilian undergraduate populace. Where student veterans are stymied, confused, or misdirected are places that civilian privilege does not recognize minority (veteran) need. Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) explain that many of the challenges faced by student veterans are connected with an inability of institutions to adjust to the different needs of student veterans. These challenges include having to reapply to programs multiple times after deployments, losing scholarships or other financial aid opportunities due to deployment, and losing work and time accrued when deployed mid-semester. These functional issues are seen in most of the literature on student veterans (Vacchi, 2012a; Persky & Oliver, 2010, Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, & Fleming, 2011; Radford, 2009).

The veteran research that has been done usually privileges a civilian knowledge over a veteran knowledge. As Vacchi (2013) points out, *Called to Serve*, an edited collection by Hamrick and Rumann (2013), is a collection of "personal perspectives and experience from a group of authors who are not, for the most part, veterans, but who are

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some of the voices from the higher education community actively working on aspects of student veteran programming and services" (p. 132). While those in disability theory may question the appropriateness of policy and research being enacted and instigated by civilians (see the fourth question under disability theory), the larger CRT-associated critique is that when research is done on veterans by civilians, it claims authority of knowledge (and the privilege of that knowledge) over veterans. In this way, privilege is being "written into" the way we understand student veterans.

Finally, the majority of college students fall into a particular age range. Student veterans, who can be (but are not always) older students, reported that this environment is not created for them. Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, and Fleming (2011) suggest that invisibility is a major factor in understanding the student veteran experience. They explain that "student veterans, whether or not by design, were often invisible members within the campus community" (Livingston, et al., 2011, p. 322). Though these institutions may not have been designed to oppress or marginalize student veterans, the report that many feel invisible clarifies that regardless of design, higher education has been effective in excluding student veterans. Inclusion is a form of privilege.

Bell (1979) introduced the idea of *interest convergence*, critiquing the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision as a failure to productively integrate minority and majority students. Furthermore, he argues that the (white) courts' inconsistency in applying *Brown* focused more on desegregation than integration and policies and procedures that made the implantation of *Brown*-based desegregation difficult were often not challenged. Bell argues that *Brown* was ultimately a boon to white privilege. CRT recognizes the

criticism that policies and procedures touted to serve a marginalized population (traditionally a racial minority) are often only accepted and implemented if there is benefit (or avoided detriment) to majority (white) stakeholders.

Ladson-Billings (1998) explains that CRT theorists contend "that civil rights laws continue to serve the interests of Whites" (p. 12). Reconsidering this in context of returning veterans, I ask:

In what ways do programs and policies intended to serve student veterans ultimately serve civilians or institutions of higher education

Though not one of the investigated texts, Thelin (2004) argues that the initial Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 was originally created to make sure that "disgruntled" returning veterans were kept busy and the nation as a whole move forward (p. 262). The law was not solely created because there was inherent value in educating veterans, nor was it in intended (necessarily) to honor veterans. Instead, the law (on some level) was created to protect civilians and promote a civilian-focused economy. McBain (2008) adds that the GI Bill was a response to the violent, "soldier on soldier" conflict of post- World War I soldier protests, broken up and disbanded by military forces. In these ways, the GI Bill in its inception was promoted by interest convergence. The way the bill functions today, however, has given rise to a new moment of interest convergence, the "veteran-friendly" campus.

According to McBain, Cook, Kim, and Snead (2012), 62% of their institutional population reported providing "programs and services specifically designed for service members and veterans" (p. 14). The two top ways that institutions have served veterans

are through program development and marketing and outreach programs. Far more than academic help, student counseling, or medical assistance, colleges and universities are begging veterans to come to their doors. While veterans have shown to be dependable, dedicated, and highly able students, they also come with a hefty dowry. GI money can be a powerful motivator for increasing marketing strategies and seeking a national reputation as being "veteran-friendly." Rumann & Hamrick (2010) suggest that "campus-based services for veterans have tended to focus on ensuring access to earned benefits" (p. 454). While it makes sense that enrollment and financial administration are necessary before academic help or student services are warranted, the fact that most veteran services are limited to financial processes speaks to at least one interest higher education has in student veterans. Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, and Fleming (2011) observe that "higher education institutions view veterans as an attractive student population with ample financial resources" (p. 316). Quoted in Persky and Oliver (2011), Julian Alssid, executive director of the Workforce Strategy Center said in 2008:

> Notwithsatnding veterans' preference for community colleges, the scope of…funds made available by the new [GI Bill] could also stiffen competition among institutions eager to tap the financial windfall…I would expect that four-year and proprietary schools will aggressively court these veterans…There will be plenty of competition for these folks (p. 118).

While this observation can certainly be considered a pessimistic response to an institution's altruistic desire to recruit and serve student veterans, it should be noted that

Bell's original critique of *Brown* was seen by whites as a "cynical explanation of whites' benevolent conduct" (Delgado, 2002, p. 373).

As researchers and universities work to serve student veterans, it is important to recognize that they are also working to serve themselves. As DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) state, "as combat veterans enroll in colleges following their service in the wars in Afghansitan and Iraq, they are likely to require support services" (p. 75). This assertion can be read as a call to service or a call to preservation. Universities and colleges create programs out of need more than good-will or hospitality. If institutions of higher education are creating new programs to serve veterans, it may be because without these programs, veterans would become a "problem" demographic on campuses. While introduced as ways for veterans to learn and develop among like-minded military individuals, veteran-only classes and organizations (if pushed as sole options or best options) could be used to segregate veterans and civilians. Imagine an institution, after reading reports of LGBT students who were more comfortable with other LGBT students, proposing classes where all LGBT students could learn. Is this protection, prevention, or isolation? Moreover, if campuses are not uniquely prepared for veterans on campuses, faculty comments or staff inaction could cause a legal problem. Persky and Oliver (2011) caution institutions that if they do not properly "address antimilitary bias as a potential liability issue," institutions of higher education may be legally vulnerable.

The civilian interest in serving veterans does not stop at the institutional level. McBain (2008) argues that "encouraging veterans' enrollment helps increase America's competitiveness in the global economy and expand its human capital" (p. 2). She

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continues that "facilitating [veterans'] undergraduate degrees is a benefit that works to both the advantage of individual veterans and America's intellectual competitiveness in the global arena" (McBain, 2008, p. 2). Recognition of the shared interest in a veteran-friendly policy is not in itself prejudicial or criticized in the sense that CRT literature implies. However, the enactment of policy and procedure based on its additional (and advertised) benefit to the civilian population is a problem.

Harris's (1993) addition to CRT is the notion of whiteness as property. Harris argues that whiteness has legal property value and the efforts to protect this property come at a great cost to non-whites. While current institutions of higher education are welcoming veterans with dedicated spaces and affectionate pats on the back, it is important to recognize that there are still ways in which a civilian status has property implications. Harris (1993) clarifies that "whiteness and property share a common premise—a conceptual nucleus—of a right to exclude" (p. 1714). It is in this way veteran literature most resonates with the CRT tenet of whiteness as property. Whether *de jure* or *de facto*, many veterans are excluded from opportunities in higher education. Some of these include organizations, residence halls, and student development opportunities. Even when their veteran-status is not a barrier, their age or lack of social network keeps them from inclusion. This important tenet of CRT can be rephrased as

How does civilian status function as a form of property

Vacchi (2012a) considers the multiple ways in which classes and credit taken while serving are not recognized. Though these classes are often taken in the same way as other online or distance classes, because they are associated with military service, the

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credit is questioned and sometimes even denied. In this way, civilians (enrolled in similar classes) earn the property of coursework because of their opportunities as civilians. In two different instances (Vacchi, 2012a; Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell, 2009) students dropped classes because of insulting or aggressive statements made by professors.

As many student veterans are married (Radford, 2009), many affordable student living options are not available. Access is a form of property. Though most institutions do not restrict participation in particular organizations and university functions, cultural differences and perceived differences may keep veterans from being invited or accepted into organizations. The experience itself, as well as network, development, and satisfaction gained in student organizations can be considered a property loss by student veterans who do not feel comfortable joining predominantly undergraduate groups.

It is important to recognize that the property issues considered by Harris began as property interests in the body, land, and freedom. Though extended to consider lost property due to lack of privilege, I recognize the danger of comparing student veterans experiences to people of color in this tenet.

A more recent addition to CRT literature is the adoption of microaggressions as a tool to explore the tenets of CRT. Sue (2010) defines microaggressions as "the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, of negative messages to target persons based solely on their marginalized group membership "(p. 3). More than a characteristic of CRT, microaggressions are ways to understand the dominant ideaology

of a superior or privileged race, the persistence of racism, the injustice meted out by racist individuals and institutions, the transdisciplinary perspective of CRT, and the personal, intimate experiences of racism (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 63). Microaggressions are further supported as a tool of CRT by the privileging of personal stories and narrative as more than irrelevant anecdote, but rather as valued knowledge. As I explored the selected literature about student veterans, I was amazed how most articles with student voice expressed forms of microaggressions. In her 2010 edited collection, Sue and colleagues explore microaggressions among Black undergraduates, Latina/o Americans, Asian Americans, indigenous peoples, peoples with disabilities, microaggressions based on gender, and microaggressions based on sexual orientation. As an extension of this important literature, it is appropriate to look at microaggressions experiences by student veterans. The next probing question is:

How do student veterans experience microaggressions

Many veterans reported general frustration with students' and faculty's insensitivity to their service. Rumann and Hamrick (2010) report veterans hearing questions like "Did you kill anyone over there?" and "Did you see anyone get blown up?" (p. 447). While these questions can be read as ways that civilians are trying to understand the experiences of veterans, they are more often than not ways of aligning veterans to preconceived notions or commodification of the soldiers' experiences as entertainment. Additional slights were experienced by soldiers who did not serve in Afghanistan or Iraq. At least one veteran reported frustration that her service was minimized or disregarded because she was in Kuwait instead of the more publicized

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locations of the war. She responded "well, yeah, but I was still there. I was in Kuwait. You weren't in Kuwait" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 447). Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) explain that not all, but some students reported inconsiderate, insensitive, and even aggressive remarks about the war after faculty or students learned of their service. A sociology professor 'referred to the American soldier as a terrorist' in a class in which a combat veteran was a student…In another incident, a Marine who served in Afghanistan was called a traitor in class by another student because he expressed opposition to the war" (p. 11). Though these experiences may be rare, the fact that they happen at all (and are so overt) suggests that more often subtle microaggressions are constantly occurring. Similar to respondents in Rumann and Hamrick (2010), student veterans in Ackerman, DiRamio, and Mitchell's (2009) work reported that they had been asked whether or not they killed someone. This particular question was often seen in the literature as a repeating microaggression. Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) explain that their participants found this question "disturbing and difficult to respond to" (p. 11). The question then becomes a debilitating action. It is important to recognize that in the field of micoaggressions (and elsewhere) questions are actions (even acts of violence). While suggesting best practices for faculty members, Vacchi (2012a) advises keeping opinions on war outside of the classroom if it is not appropriate. He recounts a conversation with a student who "enrolled in Greek Classics and subsequently dropped the course after the first day because the professor went on a rant about the illegality of the war in Iraq" (p. 20). Additional microaggressions stem from professor or student comments on Iraq, Afghanistan, or war

that are not true according to the student veteran's experience. If the student veteran

chooses to voice opposition or contradiction, they risk an escalated or hostile

conversation (Vacchi, 2012a).

Persky and Oliver (2011) report that student veterans had difficulties "dealing

with immature students in the classroom and being treated disrespectfully by some

faculty" (p. 114). Differences in maturity of classmates and student veterans repeated

through the literature as both an exclusionary characteristic and a source of frustration.

DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) suggests that "while the ages of the

participants in [their] study were not drastically different from other students, there

exists a difference in level of maturity that comes from wartime military service" (p. 87).

Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009), DiRamio, Ackerman and Mitchell

(2008), and Persky and Oliver (2011) explain that student veterans were often frustrated

at the childish or immature actions of traditional undergraduate students. One study

participant reported:

> Most [students] kind of whine over nothing. They don't really know what it is to
>
> have a hard time…They don't have people screaming at them to get things done
>
> at three in the morning. They sit in a sheltered dorm room and do homework.
>
> It's not too hard. You hear people complaining and you're just like, why are you
>
> complaining? (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008, p. 87)

Microaggressions are linked to perceived slights or insults. It is possible that many

student veterans adopt a worldview that makes them more sensitive to things that would

often pass as "normal" in a purely civilian classroom. This fact, however, does not

negate the microaggressions that are occurring. Student veterans report becoming uncomfortable and frustrated based on the maturity level of other (civilian) student in their classes.

CRT values the lived experience of it subjects and its authors. Storytelling and counter-stories (stories that contradict the assumed meritocracy or race-neutral practices in institutions and society) are a central part of CRT and a productive way of knowing. Ladson-Billings (1998) explains that because "the ahistorical and acontextual nature of most law and other 'science' renders the voices of dispossessed and marginalized group members mute" (p. 13). She argues that "stories provide the necessary context for understanding, feeling, and interpreting" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 13). Ladson-Billings continues by asserting "the 'voice' component of CRT provides a way to communicate the experience and realities of the oppressed, a first step in understanding the complexities of racism and beginning a process of judicial redress" (p. 14).

How does the literature about student veterans honor, value, and incorporate the lived experience, stories, and counter-stories of student veterans

Much of the literature investigated grounds its work in interviews or focus groups. These interviews (often lasting 90 minutes with multiple interview sessions) represent the lived experience of student veterans. Using these transcripts privileges the lived experience and stories of these students. Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) and DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) also build their knowledge on the interviewed and recorded experiences of student veterans, claiming that the "purpose of [their] study was to learn from the veterans themselves about their military and civilian

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journeys" (p. 74) and the "richness of [their] study is in the student comments—the voices of the student-veterans themselves' (p. 81). When the experiences of student veterans are not made central to the data or analysis of the research, more critical scholars point it out. Reviewing DiRamio and Jarvis's (2011) book, Vacchi (2012b) claims the "greatest weakness of [the] book is that it lacks evidence of an informed veteran's perspective in most areas" (p. 138). Even in practice, Persky and Oliver (2011) report that student veterans "linked improvement of the community college experience of veterans to the case institutions ability to validate students by listening and being aware of their needs" (p. 114). Research acknowledges the importance of the veteran narrative as both data and knowledge. Many reports (Radford, 2009; DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008; Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, & Fleming, 2011) pull liberally from their transcripts to showcase veteran voice. The most moving quotes are often the ones that represent a counter-narrative—the ones that question our assumptions about veterans or how institutions are serving them. A participant in DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell's (2008) study explained:

> There's nothing here [at this university] for veterans…I got no help. When I walked into the office it was empty and I was told I'd have to make an appointment. Which was kind of weird because all the [staff] were sitting around drinking coffee (p. 88).

Counter-narratives expose student veteran experience which is crucial to understanding student veteran perceptions of higher education and their transition experiences.

Finally, CRT includes a critique of liberalism. Rooted in its legal studies pedigree, a critique of liberalism argues that long-term, incremental justice is impossible in the context of our current legal system (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Additionally, a critique of liberalism criticizes the notions of color-blindness and defining racism "as discrete acts of racial discrimination based on the 'irrelevant' attribute of race" (Closson, 2010, p. 270). Closson (2010) continues "authors who make a critique of liberalism characterize the dominant ideology as having a delusional, color-blind, race-neutral, and meritocratic notion of their field" (p. 271). As veterans fill our nation's classrooms, we must ask:

How are the policies and procedures aimed at serving veterans too slow or incremental to be effective, and how does a meritocratic and veteran-status neutral approach privilege civilians or oppress student veterans

Many participants expressed a desire to mute or cover their veteran status. Participants in Rumann and Hamrick's worked spoke against special treatment or "un-earned" merit, saying that "they don't need no frickin' ticket" (p. 448). The tendency to blend or cover a veteran status is more often fear of special treatment than it is shame in service. In this way, veterans are both propagating and potentially being injured by a veteran-status neutral (service-blind) view of the world, resistant to the assumed meritocracy of higher education. The problem, however, is that many veterans experience challenges and setbacks in civilian-oriented institutions of higher education that civilians do not. Vacchi (2012a) critiques the way that younger student veterans are often considered traditional students when their unique experiences and often heightened

maturity make them a special population. Additionally, both Vacchi (2013) and

Livingston and Bauman (2013) critique the application of Schlossberg's theory (the

primary tool used for understanding veterans' transitions) arguing that "because the

theory is applicable to adult populations in general, it may lack the specificity needed to

encompass the unique nature of the student service member experience" (Livingston &

Bauman, 2013, p. 60). Thus not recognizing the veteran status of the individual may

ultimately result in an inappropriate or incomplete reading of the student veteran.

Current research presents slow, service-level changes in student veteran policies.

Though financial aid efficiency, credit streamlining, faculty and staff training, and the

creation of designated veteran spaces are important steps towards veteran success, they

are band-aids for a larger wound of inequality. As researchers overlook student veterans'

unique characteristics by pulling their experiences through inappropriate theories or non-

veteran specific theories, they will continue to suggest band-aids, and student veterans

will continue to suffer the effects of the wound.

Summary

Critical race theory is a useful theory in that it presents clear and generally

accepted tenets. Born in critical legal theory, CRT is easily applicable to several

different marginalized groups. Extensions of CRT include LatCrit, WhiteCrit, AsianCrit,

and FemCrit. Because of its highly developed structure, its tenets provide clear and

accessible ways to critique a larger structure of oppression or examine an experience of

marginalization. The most fruitful tenets of CRT (when applied to student veteran

research) include Bell's notion of "interest convergence," Pierce's (1970) theory of

microaggressions, a value and incorporation of narratives and counter-narratives as a way of knowing, and the larger concept of structural, pervasive, and unrecognized oppression. Though salient to CRT, Harris's idea of "whiteness as property" is particularly weak when applied to veterans. Additionally, the critique of color-blindess (when repurposed for veterans studies) is lacking. CRT's problem with color-blindness and meritocracy is often couched in the white or hegemonic view of the minority as color-less. This can be seen in comments like "I don't see color, I just see another human." With student veterans, the veterans are often the ones who are muting or silencing their veteran identity in order to accommodate assumptions of "fair play" and meritocracy.

