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Gendered Bodies and the U.S. Military: Exploring the Institutionalized Regulation of Bodies

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Gendered Bodies and the U.S. Military:
Exploring the Institutionalized Regulation of Bodies

A Thesis:

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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in
Sociology

by

Heather K. Horton
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Abstract

This thesis supplements existing literature by examining the relationship between institutional regulations and gendered assumptions about bodies. This thesis draws from feminist social constructionist perspectives and gendered organizational theories to explore the role of gendered body assumptions in the organizational framework of a hypermasculine political institution. Using the U.S. military as an illustrative example, this thesis studies military policies and rationales historically, focusing on the post-Vietnam accelerated inclusion of women, the increasing use of combat as a divisive component, and the gendered structural elements that are used to determine physical competence. Findings coincide with existing literature and suggest that social meanings relating to gender are a prominent influence in U.S. military policy historically and contemporarily, even when biological reasons are cited as justification. This research provides implications for understanding institutional, strategic use of gender and provides analysis of how physical bodies and accompanying social meanings are impacted by institutional goals.

Keywords: Feminist Theory; Social Theory; Social Construction; United States Military

Introduction

In January of 2013, the United States military policy barring women from combat roles was lifted (Department of Defense News Release 2013). The reversal of this ban was a landmark decision that generated much controversy and media attention. Controversies and debates over this issue brought to light how women already had long been serving in combat zones, thus complicating claims of gender differences in strength, vulnerability, and fighting. This reversal thus challenged long held cultural understandings about the differences between men and women and generated a fruitful cite to explore the relationship between cultural understandings and institutional policy.

The relationship between feminism and militarism has been a complicated one. During the first wave of the U.S. women's movement, one of the major obstacles to women's suffrage was the assertion that women should not vote because they did not render military service. Indeed, in her address as President of the National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1901, Carrie Chapman Catt highlighted this point by stating that: "militarism is the oldest and has been the most unyielding enemy of women" (Catt quoted in Hoganson 1998: 195). During the second wave of the U.S. women's movement, one of the issues that fostered defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was the claim that the ERA would force women to serve in combat (Marshall [1989] 1995; Schafly 1997). In turn, women have been at the forefront of many peace movements. Not only did a woman pen the first peace poem known in human history (Enheduanna, circa 2300 BC in Geoseffo 1988), but the first U.S. peace movements were organized by women (Alonso 1993; Shott 1997; Rupp 1997). Even the first "Mother's Day Proclamation" in the United States was an effort to end future wars after the carnage wrought by the Civil War (Howe 1870). However, feminists also have fought for women to have equal access to the same opportunities as men. Consequently, they have fought for

women's right to enter military academies and to have equal roles in the military. In short, for feminists, the relationship between militarism and feminism remains contested terrain.

The last half century has witnessed an increasing number of women in the military, as well as significant changes in the roles that they play. Today, women serve in many and diverse capacities, even at the highest ranks of the military. After a decade of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military had sent more than 280,000 female troops into war zones (Lerman 2013). In July of 2013, officials from all branches of the military told Congress that they will open combat positions to women by 2016. While these changes have been viewed by many as significant advances, they have not been easy ones. Not only have women in war zones long been victims of soldier rapes (Copelon 1994), but even *within* the U.S. military, women soldiers have reported an alarming number of rapes and sexual harassment by their male counterparts (Enloe 1993 and 2000).

As a site of ongoing contention in the women's movement, the U.S. military is a particularly interesting organization to study. Its long history as a hypermasculine institution with rigid gendered assumptions about strength, vulnerability, and competence – has made it an especially formidable obstacle to gender equality. Moreover, many theorists have argued that such gendered assumptions are vital to the very aims of governments and militaries, both internationally and domestically (Enloe 1990, 1993, 2007; Nagel 1998). Nevertheless, because the U.S. military is no longer based on conscription, soldier shortages experienced by the U.S. volunteer military after more than a decade of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan have accelerated changes in this hyper-masculine institution. Although official U.S. doctrine has long touted “formal equality” as a fundamental characteristic of its democracy, it took such soldier shortages to overturn restrictions on both homosexuals in the military and the role of women in combat to make this “formal equality” within the military more of a reality.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the argument that patriarchal social organization is maintained (at least partially) through institutionalized gendered regulations of bodies, using the U.S. military as an illustrative example. This thesis examines how the increased inclusion of women illuminates the contradictions that prevail in a hypermasculine institution as the military and how gendered understandings about individuals and groups have been strategically cultivated and used by the military, both historically and in the present era. This study will be pertinent to all those interested in understanding the conjunction of militarism and gender inequality.

The U.S. military has been and continues to be a historically evolving institution, responding to domestic and international concerns, as well as to imperialist ambitions. As the ultimate source of force behind the U.S. government's power and authority, the military has a history of employing cultural politics as a strategic tool and specific understandings about femininity and masculinity have long been part of that strategy (Enloe 1989). The contradictions engendered by the increased formal inclusion of women are perhaps most visible in the increase of reported sexual violence against military women and military wives, as well as in exposes of a bureaucratic climate that is largely dismissive of such violence. Sexual violence has received widespread media and political attention and speaks to the clash of formal equality and hypermasculinity that characterize this patriarchal institution, an institution which has long depended upon dichotomous understandings of men and women. In turn, women's increased involvement in the U.S. military spurs a heightened demand for accountability in regard to these contradictions. For all of these reasons, the evolving institutional regulations and their underlying or explicit assumptions about gender and bodies are worthy of prompt and thorough investigation. This thesis does not argue for or against women's full integration into the U.S. military, but rather examines this integration as an illustration of how gendered assumptions

about bodies have facilitated or justified regulations and social organization within this institution and larger society.

Chapter 1

Formal Equality in a Gendered World

U.S. doctrine touts formal equality as a fundamental characteristic of democracy and a demonstration of its moral superiority on a global stage. However, can a true democracy or meritocracy exist when hierarchical meanings about bodies and people are tethered to social organization at virtually every structural level? Meanings about the body elicit the first interpersonal assessments in face-to-face interaction, act as commercial representations of all things desirable and deplorable in popular culture, and can be a tool for power and independence or a justification for exploitation and inequality. Before a person acts, even before they are seen, the body tells a story in which agency is often overshadowed and subdued by historical and social meaning. Social meanings inscribed on bodies have historically coincided with political ideologies, offering a way to understand and to naturalize stratification. Bodies of men and women are socially understood as different. Formal institutions (such as the U.S. government, schools, and workplaces) as well as informal institutions (such as families and peer groups) often attribute to males and females characteristics that may be based more on stereotypes than individual ability or inclination. These differences that are socially attached to sex category are also aligned with social roles which have proven difficult to transcend even as legal barriers for women are lifted.

Socially cultivated meanings about gender differences are ranked hierarchically and their consequences are visible in globalized enterprises, organizational settings, and interpersonal relationships. These hierarchical meanings are visible domestically in lingering economic, social and familial inequality (including staggering rates of domestic violence and sexual assaults primarily against feminized bodies) and through the commoditization of female bodies as objectified and sexualized and male bodies as more physically capable. Internationally, a gender

hierarchy is visible in the feminization of cheap industrial labor, human trafficking, and a historically observed wartime reliance on physical and emotional stereotypes of men and women.

Social constructionist feminist theorists across the theoretical spectrum, such as poststructuralist Judith Butler (1993), ethnomethodologists Candace West and Don Zimmerman (1987), phenomenologist Iris Marion Young (2005), and even biologist turned social constructionist Ann Fausto-Sterling (2008) have challenged the assumptions about sex and gender categories that historically have drawn on religion and science to justify women's subordinate social position. Some theorists propose that society enforces gendered practices to such an extent that bodies actually change over time to reflect the differences in use based on social pressures and policy (Bordo 2003; Crawley 2008). For example, the female body that is idealized in western popular culture may be a reflection of policy and social pressures rather than a body in its natural state. Indeed, if society rewarded girls for demonstrations of strength and aggression (as it does boys), more women would likely strive to develop larger, more muscular bodies.

Research has illuminated how this gendered use of the body is normalized through socialization beginning in very early childhood (Martin 1998) and how particular institutions may use policy to intentionally highlight and perpetuate physical strength differences between men and women (Crawley 1998; Wellard 2006). Research also has explored the perpetuation of gendered behavior throughout adulthood in the workplace, in familial and social relationships, and in identity formation (Coole 2008; Ely 1995; Briant and Joworski 2011; Blume, Balter and Blume 2003; Silva 2008) and has investigated what role gendered assumptions about femininity and masculinity play on the global stage, including within the U.S. military.

While empirical research has explored how bodies are regulated and gendered in many organizational settings including schools (Martin 1998), sports (Brace-Groven 2004; Carpender

and Acosta 2005; Wellard 2006), workplaces (Ely 1995), and the U.S. military (Silva 2008), additional research is needed in order to track, historicize, and illuminate motivations and contradictions within an evolving, complex entity, such as the U.S. military. Like professional sports which, relies on strict sex and gender categories, the U.S. military is a site where an ideal of traditional and even hypermasculinity has historically been mainstay. Ample literature provides chronology and critique of women in the U.S. military, as well as arguments for and against women in combat. Additionally, literature examines the institution of sports for institutionalized regulations which generate gendered results. However, insufficient literature examines the institution of the military with regard to gendered bodies as social constructions and as instruments that are important to its very mission. As policies regarding sex, gender, and sexuality rapidly change, more research is needed to examine the relationship between gendered bodies and institutions in the era of increasing formal equality and official “gender-neutrality.”