Border Theory

"Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle, and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy" (Anzaldúa, 1999, p.19). So begins Anzaldúa's treatise on "the border." While in her life there was a physical border (Texas-U.S. Southwest/ Mexico), there were also sexual, gender, spiritual, class, and cultural borders she crossed, re-crossed, and stood astride. Border theory comments on the clash of borders, but most importantly seeks to explain the lived experiences of those who do not select one border over another. For Anzaldúa, this shared space was the *mestiza* consciousness, a woman containing Mexican, Anglo, and Indian cultures, but sacrificing no allegiances. Border theory helps social scientists make sense of the physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural, and linguistic

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space of the border. In the case of this research, that border is a border between civilian and non-civilian, soldier and student, and adult and collegian.

The first border theory tenet I investigate considers the borders themselves. For a border to exist, two nations or states must exist. While physical borders, "sites and symbols of power" are often denoted by "guard towers and barbed wire" (Donnan & Wilson, 1999, p. 1), borders between race, sex, class, and identity are far more difficult to see. The first question I use to see how border theory can be employed to understand student veterans is:

How do student veterans define and understand multiple borders (geographic, identity,

veteran-status, occupational-status, etc.)

Rumann and Hamrick (2010) suggest that when seeking advice or assistance, veterans may be "straddl[ing] both worlds" of campus and community (p. 455). For their particular research group (Guard and Reservists) the border between civilian and student is crossed more often than other student veterans. Additionally, the physical borders of campus and combat are not always clear. As Rumann and Hamrick (2010) show, "some respondents described creative ways to be students during their deployments," taking online courses, initiating transfers to new universities, and doing distance coursework (p. 442). In this way, students undermine the traditional boundaries of student/soldier. As a reservist in Ackerman, DiRamio, and Mitchell's (2009) study expressed, after serving in a war zone, "you are going to come back changed. It's not necessarily good or bad, but you will, fundamentally, be a different person" (p. 7). These "fundamental" changes can be understood as leaving one bordered space and not being able to enter that space again.

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One of the reasons many student veterans live on the border is because they cannot reenter either individual space. Vacchi (2012a) explains that "veterans have experienced socialization into a military culture that is markedly different from the culture in higher education" (p. 17). This socialization is a defining process of what is and is not military—what is and is not civilian. Even the literature recognizes and contributes to the bordered (and separated) nature of student veterans. DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) claim that they seek to understand the "military and civilian journeys" of their participants (p. 74). This is troubling because the authors create a separation (if not a binary) in the terms "military" and "civilian," and then order the terms to imply that student veterans can have a civilian story after their military story. Is the civilian story the story of the student veteran as a civilian or is it the story of the student veteran in a civilian space?

For student veterans the border is also defined by actions. As student veterans negotiate with the Veterans' Affairs Office, financial aid, admissions, they are constantly reminded that there are gate-keepers and "border patrol" at each of the borders. The service-based suggestions made by Persky and Oliver (2011), DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008), Ryan, et al. (2011), and Rumann and Hamrick (2010) are suggestion about the border (specifically the border patrol). Credit streamlining, financial literacy, faculty sensitivity, veteran space allotment, and administration issues are all border issues. DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell's (2008) suggestion to create better tracking methods is a way of acknowledging a border is being crossed. Awareness of borders by student veterans is evident in the way they consider their undergraduate civilian peers,

the way they discuss their experience in higher education, and the way they discuss leaving the space of the military. One of Rumann and Hamrick's participants explained that when in the military, the repetitive nature of the tasks "gets really old" but service members "know exactly what is going to happen…There is no guesswork involved" (p. 441). This is compared to the university where "there is no clear 'Do this, go home, you're done'" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 441). Here, the student veteran recognizes a border of expectation. The borders that student veterans see are not limited to external description; they include invisible borders of intent, responsibility, purpose, and perspective.

Moreover, these nations are constantly warring for dominance and allegiance. Lugo (1997) argues that a conversation about border is a conversation about power. Many live at the borders of conflicting nation-states. As we negotiate allegiance, we claim citizenship in one assuming (or not assuming) the loss of citizenship in another. These complex decisions to choose allegiance refuse the heterotopic (Foucault, 1984) possibility of multiple citizenship, a-citizenship, or new citizenship in a "yet to be claimed" space. The question, then, builds on how people (in this case student veterans) choose their allegiances, refuse allegiances, or establish an allegiance in a new space.

How are student veterans navigating allegiances at the student/ non-student, civilian/ soldier, and veteran/ enlisted borders

Rumann and Hamrick (2010) claim that for many student veterans, "experiences in both military and academic cultures provided [guard and reservists] with a sort of bi-cultural literacy in which they adapt and function successfully in both cultures. Part of

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this literacy is recognizing power and authority within each bordered space. The traditional authority of the classroom is often upturned by personal pedagogy or smaller age differences between students and faculty. In the veteran sphere, veterans can "read" other veterans by seeing "who has combat patches and who doesn't" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 448). This knowledge allows veterans to read a person's history and experience. Though the civilian world offers some "readable" clues, there is no replacement for the regalia of military. The process of learning and then relearning hierarchy and power at the borders is an important part of the transition experience. Additional knowledge from the military space did not have a directly corresponding civilian knowledge or did not translate in a civilian space. According to Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) "killing and survival skills learned in the military were not applicable in classroom settings, implying that a relearning of leadership skills was also necessary" (p. 7). Though I do not agree with the assumption that no leadership learned in the military (even if imbued with the need for survival) is transferable outside of the military, leading classroom and organizations of civilians whose life does not depend on your decision and whose allegiance does not compromise your safety is surely different. As veterans enter classrooms they recognize that 1) old knowledge may not be applicable, 2) new knowledge may not be available, and 3) they are constantly choosing when and if to employ their knowledge (identity). Allegiances can be conscious and subconscious decisions. In the same way that they may perform their identities differently considering their context, student veterans pledge their allegiances considering context. DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) suggest that maturity

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and nonconformity with perceived peers because of maturity directed many student veterans' actions and experience in the classroom. Reactions to the maturity of peers are a way that student veterans must navigate borders. Student veterans also make a decision to reveal or hide their veteran status or military background. Student veterans must consider how they are perceived and what they perceive and find a way to exist as both. Vacchi (2012a) explains how many veterans will not identify as a veteran if they are seeking assistance (so as not to tarnish the appearance of a flawless soldier). Some veterans (if forced to identify) may even forgo treatment or help in light of protecting the image of the unblemished American soldier. The decision to disclose veteran status is (should be), ultimately, a student veteran decision. DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) explained that one of their participants became frustrated when a faculty member would insist on talking about the student's military service. The faculty member's ostensibly positive aim of understanding was instigated by the driving force of civilian curiosity. Whether looking for sensationalist accounts, interesting stories, or validation of preconceived notions, the push for unready student veterans to divulge information to civilians is ultimately only serving civilian inquisitiveness. That being said, participants in the same study suggested that "the faculty needs to know who [student veterans] are" (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008, p. 89). Student willingness must be considered as student veterans' experiences are mined.

Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, and Fleming (2011) suggest that as student veterans attempt to navigate the borders of multiple identities or allegiances, they may have multiple levels of layers. Though Livingston and Bauman (2013) explain the roles

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and responsibilities of two bordering identities: student and service member, Livingston and colleagues (2011) explain that there is a bureaucratic border as well as a social border to cross. This recognition is important as it has implications on how we serve veterans in transition (first understanding what kind of transition they are experiencing).

Finally, the borders are not always internal to the student veteran. As some spaces are constructed to be military, civilian, and military/civilian, the student veteran must respond to how the space is constructed. McBain (2008) offers that the question facing higher education administrators is how they "bridge the gap between veteran students and civilian colleges" (p. 7). Following McBain's logic, the border is external to the student veteran.

In the preface to her work *Borderlands/ La Frontera*, Anzaldúa (1999) describes the polyglottal nature of her work.

> The switching of "codes" in this book From English to Castilian Spanish to the North Mexican dialect to Tex-Mex to a sprinkling of Nahuatl to a mixture of all of these, reflects my language, a new language—the language of the Borderlands. There, at the juncture of cultures, languages cross-pollinate and are revitalized; they die and are born (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 20).

Applying border theory to the selected literature on student veterans requires us to explore what new language emerges in the voice of the student veteran.

How do student veterans form a new language in their response to standing at/in/astride

a particular border

For Rumann and Hamrick's participants, language and literacy at the border of identities proved to be important. Describing "fundamental differences in approaches to getting acquainted," one participant suggests "The civilians have their drinking stories, and 'This chick I met last night' stories, and the veteran's got the 'No shit, there I was' stories. It's kind of like we're a different breed of person after we get back" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 446). Other participants explained that things that made them laugh were not always funny to civilians, and "cautioned that civilians may 'think you are crude when you are just trying to be friendly and open up'" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 447). Language can be considered any communication or text (body language, words, actions, dress, ceremony).

Finally, Anzaldúa (1999), discussing the Mexican/American border, claims that late 20th century immigration policy encouraged illegal border-crossings. She describes the Mexicans crossing as "faceless, nameless, invisible, taunted with 'Hey cucaracho' (cockroach). Trembling with fear, yet filled with courage, a courage born of desperation. Barefoot and uneducated, Mexicans with hands like boot soles gather at night by the river where two worlds merge creating what Reagan calls a frontline, a war zone. The convergence…" Anzaldúa (1999) notes "…has created a shock culture, a border culture, a third country, a closed country" (p. 33). Post 9/11 wars and their soldiers' return to civilian landscapes has also created a shock culture among soldiers and civilians alike. It

is important to understand how veterans understand the boundaries and/or existence of a third country—a place where only them and those with similar experiences can reside.

How do veterans construct and claim a "third country" or "border space" territory "Bob," a participant in Rumann and Hamrick's (2010) study of guard and reservists, explained:

> I think the two biggest problems, being completely separate from each other, that a soldier might have coming back is he either sees the two worlds (soldier and civilian) as completely separate and can't relate them or he tries to attack the problems in this world in the same way he attacked the problems in the other world. And you have to find some middle ground. (p. 447).

Bob's insightful comment establishes a new place of consciousness, closely aligned with Anzaldúa's notion of a third country or third space between borders. It is clearly not enough to try to stand in one or the other and connect with the adjacent world; student veterans must find a way to exist in both simultaneously. Livingston and Bauman (2013) suggest that reservist and guard members are trying to "occupy two sometimes conflicting identities, those of *student* and *service member*" (p. 43), often searching for a "middle ground of identity in which to engage and interact" (p. 58). They use a collision theme to discuss the boundary of student and service member. This conversation may be better served by naming that collided space as a verifiable place instead of a violent aftermath.

Summary

Border theory examines territorial borders and the spaces they separate. Recognition of the multiple borders that student veterans experience, both permeable and impassable, help both student veterans and those that study student veterans make meaning oppositional and/or adjacent spaces where student veterans are placed or place themselves. The tenets of understanding borders and recognizing how and when allegiances at these borders are made are rich areas for further study. The third and fourth tenets (transnational language and third country politics) are less developed in the current literature but hold great promise. The larger conversation of dedicated spaces for veterans (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008) or "green zones" where military men and women feel safe (Livingston & Bauman, 2013) speaks to the saliency of "third space" or "third country" creation. Some of the value of border theory is best juxtaposed with the trans-theoretical tenet of multiple identities (considered later in this chapter).

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory builds on a long history of the subjugation of women by men. The tenets of feminist theory are tied to understanding this power structure, naming this power structure, and undermining the power structure. Whether equal rights or equal status, feminist thought has pushed against the dominant structures of oppression (patriarchy). As I look to the selected literature on student veterans, I first ask:

What are the origins of inequality in higher education between student civilians and student veterans

It is important to recognize that most studies on veterans returning to higher education cite the 1862 Morrill Act which "formally incorporated military training into land grant universities" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 432) This early support of the military and its subsequent removal from the landscape of higher education (save some vestigial ROTC programs) gives perspective on the civilian-appropriated nature of higher education and the "reborn" military associations that were once its definition. Vacchi (2012a) argues that difficulty in naming who veterans are (active duty, combat, enlisted, reservists, dependents) has caused inequity in how they are served. He explains that "based on this lack of a common reference for student veteran, various institutions have developed their own labels for student veterans they serve, but it is unclear if these are inclusive groups" (p. 16). As an external or aberrant population, student veterans are at the whim of definitions often created by civilians or a civilian-dominated campus administration. Unfortunately, these created definitions and images are often negative or riddled with deficiencies. Vacchi (2012b) celebrates Baxter Magolda's contribution to DiRamio and Jarvis's (2011) work by calling it "the first indication [he] has seen in the literature suggesting that we should expect successful transitions from student veterans" (p. 139). Another positive approach is found in Sachs (2008) suggesting that we should "[identify] the positive aspects of military experience that promote resiliency as opposed to focusing on weaknesses' (qtd. in Persky & Oliver, 2011, p. 116). The foreground of student veteran research has been weighed down by assumptions that student veterans

will not succeed. As policy and practice are informed by this information, it stands to reason that this scholarship will breed inequality between student civilians and student veterans. As we apply the aforementioned tenet of feminist theory to veterans, it is easy to see that a history of civilian-centered policy, institutional culture, and research has bred a veteran-unfriendly space. Even the push towards "veteran friendly" campuses is recognition of this history. No one believes that before being "veteran friendly" institutions were "veteran neutral."

Whether engrained in privilege, tradition, or both, the structures that oppress and dominate the student veteran must be considered with a critical eye. As motherhood, marriage, education, business, and art have been investigated as potentially oppressive structures for women, the many faces of higher education must be investigated as potentially oppressive structures for student veterans.

How do systems and structures in higher education support inequality between student civilians and student veterans

Often inequality is supported by a lack of understanding. Rumann and Hamrick (2010) note that "many aspects of [Guard and Reservists] complex transition experiences are not well understood by faculty, staff, and administrators" (p. 431). Rumann and Hamrick (2010) also assert that "virtually all respondents reported practical transition concerns, most of which related to university infrastructure or policies that complicated re-enrollment" (p. 440). Vacchi (2012a) offers five "areas to consider when enhancing the overall learning environment for student veterans on campus: GI Bill processing, health care insurance requirements, bursar practices, academic advising practices, and

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faculty practices" (p. 19). I would argue these structural issues are all places where civilians are supported in better ways considering their needs. Many student veterans struggle with transfer hours as they matriculate into post-service academic programs (DiRamio, et al., 2008). Persky and Oliver (2011) report that one student in their study "explained that he was required to take three courses in which the content was a repeat of his lengthy and comprehensive military classes" (p. 113). Failure to account for and "[respect] and [value] the education veterans received while serving in the military" is another way that civilians are privileged as their transfer work (more often at local civilian community colleges) easily transfers as credit.

Transfer hours and financial aid represent structural, policy-driven ways that civilians are privileged in higher education. Echoing the feminist critique of the patriarchy, the structural inequality of civilian and veteran is not always explicitly announced; more often it precipitates from assumptions, unspoken alliances, and traditions that promote inequality.

Building on Beauvoir's question "Are there women, really" (1952, p. xiii), I ask how student veterans are constructed. Beauvoir (1952) argues that femininity and womanhood, the tropes of wife and mother, are not descriptive, but prescriptive. The ability of a woman to be a "woman" is defined and then assessed by men. Therefore, "woman" as signifier is cleaved from woman the signified. Beauvoir (1952) asks is woman a "Platonic essence, a product of the philosophic imagination" (p. xiii)? And then more curiously, is woman just Other, shadow or subjugation of the One (man)?

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How are veterans constructed? How does the One (civilian) write the Other (student veteran)?

How are student veterans constructed and written by civilians, institutions of higher education, and policies enacted by both

Civilian status is the default student status. As heterosexual, male, and white are defaults, civilian status is a default. Student veterans experience this when trying to meet the challenge of "returning" to a civilian status. Persky and Oliver (2011) describe their research as "provid[ing] a step forward in understanding the needs of recently returning veterans who seek to rejoin American civilian society as educated, fulfilled, and contributing partners" (p. 112). The dangers and assumptions inherent in this statement are limitless. Are veterans not fulfilled? Does fulfillment come with civilian status? Are veterans not contributing? Will they be contributing more or in a more meaningful way if they realign or "rejoin" a civilian society? There is perceived wealth (social, cultural, economic) in rejoining civilian society or civilians would not understand the value of veterans doing it. In Rumann and Hamrick's (2010) work, "Bob" explains

> Normalcy would be a return to a prior condition. This is impossible. Once you've been

>> affected by a life-altering experience such as deployment, it is impossible and counter-productive to make an attempt at "normalcy." A balance between what normalcy would be and the new conditions in the game of life are probably a

much more important positive focus. [Trying to return to] normalcy is negative

(p. 448).

Bob writes civilian-status as what is normal. This language echoes how most

institutions operate to privilege civilians (even subconsciously) when trying to

understand veterans. Also, veteran characteristics are often defined by civilians. In both

Rumann and Hamrick (2010) and Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009)

participants are asked about the people they killed. These assumptions of soldiers as

"war machines" or "weapons" are constructed from a civilian knowledge (construction)

of a soldier or warrior. That a soldier is an engineer, a postal carrier, or a cook, is

overshadowed by the sensationalism of death and combat. In this way, student veterans

are constructed by civilians. Student veterans are often covered by "blanket policies"

that undermine their highly diverse compositions (Vacchi, 2012a). Assuming that all

veterans identify as or want to be served as veterans are dangerous assumptions that

endanger the likelihood that every veteran (as institutions define them) will actually be

served.

Even the language used to discuss veterans is constructed. Radford (2009) claims

that the purpose of her report is to help colleges and universities review what is known

about veterans as we "prepare to serve more of those who have served" (p. v). Even

when constructions are ostensibly honoring, they are still constructions that need to be

understood. For example, if veterans are seen as heroes and service to them is service to

the country, at some point they may not receive the attention, help or freedom they need

as an individual student. If a veteran undermines (through action, addiction, inability, or

disinterest) what civilians recognize as being "soldierly," will this put the service of these men and women in jeopardy? In short, will institutions serve student veterans that do not align with their constructions of what a student veteran should be?

Finally, if there is a construction of "woman," Beauvoir (1952) and Butler (1990) urge women to undermine this name and expectation:

How do student veterans undermine or contradict expectations? How are they

"unknowable"

One veteran explained that one of the challenges in returning to higher education was "the fact that people didn't understand what we had been through, and didn't understand how to approach us" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 446). In this way, student veterans can be considered unknowable by the largely civilian administration, staff, and faculty that interacts with them. Additionally, some student veterans experienced negative or minimizing assumptions about who they were after deployment. "Bob" "resisted his girlfriend's assertions that he "needs help" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 8). While there are some veterans who may resist assistance who are in need of it, Bob reflected that he felt after his experiences, *he* was "the enlightened one" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 448). Vacchi (2012a) explores the trend of veterans to not identify in order to protect an image of a strong or able veteran. Additionally, he suggests that many veterans may not take advantage of suggested services because they do not want the stigma of being helped beyond other (non-veteran) students. In this way, the "mystery" of veterans is exacerbated. Additionally, Vacchi (2012a) notes that many news reports exaggerate or falsely claim struggles within the student veteran

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demographic. He explains that "contrary to news reports, the evidence offered by the few scholars who have undertaken qualitative inquiries suggest that student veterans, currently numbering over 800,000, do not experience any more transition difficulty than other student populations" (Vacchi, 2012a, p. 16). Vacchi (2012a) continues by suggesting that most of these veterans out-perform their nonveteran peers.

Though new reports and scholarly efforts arrive annually, there is still much work to be done to understand student veterans. In his review of Hamrick and Rumann's (2013) edited collection on student veterans, Vacchi (2013) suggests that "very little is known about student veterans. The current literature leaves us sifting through untested assertions, some facts, and numerous incorrect conclusions" (p. 134). Vacchi's critique is not one of just this edited collection. Instead it is a commentary on how "unknowable" student veterans have proven to be.

Summary

The two tenets of feminist theory that most productively contribute to the student of student veterans are recognition of a historical patriarchy and the constructed idea of woman. As more scholars research the experiences of student veterans, the historical and cultural privileging of civilians will help identify the ways that current student veterans are oppressed or marginalized. Secondly, as scholarship and institutions begin to understand the civilian-constructed image of veteran and student veteran (whether hero or pariah), we will find the tools to dismantle it and student veterans (after recognizing it) will be able to undermine it.

Another useful tenet of feminist theory is the tendency for women to undermine expectation and therefore be unknowable. As student veterans assert this unknowable characteristic, they evade the civilian machines that operate to oppress them. While muting their veteran identity entirely may keep them from financial or service incentives they would benefit from, retaining some measure of mystery and unknown characteristics will allow student veterans to resist civilian commodification and construction.

Queer Theory

Queer theory pushes and pulls at sexuality, gender, and sex itself. It pushes and pulls at the idea of binaries or discrete identification. It refuses the ease of definition. As Jagose (1996) argues, the constructivist view of sexuality problematizes any attempt to clearly define gay, lesbian, or queer. As both a political act and a lexical move, queer theorists haze the definitions of heterosexual/homosexual, gay/straight, man/woman, and traditional/deviant. Much of queer theory is balanced on Butler's (1990) claim that there are "ways of interpreting the sexed body, that are in no way restricted by the apparent duality of sex" (p. 112). Extending this notion, I ask:

In what ways are the categories of civilian and veteran false or socially constructed

Veterans are primarily constructed as deviant or othered to the "normal" civilian population. Student veterans in particular (as higher education is a largely civilian space) are set aside as a special population, different in constitution from the expected civilian student. Veterans "[recognize] that their appearance (e.g. uniforms, haircuts, t-shirt emblems) may… trigger…stereotypes" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 453). Rumann

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and Hamrick (2010) explain that "identity renegotiation also included learning about the presumptions [students'] veteran statuses, and in some cases their military uniforms, signified to friends and acquaintances, fellow military personnel, and strangers" (p. 448). Vacchi (2012a) is one of the first veteran scholars to criticize the way that "popular media and some higher education scholars…exaggerate the difficulties of student veterans and draw improper inferences about student veterans based upon larger veteran population stereotypes" (p. 16). Much of the current conversation on student veterans creates a stark contrast between veterans and civilians when the lines separating them are often not as bold as media would have people believe. There are many veterans who "pass" as "regular" (civilian) students because they do not want different treatment or they do not self-identify as a veteran. Additionally, assumptions about veterans (even ostensibly positive assumptions) are dangerous. Ryan, et al. (2011) wisely suggests that advisors working with student veterans ask them (to their degree of comfort) about their reasons for leaving the military and enrolling in higher education. The grounds upon which a soldier left the military and the impetus for their matriculation into higher education are important things to understand. The importance of understanding personal histories and reasons for enrolling, of course, is salient for all students regardless of military service.

Iverson and Anderson (2013) note that women veterans are currently serving in positions historically afforded only to males, asserting that "today's higher education administrators will hear, if they have not already, series of female gunners atop armored vehicles and instances in which women veterans were in positions of engaging and

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killing enemy combatants" (p. 91). Most salient is Iverson and Anderson's argument that staff working with female veterans cannot assume (as has historically been the case) that trauma suffered by female veterans was linked only to sexual trauma or abuse. While the possibility of a female veteran having experienced harassment or assault is alarmingly high, female veterans must be considered prone to the same psychological effects as men.

That being said, the camouflaged gunner is not an accurate depiction of all veterans. Movies like *Jarhead* and *The Hurt Locker* do not offer a proper education on the experiences of all veterans in or out of combat. Media constructs images, images burrow into policy and practice, research defines and separates veterans in order to research them, and the binary between civilian and veteran becomes real, experienced, and ubiquitous.

Moreover, queer theory settles its conversations on discursive acts (actions and the naming of these actions) that defy the accepted hegemony. Following Foucault's constructivist narrative of "homosexuality," the word and its power were formed by explaining a deviance (originally a deviant act and eventually a deviant person). Homosexuality exists because it was named. Jagose (1996) goes on to provocatively argue that heterosexuality (the assumed norm) did not "exist" until its partner "homosexuality was named. Similarly, there would be no need to discuss earthlings as land dwellers until we recognize earthlings that are water or air dwellers. Following this logic, it is important to understand how student veterans are defined by their deviance from our assumptions about the normal student hegemony.

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How are the actions of veterans read as deviant and who reads them as such

Some veterans responded that their language and jokes were "crude" to a civilian audience but acceptable to veteran audiences (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010). The civilian audience then reads their language and even humor as deviant or troubling. Additionally, Vacchi (2013) critiques the notion that veterans should be "socialized in campus communities" (p. 133). Supported by well-intentioned researchers, this socialization impetus creates two problems 1) it assumes that veterans can, should, and would socialize and integrate with traditional campus communities (a claim that Vacchi clarifies is not even true of nontraditional civilian students) and 2) it writes those student veterans who elect not to socialize as deviant or otherwise problematic. Much of the literature agrees that veterans are a unique population (Ryan, et al., 2011; DiRamio, et al., 2008; Vacchi, 2012a). The problem with this notion is that though the virtues of uniqueness can be celebrated, they can also be written or read as subversive, deviant, or other.

As Jagose (1996) argues (channeling Foucault), "sexuality…is the effect of power" (p. 79). Therefore, to understand the generated binaries of gender performance or sexuality is to understand the role of power and privilege within the larger context. Looking at the context of higher education we must question how both our research about veterans and institutional policy surrounding veterans constitutes or recapitulates power discourses about student veterans and student civilians.

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How do the current texts about veterans "form (or reflect) discourses that are exercises in power/knowledge and which…reveal relations of dominance within historically-situated systems of regulation" (Smith, 2003)

Ryan and colleagues (2011) advise academic advisors to focus on the temporal notion of transition when working with student veterans. Housed in Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman's (1995) one-size-fits-all theory of transition, the authors recommend that if student veterans recognize the temporal nature of the transition to college, they will be able to better manage it. This approach is wiser than the usual suggestion that institutions help student veterans transition into the civilian space (or, more dangerously, into a civilian). The larger transition process of a student veteran from a military environment to a civilian environment (a process that could promote the impossible full negation of the military experience) is a good example of a pervasive theme in most student veteran literature that relies on civilians to make policies or practice suggestions for other civilians to "fix," "help," or "serve" veterans. Knowledge regarding how to serve veterans enrolled in higher education is ultimately power. As civilians write this knowledge, they write the power. As the write practice, they write veterans. As long as higher education is a civilian industry, veterans will be written, read, and rewritten.

One veteran claimed when you "come into the civilian sector [-] you have to deprogram yourself to work in [the] environment of the civilian world" (Radford, 2009, p. 17). This "deprogramming" can be read as the effect of one power structure over another.

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Writing on gender, Butler (1990) suggests a notion of performativity. Arguing that "man" and "woman" are collections of attributes rather than substantive and essential identities, Butler suggests that "gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be" (p. 25). Additionally, Saussure's (1916) notion of the signified and signifier exposes possibility of misreading or misrepresenting the signifier or the signified respectively. Turning our attention to the binary of veteran/civilian, we can ask:

How are civilians' and veterans' behaviors seen as textually signifying or performative

Rumann and Hamrick (2010) explore many ways that a veteran's "veteran-ness" is expressed or hidden. Considering Vietnam veterans, they write, "enrolled veterans often downplayed their veteran status in order to avoid rejection or stigmatization by their civilian peers' (Rumann Hamrick, 2010, p. 433). Though the political climate of the 1970s and today is quite different, the notion that veterans could perform their veteran-identity in different ways is notable. Further, Rumann & Hamrick (2010) suggest that "social identities wax or wane in prominence depending in part on environmental and contextual influences" (p. 435). Veterans often used a language of disclosure to explain their veteran identity. This is affirmed by Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) who reported that "veterans in our sample did not bring attention to their service and discussed it in class only when they deemed it appropriate" (p. 11). In their previous work, DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) focus on the idea of student blending in as a socialization technique. On veteran responded that he "[doesn't] really like to stand out too much" and he is "growing [his] hair out more" to avoid the

"jarhead appearance" (p. 88). Vacchi (2012a) shows concern that "veterans may feel they must live up to a false expectation: not to burden others with their problems" (p. 18). Veterans can often perform acculturation, adjustment, and transition even if they are far from experiencing it. There is a thin line between the constructs of "passing" and "blending in." As Livingston and Bauman (2013) point out, disclosure of veteran status is a choice. Though they are critical of this choice, even recommending identification and tracking procedures (imagine if the same were suggested for LGBT students), they fail to recognize that blending and passing are different. I argue, passing is a conscious decision because of *explicit* privilege or oppression offered to or enacted upon a special group. Blending is better described as a decision to garner or evade *implicit* privilege or oppression. The performance of blending in is a reflection of both the student veteran and the environment (s) in which the student veteran exists. Livingston and Bauman (2013) report that "service members accomplished blending in through various methods, such as not talking about their military experiences, not speaking out in class, and adopting civilian dress" (p. 58).

Veterans can perform their veteran characteristics in more conspicuous ways. Some veterans elect to wear shirts or hats that display allegiances to their particular military branch. Others sport backpacks or accoutrement that signify their experience and identity as a veteran. Both blending and showcasing veteran identity is a conscious choice that must be read as text.

Summary

Queer theory questions the constructed binary of gender and sexuality. Applied to the student veteran literature, this theory and its tenets can be used to question the constructed binary of the terms "civilian" and "veteran." Recognizing that "veteran" is not just a legal definition, but a constructed identity and then observing how this identity can be read as deviant are important additions to the understanding of student veterans in higher education. Higher education (read, civilian) claims the power of naming and the power of enacting policy. Understanding how these powers affect veterans and effect/perform institutional culture also provides new knowledge about student veterans.

Disability Theory

Disability theory "challenge[s] the view of disability as an individual deficit or defect that can be remedied solely through medical intervention or rehabilitation" (Guidelines for Disability Studies, par. 3). Escaping the medical model of disability as a problem to be solved, a social model of disability critiques how institutions and communities create an unwelcoming space (if any space at all) for people with disabilities. However, the base assumption that people with disabilities need to "fixed" still lurks within the policies and legislation that purport to serve them.

Connecting with Valencia's (2010) work on deficit thinking, people with disabilities are often considered less-able than people without (identified) disabilities. These assumptions about lack of ability, promise, or competence directly affect the "abled" community's perception of people with disabilities as well as the experiences of people with disabilities. While deficit thinking has a place in critical race theory,

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feminist theory, and queer theory, its adverse affects are readily seen in critical disability studies. Looking at student veterans as a whole and not only considering those with identified disabilities, I ask:

In what ways are veterans victims of deficit thinking

In an effort to clarify limitations of their work, Rumann and Hamrick (2010) explain that none of their participants "discussed receiving official diagnoses or seeking formal treatment" of PTSD or "had physical injuries resulting from their service" (p. 449) Furthermore, "although most respondents reported some re-enrollment problems, they described their transitions in mostly positive and ultimately optimistic terms, and …are on track to graduate" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 449). The fact that these promising observations were listed in the limitations of their studies is troubling. While it is important to address student veterans that suffer from PTSD and physical disabilities and consider the opinions of those student veterans who do not have a positive experience with higher education, to say that the study is incomplete or lacking because these negative assumptions of deficit models were not met is a problem. Of the five "take-away" bullets of Ackerman, DiRamio, and Mitchell's (2009) article, three of these bullets contain deficit language.

- … College should develop student-centered activation and deployment policies that manage the campus bureaucracy so as not to further complicate what is already a stressful situation for those called to active military duty
- Veterans who enroll as student experience difficulties…

- Campuses are encouraged to meet the challenge of becoming veteran-friendly… (p. 13)

The assessment of and advice for student veterans in higher education are couched in a language of defeat, difficulty, and deficiency. Following these bullets, Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) give a small literature review of the ways that veterans experience sexual trauma, harassment, mental health issues, depression, alcohol abuse, and disability. There is an implication that their work (like Rumann and Hamrick's, 2010) is incomplete without acknowledging these factors. As Vacchi (2012a) has critiqued, media and some scholars may exaggerate the problems of veterans to gain popular or scholarly attention. These overestimations of student veterans with PTSD, alcohol abuse, suicide, and anger issues breed deficit thinking. Furthermore, Vacchi (2012b) accuses other scholars in the field of student veteran transition of relying too heavily on Tinto's and Schlossberg's deficit modeling, asking them to "explore student veteran success, rather than presume veterans are failing, an assumption for which [DiRamio and Jarvis (2011)] provide no empirical evidence" (p. 138).

The impetus for much of veteran's research focuses on the idea of serving veterans. This is unfortunately imbedded in an idea that most veterans need help. Though many students in higher education (veterans included) benefit from well-constructed and well-employed policies and procedures for academic, social, psychological, and physical assistance, the idea of "helping veterans" is often wedded to the notion that all veterans need help. Ryan, et al. (2011) suggests that their work is geared for advisors (who according to them will need to spend quite a bit of time with

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veterans) to "maximize student-veterans' strengths [positive though it implies veterans do not already know how to accomplish this], minimize their risk factors [negative as it assumes they will come in with risk factors], connect them with resources that facilitate academic success [negative as it assumes they will need facilitation], and help them overcome barriers to achieving their academic goals [barriers of which deficit thinking is ironically one]" (p. 56). Further, Ryan, et al. (2011) suggest that advisors "can help student veterans slowly (re)adapt to college by suggesting that they initially shoulder a part-time class load, take refresher courses, and connect to study skills resources" (p. 57). Though some student veterans (like some student civilians) may need to follow this counsel, blanket advisor policies or *de facto* processes like those suggested by Ryan and colleagues may actually have the adverse effect of what Clark (1960) referred to as "cooling out" some veterans, giving them a false impression of their own deficits.

The heart of disability studies is fair and equitable inclusion. Therefore the pulse of disability theory is the critique of what is not fair, equitable, or inclusive. The social model of disability criticizes a society that largely privileges the "abled" and relegates the "not-abled" to a second (or third) class status. This critique of society (looking at the context of student veterans) begs the question:

How is society constructed to privilege civilians or marginalize veterans
Some veterans experienced armchair triage by (perhaps) well-meaning but uninformed friends and family who insisted that they "need help" (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010). While it is clear that some veterans (and civilians) may be unaware that they need help, there is a way in which the literature privileges civilian assessment of veteran

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challenges, assuming that the veterans would be unable to competently discern their own needs. It is clear in the literature that higher education is considered a civilian space. As a civilian (normal) space, the authority of those who are citizens of that space is privileged. Livingston and Bauman (2013) refer to soldiers returning to "civilian life" (p. 43). Life is civilian life. Authority is civilian authority. The literature presupposes a fixed civilian place into which veterans must somehow "fit." Even the language of the scholarly work intended to serve and/or understand veterans adds to the constructed privilege of civilians. Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009) explain that they recognized "the challenges of fitting in, of just being a student" (p. 8). To "fit" into something implies a primary and often privileged extant group into which a secondary (often marginalized) group is "fitting." The idea that veterans must in anyway adhere to the social norms of the student (read civilian) privileges the civilian over the veteran. Furthermore, to "just be a student" means to *only* be a student and therefore deny other parts of your identity (specifically your experience or identity as a veteran).