Defining Patriarchy

Important to the discussions and analysis in this thesis is the definition of a patriarchal society, organization, or setting. Here I lay out the fundamental characteristics of a patriarchal setting as defined by Cynthi Enloe in *Militarism and Globalization: Feminists Make the Link* (2007). Enloe establishes the following criteria for patriarchal belief system:

- Women and men are intrinsically and unalterably different from one another
- These presumably natural differences explain why women and men (rightly) play distinctly different roles in society
- Men are natural-and superior-income earners, explorers, inventors, corporate executives, security strategists, public authorities, and heads of households because of their (allegedly) distinguishing traits (e.g., greater rationality, greater capacity to handle harsh realities of public life, less natural inclination for child rearing, stronger sex “drive,” greater physical strength).
- Women’s allegedly natural inclinations (e.g. homemaking, child rearing, expressing emotion, performing delicate physical tasks) make them valuable in home life and in comforting men, who, it is patriarchally believed, shoulder the heavy burden of public life. A woman gives this comfort willingly and gratefully, believers in patriarchal social orders

imagine, because women are so thankful for (and dependent on) men—the men who provide them with protection inside their families and the men who use their natural masculine skills to protect the entire society. Feminized gratitude is crucial to any patriarchal system. (Enloe 2007: 67)

It is clear in Enloe's definition that patriarchal societies attach gendered assumptions to bodies and largely organize social roles and larger society around those assumptions. Increased inclusion of women in many traditionally male social positions means that society may not be organized along the gendered lines above. However, research is needed to investigate whether patriarchal ideologies are involved in the organizational structure of various institutional settings and what are the experiential consequences of such for men and women.

Chapter 2

Setting: The U.S. Military

The U.S. military is an important setting through which to study patriarchal assumptions about bodies that are institutionalized because it is a traditionally hypermasculine institution that, for multiple reasons, is now accepting women into fields traditionally preserved for men. Examining this development, and observing what contradictions, subversions, or social reactions may arise, can shed light on the military as an institution. Such research may also provide implications for those directly and indirectly influenced by the U.S. military including individual military men and women, American and international civilians, and other military and government entities. War mobilization efforts have shaped the lives of many citizens in ways that may not even be recognizable. As the U.S.'s largest financial pursuit and the world's largest military¹ the U.S. military and its policies deserve investigative scrutiny from a myriad of perspectives and should not be overlooked because military and civilian societies seem disconnected.

Militarism and Women's Increasing Inclusion

Since the beginning of official integration of women into the military in 1901, women have steadily been involved in military operations, although their involvement has increased and decreased over time in accordance with current political climates and military policy (Enloe 2007). A general trend has been towards increased inclusion. In subsection sections, this thesis discusses women's military involvement along with policy changes. This section presents numerical data on the women's involvement in the U.S. military, as demonstration of long history of involvement and a general trend of increasing inclusion particularly after the reversal of the Selective Services Act in 1973.

¹ In 2013, the U.S. spent \$640 Billion on defense, which is more than the combined spending of next 8 countries with the highest defense spending (\$607 Billion). (SIPRI Military Expenditure Database;PGPF.org)

Table 1

Women Who Served in Selected U.S. Military and Peacekeeping Actions 1970-2012		
Conflict	Dates	Number of Women Who Served
World War I	1917-1918	33,000
World War II	1941-1945	400,000
Korean War	1950-1953	120,000
Vietnam War	1962-1975	7,000
Grenada	1983	170
Panama	1989	770
Persian Gulf War	1991	41,000
Somalia	1992-1994	1,000
Haiti	1994	1,200
Bosnia Air War and Kosovo	1994-1995 1999	16,000
Operation Enduring Freedom	2001-	*
Operation Iraqi Freedom	2003-2010	*
Operation New Dawn	2010-2011	*

*Women served in 285,000 tours of duty throughout these operations however some of these count individual women more than once

Source: Women's Research and Education Institute, 2012

Table 2

Percentage of Women in U.S. Military Service, by Branch						
Year	1972	1980	1988	1996	2004	2011
Total Military*	1.7	7.6	9.5	10.7	13.1	13.74
Army	1.8	9.1	10.8	10.1	14.6	13.0
Marine Corps	1.8	3.6	5.0	5.0	6.0	6.9
Navy	1.1	6.5	9.2	12.2	14.4	16.4
Air Force	1.9	11.2	13.1	16.9	19.9	19.1
Coast Guard	NA	NA	NA	9.3	10.8	13.3

Source: WREI, DoD Defense Manpower Data Center

*percentage not including National Guard or reserves

Table 3

Percentage of Women in the Military, by Country, 2005			
Country	% Women	Country	% Women
Australia	13.0	New Zealand	15.0
Britain	8.8	Poland	4.5
Canada	16.3	Russia	10.4
China	6.2	Slovenia	6.0
France	12.8	South Africa	21.7
Germany	5.2	United States	15.0
Netherlands	13.2		

Source: Manning 2005 via Enloe, 2007

Three Predicted Possibilities

Enloe (2007) articulates the complicated social situation of the female soldier. Female soldiers have been used as a symbol of national modernization and of individual women's

empowerment (by subverting their previous status of being the *protected*). Such changes have been met with controversy because they embody contradictory social assumptions about physical strength and femininity, and thus call into question the military as a male preserve and a justification for civilian male privilege.

Enloe (2007) distinguishes three distinct possible outcomes that have been articulated by scholars as potential results of the increased inclusion of women in militaries. One optimistic prediction anticipates that the increased proportion of women and decreased proportion of men will lead to an overall decrease in the patriarchal orientation and goals of that military. In this scenario, the increased participation of women would render patriarchal organizational climate, male privilege, and militarization itself as it has historically existed, unsustainable. This model predicts a “less militarized military” which relies less on civilian fear, masculinized violence and national domination and instead is more dedicated to humanitarian efforts, rescue, and disaster relief (2007:78).

The second prediction posits women as becoming more militarized through their involvement in the military, and assimilating with, rather than subverting patriarchal ideals of masculinity and militarism. Thus, while traditional femininity may be challenged or subverted by individual women, the patriarchal project of the military remains intact. It is up to the woman to rectify any internal and external contradictions and social pressures that may result from her unique position (a female, performing traditional masculinity within a patriarchal institution). While the institution may see effects from increased demographic inclusion, there are considerable incentives to continue the dynamic that has led to and maintained the U.S.’s status as an imperial power. Historically, the military has adapted to changing cultural dynamics while maintaining patriarchal hegemony (Runte and Mills 2006). Furthermore, by becoming a more formally inclusive institution, the military and its pursuits could become less easily scrutinized as exclusionary, patriarchal, or hypermasculine (Enloe 2007).

Finally, in the third prediction, multiple, complex, and contradicting forces are seen as existing simultaneously within the military as an institution. Forces within the institution may contain explicit goals to protect, transform, or dissolve patriarchal organization. Additionally, even individual civilians, soldiers, and policy makers may hold contradictory ambitions and understandings. For example, when changes in conscription created a need for women to enlist in more and more military sectors, the military institution needed to be invested in changing ideals about acceptable femininity and family dynamics while still backing the patriarchal project of the military (Enloe 2007). Because of the contradictions that are highlighted through this particular arrangement, female military involvement is an especially interesting and fruitful site of sociological inquiry in order to more fully understand the relationship between patriarchal society and militarization. Enloe calls for close feminist attention to be paid to changing gender restrictions and to changing definitions of combat in particular: a directive to which this thesis aims to contribute.

Current Controversies for U.S. Military Women

Increasing inclusion of women has occurred alongside controversies and social problems, which speak to a possible contradictions or animosities between the hypermasculine institution and the increasing inclusion of women. Social problems and public backlash that have arisen out of this historical change demonstrate a need for feminist guided research in this area.

One contemporary controversy that has generated much media attention is the large numbers of sexual assaults that occur within the U.S. military. Another much publicized controversy surrounds women's official entrance into direct combat assignments. Gendered assumptions about bodies are central to both of these issues. Currently in the U.S. military, an estimated 19,000 sexual assaults occur per year. In 2010, 1,108 cases were reported, and 96 individuals were court-martialed (Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault 2012). Much media attention has focused on an inadequate system for reporting sexual assault

and claims have been made that suggest the military cultivates an institutional climate that supports sexual assault perpetrators and vilifies victims. The U.S. military's internal chain of command structure enables the fate of many sexual assault cases to be decided by a single individual, often who works closely with or is the perpetrator. This climate is believed to influence many victims of assault to not report the incidents (Lawrence and Penaloza 2013). Much political deliberation currently surrounds this issue. On March 6, 2014, a bill failed to pass the Senate which aimed to remove the chain of command system from authority on sexual assault cases, instead of trying these cases using civilian attorneys (Cooper 2014).

Debate has long surrounded women's assignments in the U.S. military. Contemporary controversy surrounding women's various military assignments tends to center around gendered assumptions of bodies and physical strength. Public debate on women in the U.S. military is nuanced and divisive, and some research is contradictory. Media reports and research have been devoted to notion that women should not be in combat for various reasons which range from emotional and physical inferiority, unit cohesiveness, reproductive roles, and emotional effects on military men and U.S. society at large (Gregor 2011; Goodell 2010; Burrelli 2013). Controversies and research pertaining to actual physical strength requirements will be discussed more in depth in a subsequent section. This thesis will take aim particularly at this second controversy (women's military assignments), with the hopes that understanding the institution through these regulations will shed light on underlying ideologies and may help inform additional ongoing crises, such as sexual assaults amongst military personnel and other human rights abuses tied to hypermasculine institutions. Before reviewing the historical and contemporary regulation of women in U.S. military assignments and discussing the corporeal aspects of contemporary restrictions, this thesis will provide a foundation in the theories and research which guide and inform the following analysis.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Perspectives

Feminist Perspectives on the Social Construction of Body

This thesis will explore the argument that patriarchal social organization is maintained (at least partially) through institutionalized gendered regulations of bodies, which are particularly visible in hypermasculine settings. Central to this argument is an analysis that posits the gendered body as largely a social construction. Feminist social constructionist perspectives argue that understanding social meanings, regulations, and effects on bodies is important to understanding inequality. Bodies are an illustrative, tangible site through which to study how power dictates corporeal functionality and affects social outcomes. Feminist social constructionist theoretical perspectives contain analyses of power's inscription on and regulation of bodies and how patriarchal societies construct a dichotomous gender divide, in which femininity is both structurally maintained and crippling.