As Oliver (2009) claims, disability is not an identity as much as it is a construction. Using a materialist view, Oliver offers that "the production of the category disability is no different from the production of motor cars or hamburgers. Each has an industry, whether it the car, fast food, or human service industry. Each industry has a workforce that has a vested interest in producing their product in particular ways and in exerting as much control over the process of production as possible" (p. 90). If disability can be "produced" in this manner, certainly higher education's identity of "student veteran" can also be produced by various stakeholders.

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How is term "veteran" constructed and who gives it meaning (who has stock in its

meaning)

One of Vacchi's (2012b) most important criticisms of DiRamio and Jarvis's (2011) book on veterans in higher education is that the book "lacks evidence of an informed veteran's perspective in most areas" (p. 138). Vacchi (a 20-year veteran) criticizes the dependence of the literature on researchers with no (recent) military experience. The fact that DiRamio (a veteran) and Jarvis (a civilian) are "writing" the experiences of veterans is troubling for Vacchi. As much of DiRamio and Jarvis's book is built on their earlier work and a deficit model of veteran, it is actually beneficial for them to continue building this research line. The victim, unfortunately, is the student veteran who may be essentialized, misunderstood, or underestimated because of researchers' dependences on these models. Vacchi (2013) champions Livingston and Bauman (2013) as they "devote several paragraphs to the shortcomings of using Schlossberg's 4S Model, boldly inviting future research on student veterans to develop theory and use frameworks that [are] more appropriate for researching student veterans" (p. 133).

Vacchi (2012b) critiques student veteran literature for "frequently reinforce[ing] negative stereotypes of veterans by referring repeatedly to Hollywood's *The Hurt Locker*, overstating statistics on veteran disabilities, and highlighting a community college student veteran's graphic essay, even though these instances are not representative of student veterans in [his] experience" (p. 139). In these ways, scholarship (often by civilians) is writing and constructing veterans, defining and owning what it is to be veteran.

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One of the foundational documents in disability theory came as a proclamation in 1972. The Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation in the United Kingdom drafted a policy statement in which they aimed "to have all segregated facilities for physically impaired people replaced by arrangements for [them] to participate fully in society" (UPIAS, 1976). An important part of this document was that it was drafted by people who identified as physically impaired. Much of disability legislation is informed by but not written or put into practice by people with disabilities. As veterans return to higher education, institutions not always welcoming to the military and rarely run by people with military history, the policies and procedures aimed at serving veterans are penned by civilians.

How are veterans more appropriately positioned to inform policy and practice

regarding veterans

Many of the veterans interviewed in the literature expressed a desire to spend time with other student veterans. Rumann and Hamrick (2010) noted that their participants felt "these peers understood the complexities of military or combat experiences, laughed at their jokes, affirmed their service, and knew the sets of challenges that may accompany return to civilian life" (p. 453). Rumann and Hamrick (2010) affirm this comment by explaining that "military personnel and other veterans and servicemembers can provide validations of [student veterans'] military service and experiences that campuses or civilian students are less well-equipped to provide" (p. 452). These comments seem to suggest that veterans and servicemembers are better poised to know the needs of student veterans. Clearly in some cases by virtue of human

resources, this may prove impossible. However, it does speak to the need for institutions

of higher education to be aware of who is writing policy. Participants in Ackerman,

DiRamio, and Mitchell's (2009) study suggested that "campuses offer orientation

sessions for veterans by veterans" (p. 12). The idea behind the veteran-led orientations

seemed to be the highly structured military life and difficultly that student veterans had

entering the unstructured and non-routine lifestyle of the college student (read civilian).

As policy is informed by research, it is also important to hear how veterans respond to

the research. Vacchi (2012b) is particularly troubled by the way that DiRamio and

Jarvis (2011) leaned heavily on civilian knowledge and understanding of veterans.

Vacchi (2012b) resonated most with Baxter Magolda's contribution which supported a

student-centered and student-led transition concept "under the tutelage of someone who

understands veterans, or who is a veteran, and who possibly has a background in

counseling" (p. 139).

Vacchi's assertion that veterans are better suited to serve student veterans is

furthered by his challenge to "imagine a man serving as the director of the women's

center on campus, or a White person directing the Black Student union." He contends

that "we would not even consider the possibility, yet we continue to hire well-meaning

nonveterans with little tacit understanding of the plight of veterans to lead veterans'

services" (Vacchi, 2013, p. 134). Livingston and Bauman (2013) echo Vacchi's call by

suggesting that student service members are better equipped to help one another than a

civilian. Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, and Fleming (2011) cite student veterans who

express the importance of being served by a veteran:

We know how hard it is for people coming back. It's pretty disorienting so it's really important to find these people and let them have people around them that are like them, you know. They may not know us, but we're like them (p. 323).

Summary

Disability theory offers two additions to the literature on student veterans. First, as some veterans experience disability from combat or other forms of service, scholars can use disability theory to understand how higher education treats its students with disabilities (particularly student veterans who bring non-traditional disabilities into the higher education environment). Secondly, by applying the tenets of disability theory to veterans, we can see ways that student veterans are constructed as "broken" or "wanting" and explore ways that civilian efforts may exacerbate current problems with veteran participation in higher education. Two useful tenets from disability theory that are useful in exploring the experiences of student veterans are the deficit model and the value of internal (to the marginalized group) creation and monitoring of programs and services.

Multiple Identities

A tenet shared by many of the critical theories discussed was the notion of multiple identities. In CRT, Patton, McEwen, Rendón, and Howard-Hamilton (2007) suggest that an important part of the theory is understanding "the intersections of multiple identities." Quoting Delgado and Stefancic (2001), they define these intersections as "the examination of race, sex class, national origin, and sexual orientation" (p. 47). They add the additional dimensions of "culture, ethnicity, ability,

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religion, and faith" (Patton, McEwen, Rendón, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007, p. 47). In feminist theory, Crenshaw (1989) (also a CRT scholar) suggested that the intersection of race and gender are important in understanding the experiences of women of color. The concept of intersectionality "has been heralded as one of the most important contributions to feminist scholarship" (p. 67). Sedgwick (1990) describes early queer theory as a "highly productive queer community whose explicit basis [was] the criss-crossing of the lines of identification among genders, races, and sexual definitions" (p. x). Disability theory recognizes the importance of understanding how disability can be one of many ways that a person is constructed, defined, and oppressed. Finally, border theory is by definition the aggregate place where all things have the possibility to simultaneously collide. Anzaldúa, while often pigeon-holed by the geographic border she studied, was active in understanding how race, ethnicity, sexuality, language, and spirituality all met. For these reasons, I read the selected veteran literature considering:

How do veterans experience multiple identities

As discussed in the section on border theory, one of the challenges with tracing identity, identity expression, and identity alignment is the fluid nature of many assumed identity binaries. Rumann & Hamrick (2010) suggest that "Guard and Reserve units are subject to multiple activations and deployments, so individuals re-entering college may simultaneously be students, veterans, and armed forces members" (p. 431). Recognizing that "student" and "veteran" are identities that are performed and descriptors used by others to define is an important addition to student veteran scholarship. The literature

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discusses how students perform or mute, identify or blend, disclose or hide their veteran status.

Considering masculinity, Iverson and Anderson (2013) call on colleges and universities to question the ways in which they validate or extend the idea of aggressive masculinity as soldier or veteran. This outdated image of what a soldier is reifies patriarchy. This patriarchy then perpetuates White superiority and heterosexism. They call for "additional efforts…needed to ameliorate the systemic sociocultural factors that perpetuate…structural inequalities" (p. 103). Race, gender, sexuality, disability, marital status, parental status, disability, and veteran are all identities that student can choose to express, deny, resonate with, or act upon. The relative silence about intersecting identities in the literature implies that more work needs to be done that evaluates the ways that veteran status and race, gender, sexuality, and disability intersect and affect one another.

Direct Application

While the goals of this exercise were to evaluate how these five critical theories could be recast to understand the experiences of student veterans more, it is also important to note how these critical theories can (as they stand) add to our understanding of veterans' experiences in combat, while enlisted, and then in higher education. Iverson and Anderson's (2013) discussion on veteran identity is the broadest brush used to paint a picture of multiple identities and how they may work to benefit or disadvantage student veterans in addition to their veteran status. They consider identity dimensions including gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation/ gender resonance.

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"Karen," a participant in Rumann and Hamrick's (2010) study, explained her frustrations in being restricted in combat because of her gender: ""I'm a soldier, you know? Yeah, I'm a girl but I'm here with the rest of your guys for a frickin' year. The least you could do is treat me like everybody else and let me go to Iraq on missions" (p. 441). Karen's response is startling for many reasons. Using a feminist lens, she is clearly working against a restrictive patriarchy. What is most interesting is that her language seems to support this patriarchy, using the diminutive "girl" in juxtaposition to the more adult "guys." Additionally, she recognizes the "guys'" ability to send or restrict her from military combat. Finally, she attempts to mute her own gender by asking to be treated "like everybody else." Ackerman, DiRamio, and Garza Mitchell (2009), discuss a participant who "referred to her experience [as a construction engineer in the national Guard] as being in a 'double boys club' in which it was difficult to earn acceptance as a female soldier and as a female assigned to construction" (p. 8). These reflections from student veterans who did not "fit" into the assumed mold of a male soldier were not uncommon. Iverson and Anderson (2013) point out that women are historically more successful at degree attainment than men. Radford (2009) reports that just before her report's publication, though women comprised only 7 percent of the United States veteran population, they "represented 27 percent of all military undergraduates" (p. v). Viewing women as achievers within higher education may undermine the critical, oppressive, and negative assumptions that the military connects to women.

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Critical race theory

While Iverson and Anderson (2013) mention race, they do little to help readers understand the growth of minorities in service and how that impacts minority enrollment in higher education. Discussion on how military service affects opportunity among minorities is limited to early research (before 2000) that does not account for rapid enrollment of minority service members. According to 2011 Department of Defense demographics, 16.9% of active duty military was African American or Black (Iverson & Anderson, p. 22). This compares to a 14.6% Black student enrollment in American colleges and universities in 2009 (College Enrollment, 2012). These numbers (at the very least) imply that there will be a potential surge in Black student enrollment for those institutions that anticipate high veteran matriculation. The absence of literature on student veterans of color is a voice unto itself. Veteran is still read as White and male. An exploration of multiple identities (encouraged by CRT) begs new research to consider the experiences of student veterans of color. Radford (2009) notes that "military undergraduates were (in 2007-2008) more likely to be non-white than veterans in general and traditional undergraduates" (p. v). As this trend continues it will become increasingly important to understand the experiences of student veterans of color through appropriate critical lenses.

Queer theory

Iverson and Anderson (2013) note that "20 percent of all adult transgender people in the U.S. are military veterans" (p. 94). This high percentage, relative to the national population, implies that those working with veterans should be aware of needs

and resources associated with a transgendered student population. It is also important to note that transgendered students even in the "deviant" space of student veteran, may feel additionally deviant, othered, marginalized, or oppressed (even within a LGB space).

Following September 20, 2011's repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the military's discouraging policy of ordering service members to hide, conceal, or at least be silent about their sexual orientation, LGBT and queer studies in relation to the military took a sure if not sharp turn. The fact that military members can now (*de jure* if not *de facto*) serve openly may create a new generation of student veterans whose sexual orientation will become an expressed part of their student identity. Iverson and Anderson (2013) note that because of the restrictive history of the military with regards to expression of sexual orientation, some veterans (including student veterans) may fail to take full advantage of benefits or services "because they fear needing to return to the closeted roles they were forced to play in the military" (p. 94).

Disability theory

Though not one of the selected texts, one of the most important works on applying disability theory to veterans comes from the *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*. Branker (2009) uses Universal Design to create an appropriate model for veteran services (particularly services to student veterans with disabilities). Her conclusions include seven suggest practices for good teaching:

1. accommodates diverse abilities, talents, and learning styles;

2. accommodates a wide range of individual preferences;

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3. is easily understood regardless of the student's experience, knowledge, language skills or concentration levels;

4. is easily communicated regardless of the student's sensory abilities;

5. minimizes the adverse consequences of unintended actions;

6. allows for the participation of students with efficiency and minimum fatigue;

7. allows for full student participation regardless of body size, posture, mobility, or psychological motility (Branker, 2009, p. 63).

Branker (2009) recognizes that design of space and strategy is Important to proactively and not reactively meet the needs of student veterans. Moreover, Branker (2009) does not focus only on the deleterious nature and negative image of combat and service-related disability. Instead she looks towards an inclusive and thoughtful redesign of classroom space and pedagogy.

Border theory

More than any other theory, border theory does not need to be particularly adjusted to be considered in the context of returning student veterans. Border theory recognizes that a border exists; this border can be one of many borders. The flexibility of the theory allows for that border to be one of soldier/student or civilian/veteran. Therefore the previously discussed application of border theory to the considered literature, form an "as-is" application of border theory.

Process Limitations

This process alone is riddled with limitations. I recognize that most research is. The important thing is to recognize what those limitations are and how they may adversely

affect the employability of findings. As a researcher, many of the decisions that directed

the project were a reflection of my own world view, understanding of critical theories,

bias towards particular critical theories, reading of said critical theories, and

understanding of veterans. Another researcher may have chosen an additional theory to

explore. The theories I chose are engendered in the treatment of marginalized

populations and (with the exception of border theory) have been used extensively within

the field of higher education. The tenets (though some like CRT are more explicit) were

developed through my reading of texts on the theories. The rewriting of the tenets for a

veteran inquiry could have been written differently by another researcher. Finally, the

way the tenet-based questions and the selected text interacted may be read differently by

a different researcher. It is because of these limitations that I do not claim the next

chapter presents veteran critical theory. Instead, I claim the next chapter suggests it.

Chapter Conclusions

By examining the interactions of the five selected critical theories and the twelve

selected texts, we can begin to see how a critical theory for veterans may take shape.

This chapter explained both the reasons for each questions selection and their translation

to the context of the critical theory. Secondly, the chapter reports places where each

tenet interacts with the chosen (representative) literature on student veterans. Third,

each theory is summarized by considering what tenets were appropriate or useful for

envisioning a new critical theory for veterans. Finally, the critical theories (as they stand)

were used to briefly consider their immediate applicability to research on veterans.

CHAPTER VI

WRITING VETERAN CRITICAL THEORY

As critical legal studies gave birth to critical race theory (CRT), CRT's history in

inextricably linked to how the law sees, privileges, and oppresses race. VCT is fashioned

in response to policy and procedure. It is in policy and procedure that most institutions

of higher education have responded to an influx of student veterans. I argue that VCT

can be traced before reactionary policies to the first moments of reaction. Scheurich's

(1997) work on policy archaeology looks away from scholarly conversation and asks

who first began the conversation and under what pretenses and for what purposes did it

begin. As research on Post 9/11 veterans is still quite young, we do not have to look far

behind us to find our fields first murmurings. Scheurich (1997) offers that policy

archaeology examines the social construction of problems within education, recognizes

the networks of regularities that define what is normal and acceptable (thereby teasing

out what is deviant and unacceptable), and questions the constructed nature of what is

and is not an acceptable policy solution to the problem. I believe Scheurich's work on

policy archaeology properly grounds the critical impetus of VCT. Veterans are too often

socially constructed as "a problem" in the context of education. They are defined this

way by juxtaposition to what is defined as normal and appropriate (civilian student).

Finally they are served with policies and practices that are limited by the ways the

policies and practices will best serve the interests of the civilian majority.

This critical spirit (in conjunction with the five explored critical theories)

foregrounds what I call veteran critical theory. What follows is an introduction of each

tenet, a brief description, and the responses and suggested revisions made by academic peer debriefers (civilian and military). Suggestions from debriefers ranged from edits or word choice to more global comments on VCT. Tenet-specific comments are included at the end of each tenet and global comments are reserved for the end. The debriefers were five scholars in the field of Post 9/11 student veterans in higher education (Diamond, Hammond, Hamrick, McBain, and Vacchi). Only one of the debriefers served in the military (Vacchi).

This chapter is devoted to ten suggested tenets of veteran critical theory. The tenets were pulled from Chapter V's list of interrogating questions and adjusted. I looked at the questions that seemed to interact with the data in the most meaningful ways. These suggested tenets represent my experience interacting with the critical theories and the data. I understand that another scholar may have chosen other tenets on which to focus. It is important to recognize that these are not *the* tenets of VCT. There are no tenets of VCT. VCT is being written by these tenets. All I offer are suggestions and a hope for further conversation.

1. Structures, policies, and processes (particularly institutions of higher education) privilege civilians over veterans.

2. Veterans experience various forms of oppression and marginalization including microaggressions.

3. Veterans are often victims of deficit thinking in higher education.

4. Veterans occupy a third space (country) on the border of multiple conflicting and interacting power structures, languages, and systems.

5. VCT values narratives and counternarratives of veterans.

6. Veterans experience multiple identities at once.

7. Veterans are constructed (written) by civilians, often as deviant characters.

8. Veterans are more appropriately positioned than civilians to inform policy and practice regarding veterans.

9. Some services advertised to serve veterans are ultimately serving civilian interests.

10. Veterans are unknowable.

11. Veteran culture is built on a culture of respect, honor, and trust.

I have attempted to place this argument within a larger, necessary discussion. There must be purpose and need for a critical theory focused on veterans before any tenet of the proposed theory either makes sense or seems useful. I argue that VCT is logical, appropriate, and necessary.

VCT is logical because it is the next step. As different marginalized populations are acknowledged and described, critical theories are written to critique the ways they are marginalized. A chronological and sociological history can trace crucial theory from feminism to critical legal studies, race-based critical theories, disability studies, queer theory, and border theory. Several other theories fall in and around these hash marks. As veterans return from post 9/11 service and face marginalization and oppression, it is natural that scholars write a critical theory that seeks to emancipate veterans.

VCT is appropriate because America is at the doorstep of the largest veteran population since the Second World War to attend institutions of higher education and

"rejoin" a civilian population (please note my discomfort in the word "rejoin"). To ignore the need for a critical theory is to ignore the responsibility America has to respect and honor the service of her sons and daughters. We are still at the beginning of the scholarship story. Our research (and many of our researchers) is young and still trying to wrap collective arms around Post 9/11 veteran research. Now is the time for a critical and structured lens with which to view returning veterans and their experiences.

Finally, VCT is necessary. Several researchers acknowledge the need for an appropriate theory that recognizes the unique nature of veterans and works to inform practice and make meaning of veterans' stories. VCT is not *the* answer, but VCT is *an* answer to the ubiquitous question "I have these veterans stories, but what do I do with them?" We read them. We seek to understand them. We evaluate them with tenets that are both structured and open to adjustment. Additionally, the growth of research on veterans in the last decade has demanded a new critical voice to be added to the descriptive and prescriptive voices already heard. VCT will allow researchers to be critical using a similar vocabulary and based on agreed tenets. The research will, of course, become more refined as the tool (VCT) is refined.

Structures, Policies, and Processes (Particularly Institutions of Higher Education) Privilege Civilians over Veterans

As feminist theory recognizes that we live in a male-dominated and male-privileged world, as disability studies recognizes how the "abled" are particularly privileged, and as queer theory questions the privilege of heterosexuality, VCT asks that we recognize and question the innate privilege of being a civilian. As McIntosh (1989)

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began to understand White privilege by examining male privilege, I came to understand civilian privilege by examining how privilege works against veterans. McIntosh (1989) warns that "whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege as males are taught not to recognize male privilege" (p. 2). In the same manner (as is true with sexual orientation and class) those in the privileged portion are taught to believe that their privilege is the natural order of things or the most politically viable, characteristic-neutral, or efficient structure. The first part of recognizing civilian privilege in higher education is a recognition that higher education in itself is a civilian structure. Though some institutions of higher education are directly connected with the military and many current institutions (particularly land-grant institutions) have a military history, today's colleges, universities, and trade schools are most often led by civilians, taught by civilians, and run with a civilian student in mind.

Literature on student veterans in higher education often focuses on how to integrate the student veteran into the extant university or college (civilian) community. Little work recognizes that the civilian-privileged structure of higher education can be questioned. Privilege is a tricky thing to explain because the *status quo* is often seen as the only way to operate. Additionally, changing how things are done to accommodate a relatively small minority seems inefficient and disruptive. No one questions a classroom with a doorknob until a handless student arrives. While the differences in civilian students and student veterans are not always housed in disability, and the differences are rarely negative, these differences should cause researchers to recognize ways that

civilians are positioned in higher education for easier access to success than student veterans.

Financial aid policies, course transfer policies, mandatory veteran identification policies, and policies that assume a particular student age, mentality, or experience are often exclusive to student veterans and inclusive to traditional (civilian) students. While change may be a distant goal, recognition of the ways in which civilians are privileged over veterans is an important step in understanding how veterans can be better served.

An important critique that came from debriefers was the danger of using words like "oppression." Reflected in my discussion with a student veteran as well, the idea that veterans are "oppressed" is not particularly palatable to the veteran community. I argue that there is a weakening of the veteran image or a notion of exaggeration, both inappropriate according to the veterans. Notably, the civilian debriefers did not mention concern over the words. McBain noted (but does not promote) that some may push back on the honor and earned dignity of military service. A distaste for the "military complex" may encourage some scholars or administrators to (in their opinion) justifiably marginalize members of the "complex." I think this is already happening, which makes the critique of these practices all the more compelling. McBain also continues that many of the civilian privileges alluded to are not properly discussed or given due example. A promising scholarly work *a la* McIntosh would be to list examples of thee many civilian privileges inside and outside of the academy.

Veterans Experience Various Forms of Oppression and Marginalization Including

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are "hidden messages (that) may invalidate the group or identity of experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest that they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment" (Sue, 2010, p. 3). Any demographic that is not considered the "normal" demographic can be vulnerable to microaggressions. Sue (2010) explores microaggressions or perceived microaggressions acted on Black undergraduates, Latinos, Asian-Americans, LGBT people, religious groups, and people with disabilities. His consideration of microagressions experienced by people with disabilities is especially useful in staging this tenet of VCT. Sue (2010) explores ten themes of disability microaggressions: denial of personal identity, denial of disability experience, denial of privacy, helplessness, secondary gain, spread affect, infantilization, patronization, second-class citizen, and desexualization (p. 249). The diversity of ways that people with disabilities experience microaggressions is particularly striking. At first glance, some of the prompting actions seem quite altruistic. As Sue (2010) explains, "The most detrimental forms of microaggressions are usually delivered by well-intentioned individuals who are unaware that they have engaged in harmful conduct toward a socially devalued group" (p. 3).

Sue (2010) suggests three forms of microaggressions: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation (p. 7). The majority of microaggressions are either microinsult or

microinvalidation. Particularly in closed environments such as the classroom, student veterans reported experiencing hostile environment caused by professors' politics, civilian misunderstanding, or disregard for non-combat service. Other microinvalidations stemmed from student veterans' interaction with financial aid as some offices through incompetence or disinterest did not help the student veteran meet his or her needs.

Four of these themes that were illustrated by veterans in the literature include denial of privacy, spread effect, secondary gain, and helplessness.

Denial of privacy

Denial of privacy describes situations where people outside of the minority group ask personal or probing questions about someone in a minority group. There is an expectation of answer that reaches beyond reciprocal conversation. When a veteran experiences denial of privacy, the veteran becomes a subject and their story becomes the available and expected property of the consumer (civilian). The most common question that denies privacy is whether a veteran has killed another person in combat. McBain also offers that several civilians may feel entitled to veterans' stories.

Spread effect

Spread effect assumes additional disabilities based on one known disability. In the world of student veterans, this microaggression is most often expressed by assumptions of PTSD or TBI. Though the effects and challenges of PTSD and TBI should be assessed and addressed where necessary, they should never be assumed based on veteran status alone. Additionally, if a student veteran does publicly reveal his or her

PTSD or TBI, the microaggression assumes an inability to perform within the higher education context beyond their actual limitations. In this case, perceived limitation or liability trumps actual limitations or liability.

Secondary gain

Secondary gain occurs when someone without known disability gains personal, professional, or property gain from treating someone with disability with respect. This is especially problematic when the person expects public adulation, gratitude, or praise from the person with disability. Understanding this particular microaggression is important as institutions of higher education have put effort into creating "veteran friendly" environments. As institutions are charged with the responsibility to serve veterans, programs , procedures and policies aimed at serving them may be connected to an institutional expectation of gratitude or acknowledgement. We can already see this as some institutions compete for high veteran service rankings. This is political but also (in a way) personal. Some of the moves faculty, staff, or fellow students may be making on behalf of student veterans may be perceived as a microagression.

Helplessness

Finally, helplessness "occurs when people frantically try to help [people with disabilities]" implying that they are unable to help themselves (Sue, 2010, p. 249). "Frantic" help about college campuses is rare, but "help" can be administered in active and subtle ways. Though veterans may not experience this physically, they may experience it academically or socially. Many student veterans have made it clear that they do not want "hand-outs" or other advantages. Though student rarely receive special

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privilege based on their veteran status, even their own perception of a particular act or opportunity may lead to frustration wrapped within this complicated microaggression.

When evaluating microaggressions experienced by student veterans, researchers should focus on student veteran perceptions. Even if the microaggression can be "reasoned" away, that reasoning is often coming from a civilian point-of-view. Like sexual harassment, microaggressions should be measured by perception and not intention. "[T]hese maneuvers serve to preserve the self-image of oppressors, but on the other (hand), they silence the voices of the oppressed" (Sue, 2010, p. 5).

Proper credit must be given to Vacchi as he helped me understand the multiple ways spread effect can affect student veterans. Vacchi also clarified that secondary gain must be seen through two lenses (individual and institutional). Veterans may be facing this microaggression from a person or an entire university.

Veterans Are Victims of Deficit Thinking in Higher Education

Deficit thinking has a dark history. Contemporarily associated with K-12 minority education, deficit thinking has roots in colonization of the "New World", slave trade, miscegenation, and segregation laws. Deficit thinking as described by Valencia (1997) is when "the blame for the problem or injury is located—by the more powerful party—in the individual person, the victim—rather than in the structural problems of the unit" (p. xiv). The critique of deficit thinking has been adapted by disability studies and critical race theory. In the case of student veterans, deficits or (more often) perceived deficits are blamed on the student-veteran when they are more likely a fault of the civilian-oriented and civilian-privileging structures of higher education institutions.

Often introduced as a problem or "broken" population, student veterans are victims of deficit thinking in higher education. Valencia (2010) suggests six characteristics of deficit thinking: blaming the victim, oppression, pseudoscience, temporal changes, educability, and heterodoxy. Of these characteristics, blaming the victim, pseudoscience, temporal changes, and heterodoxy seem most appropriate to the study of student veterans.

Blaming the victim

"Blaming the victim" occurs when a proposed problem is explained by blaming the person with the problem. In a simple example, if a young woman claims that a gas station pump is not working correctly, a quick accusation may be that the young woman is not pushing the appropriate buttons. This direction of blame is complicated when the teller user is a person of color, a person with a disability, a woman, an LGBT person, or (as pertains to my work) a veteran. "Blaming the victim" is also about power and the locus of power. The fact that the woman (a minority) in a gendered (male) space (a gas station) is blamed speaks to the power of the machine owners and a subtle (or not-so-subtle) gender bias based on misogynistic expectations of women. Likewise, veterans blamed for a difficulty or inadequacy experienced in the higher education (civilian) space can be turned on the structure of higher education as a civilian machine that "others" and subsequently diminishes student veterans. As Vacchi rightly pointed out in his review of these tenets, veterans can experience "blaming the victim" through comments like "you volunteered for military service." These comments divest the

institution or individual from responsibility for any difficulty faced by the student

veteran.

Pseudoscience

Pseudoscience is a characteristic of deficit thinking that promotes scholarly truths

about deficiencies that "base their study on unsound assumptions, use psychometrically

weak instruments and/or collect data in flawed manners, do not control important

independent variables, and do not consider rival hypotheses for the observed findings"

(Valencia, 2010, p. 12). Other trademarks of pseudoscience include making wide

generalizations based on limited cases and assuming characteristics of a particular group

based on its larger parent group (this happens in both qualitative and quantitative

research). This latter danger of pseudoscience happens specifically when Post 9/11

student veterans are characterized by national, era-unrestricted veteran statistics. As an

example, veterans using the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post 9/11 GI Bill are often

lumped together in the same population. These forms of assistance, however, can create

vastly different student experiences.

Temporal changes

As Valencia (2010) argues "the era and its spirit greatly influence how deficit

thinking manifests itself" (p. 13). The fact that veterans are still returning from Post 9/11

conflict has a direct effect on how they are perceived. It is possible that a veteran of

another war may not by stigmatized in the same way as a Post 9/11 veteran. This

characteristic explains the fluidity of deficit claims and the possibility of new claims that

result from new research, new global events, or new local and national policies. It is

important to note that the deficit does not fluctuate as much as the "oppressor's" reasoning for the deficit.

Heterodoxy

Heterodoxy can be easily explained as a state of multiple understandings or discourses. Quoting Bordieu (1977), Valencia (2010) explains that as heterodoxy, or the opening of multiple opinions and ways of thinking, burgeons, the dominant group of thinkers or the privileged class has a interest in orthodoxy, or the oppression of this additional (and often competing) way of thinking. As a way to explain deficit thinking in institutions of higher education, there are ways that the presence of student veterans may challenge the *status quo* of financial aid, student services, and pedagogy. Instead of accepting this new knowledge as equivalent knowledge, student veterans are considered problematic, lacking in some way, or student that (in some way) need to be "fixed." Therefore the traditional models of deficit thinking (a person is inherently not as able as the dominant group) are pronounced as the marginalized group uncovers the existence and perpetuation of the *status quo*.

The multiple ways that veterans (particularly student veterans) suffer from deficit thinking affects student and faculty perception of student veterans as well as contribute to student veterans' sense of self worth and self-efficacy. Deficit thinking can work as a way for a privileged class to validate actions that do not support other groups or individuals. A critique of the deficit thinking model should ultimately turn the lens to deficits within the structure, policies, procedures, and culture of privileged class—in this case, institutions of higher education.

Vacchi offers that the urban legend of the young man or woman enlisting to get out of the ghetto may also contribute to deficit thinking. Though not directly tied to the war being fought, this way of thinking reflects contemporary socio-economic and socio-cultural issues. McBain also encourages further work on historically situating the notion of temporal changes.

Veterans Occupy a Third Space (Country) on the Border of Multiple Conflicting and Interacting Power Structures, Languages, and Systems

Borrowed from border theory, student veterans are no longer fully military nor fully civilian, though they are often expected to be fully both. This schism either forces student veterans to detach from their military foundations (and often suffer detachment and loss of support because of it) or devote themselves a new student (civilian) role (often performing these roles more than they are living them). VCT celebrates a third space where student veterans are students, veterans, and the unique mesh of the two identities. Part of this space identification and citizenship includes a unique language, a unique (if not borrowed) set of symbols and ritual, and a unique system of support and power. This third space does not preclude student veterans from operating by the rules of and living within the accepted practices of veteran (military) or student (civilian) spaces. In fact, many student veterans will adhere to different cultures in an effort to gain the power, privilege, or prestige associated with each culture. As a multi-space citizen, this is their prerogative. Third country allegiance adds another potential citizenship more aligned with military men and women living and working in a largely civilian world.

As Anzaldúa (1999) beautifully depicts;

Living on the borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and

multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, and

"alien" element. There is an exhilaration in being a participant in the further

evolution of humankind, in being "worked" on. I have the sense that certain

"faculties"—not just in me but in every border resident, colored and non-

colored—and dormant areas of consciousness are being activated, awakened.

Strange, huh? And yes, the "alien" element has become familiar—never

comfortable, not with society's clamor to uphold the old, to rejoin the flock, to go

with the herd. No, not comfortable but home. (p. 19)

The practical ways researchers can see this third space are in the unique structures,

cultures, traditions, rituals, language, and shared experiences of student veterans. As we

continue to recognize student veterans as a unique demographic, it is important that we

also recognize how they are different (fundamentally or perceived). Documenting the

politics of the "socio-geographic" third country will allow citizens of surrounding

principalities better insight on how to build community with their neighbors and

properly welcome them if/when they wish to move in.

While this tenet balances at the border of "civilian" and "veteran," I respectfully

reemphasize the importance of recognizing the multiple borders upon which student

veterans sit.

Introducing this tenet, I originally used the term "loneliness" instead of

detachment. Vacchi correctly noted that the implications of loneliness are far direr than

detachment and to use loneliness is deficit thinking. Vacchi also suggested further work on this section. I assume it is because the notion of "third space" is not as common in the literature as some of the other tenets. McBain offered the idea of othering as an appropriate way to viewthe population of this third space and encourages the inclusion of spouses and dependents in its possible citizenry.

VCT Values Narratives and Counternarratives of Veterans

Many critical theories privilege the voice of the marginalized. Voice not only clarifies the experiences of the marginalized group in question, voice offers a counternarrative to assumed experiences of the marginalized group. In CRT, Ladson-Billings (1998) explains, "Stories provide the necessary context for understanding, feeling, and interpreting" (p. 13). Delgado (1989) argues that storytelling can "shatter complacency and challenge the status quo" (p. 2412). As we all experience things differently, perception of what a student veteran is "going through" may be very different for the student veteran. Alternatively, student veterans that are (by our standards) fully integrated into the civilian world and school may be quietly suffering. Leaning on student-veteran stories and counterstories gives student veterans the opportunity to name their own reality (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Borrowing from Delgado (1989), Ladson-Billings (1998) offers three reasons for "naming one's own reality" (p. 13):

1. much of "reality" is socially constructed;

2. stories provide members of outgroups a vehicle for psychic self-preservation; and

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3. the exchange of stories from teller to listener can help overcome

ethnocentricism and the dysconcious drive or need to view the world in one way

(Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 13).

Research on student veterans has already recognized this tenet as shown

through the emphasis of qualitative research projects over quantitative research projects.

Veteran voice allows student veterans to directly reply to assumptions and perceptions

that may make their time in higher education more difficult. Moreover, student veterans

are best suited to understand their needs and the ways that colleges and universities

should adjust to make room for them. Finally, student veterans' narratives turn an

experience into a reality allowing other student veterans the opportunity to compare their

own experiences with the experiences of fellow student veterans. In effect, to speak truth

creates truth.

As a note of caution, it is important to recognize that a privileging of student-

veteran narratives does not encourage or support essentializing or generalizing student

veterans as a whole based on one narrative. Instead, narratives should be used to

recognize the ways that at least one student veteran has experienced a particular

situation. In the case of counternarratives, student veterans can offer special insight into

how some of the assumptions being made by higher education may not be accurate or

applicable to all student veterans.