Many feminist theorizations of the body have been highly influenced by Michael Foucault's analysis of power and bodies. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975) Foucault developed an analysis of modern power through his study of prisons. Foucault (1975) understood that bodies are made docile through the highly regimented use of time and space that is demanded in institutions such as prisons, schools, and factory work. Conformity and submission does not require explicit punishment when people believe themselves to be under constant surveillance and internalize the rules; rather they become their own jailers through self-policing. This modern form of power is much more effective than the explicit, violent punishment styles of previous premodern eras because it extends into realms that cannot easily be policed and where the source of the oppression is obscured. This modern power requires regulation of the body itself, not merely of the end result of the body's labor (Bartky 1986). Foucault developed this useful framework for understanding how power is inscribed on the body and implications drawn from

this theory have proven fruitful for feminist theorists in understanding how modern patriarchal power operates.

Foucault conceived the body as a mechanism through which implicit control is exercised. The internalization of the expectations of power that maintains docile bodies has particular significance in theorizing women's situation within patriarchy societies. Feminists were among the first to articulate the body as a site of political struggle (Bordo 2003). In *The Second Sex* (1952) Simone de Beauvoir was foundational in discussing the female body as a site that is contextually dependent and exemplifies power relations. De Beauvoir (1952) articulated that the female gender is a socially constructed category that places women in the status of "other" and object in patriarchal societies. The uses and meanings of the body are central to de Beauvoir's (1952) analysis which posits that the body is shaped through mechanisms of patriarchal power. The woman comes to know herself in relation to man and her body as defective in comparison. Femininity becomes a disciplinary concept that is internalized by individuals and performed largely and willingly without explicit, harsh disciplinary measures. Since femininity is almost by definition the dependent half of the masculine/ feminine binary that exists within patriarchal societies, adherence to the codes of femininity handicaps those who enact femininity (de Beauvoir 1952).

In "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" (1986) Sandra Bartky demonstrates the ways in which femininity disciplines women in modern society through social expectations that demand her time to be highly regimented, much like is the case with Foucault's prisons and schools. Women internalize patriarchal society's expectations for their body use and appearance. The measures of bodily maintenance and presentation that are cultivated in patriarchal society also physically devalued and foster dependence by creating

smaller, weaker bodies and, paradoxically, accusations of a frivolous preoccupation with appearance (Bartky 1986).

Other poststructuralist feminists have extended this conception of gender and bodies as social constructions. Butler (1990) theorized gender as performative, something which is not innate or biologically-based. Butler (1990) theorized that gender is constantly strived for and reproduced. It is scripted, rehearsed, and performed within the boundaries of compulsory heterosexuality. Some social constructionists (West and Zimmerman 1989) agree with Butler's (1990) claims and understand that the constant reproduction of gender is an important dynamic to consider when theorizing the body and inequality. While Butler (1990) offered an explanation of gender performance that is effective in describing gender, some theorists (Bordo 2003; Young 2005) question its applicability for use in empirical research and maintain that there is a need for a more precisely articulated power analysis. Bordo (2003) argues correctly, that Butler's (1990) analysis lacks a historical contextualization of material manifestations of power on the body.

Additionally, Iris Marion Young (2005) discusses how Butler's articulation of the sex/gender categorization as heteronormative social constructs has led some feminists to question the adequacy of gender as a category for use in feminist and queer theory (Moi 1991). Gender was originally articulated in feminist theory to distinguish between biological sex and the social constructed aspects of lived experience (Young 2005). Young (2005) argued that there are more adequate concepts for theorizing identity and subjectivity such as the phenomenological theory of the lived body which was utilized by de Beauvoir (1952). Young explains that the theory of the lived body more adequately accounts for the intersections of sex category, race, nationality and sexuality by avoiding essentializing the body experience of any single category. However, Young (2005) argues that gender is still a necessary concept for understanding how social structure is gendered. Because inequality cannot be reduced to social interactions, and structural

processes still advantage some and disadvantage others, it is necessary that feminist and queer theorists maintain a developed analysis of structural power (Young 2005). Thus, Young (2005) proposed a shift from the use of gender as a concept which describes individuals to a concept which describes features of social institutions. Young (2005) calls for a return to the use of de Beauvoir's understanding of the situation of women as a guiding perspective.

Young demonstrated this theoretical use of gender in her article "Throwing Like a Girl" (1980) which described how institutional power is inscribed on the body of girls and women in gendered ways. Young theorized how woman's placement within patriarchy, and the structural expectations of femininity placed upon her, physically handicaps women and girls. Girls are socialized to understand their bodies as fragile, in need of protection, and as objects that need to pay constant attention and care to appearance (Young 1980). While physical differences between men and women exist, Young attributed much of this strength disparity to differences in bodily practices, bodily confidence, and the internalization of what it means to be feminine. Young argued that these conditions are largely inescapable for women within patriarchal societies. She also speculated that this lack of confidence in the body is not limited to the physical realm, but relates to a lack of confidence observed in women in terms of leadership and cognitive abilities. Young's work is designed to illuminate the structural forces at work, not to draw conclusions about the bodies themselves. She investigated how certain bodies are disciplined in patriarchal society and theorized how this extends to affect those individuals' lives in compounding ways (Young [1980] 2005).

In *Unbearable Weight*, (2003) Bordo also extended this theory of femininity crippling the body within patriarchal societies. One of her major contributions was to trace how the female body has been problematized and medicalized historically. Indeed, the nature of the diagnosis has changed over time, from the focus on hysteria and agoraphobia in previous eras to the eating

disorders, such as bulimia and anorexia, of today. Bordo articulated how in all of these cases, there is a thin line between what is socially expected of normal femininity and what is considered to be pathological. Through this analysis, she highlighted the practices of normative femininity that cripple those who adhere to its demands. The normative constructions of femininity which gave way to these disorders are historically situated to enable specific groups to benefit from another group's subjugation. Bordo posited late capitalism and its demand for constantly expanding consumption as an important source in the bodily subjugation of women within patriarchal societies². However, she rejected an essentialist oppressor/ oppressed model and argued that everything must be examined contextually. For example, the slender female frame so often used in advertising can conjure up meanings of powerlessness as well as of freedom and autonomy. Mixed messages of conformity with empowerment in this way complicate a distinction between agency and oppression. Bordo argued that because of such complexity, the oppressor/ oppressed model that is often used in feminism cannot adequately address these phenomena because so often, women voluntarily submit to practices that handicap them in patriarchal society. Bordo used Foucault's theories of internalized power to articulate this dynamic and to escape essentialist theorizations.

In addition to power's corporeal manifestation on bodies, an important theme throughout these Foucaultian-inspired perspectives is how power operates within modern society, in an era where equality is the explicit rhetoric and the sources of inequality and power are dispersed or internalized. Feminist perspectives which utilize Foucault's analysis of power will be particularly useful when investigating how patriarchal power creates docile bodies through the practice of femininity and also how power may be inscribed on bodies in the contemporary climate which includes somewhat more malleable sex and gender definitions and social expectations.

² See also Orback, 2011

Importantly, however, the contemporary national climate of increased (and increasing) formal equality alongside increasing national and global economic and social inequality should remain central in analysis of bodies and power. Perspectives that theorize gendered, sexed, and sexualized bodies as not merely biological but constructed through social and cultural factors are important to involve in analysis of how political and economic aims regulate actual bodies and cultural understandings about bodies alike (de Beauvoir 1952; Young 2005; Bordo 2004; Butler 1990).

Gendered Organizational Perspectives

Feminist organizational theories build upon social constructionist assumptions and argue that when gendered social meanings and regulations of bodies are built into organizational structure, they reproduce gendered hierarchies within and beyond the realm of physicality. Theory and research explores the implicit and explicit regulation of gender within a variety of organizational settings. Dichotomous gender configurations are particularly pronounced within hypermasculine settings, making the military an especially fruitful site to study the institutionalization of gender hierarchies. This section reviews theory and research which develops a framework for understanding how gender hierarchies are operationalized in organizational settings within patriarchal societies and particularly in hypermasculine institutions.

One of the most prolific feminist researchers who studied the gendered structure of organizations is Joan Acker. In “Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations” (1990), Acker argued that gendered assumptions about bodies are written into the documents and regulations which make up organization structures, therefore gendered outcomes are reproduced automatically. This is contrary to the assumption that organizational structures are in fact gender-neutral, and that acts of discrimination and/ or lack of individual human capital are to blame for

inequality among men and women. Acker argued that capitalist societies are built upon notions of dichotomous gender differences, and that organizational structure and social understandings posit male bodies as “gender-neutral” bodies, therefore problematizing female bodies themselves and the socially prescribed roles associated with female bodies. For example, men and women have varying relationships to procreation and paid work. Men have historically dominated the public realm of paid work while women have historically been held more responsible for child rearing. Although women are now involved in the paid workforce, the worker is largely expected to remain disassociated from social expectations that are maintained for women, therefore women are penalized in the workplace for their participation in the social responsibilities to which they are disproportionately held.

Contemporary research demonstrates that gendered assumptions about social roles associated with reproduction still produce unequal social outcomes. In “Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?” (2007) Shelley J. Correll and Steven Bernard demonstrate through survey research, lab experimentation, and an audit study that women with children receive substantial penalties in terms of wages (5% per child when controlled for human capital) and evaluations as compared with men (with or without children) and women with no children. Some research concluded that the wage gap between women under the age of 35 with vs. without children is greater than the wage gap between men and women (Crittenden 2001). If women are disproportionately responsible for child rearing, and then are penalized in the workforce for that responsibility, this speaks to a society which is organized around patriarchal principles that are built upon gendered assumptions about bodies and social roles. Research also indicates that modern work structure, although often different from the hierarchical organization of Acker’s theory, also demonstrates patterns which penalize women (Williams et al. 2012).

In addition to social roles associated with reproduction, research and theory suggests gendered assumptions about bodies permeate patriarchal societies and affect individuals in a host

of ways. As traditionally male organizational settings open to women, long held gendered assumptions remain and result in experiences that are shaped not solely by individual effort, and demonstrate how institutional regulations and implicit ideologies can influence personal choices and uses of the body. Research has shown that social, rather than biological factors are highly determinative of women's success in traditionally masculine sports such as weight lifting (Brace-Groven 2004). Women negotiate social pressures to exhibit traditionally feminine qualities, which are often starkly contradictory to the skills needed for success. Additionally, many traditionally masculine settings are permeated with ideologies that validate their masculinity against an assumed inherently inferior femininity (Silva 2008; Walton and Helstein 2008; Wellard 2006).

The process of personal negotiation and conflict which occurs when women enter a traditionally masculine domain is exemplified in research conducted by Jennifer Silva. In "A New Generation of Women? How Female ROTC Cadets Negotiate the Tensions Between Masculine Military Culture and Traditional Femininity" (2008) Silva discussed findings from interviews with male and female ROTC students. The study revealed that women proactively performed stereotypical femininity in order to maintain their personal identity. Silva remarked that the women understood gender and stereotypical femininity to be inherent, natural, and attached to their sex category; therefore the women were active in maintaining this identity. Femininity was also a criterion for positive assessment by male cadets and was directly in opposition to the skills required for success in the ROTC program. Thus, even though policies largely retained a gender-neutral claim, this process drew on presumptions about sex and gender to set up the women for subordinate status in their organizational program. This study revealed how the participants' identity as female prompted them to restrict their own physical strength or perform compensatory femininity. Through women's own complicity in this process of maintaining their feminine identity, a hegemonic gender structure was maintained.

Although women are active in the perpetuation of gendered outcomes, structural components largely dictate the arena within which individuals act (by subverting, conforming, or some combination) and the options are often complex. Research and theory offers insight into the processes which normalize and obscure the uneven structure of patriarchal social organizations, especially as explicit equality becomes the norm. Michael Kimmel explored how troubling patriarchal ideals are cultivated and produced in *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* (2008). Through interviews and focus groups with mostly white and middle-class men from high school to late twenties, Kimmel investigated the organizational structures within patriarchal societies which perpetuate and naturalize social inequality, rape, and other forms of violence. Kimmel discussed how American society's dominant ideal of manhood is very narrow and largely stigmatic of emotion, vulnerability, and intimacy. Kimmel described that violence is the dominant redeemer available for men who embrace traditional masculinity³.

Embedded within this organizational climate are patriarchal ideals about inherent differences between men and women. Much of the illegal and violent behavior Kimmel's interviews uncovered is attributed to a biological impulse or is identified as isolated incidents and not indicative of the setting at large. However, Kimmel's research suggests that cultural components protect and proliferate such behavior and that by adhering to the social messages of masculinity, such abuses are actually in line with dominant social expectations. Kimmel describes three cultural factors which perpetuate this type of masculine organizational structure. First, Kimmel identifies the culture of entitlement which adheres to notions of traditional masculinity where boys must work hard to become men and thus are deserving of power over others, especially women. Second, the culture of silence maintains this structure by way of fear (of violence or rejection) as a deterrent from boys voicing concerns about their peers' behavior.

³ See also Pascoe, 2007

Third, the culture of protection is a scenario in which parents, community members, and society at large tends to vilify victims while protecting those responsible and those who were implicit.

Kimmel's research, while stemming from one particular setting, speaks to how gendered violence can be institutionalized and normalized. This phenomenon is especially salient within hypermasculine settings, as is demonstrated with the high instances of sexualized violence in the U.S. military. Enloe (2007) discussed how patriarchal values of masculinity can be institutionalized, sometimes explicitly, for strategic purposes. Such is theorized to be the case in the abuses occurring within Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo where U.S. soldiers engaged in highly gendered and sexualized torture of prisoners. These wartime operations have generated controversy because they contradict dominant rhetoric of U.S. morality as well as explicitly violating international agreements. Despite the accused soldier's insistence that they were directly following orders, the infrastructure of the U.S. Military was able to avoid accountability by claiming the accused acted individually and were not representative of the institution or its belief system but were in fact "bad apples" that needed to be persecuted (Enloe 2007).

The research and theory discussed above demonstrates how gendered assumptions about bodies are embedded into many organizational climates, and how these dynamics can produce gendered results. If patriarchal assumptions about bodies and gender are naturalized or taken as granted, structurally regulated inequalities are often obscured. Thus, it is important to investigate how social assumptions are institutionalized and regulated, and how such regulations may affect bodies themselves and consequently reinforce the assumed inherency of the gendered regulation or social inequality. This thesis now investigates the implicit and explicit assumptions about bodies and gender that are visible through U.S. military policies on the assignments of women.

Chapter 4: Gendering Bodies in Military Policy

Table 4

Timeline of Major Policy Changes on Women’s Assignments in U.S. Military	
Year	Policy Change
1901	Reorganization Act of 1901
1948	Women’s Armed Services Integration Act
1967	Modification of Women’s Armed Services Integration Act
1973	Selective Service Act expired, recruitment of women into services increases
1981	Army announced “pause” in recruitment and planned increase of women in services
1988	Department of Defense “Risk Rule” implemented
1994	“Risk Rule” Rescinded, Ground Combat Exclusion added
2013	Department of Defense announced intent to end ground combat exclusion for women, to be fully implemented by January 2016

Although in recent decades, the U.S. military has utilized women in progressively larger numbers and for more diverse assignments, policies have consistently regulated the entry of women in ways that men’s assignments have not been regulated.⁴ Formal inclusion has increased out of a need for more volunteer soldiers, out of domestic and international pressure for diversity and equality (or the image of), and due to the landscape of modern war making traditional gendered role segregations no longer enforceable in terms of assignments. As U.S. society transformed from embracing legally sanctioned race and sex based segregation to one which proclaims equal opportunity, official U.S. military policies, mobilization efforts, and discourse surrounding military strategies follow similar progression. However, breaking tradition in an institution that has historically utilized traditional values for mobilization has not been a straightforward process and has seen varying levels of backlash. This is particularly interesting to

⁴ History shows a general trend of increased inclusion although women’s participation and roles have waxed and waned historically, see Enloe 2007 and Stiehm 1989

view in an institution which has long evoked traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. As such, the U.S. military offers insight into national U.S. ideologies as well, due to the historically observed integral relationship between civilian and military social configurations⁵.

This section will provide a historical overview of policies regulating women's assignments in the U.S. military. Institutionalized meanings about gender and bodies will be examined by focusing on official U.S. military justifications and discourse surrounding policy changes. While some context will be provided, primary focus will remain on U.S. military policy and dialogue pertaining to policy changes in an effort to gain insight about this institution. Following a broad historical overview, closer attention will be paid to the nuances of combat restrictions. Combat emerged as a primary distinction based on sex in the contemporary U.S. military, and contains particular implications about gender and physical capability.

Section I: From “Women of Doubtful Character⁶” to “Women’s Place is in the War⁷”: The Regulation of Women as Civilian Support to the War Department American Revolution through World War II

Early military forces organized men and women through explicitly evoking traditional patriarchal assumptions about gender roles. Military strategy depended on men for comprising an expendable physical presence with which to carry out their war mission. Likewise, military strategy also depended on women for support (both in the sense of supporting war efforts generally, and in providing tangible support services). This section focuses on women's roles in the U.S. military in the time period from the American Revolution (1763-1783) through the Korean War (1950-1955). Initially, women were vital to war efforts yet restricted to traditional roles and denied recognition as members of the military. As diverse war climates warranted, the military needed women in expanding capacities, and the Armed Services recruited and slowly

⁵ For example, U.S. war propaganda often relies on dominant gender ideologies held by civilians in order to mobilize support for war or enlistment in the military.

⁶ Directed at camp followers, War Department discussed incorporating women into the Armed Forces to avoid the problem of the women of doubtful character, (Treadwell 1991)

⁷ American propaganda poster, World War II (Rupp 1978)

began to integrate women in the official U.S. military. Throughout most of this time period, women were not awarded military status or benefits. As documented primarily through dialogue of leadership and through mobilization efforts, justifications for gendered assignments relied heavily on patriarchal assumptions of social roles. Patriarchal meanings about bodies attached to those roles are implicit in this dialogue. Discourse and institutional action surrounding women in subversive roles also demonstrates patriarchal ideologies about gender trumping observed ability. Women's position in the military paralleled the status of women in larger colonial and U.S. society and evoked traditional ideologies about gender and bodies even while recruiting women into nontraditional roles during war times.