Finally, these narratives must be freely offered by student veterans and not

required. Interest in the experiences of student veterans can quickly (and dangerously)

turn from inquiry into what I call "qualitative cannibalism," the eating or consumption of

a narrative for personal use or a sensationalist appetite and not emancipatory design. An example of this is asking student veterans about particularly traumatic experiences for the entertainment of the listener and not to support, validate, or build community with student veterans.

Veterans Experience Multiple Identities at Once

A hallmark of critical theories is the recognition that a member of one disadvantaged group may identify as a member of multiple groups. Crenshaw's 1989 work on intersectionality explored the importance of recognizing how black women are doubly oppressed. Border theory recognizes that at the intersection of "opposing" identifications, a person can experience several borders at once. Critical race theory acknowledges that racial oppression is often compounded by alternate forms of oppression (gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, and age). Student veterans are not a homogeneous group that experience only veteran status differently. Student veterans are diverse in age, class, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, military branch, rank, deployment history, and combat service. Using the Jones and McEwan (2000) model of multiple dimensions of identity, we recognize that "core" attributes including "personal attributes, personal characteristics, and personal identity" remain at the center of one's identity (p. 409). However, race, culture, religion, gender, class, and sexual orientation revolve around that core like electron rings around Neil Bohr's atomic model or planets around the sun.

I suggest three important characteristics to notice from this model:

1. Participants *have* multiple identities.

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2. Participants *elect to express* these identities in different ways and at different times considering context and personal desire.

3. Whether participants identify with "orbiting identities" or not, *they can still be oppressed or privileged* because of them.

4. There are varying structures of *power working within each orbiting identity* (not expressed by Jones and McEwan, 2000).

Student veterans are students with military service. Based on these two attributes alone we can see how the four previously stated characteristics are at work.

1. At their base level, student veterans are legally classified as students by their enrollment in a higher education program and veterans (those who are not active-duty) by their record of military service.

2. Student veterans (should) have the choice whether or not to disclose the fact that they are enrolled in coursework or that they have had military service. The literature on student veterans is full of ways that student veterans perform their veteran affiliations through clothes, stories, and group affiliation. Additionally, outside of the classroom, student veterans can choose whether or not to perform their student status by revealing or concealing the fact that they are in school.

3. Whether or not they are performing (or even resonating) with their veteran or student status, student veterans can be assumed as or recognized as a student or veteran and fall victim or privilege to others' reactions to those separate and aggregate identities. Additionally, some mechanisms in higher education

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require students (or highly encourage without explaining it is optional) to disclose their veteran status for admissions of financial aid purposes.

4. Finally, we must understand the intra-community hierarchies that govern group politics. "Student" is a legal definition that describes several different people enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs, four-year research universities and technical schools, full-time and part-time, and in several different fields. Within these structures, privilege may be given to a certain major or enrollment status. Additionally, veterans may experience the undergraduate or graduate program in a very different way than more traditional or civilian students. Maturity level can often "other" a non-traditional student within higher education (Read, Archer, Leathwood, 2003). Additionally, within the term "veteran" there is a laundry list of ways that veterans identify (branch, rank, service history, military occupation, deployment history, combat experience, reason for discharge, time spent in the military, active duty status, reservist status, etc.). Each of these sub-identifications of "veteran" has power, privilege, and prestige or a lack of power, privilege, and prestige attached to them. While in the military, many of these identifications are (quite literally) on a soldier's sleeve; student veterans make a conscious decision whether or not to reveal these specialized characteristics beneath the umbrella identification of "veteran."

Because of their multiple identifications, many student veterans may experience multiple levels of oppression or isolation. As we regard the experiences of student

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veterans, we must understand both how the student veteran identifies and then in what ways the student veteran experiences privilege or marginalization based on these identifications. Writing on CRT, Delgado (2001) explains that "No person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity…Everyone has potentially conflicting, overlapping identities, loyalties, and allegiances" (p. 9). Pressures to "serve" student veterans may eventually focus so much on veteran identity, that engaged faculty, staff, and administration may miss the ways that student veterans identify and seek assistance based on additional identifications. For example, a former Marine who identifies as LGBT may not be properly directed to LGBT programs and veteran services on campus may not be equipped (or in rare cases, willing) to redirect the student veteran to these specialized services.

Vacchi advised me to temper my language surrounding veteran disclosure programs. While Vacchi recognizes them as a functional way to make sure that student veterans are being identified and serviced, I see it as a way for an institution to pull private identifiers from students. I have often compared the same situation to a university who wants to better serve the LGBT population and requires students to self-identify. The analogy is imperfect but it at least warrants thoughtful response. This is one example of how VCT is not a mantra or anthem sung in unison, but a language that scholars can choose from to carefully make their own claims. A complicated part of VCT, it is not surprising that many of the debriefers felt this section needed additional work.

Veterans Are Constructed (Written) by Civilians, Often as Deviant Characters

Within queer theory, homosexuals are written (constructed) and written as deviant. The heterosexual pen defines what is right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable, normal and deviant. VCT sees much of what is "known" about veterans as written by a civilian pen and subsequently questions the authority of the author. This tenet does not presume that civilians cannot research or write veterans. If so, I may be out of a job. Instead this tenet concerns the ways veterans are written inside and outside of academia. Media treatment can often tell veterans who they are before they give veterans the opportunity to understand themselves. In the same way, media (and some scholarship) tells students, faculty, staff, and administration of colleges and universities who (or more often what) veterans are. Student veterans then become either characters in a civilian story or caricatures of civilian assumptions. Vacchi (a scholar and veteran) beautifully adds that veterans can be part of the story as well and their narratives can be both advantageous and disadvantageous to the ways veterans are perceived and perceive themselves if the narrative are regarded as more than a personal narrative. In our personal correspondence he wrote "there are veteran scholars who contribute to the problematic authorship of who veterans are as well - no one owns the right to pen the story of veterans, but themselves. To this end scholars (both veteran and non veteran) can be obstacles to the truth, or enablers of the truth - there is no middle ground" (Vacchi, 2014).

VCT purposefully questions both what is known about student veterans and who authors what is known. This questioning process challenges both the pedigree of the

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author and the intent of the text. While running a race that benefits the Wounded Warrior Project, small billboards were placed around the route that advertised the high numbers of veteran with PTSD, disability, and need. While the Wounded Warrior Project is intended to raise awareness and offer support to veterans in need, the signage provided a narrow and deficit-driven model of veterans collectively. Though the organizers were not intending to cast all veterans as part of their problem population, no alternative description of high-performing, well-adjusted veterans was provided.

The characteristics of student veterans are too often (and recently) determined by a civilian or pre-Post 9/11 veteran voice. New research needs to allow veterans to construct their own identities and stories within and beyond the classroom, privilege the veteran voice, and fight civilian constructions that describe or define student veterans as deviant.

Common ways that veterans have been described are quiet, older, more mature, or distant. These characteristics describe veterans in ways that they are deviant from the traditional undergraduate civilian student. While they are indeed deviant (by definition), the negative stereotypes or feeling attached to these descriptors must be changed. The description itself privileges the civilian as the primary and student veterans as a secondary, comparative group. VCT encourages recognizing the needs of student veterans as the needs of students, not the special needs of students deviant from "normal" students.

The most important critique or suggestion received on this section came from Vacchi. Both taking issue with the word "privilege" and the notion that privileging

veterans would not be fair recompense to the current situation, he suggested that perhaps giving "fair ear to the voices of veterans" is a better step. Critical theory itself has enemies and they are not all sinister. Those who may see VCT as too far a step must recognize that VCT is not a step as much as it is pushing out the boundaries of where we are allowed to step.

Veterans Are More Appropriately Positioned to Inform Policy and Practice Regarding Veterans

Though men do feminist work, White researchers engage in CRT debates, and heterosexuals write about queer theory, the unique experiences of veterans (particularly Post 9/11 veterans) should (in my opinion) be leading the scholarly conversation about veterans. VCT recognizes that while not always possible, veterans should have a hand in writing policy that applies directly to veterans. This tenet is grounded in disability studies and reiterated in research literature. It is important to recognize that this tenet does not exclude civilians from the conversation, legislation, or application of policy regarding student veterans. Again, I would be out of a job. Instead, this tenet recognizes the unique nature of the veteran experience and seeks to empower those voices that may understand it in the most meaningful ways.

McBain urged me to recognize the nuances of national and state policy that may be veteran-informed but not always veteran-authored, especially when there are multiple stakeholders involved.

Some Services Advertised to Serve Veterans Are Ultimately Serving Vivilian

Interests

Borrowing from Derrick Bell's notion of "interest convergence," many of the

services available to student veterans (particularly those used for recruitment) are

primarily created to market a product to a potential buyer and secondarily to serve

veterans. As veterans enroll in programs across the nation, more and more institutions

offer welcoming retreats, seminars, and orientations for veterans. Some institutions

create physical space for veterans in the form of offices or lounges. Other institutions

advertise how "veteran-friendly" their campus or their academic programs are. Though

the realities of White privilege and civilian privilege are far from similar, there are

echoes of one in the other within the confines of higher education. Bell (1979) explains

that "racial segregation is much more than a series of quaint customs that can be

remedied effectively without altering the status of white" (p. 522). In a similar way, the

privilege enjoyed by civilians within higher education cannot be addressed by a handful

of institutional acts. These acts are particularly concerning when they seem to benefit the

civilian students more than the student veterans. In some cases, services offered seem to

injure veterans. A useful examples of this tenet is the idea of a veteran-friendly campus

and recruiting practices that prey on student veterans' lack of information.

The literature is full of practical ways to encourage a veteran-friendly campus

(DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011; Ackerman & DiRamio, 2009) and publications that rank the

level of veteran-friendliness (Education, 2013; militaryfriendlyschools.com, 2014; G.I.

Jobs, 2014). These ranking are based on veteran enrollment, veterans staff, academic

support, residency requirements, presence of a veterans office, and participation in programs like Veteran Upward bound and Yellow Ribbon (*Military Times*, 2013). The term however, is used primarily in brochures and websites and rarely around the campus. In this way, veteran-friendly (a term not fully defined or agreed upon) has become a marketing strategy or a "branding" tool. Universities and college can often declare themselves veteran-friendly without an external assessment. Jim Humphrey (2014) suggests that "like a bug drawn to the warm luminescence of a 'bug zapper' many of our fellow veterans and their families are drawn to the most appealing advertising generated by both traditional brick and mortar [schools] and those who specialize in on-line education. 'Military Friendly' is the opening headline…In truth, only a veteran can determine if a particular institution is 'military friendly'" (par. 4). Furthermore, while it is possible for anyone to see the more pronounced markers of "veteran-friendly" (i.e. honoring Veterans Day, dedicated staff for veterans, accessibility for veterans with disabilities), I would argue that only a veteran can determine whether a school is military or veteran-friendly for him or her. Vacchi added that these inclusionary/exclusionary factors may be very subtle. The "interest convergence" of veteran-friendly is that veterans come with government money. Often veteran-friendly is a tool to get to that money. Once the student veteran has enrolled and paid, the need to be veteran-friendly is not as important.

Though seemingly pessimistic, this tenet urges those researching student veterans to consider how policies, procedures, and practices may ostensibly seem geared towards the service of veterans but may ultimately be for the good of the institution.

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Additionally, researchers must consider the ways that some practices may actually benefit civilians at the expense of veterans. The Chronicle of Higher Education has run several articles on the predatory nature of for-profit institutions. The practice is common enough that a scholarship has even been established for those that "have been mislead of defrauded by a for-profit college" (Stratford, 2012, par. 4). On the surface, reaching out to student veterans seems like a noble act. However, some institutions are taking advantage of student veterans' lack of access to quality academic advising or career planning.

Vacchi added that he disagrees with Humphrey and does not believe the pull of college advertising is a strong as Humphrey argues.

Veterans Are Unknowable

Feminist scholarship claims that women are "unknowable" (Butler, 1990). The unknowable nature of women is linked to their constructed nature, male assumption, and their inclination to undermine these assumptions. In the same way VCT recognizes that veterans can be unknowable. This tenet recognizes the broad spectrum of veterans (student veterans in particular), and challenges essentializing or blanket policies, procedures, and programs. Veterans often defy their assumed abilities or civilian-constructed roles. Within the veteran community, there is as much diversity, ability, and promise as within the civilian community. This tenet fights attempts to fully understand, define, or "write" veterans. There is a way that using a VCT lens, I could actually question and "unwrite" this proposed theory. This tenet establishes every other tenet in VCT as a suggestion or concern, and not a truth or a rule.

This tenth tenet caused the most "commotion" in debriefers' comments. Vacchi clearly explained that he disagrees with its inclusion to the point that its exact opposite "Veterans are knowable" makes more sense. The tenet, he argues also gives too much weight to the ways that military experience can define a person. Upon further discussion, we agreed that the tenet is useful but not always applicable. I believe that recognizing veterans as a "knowable population" may create a slippery slope of generalization, scholarly assumption, and the idea of a static veteran. Vacchi shares concerns that though not everyone understands veterans, there are still ways of understanding veterans that help us better serve them. Hammonds suggested that this tenet was a less a tenet and more an expanding thought.

Veteran Culture Is Built on a Culture of Respect, Honor and Trust

Though a departure from the available critical tenets examined in Chapter V, this final tenet provides an important foundation to how student veterans interact with the other suggested tenets. As student veterans return to institutions of higher education, their own notions of respect, honor, and trust may be violated in different ways. Moreover, policies and procedures that colleges and universities put in place that seem to undermine these characteristics shake the foundation of student veterans' relationships with their institutions.

This final tenet is important to understand as it can highlight how veterans may respond to some of the previous tenets. For example, the literature explains that many veterans do not gravitate towards psychological, social, or academic support structures because they are either embarrassed or do not like the idea of asking for help. This

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reluctance to identify needs can also result in a failure to name oppression, marginalization, discrimination, or perceived microaggressions.

A culture of trust further solidifies the importance of the ninth tenet as veterans are more likely to believe that a fellow veteran would be able to serve them. The culture of respect helps to understand frustration that can stem from deficit thinking as well as interactions with university or college community members who do not share the student veteran's sense of respect or honor. As policies, procedures, and practices are dissected, it is important to recognize how they may bolster or undermine (or be perceived as undermining) this culture, especially if their success requires student veteran buy in.

Additional Comments

Debriefer comments that were germane to specific tenets were included with each tenet. More global comments on the theory or how the tenets work together included combining or removing tenets, giving more examples, and describing how the tenets can be better used in research. Hammond suggested that the conversation about third space was better linked to the multiple dimensions of identity. Additionally, he suggested that there may be closer links to the oppression and marginalization of veterans and deficit thinking than these tenets suggest. Hamrick was careful to advise that the tenets are bound by my experience and my reading. Additionally, the complexities of cultures, structures, and identities make a list of tenets difficult in any field, particularly, the field of student veterans. McBain suggested that spouses and children of veterans must also be included. Diamond contributed thoughtful comments throughout the text but mainly caught where my work was over-reaching or

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generalizing. Diamond also encouraged more examples throughout the work. Some of the ones offered (woman at the gas station) she did not think were incredibly useful. Overall, her suggestion was to refine and explain through application and example. These tenets are flexible and deserve further consideration from other scholars in the field of veterans research. What these tenets fail to consider or cover, I hope will be made up for by the ways they allow researchers to share a voice and method of critique. We are at a time when it is not enough to through policies and new practices at veterans in hopes that one will "stick." Instead, we must be discerning in how we attempt to serve veterans and unafraid to speak out when those "services" are not in the best interests of veterans. This work is unfinished, but it must be made public as its refinement is a public discussion. The suggested tenets and debriefer comments herein are only the beginning of that conversation.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This work is (I hope) a step forward for scholars in the field of veterans studies.

After explaining my project to a publisher, he informed me that I will never write

veteran critical theory. It will not be written, he averred, until four different scholars

have an argument about it. I hope this raw material encourages others to begin looking at

the ways that civilian privilege can stymie veteran success. I hope that these tenets will

encourage administrators, staff, faculty, and students to think critically of their actions,

assumptions, and attitudes in regard to veterans. In short, I hope to start some arguments.

This chapter explores the limitations, implications, and projected applications of

this project. Additionally, this chapter considers new avenues of research based on VCT.

While VCT is still at an early stage, it heralds a new dimension of student veteran

research. The goal of the project as noted in Chapter I is to write a list of tenets suitable

to critically evaluate the ways in which student veterans are marginalized or oppressed in

higher education (civilian) institutions by largely-civilian faculty, staff, administrators,

and fellow students. The goal was not only to raise a critical voice but also to unite

researcher voices with a shared language.

Limitations

This project has three main limitations: the specific context of higher education,

the limited research available on student veterans, and my own biases as a researcher.

Though these limitations do not summarily injure the applicability or usefulness of VCT,

understanding these limitations may help future researchers responsibly apply the

suggested tenets of VCT or adjust the given tenets to work within their selected population or to reach their stated goals.

This project is completed by a student of higher education based on data about student veterans in higher education. Though I believe these tenets extend beyond the ivory tower and can be applied to veterans in non-academic sectors, its context has certainly influenced the selected tenets I found meaningful. I hope that another scholar looking at another aspect of Post 9/11 veterans' experiences upon returning from service will revisit the larger list of questions and determine which may be appropriate or inappropriate for their work, but as VCT stands it is a reflection on current intersection of Post 9/11 military and 21st century higher education. Because I believe there is hope that VCT has applicability beyond student veterans, I did not opt for a more specific but perhaps limited student veteran critical theory. If for no other reason, SVCT just does not roll off the tongue.