Camp Followers and Incognito Soldiers: American Revolution through World War I

Regulations defining women's military assignments were not explicitly written into U.S. military policy until the Reorganization Act of 1901 when civilian nursing positions became available to women. However, women were explicitly written out of military policy at the end of the American Revolution, when Congress restricted military service to "free, able-bodied white, male citizens" (Goodell 2010 on Milicia Act, ch 33, S 1, 1 Stat. 271, 271 (1792)). As such, women have been officially excluded yet unofficially involved in direct combat and indirect or supportive military operations in varying capacities beginning with the American Revolution and in each war thereafter. Women's involvement during the colonial and early U.S. period largely coincided with traditional notions of femininity and remained in the realm of support and domesticity, even though support roles often brought them to the battlefield. More than 20,000 women were directly involved in military operations during the American Revolutionary War either by dressing and 'passing' as men or (much more frequently) by accompanying men into war (Small 1998 on Abrahamson). Four women are documented as having been discovered serving in direct

combat. Two of these women reportedly received a pension⁸. Those who were discovered prior to their death were immediately discharged (Small 1998). Although rare, the historical existence of women who performed direct combat duties undetectably⁹ alongside men certainly strikes doubt upon historical and contemporary arguments that suggest biological differences cause women as a group as well as mixed sex units to perform ineffectively in combat situations. The automatic discharge of women who had successfully performed the duties of a soldier demonstrates that social meanings about gender were important factors for delegating assignments, trumping functionality in this example. Further, the Army did not formally acknowledge such women in combat roles and emphasized how women's involvement in the military was considered distinctly separate from the situation of male soldiers. For example, although women's combat involvement is recognized by historians today, and despite several widely known cases, in 1909 an officer within the Department of Defense claimed in response to a journalist's inquiry that no official record of women passing as men exists (Blanton 1993)¹⁰.

No official record has been found in the War Department showing specifically that any woman was ever enlisted in the military service of the United States as a member of any organization of the Regular or Volunteer Army. It is possible, however, that there may have been a few instances of women having served as soldiers for a short time without their sex having been detected, but no record of such cases is known to exist in the official files. Women were often employed as laundresses and as nurses, but they were merely civilians while so engaged and were in no sense in the *military* service of the United States. (1909 via Blanton 1993)

Women whose duties remained within the realm of support and domesticity were much more numerous¹¹ than women who served under disguise. These women, now referred to as

⁸ One of these women publicly lectured about her experiences afterwards, advising women to stay out of war and politics and embrace the traditionally feminine role of mother (Danyluk 2014).

⁹ Factors that likely lead to "passing" of women in the Civil War (and likely prior wars including the American Revolution) include ill-fitting uniforms, the tendency for soldiers to "attend to bodily functions in private areas instead of going to the disgusting latrines", the presence of young male soldiers, and the citation of menstrual cycles due to poor nutrition and harsh physical and psychological conditions of war. (Millett and Feis 2012: 187)

¹⁰ Compiled Military Service Records demonstrate that the Military was in fact aware of women in service (Blanton 1993)

¹¹ Although it was still highly stigmatized for women to perform even traditional duties outside of the home (Rupp 1978)

camp followers, lived and worked on battlefields in close proximity to male soldiers. These women were, at times, in the line of ground combat fire despite officially being present solely for support services. Indeed, despite their proximity to and sporadic involvement in combat situations, their presence did not subvert patriarchal social meanings regarding gender and bodies because their duties retained traditionally feminine connotations. Sometimes, women camp followers brought children with them. Camp followers provided services for men that the U.S. military did not, including childcare, cooking, caring for the sick (largely cleaning), sexual services, and laundry. Some of these women were enslaved women and some were family members of male soldiers. Women who were permitted to accompany the Army were compensated for their domestic service with a quarter to a full food ration (depending on their labor) and were allowed to charge soldiers a regulated price for laundry service. Many duties, however, were unpaid (Danyluk 2014; Small 1998).

When camp followers became active in ground combat, military history depicts heroic and patriotic individual women who, in extreme circumstances, fought in place of their husbands or other men until replacement men could arrive (Small 1998, Danyluk 2014). Similarly, the contemporary Department of Defense and advocates of women's full integration into the U.S. military sometimes remember women's participation in this time period as proof of women's patriotism and physical capabilities (SWAN 2014). However, sentiments at the time reflected strongly held traditional gender roles as a prominent condition of military functionalism.

While women's involvement in direct combat was quite rare and existed despite strong opposition¹², women's presence as domestic support on the battlefield brought nuanced and conflicted responses from military officials. On one hand, women and children complicated mobility. On the other hand, this arrangement was shown to decrease soldier desertion and

¹² As demonstrated by women disguising themselves as men and being immediately discharged upon their discovery

provided necessary services for the military (Danyluk 2014; WREI 2013; Small 1998; Courtney 1999). This contradiction is pointed out in the following quote from August 4, 1777 where George Washington warns against the presence of women in battle while acknowledging the necessity of some women.

...the multitude of women in particular, especially those who are pregnant, or have children, are a clog upon every movement. The Commander in Chief earnestly recommends it to the officers to use every reasonable method in their power to get rid of all such as are not absolutely necessary (Danyluk 2014).

Women were largely left out of legislation, both in civil and war concerns as they were at this point in time not considered full citizens in many respects. Married women were deemed necessary as camp followers largely according to their husband's military performance. Coercion was sometimes used to regulate the behavior and work of women and took the form of bribery or threats. Despite social ideologies that painted women as gentile and protected, the most unappealing tasks were often left to women (Danyluk 2014). All women working outside of the home faced stigmatization; however, enormous distinctions between women's experiences coincided with race and class.

The above illustrates how, despite being left out of the official military, women's lives were regulated by this institution in important ways which coincided with traditional ideals of femininity and masculinity. War Department regulations also coincided with nationally dominant ideals of class, race and white supremacy. As women were needed for war efforts in more diverse capacities, the military adjusted their hold on these traditional gender roles while gendered and racialized regulatory distinctions largely remained intact.

Civilian Nurses: New Jobs for Middle-Class White Women during the Civil War

Women first officially worked with the military in nursing professions, which held duties comparable to camp followers, but race and class marked considerable differences among women's experiences and the availability of this previously male dominated assignment. Due to

an increasing need for soldiers and nurses, the U.S. Army was the first branch to recruit women into the military during the Civil War (1861-1865) to work as nurses. Army nurses retained their civilian status and did not receive veteran's benefits (WREI 2013). Because of the non-military status of these assignments, policies regulating their behavior came through civilian appointees, not explicitly through the military. For example, Dorothy Dix was appointed as superintendent of women Army nurses at the beginning of the Civil War and personally determined criteria for the women who were eligible throughout her appointment.¹³ In a document written by Dix in 1862 and approved by the Surgeon General, Dix outlines application requirements for female nurse applicants:

... No candidate for service in the Women's Department for nursing in the Military Hospitals of the United States, will be received below the age of thirty-five years, nor above fifty... The duties of the station make large and continued demands on strength... Matronly persons of experience, good conduct, or superior education and serious disposition, will always have preference..... Dress plain, (colors brown, grey, or black,) and while connected with the service without ornaments of any sort. (Circular Num. 8)

Despite women's lesser pay and lack of military benefits, they were regarded as superior nurses and a feminine nature was emphasized and evoked in war mobilization efforts (Treadwell 1991). The female nurse stood in contrast to the male soldier. While physical strength was emphasized in the above nursing criteria, it was done so in a particularly gendered way which (along with the age range) evokes ideologies of patriotic, motherly sacrifice.

While much of the work performed by Army nurses remained similar to other civilian support positions performed by women, creation of the nurse position allowed for social distinctions along race and class barriers. Camp followers and other non-nurse positions in which women assisted the military were highly stigmatized. Nursing positions were considered risky for many women since working outside of the home, even in traditional roles, was still

¹³ Dix was sole regulator of military nurses for a time, then other, less restrictive (in age and dress) avenues became available

unconventional. Not surprisingly, the position of Army nurse was predominantly reserved for middle-class white women. Women of color and working-class white women who worked to support the military were given other job titles including matron, cook, and chambermaid.¹⁴ Mobilization campaigns created a dominant national image of women in U.S. war service which transcended class, evoked white supremacy, and patriarchal gender ideology (Mitchell 2013). Such imagery capitalized on associating nursing with traditional (white) gender roles despite the many women who were involved in support efforts but were prohibited from such nursing positions and the accompanying social capital.¹⁵ Gender ideals were also used for male recruitment and general support for war, then were rearranged to recruit women into civilian and military participation (Rupp 1978; Mitchell 2013). Patriotism was evoked for recruitment and some elite white women who could afford to do so refused the pay for their nursing positions, claiming patriotic duty as motivation. However, some enslaved women were sold into the military by their owners and other women of color and working-class white women sought work out of economic necessity (Hicks and Hicks 2010). Outside the military, over 100,000 women were estimated to have worked in manufacturing the ammunition that was used in the Civil War (Small 1998). Although women were still barred from non-nursing/ non-domestic roles in the military, it has been documented that, during the Civil War, a few women served in combat openly as women and an estimated 400 women are thought to have served in combat roles while disguised as men (Small 1998 on Abrahamson: 72).

Throughout the Civil War, women nurses were numerous but retained their civilian status. Similarly, during the Spanish-American War (1898-1902), the U.S. Army continued recruiting women as contracted civilian nurses (and lower level laborers with various job titles) to work both domestically and internationally (Small 1998). The military attributed much of the

¹⁴ A literacy requirement for nurses served to institutionalize this segregation (Hicks and Hicks 2010)

¹⁵ Although war propaganda and recruitment campaigns glorified the military nurse, social stigma still followed this role (Rupp 1978)

inefficiency of medical care throughout these wars to difficulties in organizing and maintaining a civilian organization within the military (Treadwell 1991). The Reorganization Act of 1901 included the formation of The Army Nurse Corps which marked the first official inclusion and recognition of women with the job title of nurse in the U.S. military (WREI 2013, Small 1998). However, the women in the Army Nurse Corps were not awarded full military status and did not receive the privileges of their male counterparts. For women working as nurses, caps were placed on rank and pay scales and they were denied retirements benefits (Small 1998). Women working for the military under titles other than nurse (primarily working-class women and women of color) were not recognized under this Act and did not receive military status. As the U.S. gained status as a world power, larger wars increasingly required more efficient utilization of labor. Thus, this early inclusion of women nurses into military status can likely be attributed to strategy in addition to (if not primarily) aims of equality (Treadwell 1991). Gendered assumptions about bodies dictated women's assignment options throughout this time and are demonstrated further when women were granted permanent military status as is discussed below.