Secondly, we are still at the beginning of this era of veteran research. Major concerns or milestone policies have yet to be discovered or enacted. The millionth veteran was served by the Post 9/11 GI Bill in December of 2013 (Sander, 2013a). We are, however still at the beginning. As more veterans return and more institutions work to include or unintentionally exclude them, we will need to reconsider these tenets as well as other scholarship on veterans. Though my literature review in Chapter II is recent with articles less than two months before my defense, between the time I defend and walk the stage, more policies will either shift, be born, or die. New research will be published. New dissertations will fill electronic libraries alongside mine. The effects of

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these must be subject to a critical lens as well. All work on student veterans is bound by this limitation. It is in our collective best interest to synthesize what we *claim* and what we *know* and recognize the vast chasm between these words.

Third, I am a civilian. In at least two tenets, that fact alone casts doubt on my ability to write this work at all. While I do not believe that my civilian status precludes me from thoughts, investigative research, or useful presentation of findings, I must always remember that I am playing another person's tune. Student veteran authority will trump my assumptions and assertions every time. I can only hope to piece together meaning that some student veterans may not have had time or inclination to construct. And while an outsider, I must also recognize that through rigorous and careful research my outsider opinion still adds value to the larger conversation. Similar limitations have been considered in feminist research, critical white studies, and queer theory. While in my own proposed tenets I aver that veterans are better suited to inform policy, there is still worth in opening the conversation to willing civilians who recognize their limits (and wealth) as outsiders

Current Implications

This work offers four things to the reader: critical theory creation; extension of critical theory as a field; an exercise to help scholars, administrators, students, and faculty to recognize their own positionality; and application to scholarly work in the field of veterans.

First, the process of creating VCT is a process of knowing and understanding how critical theory works and its worth to both scholarship and policy

creation/assessment. This project provides an example of how the tenets of five different theories can be understood and reapplied to another marginalized population for a productive purpose. Both recreating the process with another population in mind and revisiting the current process with a different set of researcher biases is a powerful way to see how critical theory "works."

Second, the advent of VCT adds a necessary and timely addition to the field of critical theory. As critical theory creation is often emblematic of the time and politics surrounding its creation, the 21st century is marked with a responsibility to recognize, serve, and support veterans. VCT is an appropriate tool to do just that. The tenets suggested also respect and employ the rich history of critical theory as this new theory is born.

Third, VCT creates a systematic way for civilians in the higher education community to recognize their own privilege and see those moments that their privilege may be marginalizing or discriminating against a veteran. As CRT, queer theory, and feminist theory have helped shape the ways that higher education creates, employs and assesses policy, procedure, and practice, VCT will give administration, staff, faculty, and students a unified language to discuss how through their individual and corporate roles they may be able to make significant positive change in the lives of student veterans.

Fourth, and perhaps most saliently, VCT offers researchers a new tool to understand, evaluate, and analyze student veteran experiences and the policies that surround them. As has been argued earlier, VCT is a new dimension of scholarship on student veterans. The tenets of the theory can be used to form *a priori* interview

questions. The tenets can be used (as shown in Chapter VIII) to code and understand

data. The tenets can also be investigated separately as scholarly additions to our

collective understanding of the experiences of student veterans. Additionally, as the field

grows, new research on student veterans can include a unified critical voice yet unseen

in the literature. Though not all scholars will agree with all eleven tenets, they provide a

necessary extension of the student veteran conversation.

Projected Applications

While VCT is limited in this project to a discussion about Post 9/11 veterans in

higher education, the tenets of VCT can be used to enrich conversations about veterans

who do not elect to return to colleges and universities. New research on veterans in the

workplace, veterans and healthcare, and veterans in communities can benefit from

looking at the tenets of VCT. Additionally, historical analysis of early and mid 20th

century wars and their precipitate veterans can use VCT to retroactively investigate

homecomings, transitions, and legacies. Though perhaps just a dream, I imagine a time

when VCT can also be used to enrich literary analysis of film and novel recreations of

military or veteran experiences.

Finally, as VCT becomes more discussed and disagreed with, I hope that the

collective efforts of tomorrow's researchers can shape these suggestions into a powerful

tool. While a useful exercise and hopefully a strong start, my efforts are focused on only

one goal, serving veterans better in ways that respect veterans, understand their varied

complexities, and question the ways that civilians are privileged. I hope tomorrow's

researcher (still dedicated to these goals) can bring about positive change for the way student veterans and veterans writ large experience life after service.

New Avenues of Research

Though Chapter VI discusses first responses to VCT made by scholars in the field, an important dimension of assessing the appropriateness, usability, and benefit of VCT should be housed within student veteran response to the theory. Already underway, I plan on interviewing several student veterans about their impression of VCT. After my first interview I learned some valuable lessons. The student veteran I interviewed was at one time a student of mine. After finishing my class I helped tutor him through his next few years. The student was very hesitant to accept the foundational notion that civilians were privileged in higher education. However, after prompting him with examples of subtle privilege (being in classes with people like you, seeing faces around campus like yours, and having examples from class relevant to you) he quickly agreed that "that stuff is *so* true." He did, however, have a problem with the language of privilege, especially because he felt that it seemed like he was "whining." After the interview, the student veteran confided that several of the words I was using "blew his mind." Though he understood through examples, microaggressions, interest convergence, and third space were particularly confusing. He advised me to "dumb it down" when speaking to future students. Reflecting on this last comment I recognized that the difficulty he was having with "academese" was not unlike the problems I often have understanding a veteran when they reflect on their time in the service. Even in our conversation, the interviewer referred to BAH several times before I understood he was using an acronym for "basic

allowance for housing." This experience reminded me of how I was hopelessly a promoter of my own civilian privilege even when attempting to undermine it.

Other future research includes investigating each tenet as it applies to a broader swath of student veteran literature or a selected group of student veterans. If this is to be a language, the nuances of each word (tenet) and their declensions (applications) must be explored and understood.

In the hope of serving veterans, I offer a new way to speak about their experiences, their concerns, and their relationships with institutions of higher education. As it evolves, I hope that VCT also gives future scholars ways to talk about veterans outside of the university community.

In returning to my research questions, Chapter II discusses the current scholarly, public, and political conversation about student veterans. Chapters III and V both ground and explore the ways that the tenets of extant critical theories interact with select student veteran scholarship. Chapter VI establishes the first tenets of VCT and tests them with peer debriefers.

As Pallas Athena covered Odysseus with a fog, she protected both the warrior and the civilian community. However, that protection comes with a price—in fog no one can see clearly. A harder circumstance than collective confusion would be if the warrior could see and the people of Ithaca could not or *vice versa*. VCT will not lift the fog. In fact, there are circumstances where it may make the fog denser. However, over time, VCT will give both the warrior and the civilians a communal language to describe the fog—a first step towards better weather.

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CHAPTER VIII

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS FOR VETERAN CRITICAL THEORY

The following chapter is a sample journal article that uses veteran critical theory as a theoretical framework. Due to the fact that this chapter follows a larger work that contains a healthy review of the literature, this scholarly "article" considers how VCT could work as a lens for seeing and a tool for understanding veteran data. Indeed, it is important to test a theory for its use and applicability. The data used were gathered for a descriptive study on graduate student veterans. Thus, the theory does not frame the semi-structured interview questions. Instead, the theory is used to think deeply about the participant responses.

As more qualitative researchers investigate the experiences of Post 9/11 student veterans, many turn to the same limited set of theories to evaluate and understand the transition from combat to classroom, boots to books, or a myriad of other catchy alliterative slogans. The dominant framework often includes Schlossberg's (1981) adult transition theory (most popularly the 4S model) or Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering's (1989) adaptation of the transition model which relies on "moving in," "moving through," and "moving out" of a particular transition. DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell (2008) and DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) used Schlossberg in a collection of articles that (by DiRamio's assertion) began the first wave of Post 9/11 student veteran research. For reluctance to bully precedence, agreement with the applicability of the model, or a lack of imagination, many subsequent scholars have used Schlossberg or a derivation thereof to model student veteran transition, compartmentalize different challenges faced at

different stages, and to understand how veterans make meaning of their transitions. The work has been so saturated with these theories that at a recent national conference, three of four unrelated presenters used the same theoretical introduction to discuss their work with veterans. The last participant simply skipped her slide and remarked that the audience had "been through this already."

While Schlossberg serves a purpose in veteran research, it is not without its critics. Namely, Vacchi (2013) and Livingston and Bauman (2013) note problems using Schlossberg as it fails to recognize the unique experiences of student veterans and relies too heavily on deficit model. A call has already been made by many scholars to find a new, more suitable theory to explore the transition experiences of veterans (Vacchi, 2013). While not a student or personal development model, I introduce veteran critical theory as a new way for researchers to critically examine qualitative and quantitative veteran data. The past decade has been an effort to understand and subsequently serve veterans, but this effort has largely focused on identifying student veteran concerns, developing programmatic responses, and evaluating these programs.

We have been building with the same tools. We need new tools—not only tools for construction, but tools for destruction. veteran critical theory (VCT) is not a reaction to current literature; it is a next chapter. To provide both a critical voice and a unified voice for student veteran researchers, VCT suggests eleven tenets that can be used to look reflectively and critically at the experiences of veterans and the experiences of institutions that house, educate, and serve these veterans.

Theoretical Framework

Suggested in the earlier chapters of this work VCT operates as a sieve through which data can flow. The precipitate (instead of traditional models or program suggestions) is a critical look at how veterans are marginalized, othered, or oppressed within the higher education construct. These findings can then better inform programming decisions, evaluation strategies, and institutional awareness or an oppressed student population. The eleven tenets suggested by VCT are:

1. Structures, policies, and processes (particularly institutions of higher education) privilege civilians over veterans.

2. Veterans experience various forms of oppression and marginalization including microaggressions.

3. Veterans are often victims of deficit thinking in higher education.

4. Veterans occupy a third space (country) on the border of multiple conflicting and interacting power structures, languages, and systems.

5. VCT values narratives and counternarratives of veterans.

6. Veterans experience multiple identities at once.

7. Veterans are constructed (written) by civilians, often as deviant characters.

8. Veterans are more appropriately positioned than civilians to inform policy and practice regarding veterans.

9. Some services advertised to serve veterans are ultimately serving civilian interests.

10. Veterans are unknowable.

11. Veteran culture is built on a culture of respect, honor, and trust.

No other current model or theory takes a critical theoretical stance to understand the experiences of student veterans. Instead, much of the literature is housed in helping veterans adapt to fit instead of questioning the institutions and cultures that define fit.

Methodology

The data for this project comes from interviews with graduate student veterans. Seeking to understand both their experience and student veterans and specifically their unique classification as graduate students, 11 students were interviewed representing diverse military branches, diverse academic degrees, and diverse academic fields. The students all attended a large research university in the southwest and were enrolled in graduate programs. Two of the students lived in another state and completed their courses online. In semi-structured interviews, I gathered the stories of these graduate student veterans. My list of talking points grew and changed as the interviews progressed. After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed by a third party service and shared with the participants for editing or adjustment. The adjusted transcriptions were then read and coded using the eleven tenets of VCT. Segments, phrases, or words coded with a particular tenet were then collected and examined in ensemble to show how each particular tenet contributed to a better understanding of the experiences of graduate student veterans.

Data

For both clarity and organization, each tenet is listed below with examples from the interviews that seem connected to the tenet. Another researcher may have coded phrases differently; such is the nature of qualitative research.

Structures, policies, and processes (particularly institutions of higher education)

privilege civilians over veterans

Several participants explained how their enrollment process was complicated by their veteran experiences. Kathryn had to send several different transcripts to her undergraduate school (it is quite common for veterans to piecemeal a body of knowledge together while on active duty). She was originally denied twice from the school until a third person answered the phone and explained that her transcripts had been mislabeled. She was encouraged to register the next day. Another common concern for veterans included the breaks in GI Bill pay when school was not in session. Semester or holiday breaks are often not a problem for undergraduate students whose funding does not rely on school enrollment. Also, staff and faculty are on contracts that rarely break over the days when class does not meet. For veterans, these breaks (part of the new revision of the Post 9/11 GI Bill) have caused financial hardship and have caused several students to turn to loans as a way to keep the electricity in their homes running.

Part of the financial frustration discussed by participants resulted from university or college financial aid offices not being up to date on different forms of financial aid for veterans. Though most offices do a fine job navigating civilians' financial aid needs, Hank, a masters student explained that because his unique experience serving before and

after 9/11, he was not afforded the Post 9/11 GI Bill until its first revision. He gently explained, "The schools had no idea what the hell to do with us." Hank also explained that he receives state aid even living outside of the state because he was grandfathered into the program. However, the business office (against the Veteran's Office's wishes) refuses to forgive some out of state fees that Hank in semesterly assessed. According to Hank, the business office has told him, "We can't change the system even though it's illegal."

Hank also commented that as he was transitioning from the military to education, he faced some challenges with coursework that would have been second-nature when he graduated high school but was somewhat murky as he was an older student. In this way, Hank implied that college (even graduate programs) were more geared for people who followed traditional paths from high school to undergraduate to graduate school. Those who took off time to serve their country were at a disadvantage trying to remember what would have been much easier to remember when they were 20. Hank explained that some of his peers' frustrations with the "hoops" veterans are forced to jump through are so frustrating that many say, "Screw it, I'm done. I don't want to do this anymore. I'm going back to work, go back in the army." He continued that many veterans are frustrated with a system they feel is inefficient and unfair.

> [Veterans are] actually looking for a fair deal and to get their degrees. That's why they're here. While they don't want to be treated differently than anybody else, they do expect [the administration] to do [its] job. I think that the frustration around it is when they come into a system that is so inefficient, so top-heavy and

so Byzantine that they get pissed off and leave. I see schools driving grad students away even at the graduate level. I've watched a couple walk out of here already…In the military service you can sometimes have an equally Byzantine bureaucracy but guys know how to work around it…There is an order to it. You can understand it. You can comprehend it. You can go pull out a book and read exactly how that is supposed to happen. You cannot do that at college. That frustrates the hell out of the guys. People perceive, real or not, unequal treatment because the system is basically designed to serve a 21-year-old undergrad. You're trying to squeeze in somebody who's not that. They don't try to modify the system to adapt to that. They just try to make you be the 21-year-old undergrad.

Frustrations with a system that does not acknowledge them was a reoccurring theme in how veterans experienced discrimination based on their veteran experiences or saw privilege, enjoyed by a civilian, "normal" population.

Veterans experience various forms of oppression and marginalization including microaggressions

Closely tied to the eleventh tenet (a culture of respect), the way that some student veterans perceive civilian actions can be considered a microaggression, especially when the lack of respect creates a hostile or pressured environment. Eric, a medical school student, recounted that he has "good motivation" in class because when he is frustrated he will remember and be thankful that it's "not 3am in the morning and [he's] not lugging up this hill in Afghanistan about to cry." But he feels that most students "are

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missing the big objective and all they care about is the grade and the test instead of learning x ,y, and z in order to save someone's life. They get caught up in the nitty gritty and [he feels] like they are very disrespectful about it."

James recalled that a fellow veteran from the navy was in a class and "a civilian undergraduate student was explaining why the federal government should release Guantanamo Bay detainees in the United States and pay them reparations, and pay them to live in the United States. He was describing how his knuckles were white that he was so upset that someone had the ability, the audacity to say that." Even if civilians do not intend for their comments to be microaggressions, like sexual harassment, the perception is what is important. While academic freedom and a marketplace of ideas should not suffer, sensitivity must be considered when faculty, staff, or students are sharing their opinions.

Hank explained that he was thankful that his program had veterans as faculty because he did not have to deal with the "issues" you normally see at the undergraduate level. Some of these issues, he continued, included

> You could run into the professor that doesn't like the military in their class. You can run into the professor that doesn't like adult learners on their campus. You can run into issues particularly with the Guard Reserve members where they've got to do drill. They don't want to let them go drill or they're going to assign them a bunch of stuff even though they've got drill.

Other, more subtle microaggressions were experienced in the culture of the institution. The university where the interviews took place has a strong military tradition and a

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popular ROTC program. Della (who attended the institution's state rival for her undergraduate degree) explained that

> There are some things that I find kind of off-putting and it mostly has to do with the [ROTC program] and the fact that there are so many people that are in the [ROTC program] that just do the [ROTC program] for fun and never go and serve.

Della wanted to ask each [ROTC] member, "Are you actually planning on commissioning or are you, like did you serve at one point and now you're just like being in the [ROTC program] because you want to do it?" or "[A]re you playing dress up?"

> That's one of the things that it still bothers me about the [ROTC program] because I think that [the ROTC program] sits on tradition that you would go into [service] … and I don't understand really what their motivations for doing that are, if they don't plan on serving, I guess is my point.

> Microaggressions can be experienced in a variety of ways by student veterans.

An unfortunate side-affect of these microaggressions is that without a close veteran community, student veterans can often feel alone or further detached as few understand the affect or depth of impact of each microaggression.

Veterans are victims of deficit thinking in higher education

Part of deficit thinking is a refusal to consider the value-add of a student veteran. As Eric described, while going thorough medical school interviews, "a lot of people don't know how to handle [military experience], you tell them, 'I was in the infantry and I just got back from Afghanistan a year ago,' they don't want to go anywhere near that.

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They interview you like they would any other academic, but I feel like they are missing out on an important part of a potential student."

Hank, a particularly vociferous participant, explained that he was frustrated with how the university assumed every student veteran had issues relating to PTSD.