Larger Wars Demand Greater Military Participation: World War I (1917-1918)

During World War I, despite much controversy, roles for women were expanded¹⁶ and some women received military status for the first time. Women were officially recognized by the U.S. military in civilian non-nursing positions for the first time during World War I (Scott 1089). However, their positions were limited, temporary, and corresponded with national ideologies regarding gender. For example, the hiring of women was approved under the qualification that men could not be obtained for the job and that the Armed Forces employed “only those of mature age and high moral character” (Treadwell 1991: 7).

¹⁶ The Navy implemented a policy which allowed women into positions including yeomen (*petty attendant of supplies*), clerical worker, and radio electricians which granted them military status. In 1918, the Marine Corps opened military nursing positions to women (Scott, 1989). As in previous wars, racial segregation marked considerable differences among the opportunities and experiences of women in military assignments during this time. Eighteen Black women were enlisted as nurses on a temporary basis towards the end of the war. However, permanent recognition of Black nurses in the Military Nursing Corps was denied in peace times (Hicks 2010).

As was the case in previous wars, nursing and other military assignments of women during World War I were often on or near battlefields, placing these women in combat zones (Small 1998). However, the arguments for women's segregated assignments at this point in time primarily centered on normative ideologies of social roles, which maintained that women's rightful and decent place is in the home (Rupp 1978). Issues of morality and decency took precedence and issues of women's physical inferiority seemed to be taken as granted, and not worthy of much deliberation. For example, in World War I, the Surgeon General was denied a request for women doctors to be admitted into the Medical Corps without much justification. Despite no explicit, legal exclusion of women, the War Department cited the requirement that doctors must be "physically, mentally, and morally qualified" and concluded that women necessarily did not meet the physical requirement (Treadwell 1991).

On the other hand, national ideology concerning women and morality (which also conjured up ideologies of race and class) was often explicitly demonstrated through discourse surrounding women's expanding roles. The inception of the Women's Corps coincided with frustrations surrounding the management of civilian women's morality (Treadwell 1991). Despite the War Department's recognition that camp followers and civilian nurses provided necessary services and boosted male attrition (Small 1998), the morality of these women was often called into question. For example, when deliberating the creation of a military corps for women, The Quartermaster General stated "Every effort in the past of this office to provide a hired force of women at camps and cantonments has been unsatisfactory...only women of doubtful character show any inclination to remain as long as the voluntary system of employment is in vogue" (Treadwell 1991: 7). Further, women's morality was explicitly discussed as a risk factor, and a consideration needing management and protection with the formal inclusion of women in the military. The War Department offered that "With careful

supervision, women employees may be permitted in camps without moral injury either to themselves or to the soldiers” (Treadwell 1991:7).

Despite their new involvement in the military, women’s military status in World War I was still considered temporary and secondary. National ideologies of gender were explicitly evoked as primary considerations when the Armed forces weighed the decision to officially enlist women. It was not until the manpower shortages of World War II that women were granted permanent military status. Gendered ideologies remained salient throughout this inclusion and mobilization efforts in World War II exposed a continued focus on women’s morality and acceptable social roles in propaganda. Social understandings of women’s bodies as physically inferior remained largely implicit.

World War II (1941-1946)

During World War II, the U.S. military’s need for men and women exceeded that of previous wars and women were recruited for many more and diverse assignments both in the military and in the civilian realm. Much deliberation surrounded the formulation of how women would be organized and into what capacity they would be included in the Armed forces. The development of organized and recognized women’s corps was prompted largely through continuous efforts of women including Congresswoman Edith Rogers and first lady Eleanor Roosevelt who observed the lack of adequate training and disability benefits for women who served in World War I. Some women demonstrated their eagerness for military involvement through membership in private organizations that trained women for anticipated military service.¹⁷ Despite these efforts, full military status was denied, and instead, the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was established. WAAC was a civilian group under Army control. Discourse demonstrated that the War Department created the WAAC in order to retain the most

¹⁷ Organizations included the Women’s League of Defense (17,000 members), Women’s Ambulance and Defense Corps, Memorial Gold Cross First Aid and Ambulance Corps (2,000 members), Toledo Unit of the Willys-Overland Women’s Motor Defense Corps

power over the organization while still avoiding admittance of women into the Army¹⁸ (Treadwell 1991: 17). Such distinctions suggest that emphasizing the difference between male and female members of the military remained important to both the War Department and Congress.

This emphasis on different and separate status was institutionalized on a number of levels with the establishment of the WAAC. Grades for women in the WAAC were “camouflaged” in a way that rendered pay and rank incomparable to that of men in similar positions (Treadwell 1991:19). Because the WAAC operated *with* the Army but was not part of the Army, WAAC members did not receive veteran’s disability and other benefits. Unclear wording left discipline largely to the discretion of the Army. Women also were held to higher education standards than men and were asked to be of high moral character, a stipulation not asked of men. As camp followers of previous wars were morally condemned, much public debate that surrounded the creation of the WAAC involved suspicions of women’s promiscuity.

The status of the WAAC was transformed throughout the war, eventually attaining full (temporary) military status. Approximately 350,000 women enlisted in the military during World War II and served domestically and internationally (WREI 2013). Women’s only service sectors were created in all five branches of the military in addition to the Army and Navy Nurse Corps. Women’s non nursing assignments included driving vehicles, office and clerical work, various aviation tasks, lab technician and radio operator. In 1941, the Army Nurse Corps opened assignments to African American women with a ceiling set at 56 women, and this ceiling was eliminated in 1944 with a policy change that officially granted all women provisional integration into military status¹⁹.

¹⁸ Full integration of women into the Army was the aim of Congresswoman Rogers

¹⁹ In 1948, the integration Act extended this policy to give permanent, but highly regulated, status to military women (discussed below)

In effect, while policies were extended throughout this time, discourse suggests the integration was in large part due to efficiency concerns rather than aims of equality. Women and men's assignments, training, benefits, and expectations were for the most part held to be completely separate. This consistent effort by the War Department to maintain explicit separation in both assignments and social understandings of gender speaks to national ideologies of gender which contain notions of innate physical and social differences as a basis of justification. These ideologies play out in policy as discussed above and are highly visible in mobilization efforts by the War Department, both in campaigns to mobilize citizens to join a previously unconventional workforce and in the recruitment of women into the Armed Forces.

As options increased for women's participation in the military, interesting dynamics arose between the War Department's need for women's military and civilian labor and a strong national ideology that valued women's primary social roles as wife and mother. In *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda 1939-1945* (1978), Leila J. Rupp discussed how American war propaganda successfully employed national ideologies of gender, race, and class to mobilize war support and voluntary enlistment without subverting the national ideologies that seemingly held such actions in contempt.

While the successes of the first wave women's movement have sometimes been attributed to their participation in the military, Rupp maintains that this assertion does not sufficiently represent the role of military service in actual social transformation of gender roles in America during this time. World War I and World War II marked times of new positions for women, a point which was highly publicized by the War Department and tied to patriotism. This publicity prevailed despite the reality that many of the women who were new to the workforce were doing so out of economic necessity rather than patriotism. Thus, despite many women's new experiences in the public realm, to deduce from this the shift to military involvement seems to be an oversimplification. Furthermore, Rupp discusses how women's involvement in the civilian

workforce subsided after the war and that the positions held by women were designed to expire once they were no longer required for war. Because war propaganda did not subvert existing gender ideologies but merely extended traditional femininity to include temporarily caring for the nation, national ideologies which largely restricted women to domestic roles were not seriously challenged on a large scale until the women's movement of the 1960's.

Section II: Official Integration of Women in the Military

This section delves into a particularly transformative time for women's assignments in the U.S. military. The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 marked women's first officially permanent military status which also enabled military women to be regulated in new ways by the institution. Stipulations written into this Act illustrate an attachment to patriarchal assumptions which will be outlined in this section. The social movement activity of the 1960's and 1970's, especially the Civil Rights Movement and the second wave of the Women's Movement, ushered in litigation that challenged the segregated and gender exclusionary policies in civilian society and the military. The Vietnam War and Selective Service Act were at the forefront of a growing movement for social equality. The expiration of the Selective Service Act in 1973 led to an increase of women in the Armed Forces and a complicated relationship between women's equality and assumptions about women and their roles in the military and society. With the attempt to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, debates surrounding conscription for women became tethered to struggles for women's political equality. During this time, women's assignments expanded generally but changes were complex and saw considerable resistance and backlash. As we shall see below, discourses of this era demonstrate that justification remains largely in the realms of social roles, although formal equality remains explicit. Justifications cite military functionalism and evoke patriarchal assumptions about gendered bodies by beginning to base exclusionary policies on risk, protection, and an evolving definition of combat and associated assumed inherent differences.