What I find demeaning is that most colleges keep talking about PTSD and all this other garbage. Most veterans don't have those issues…Most veterans have issues with the fact that you've got a crappy administration that screws you over on a regular basis. The college spends all of its time focusing on all these wrong things… It's demeaning particularly with the emphasis they put on the PTSD stuff. That pisses a lot of people off. There's this growing idea … I call it the "Vietnamization" of Post 9/11 veterans that everybody has PTSD. Everybody has some sort of psychological issue. Everybody has some kind of problem. It's just not true. You see it in the media. You see it portrayed through the schools.

While no participants shared examples of feeling academically undervalued or "cooled out" (Clark, 1960), many resented the stigma of having emotional, physical, or psychological issues. The resentment existed on two levels: the participants did not exhibit the assumed issues and it made a mockery of those service members who did face significant challenge after service.

Veterans occupy a third space (country) on the border of multiple conflicting

and interacting power structures, languages, and systems

When asked about his ability to form community, Eric replied that "in terms of finding community, I just don't have it. It's just one of the things I choose. I had to get

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into school, yeah. That's one of the things I honestly do struggle with is that I don't have people I feel I can relate to here." Often community is only formed with people that share the boundary space in which veterans live. As graduate student veterans, the boundaries can be even smaller, often limited to particular fields of study, rank, and active duty status. Eric also explained that as a graduate student (yet another bounded space) he does not participate in the traditions and local camaraderie of his university.

Charles shared that getting into the classroom environment of constructive conversations was a challenge. He explained that it "took [him] a while to get used to [the fact that] our ideas were welcomed and it's not just the more hierarchical structure that you're used to…that experience, it's very nice to see, I think and experience right now." Like Charles, some active duty personnel (still often considered student veterans) are not in "transition" phase as their stay in higher education is temporary. However, these men and women can be strong allies in mentoring programs, orientation camps, and any other situation where the third space of "military" and "civilian" is entered. Charles also referred to a "lingo" that is often shared by student veterans or men and women who have served.

> There's a certain lingo. "Where'd you serve? I was with the 3rd Infantry Division." There's this lingo, acronyms that they use and talking about either Afghanistan or Iraq that we're all familiar with so that we both immediately become comfortable in that language and start talking kind of shop talk military lingo. That seems to be very rewarding for both of us because especially if they've served Iraq or Afghanistan like I have. "Where'd you serve?" You

understand what it's like to sleep in the tent in a windstorm and the sand in your teeth and your ears, and just the whole ... there's just this ... it's hard to describe unless you've been there kind of experience. There's a whole new appreciation for each other.

Bill explained his transition from military life to a master's program as "the hardest thing [he] ever had to do in [his] life, mentally." The stress mainly came from a lack of order and expectation. A colonel that works with veterans at the participants' institution described the transition as going from a 24-7 week to a 7-24 week. The idea was that in the military a schedule was full and in the civilian world, veterans were trying to fill it. These time restrictions and lack of restrictions can place student veterans at a precarious place between the two worlds.

In language, activity, community, and lifestyle, many veterans are not wholly military and not wholly civilian. The recognition of a third space protect veterans from feeling an obligation to assimilate to one or the other and simultaneously gives authority to their current space, which for some is a third space.

VCT values narratives and counternarratives of veterans

This collection of interviews is an example of how VCT values student veterans. The different examples given for each tenet are passed through my own lens as a researcher but taken directly from student veterans' stories. In some instances, the participants even reflected on the value of sharing their stories. Eric explained that "it's cool for [him] to talk about [his experience in graduate school] in a constructive way

because [he doesn't] get that opportunity." He finally remarked, "It's just like two different worlds, I was there and now I'm here."

Whether Hank's frustration or Charles's almost poetic descriptions, the veteran voice that comes from these transcripts both stretches the reader's definition of what a student veteran could be, but also empowers veterans with a presence—a narrator of the story (agency if this were the early 2000s).

Veterans experience multiple identities at once

Many of the participants discussed their age, gender, marital status, and parental status as identity components. Additionally, many students explained that their experience within the military comprised a complete separate set of orbiting identities: branch, rank, deployment history, and combat history to name a few.

Discussing the term "veteran" with Eric, an Army paratrooper in medical school, he explained that he does not have a significant emotional connection with the word. He sees it more of a descriptor of his father or grandfather (both veterans). However, he did acknowledge that he associates the word with "someone who is deployed, which is probably the wrong association," he admits. However, there are people on a similar medical scholarship that have no service history and "went to a very short welcome to the Army summer camp session and earned a commission, which most of people have to go through a lot of crap to earn a commission, never mind actually deploying and whatnot," and "[he] would never call them veterans." For emphasis, he repeated, "I would never do that." Deployment history was also important to Charles, a 23-year Army Major who volunteered to deploy. "I volunteered to deploy simply because when

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you're in for 20 years and there's a war going on as long as this one and you don't go

serve, why are you in?" Ivan, an Air Force pilot, said that he did not resonate with the

term "veteran' because "the connotation of it is that you have gone to war and come

back…I've never been involved with any combat."

James described why he did not feel that he fit in with other graduate student

veterans,

> "I didn't gravitate to the core group of veteran students and actually when I was
>
> in class recently there were three veterans, they're all if I'm not mistaken
>
> certificate students (in James's program)…two were Army infantrymen and then
>
> one was a Marine and they were talking about IEDs. I actually learned later the
>
> Marine actually lost his leg, which likely was from an IED, but I don't have those
>
> experiences. I didn't deploy. … If you were an intelligence person everyone
>
> thinks that you're a genius and that you can look into everything about their
>
> background that you know all of their darkest secrets. If you're an Infantryman
>
> everyone thinks that you're in the best shape ever and that you are sort of God's
>
> gift to the Military because everything is built to serve the Infantrymen, there are
>
> combat arms and there are support jobs so in that way I don't really fit in with
>
> those guys I would say. So there haven't actually been a lot of experiences with
>
> other students.

Kathryn, one of two female veterans interviewed, explained that as a woman and

a mother, these two identities are often invoked before her status as a veteran. As she

held her son during our interview, he explained that her baby is "her whole world," and

everything revolves around him. Charles also discussed how his role as a parent of two young boys was an important identifier in his life. Della, the other female participant, explained that in her academic program, she felt like a double minority—female and a veteran. She continued to explain that as her husband is in the military and deployed, "that adds another level of otherness."

The only participant in my study that did not identify as White was Frank, an African-American Army veteran. When asked about how his race works into his identity, he said:

> I've always seen myself as a competitive individual, and I resonate most with success, whatever that looks like. Success and in myself as an American veteran, a combat veteran, and then race comes further down the line.

In all the interviews, apart from gender, identities external to the military did not seem to hold much weight. Some participants considered themselves more of a graduate student than a veteran but their veteran status was always "waiting in the wings."

Ivan, Greg, and Hank all discussed their status as adult learners and how that impacted their experience at the university. In some ways, their status as an adult learner was more problematic than their status as a veteran in trying to navigate class, social interactions, and profession community. Hank explained that your age "separates you not only from the other students but it separates you from some of your veterans."

While many participants explored the different ways they were identified, at least one participant, Bill, described how leaving the military left him feeling less unique.

Now, you're a normal person. Now, I'm an old person. I'm just like everybody

else and that sucks to me. I miss that being the unique … one o'clock off the

coast of Brazil in the morning. There's a unique coolness to that. When you're

out, you miss it…it's a different kind of thing that not everyone gets and if you'll

go back to writing an essay like everybody else, it's like I would assume they're

like 'Wow, maybe that wasn't bad' or 'I miss my buddies' or this or that and this

part.

Identity for student veteran participants was a multileveled experience, and these

identities were often in collision with one another. Rarely did a participant showcase

multiple identities at once. The majority of participants displayed one identity at a time

dependent upon the context.

Veterans are constructed (written) by civilians, often as deviant characters

When asked what he wishes people understood about him or student veterans in

general, Charles responded:

I don't know. I just feel like there's a lot of assumptions made about us in the

military. I've had some other graduate students go, 'Well, you're not different. I

thought you would be a lot more kind of authoritarian and more rigid, and you

don't seem that way. I think there's just some assumptions, a stereotype that

they have of being in the military in some of the civilians' minds.

Participants were most frustrated when they felt that veterans were being

portrayed as wounded in some way. Though there was acknowledgement that some

veterans had emotional, psychological, and/or physical challenges, the broad brush was used too loosely.

Some participants explained that when colleagues or friends learned of their service history, the civilian students did not know what to say. Response to deviance can be marked by silence or avoidance, especially when the afforded information is delicate or personal. Della recalled that

> people have been asking me, "What does your husband do?" I just say, "He's in Afghanistan" and then a lot of people have no idea what he say. That's something else that has been interesting because I actually was just in Austin yesterday and I was spending some time with some of my friends from Killeen who are army wives like I met them through colleagues of my husband and so it was nice having people that you didn't have to really explain anything to. They understood exactly what you're going through and we could talk about that. That's been another thing that's been lacking for me … I don't really have anyone to talk to in the program who really understand what it's like to also have a spouse who is serving as well.

Bill had difficulty deciding whether he identified as a veteran or a graduate student more. He completed his mental chess game by averring that "people would tell me that I'm a veteran." While not necessarily constructing Bill as a deviant character, an "other" still had primary responsibility or "writing" Bill in that moment.

Veterans are more appropriately positioned to inform policy and practice regarding

veterans

Speaking of the men and women he served with in Texas and in Iraq, Charles said:

> It's usually those that you served with and that you feel like you trust. I think a lot of the ones that I'm mentoring and the ones that mentor me, there's a certain level of trust and safety that they have with me. They know that I'm going to help all I can at getting that letter of recommendation even if they're just looking for another job or applying to a certain school or military school or program. I think a lot of it just has to do with people that you've already built relationships with and that you've served with in the past and that they feel comfortable calling because they trust that I will be there to support them, just like I trust the mentors that are there for me.

Hank explained that because his program was run by people who had been in the military, he did not have to face many of the problems that other academic departments had to face. Those most suited to advise became those most sought for advice. Many of the participants discussed finding mentors within their programs, their military family, or even (as Della did) online. The value that insiders had made an important difference, gives insight into the need for veteran-manned offices and veteran-authored policies.

Some services advertised to serve veterans are ultimately serving civilian interests.

Hank, a true student of the system, explained that one community college system he was in was a member of SOC (Service members Opportunity College Army

Degrees). The membership gave the college web visibility that ensured their ability to work well with veterans, support active duty students in deployment, and respect credits from other SOC schools. Hank explained that his school was taking advantage of the visibility by welcoming student veterans but failing to honor the credits promised. Clearly this is a rare case (hopefully) of a school blatantly taking advantage of a system, but there is some echo of this circumstance in others that focus on recruitment more than service upon matriculation.

Hank also resented the fact that he felt the university's attempts to "help" students with emotional or psychological trauma was just a means to use them as what he called "funding sources." Essentially, he felt the universities would focus on media portrayals of problematic veterans and get funding to assist these veterans. The reality was that few veterans took advantage of the programs but the money was still being sent and the school was advertising their opportunities for veterans. This served to bring in more money for the university but also bolster a civilian notion that veterans are somehow broken or needing repair.

Veterans are unknowable

Examples within interviews of veterans being unknowable include those moments that undermine or change the common narrative for a student veteran. Kathryn, a student veteran and mother, admitted that the only reason she was enrolled in classes at all was because her GI Bill gave her family another income, without which she could not stay at home with her child. James left the military without promotion, he recalled:

I don't generally identify as a Veteran I would say just because I didn't enjoy my experience. I didn't even keep my uniforms you know, like your dress uniforms. I gave away my medals and things …I gave them to a soldier when I was leaving because he needed them because he just gotten in, he needed them for his uniform and I didn't want to keep it because I'm not proud of the rank that I held and the experience that I had. I'm proud of serving, I'm proud of being in the Military, so I guess that sort of a divide for me is when I'm meeting people and talking to them I mention that I've been in the Military but I don't say I was in the Army. I don't say it was Military intelligence, I don't really talk about that. And because I didn't deploy I don't have certain experiences I just don't deal with that. Having been as educated as I was, people immediately assumed that I was an officer when I wasn't. I'm a little embarrassed by the fact that I wasn't. I didn't really know what I was getting into.

Frank, an Army veteran, when prompted to compare his colleagues in graduate school that are civilian and veteran explained ""Obviously, if you've never been at combat, you can't relate. I can tell you certain things, but it's not the same as someone that's actually been there. It's just that sense of experience that we share, and we'll reflect back to." That veterans are unknowable is not a discouragement for those who want to serve them; rather it is a release from an obligation to fully know and understand a veteran population—a population that is constantly evolving and growing.

Allen candidly explained that

A lot of people have been very appreciative of military service and they really

like it and respect it, but just don't know what to do with it. That's just very

honest. A lot of people are 'Thank you for your service. We really like it.' And

then, What do I do with that?

Allen's response to his own question was to educate:

It's learning and being able to educate people on what you can do for them to

make their lives better and solve their problems with their business. That would

be my advice.

As the wealth of these suggested tenets is also found in their contradictions, Bill found

veterans to be overwhelming knowable. He argued that

Like you said you look at me as an undergrad to a bunch of other undergrads

we're the same. We live the same. We do everything. I may have a different

personality and maybe a little more efficient but in general, I'm living like them,

I am them. I would say this thing, I bet you do the same thing, if you look at a

typical undergrad, that's what a veteran undergrad looks like. Sometimes they do

… they smoke pot or whatever, whatever it is, they live at home, that's probably

what a veteran's going to do. You wouldn't treat a 24-year-old the same. A

normal 24-year-old going here, you wouldn't treat them the same. You treat them

differently. You've got an undergrad, you treat them like an undergrad …If he's

going to grad school, you treat him like a grad student. That's the biggest thing I

would think of, is maybe you can't … just because they're veteran, there's some

mythological difference between him and every other student. There's probably not.

Veteran culture is built on a culture of respect, honor, and trust

Many participants reported frustration working with civilian students, faculty, and support staff (especially those connected with the Veterans Affairs Office). Much of the frustration was linked to a perceived lack of respect or lack of appreciation for things participants felt were taken for granted.   Eric, an Army paratrooper on a medical military scholarship was particularly distressed by the actions of his classmates. Comparing his service and his current medical school class, he observed,

> If we are at a brief and we're in the military and someone is briefing you and it doesn't matter who it is , whether it's a general or a civilian talking about sexual harassment, you still act a certain way: you sit up, you pay attention, you don't talk to your neighbor all of the rime and there's just this element of professional respect whereas I've never seen such a selfish, obnoxious group as I'm with now and this is medical school.

Aware of the potential to see civilian students as disrespectful, James recalled that in his one-day "Veteran camp" before classes began that he was told "you're going to meet people who have never been in the military who have no idea what authority is, and you're going to find them extremely disrespectful." Some of the participants discussed having the ethics of the military so engrained in them, that they feel they will always be "military because [their] core, who [they were, was] shaped by the military."

Discussing the benefits of the Post 9/11 GI Bill, Charles explained that "it's smart. These soldiers that are loyal to the government to help pay for their education and so that they will continue to serve or even if they go into civilian sector and to help them become educated. I think that's a great focus for our government" to spend "money on…people who are very loyal, that have sworn to uphold and defend the constitution of the United States."

Charles explained how student veterans he has met in his graduate program take time to work together on projects, read one another's' papers, and help each other study. He suggested a sense of pride that is felt between fellow veterans and an obligation to serve another man or woman who has sacrificed and agreed to defend the Constitution.

Hank displayed some of the frustration that comes from veterans engaging with systems that do not respect or honor their service.

It's ridiculous most of the time. It's painful. For a lot of veterans, it can rapidly reach a point where they won't return. They'll walk away. I don't think most administrations realize that … I don't think most administrators realize the impact they have on all students but especially on adult professional students especially when they give them the run-around…I have a problem saying this. I have seen guys break down in tears trying to deal with administrations. I don't think it ever penetrated. I don't think they gave a crap. I've got that here…I got that at University S. I've gotten that at every college I ever went to. It's because they treat you like a high school student. It's like, "We own you." There is no service-minded mentality in college administration. It's particularly hard for

veterans and adult learners I think because we look at college as a service

provided to us. We're not here for you. You're here for us. I'm paying your bill.

Most colleges look at students in a completely different way. They don't treat

them as customers.

I see a lot of people get frustrated. I know I personally get mad as hell about it

but I've seen a lot of guys severely impacted by it to the point where they ended

up leaving college or they developed other ... Guys that are already teetering on

the edge with other issues like PTSD and everything else and they run into these

sort of bureaucratic runarounds. You want to talk about making a bad situation

worse? It pisses me off. It makes me mad as hell because I deal with these idiots

every day.

Student veteran frustration was often linked to a perceived breach of respect,

honor, and

trust. As many participants were encouraged to "work" the financial system to their

advantage, they thought it was despicable. As student veterans explained bad

experiences with undergraduates or civilian graduate students, their frustration was built

on a perceived lack of respect. Understanding how this tenet can be used to critique

policy, procedure, and practice will help solve root problems in lieu of reacting to

peripheral complications.

Discussion

The examples found in the participants' data do not "validate" VCT anymore

than driving a nail in with a rock "validates" the rock as a good tool. VCT can be used

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to get a richer picture of the experiences of graduate student veterans. Looking at the tenets, it is easy to see that multiple identities and a culture of respect were highly interactive. Other tenets like the unknowability of veterans and the potential of institution services to benefit veterans were less interactive. Investigating each tenet closer, however, gives a useful and productive look at these students' experiences. The goal of VCT is not to create a machine of generalization or an equation with inputs and outputs. The goal of VCT is the same goal of a sharp knife, a camera, or a skilled poet, to observe the population in a particular context and give possibility for the population's experience to be seen in a new way.

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