Women are Given Permanent (Conditional) Military Status

In 1947, the Army-Navy Nurse Act passed Congress which established the Nurse Corps (open only to women) as permanent and regular staff. Stipulations existed in this policy including caps on the ranks of these women. Shortly thereafter, a similar but more expansive measure, The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 (Public Law 625) passed Congress, officially giving women eligibility for assignments in permanent, non-nursing active duty forces (WREI 2013). Many stipulations were attached to this eligibility, as well. Women could not constitute more than two percent of the entire military and no more than ten percent of those women could be officers. Women could not be promoted or paid above specified caps and could not possess command authority over men. Women were not allowed to serve on the Navy ships except for hospital ships and some transport ships. Women were also barred from aircraft involved in combat missions (WREI 2013). Aside from these restrictions, the Act did not include a provision banning women from all combat positions but discretionary authority was left to each service and each service continued to officially restrict women from combat roles (NWLC 2013 and WREI 2013). This new policy occurred alongside the Executive Order 9981 which called for racial integration in the Armed forces. Both integrations resulted in continued segregation in practice and were mandated in part as a consequence of a younger, and less educated white male enlisted population following World War II (Millett 2012).

This official integration of women into the U.S. military contained measures which regulated women's access to assignments based on highly gendered expectations of social roles and bodies. For example, services were permitted to automatically discharge women if they became pregnant or lived in a home with minor children (Stiehm 1989). Additionally, military women's families were not awarded benefits the same way that military men's families were. While families of male military personnel were considered to be his dependents and the family

was awarded benefits automatically, women only received benefits for their families if they could prove their husband's financial dependence.

In the midst of the Korean War (1950-1955) and in response to the military's increasing integration of women, The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) was established by the Secretary of Defense. DACOWITS still operates today and is made up of civilian men and women who are appointed by the Secretary of Defense and are tasked with reviewing and making recommendations pertaining to women in the U.S. military (Department of Defense 2014). Representing women in the military as a civilian/military issue, DACOWITS recommendations are often cited as influencing policy changes and are drawn upon in sections below.

Also in 1951, President Harry Truman demonstrated the stronghold traditional gender roles played in the military by signing executive order 10240. This made explicit the regulation of women's relationship to reproduction that was permitted through the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948. Executive order 10240 authorized the total separation of women from the Armed Forces under the same conditions that would merit men's separation plus:

...whenever it is established under appropriate regulations of the Secretary of the department concerned that the woman (a) is the parent, by birth or adoption, of a child under such minimum age as the Secretary concerned shall determine, (b) has personal custody of a child under such minimum age, (c) is the step-parent of a child under such minimum age and the child is within the household of the woman for a period of more than thirty days a year, (d) is pregnant, or (e) has, while serving under such commission, warrant, or enlistment, given birth to a living child.. (Truman 1951)

The inclusion of step children, pregnancy status, and having given birth (with no distinction of that child's custody) makes clear that the regulation prescribes to patriarchal assumptions that attaches women to childrearing roles despite the actual effect these various family satiations may have on men and women. This is significant because it required women to choose between

having children and having military careers in a way that men were not. Further, while marriage alone was not grounds for automatic termination like proximity to children, marriage was an appropriate reason for women to request military discharge. Such factors undoubtedly contributed to 70-80 percent of women not completing their first enlistment (Stiehm 1989). These regulations were implemented during the Korean War which did not see a shortage of available military ready men. This example illustrates that regulations matched social expectations of this era and were more strictly traditionally gendered in times when military need did not rely on women's service. When conditions allowed, the military regulated women into supportive, domestic roles while retaining the option to use women in more diverse roles, revealing that not much had changed in this regard in the immediate post World War II era.

In addition to these regulations which shaped family dynamics of men and women in the military, differences in the training and expectations exaggerated physical differences between military men and women. Gendered expectations of bodies are implicit in assignment differences. For example, until the 1970's, women's military training included "ladylike" grooming and manners and uniforms included skirts and makeup, they did not wear boots or pants and were not trained to use weapons (Stiehm 1989). Such regalia and differential training, along with national propaganda that emphasized women's moral character, made the possibility of women being engaged in combat or other physically demanding tasks appear largely unimaginable. Since social roles still maintained a strong hold on gender, justifications for differential treatment only needed to implicitly address women's inferior physical nature. As the innateness of gendered social roles was challenged and as military need caused women's training to be less traditionally gendered, justifications began to hone in on the presumed innate physical differences.

Social Movements Bring Greater Equality, Greater Inclusion of Women in Military

The civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam War movement, and the women's movement illustrated a civilian resistance to normative ideologies and political practices that were seen by many civilians as oppressive and unjust. The women's movement brought about challenges to the normative social role justifications that had been present thus far in the regulation of women in society and the military. Despite a complicated relationship between the U.S. military and largely anti-military women's movement, this era of increasing formal equality ushered in expanding military options for women and many of the previous restrictions on military women were called into question. Many policy adjustments were made at this juncture after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibited discrimination on the basis of both race and sex. For example, during the Vietnam War (1961-1975), The Women's Armed Services Integration Act (1967, PL-90-130) was modified. The provision limiting the percentage of women in the military to no more than two percent was lifted. Pay grade caps were lifted from pay grade 3 to 6 and women became eligible for Flag/General officer rank. In 1969, the Air Force was the first service to open their ROTC program to women. In 1971, the Air Force began to allow requests to waive the automatic discharge of pregnant women and was the first service to allow women with children to enlist. In 1972, in the case of *Frontiero v. Richardson*, the Supreme Court ruled sex differences in dependents' benefits to be unconstitutional. Also in 1972, the Army opened their ROTC program to women. Training became less gendered and integrated in some cases. That same year, a more sweeping directive (Z-116) was ordered which allowed women (with limitations) into "all enlisted ratings." This directive allowed women to enter more occupations (intelligence, cryptology, public affairs, and aircraft maintenance), including admission into the Chaplain Corps and Civil Engineering Corps. Through this directive, the Navy ROTC was opened to women and women could thereafter be selected for war college. (WREI 2013).

The expiration of the Selective Services Act in 1973 marked an acceleration of recruitment and enlistment of women in the U.S. military. The Department of Defense needed

women to maintain a volunteer military in a time when the anti-Vietnam movement saw an increase in criticism of the U.S. military and a decrease in those willing to volunteer. Between 1972 and 1976, the percentage of enlisted women more than tripled (Stiehm 1989). Some exclusionary policies continued to be ratified and women were assigned more diverse roles and definitions of combat surfaced as a primary divisive measure. In 1973, the Navy first allowed women into aviation duty in noncombat aircraft. Age requirements that differed by sex were abolished in 1974. The Coast Guard began enlisting women in active duty for the first time since WWII. In 1974, the Army also allowed women on aviation duty in noncombat aircraft. In 1975, women were granted admittance into the Coast Guard Academy. In 1976, PL-94-106 opened remaining service academies to women. In the 1976 case of Crawford v. Crushman, the automatic discharge of pregnant Marines was ruled unconstitutional as it violates the Fifth Amendment of due process. In 1977, the Air Force followed suit with other services and allowed women into aviation duty in noncombat aircraft. The same year, the Coast Guard began assignments of women to “shipboard duty.” (WREI 2013) In 1978, the policy which limited Navy women’s assignments to hospital and transport ships was ruled unconstitutional in Owens v. Brown, prompting this policy to be amended. New provisions stated that:

... women may not be assigned to duty on vessels or in aircraft that are engaged in combat missions nor may they be assigned to other than temporary duty on vessels of the Navy except hospital ships, transports, and vessels of a similar classification not expected to be assigned combat missions (P.L. 95-485 quoted in NWLC 2013:1).

Congress required the Department of Defense to supply a definition of combat. While these Air Force and Navy provisions allowed women into more assignments, the implicit limitations which are evoked will be discussed further below.

Increased Inclusion of Women in the Military Stalls

The 1960’s and 1970’s brought a social and military climate which increased women’s inclusion at a steady pace (Stiehm 1989). However, the early 1980’s saw a stall or even a reversal

of this increase. One primary beacon of this change in climate is represented by the controversy and failure of the Equal Rights Amendment. The women's movement was successful in lobbying Congress to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972, which was first attempted in 1923. The Amendment read "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of Sex" (Neale 2013). While ERA failed to be rectified by the required number of states to become a constitutional amendment, the discourse which surfaced in opposition was especially indicative of a pervasive national ideology about gender, difference, risk, and protection. Additionally, controversy surrounding this proposal articulated an incompatibility between military effectiveness and women's equality. Inherent physical differences were inherent in this notion.

This proposed Amendment forced acknowledgement of institutional policies which currently discriminated based on sex. With the expiration of the mandatory male draft, equal protection evoked the possibility that women could be mandated to military service like men had been in the past. Indeed, Congress stated that women would not be constitutionally protected from draft requirements should the ERA gain ratification (Stiehm 1989). An anti-ERA campaign successfully complicated widespread support for the ERA. This opposition sited both military effectiveness and risk to women, both of which hold implicit ideologies about gender, fighting capacity, social roles, and need for protection²⁰.

Women and men were becoming more integrated in training and assignments during this time. Congress passed the Defense Officer Manpower Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) in 1980 which "abolishe[d] laws requiring separate appointment, promotion, accounting, and separation procedures for women officers in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps" (WREI 2013) and required women to compete with men for Flag/General officer rank for the first time. Many

²⁰ Elaine Donnelly, president of Center for Military Readiness and a protégé of Phyllis Schlafly has done similar work in the contemporary military to prevent women's entrance into combat

differences, such as the combat restriction for women's assignments, still caused great difference in the potential careers of men and women. In 1979 in the midst of the ERA debate, President Carter proposed to Congress a draft registration requirement for men and women. In the 1981 case, *Rostker v. Goldberg*, the Supreme Court ruled that the exclusion of women from the Selective Service registration was constitutional, citing the combat exclusion as justification. The justification behind the combat exclusion itself was not discussed and a traditional separation between military affairs and civilian court was cited as reason for this departure. The military gave this statement in regard to concerns of military readiness: "military opinion, backed by extensive study, is that the availability of women registrants would materially increase flexibility, not hamper it" (*Rostker v. Goldberg* 1981: 453). The court upheld that since men and women did not have the same opportunities in the military, the differential treatment was constitutional. This decision was controversial but largely seen as a loss for women's equality because a host of inequalities ensued on the basis of this distinction.

Despite the military's professed and demonstrated need for military women (see above), the tensions between women's rights and military functionalism have been (and continue to be) central to much military, congressional, and public discussion. This was especially salient amongst Cold War anxieties. In 1980, Air Force assistant secretary for manpower Joseph C. Zengerle reported to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DECOWITS), claiming that women's rights may no longer be consistent with issues of military readiness.. Zengerle made explicit a sentiment of nostalgia for more traditional gender arrangement in the military by stating:

Women have been in uniform long enough and in sufficient numbers for people to have developed some sense of the impact their presence will have on military institutions. That change would come about was inevitable. But the natural human tendency to protect the status quo now has a concrete set of targets to work on. (Stiehm 1989: 49)

This dichotomy (military effectiveness vs. equality) is evoked more frequently after the 1970's. The Reagan administration seemed to legitimize this reasoning by slowing a number of planned assignment expansions for women. Women's recently expanded involvement in the military was sometimes referred to as a "social experiment", particularly pertaining to those women who entered non-traditional assignments during the 1970's (Stiehm 1989: 50). With this new questioning of women's effect on military readiness, issues of gender were evoked as justification for categorical exclusion.

As formal equality became a legal expectation, and social roles justifications were challenged, discourse turned to differences that were assumed to be innate. The Armed Forces began conducting tests (or referencing past and present service of women as a "test") to address how sex affects military readiness, the results of which were used to justify future restrictions. Supposed categorical differences in physical strength, relationship to reproduction, emotional strength, as well as effects of women's service on military men became common in discourse.

Many of the services restricted women's assignments that had been expanded previously. The Army announced a "pause" in 1981, stating a need to re-evaluate women in the Army, and primarily stopped enlisting women for the remainder of that year and raised enlistment standards to be above that of men. Similarly, the Air Force, which had previously high percentages of women with virtually no assignment restrictions, also changed its policies regarding women. The Air Force lowered its goals for women by one third, and removed women's eligibility from previously held positions, citing test results that indicated the change was due to "combat relationship considerations" (Stiehm 1989: 52). Such a change implied that women had failed the test in question on some level of ability. However, the test actually recorded attrition, which cited that 71 percent of men and 47 percent of women remained throughout the test year. The test did not specify physical inadequacy as a reason for women's lower attrition, but broke down women's leave in language that contained gendered stereotypes. Reasons women left the position

included “emotional problems” and “fear of weapons.” Reasons men left the position were listed simply as “lack of adaptability” and were not broken down further (Steihm1989:52).

Such tests demonstrated a new focus on biological justifications rather than the implicit social roles justifications that were used in the past. Formal equality had become socially demanded, yet military assignments remained distinctly based on sex. The Reagan administration ushered in what has been viewed by some as a political backlash against women’s growing equality in the Armed Forces. Increased expectations for formal equality mark a transition from social role justifications to those which explicitly evoke physical differences. Focus turns to military effectiveness generally, and women’s inadequacy specifically. Combat is increasingly used as a dividing measure for the appropriateness of women’s involvement. Implicit in combat are both notions of military effectiveness, women’s inadequacy, and women’s need for protection against risk. Policies and discourses of this era suggest that each of these justifications were used, perhaps selectively, and will be discussed in greater detail in the following section. These discourses and policies also suggest a divide between military and civilian legality, with jurisdiction concerns and “military effectiveness” trumping protection of individual rights in many cases.

Section III: Combat as a (Malleable) Dividing Line

This section discusses changes in U.S. military policy of women’s assignments as the focus for exclusion centers explicitly around definitions and interpretations of combat. As exposed through justification and discourse, the combat distinction contains implicit patriarchal ideologies of women’s physical inferiority as well as ideologies of women’s need for protection. In addition to ideological concerns, this definition prevented women from benefits associated with combat despite their involvement in situations and locales only narrowly distinguishable from those experienced by males in combat assignments. The protection ideal was explicitly politicized with the Risk Rule in 1988. Following the Risk Rule’s eradication in 1994,

justification became primary tethered to combat as the major distinction, and even though the definitions and interpretations of combat were inconsistently understood and applied across services. U.S. military received pressure to evaluate such restrictive policies and in 2012, rescinded the combat restriction policy with the explicit aims to remove the final barrier to equal opportunity (some restrictions and exemptions still apply). Social perceptions of women (which often evoke traditional social roles) are still noted as important considerations and are still used in military research. Traditionally gendered social roles are now also used strategically in non-traditional ways. Overall, this time period marked a gradual shift from social roles to biological difference as a primary justification for assignment restrictions of women. However, justifications are nuanced and this thesis argues that each argument contains patriarchal assumptions about gender and bodies.

Rick, Combat, and Legal Ambiguity

The U.S. law and the Department of Defense policy regarding women and combat have evolved over time. Historically, all services officially barred women from direct combat assignments despite there being no sweeping combat restrictions written into the Women's Armed services Act of 1948 (NWLC 2013; Department of Defense Task Force 1988). As mentioned above, two statutes in the Women's Armed Services Integration Act address women's restriction from combat in specific capacities on vessels and aircraft in the Navy and Air Force, which acted as the basis for broader combat restrictions (Title 10, U.S.C. 6015 and Title 10, U.S.C. 8549). The Army cited "implied Congressional intent" to justify their provision that excluded women from "routine engagement in direct combat" (Department of Defense 1988:9). Although combat was becoming a common justification for women's exclusion, many ambiguities surrounded its application in terms of consistency and definition. Additionally, the reasons behind combat as necessarily being unfit for women as a category remained unclear.

In response to such ambiguities and other concerns about women's integration into the Armed Forces, DACOWITS established a Task Force on Women in the Military. Recommendations from this Task Force were used in the creation of the Risk Rule in 1988 which determined women's eligibility for military assignments until it was rescinded in 1994. This Task Force uncovered particularly compelling inconsistencies within the Armed Services' understanding of combat. It did not, however, address the justifications of the combat exclusion, citing instead "The Secretary of Defense has previously taken the position that the law regarding combat exclusion reflects a fundamental social issue more properly addressed by the Congress" (Department of Defense 1988:8). In addition to uncovering inconsistencies, the recommendations in this report illustrates patriarchal ideologies that are implicit in the regulations and are unchanged (or perhaps exaggerated) in the proposed shift from combat to risk as a definitive measure.

While no overarching Department of Defense policy on women's assignments existed, the Secretary of Defense offered guidance to the services on the issue of combat exclusion in 1985, in terms of the criteria used by the Task Force to check each service's uniformity. This advice stated:

Military women can and should be utilized in all roles except those explicitly prohibited by the combat exclusion statutes and related policy. The combat exclusion rule should be interpreted to allow as many as possible career opportunities for women to be kept open. (Secretary of Defense Statement quoted in Department of Defense Report 1988: 9)

This task force was assigned to address three issues²¹, one being the "consistency of application" of combat exclusion across the services. The task force discovered inconsistency in the definition of combat among the services, citing the lack of a Department of Defense definition. Although law only prohibited women from serving on ships and aircraft engaged in

²¹ The other two issues addressed were attitudes towards women in the services (which encompassed sexual harassment and quality of life) and career development

combat, this logic was extended based on interpreting the intent of Congress to prevent women from serving in a multitude of assignments.

Although inherent differences between men and women are certainly implicit throughout all exclusionary policies, the report cites not the inadequacy of women but rather Congressional intent for “the combat exclusion laws to protect women from the most serious risks of harm or capture” (Department of Defense 1988:9) No explicit mention of physical strength is cited in this report. Instead, the concept of risk is constantly evoked but never defined as a measure in and of itself. Rather, risk was defined always in relation to the units to which women were to be excluded, those reserved for men. The notion that women warrant protection is explicitly evoked but not justified. With this protection, the most dangerous assignments were reserved for the category of men.

In 1988, on the advice of the Task Force, the Department of Defense established the Risk Rule which in addition to excluding women from combat missions:

...excluded women from noncombat units or missions if the risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture were equal to or greater than the risk in the combat units they supported. (Department of Defense Report 1998:2)

The result of this new definition was multifaceted and resulted in opening some assignments to women that previously fell under inconsistent understandings of the combat rule. Conversely, some non-combat positions became closed to women due to the associated risk. The applicability and justifications of this rule came under question as risk proved difficult to measure in practice and the reality of war meant women were asked to serve in restricted roles.

By qualifying women’s assignments as necessarily involving less risk than assignments reserved for men, the Risk Rule reinforced women’s position in the military as support rather than as soldier and played into patriarchal ideologies of men as the protectors and women as the protected. Despite their assignments being labeled as non-combat, American military women’s

experiences in the Gulf War and subsequent wars prompted the Risk Rule to be scrutinized (Harding 2012). During “Operation Just Cause” in Panama (1989), women performed assignments that closely resembled combat and some female pilots were in the line of fire. In 1991, the ban on women flying aircraft in combat missions was overturned. In 1993, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin gave a directive that opened combat aviation assignments to women as well as assignments on Navy combat ships (WRIE 2013). During the Gulf War, 40,782 women served with men in combat zones, fifteen were killed and two were captured thus demonstrating that the Risk Rule was not complied with in practice. (WREI 2013) Thus, in 1994, the Risk Rule was rescinded for such reasons. In its place, a new combat rule was implemented which stated:

Service members are eligible to be assigned to all positions for which they are qualified, except that women shall be excluded from assignments to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is direct combat on the ground.
(Department of Defense 1994 quoted in Burrelli 2013:4)

Congress required the Department of Defense to provide a definition of ground combat which read:

...engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew-served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force’s personnel. Ground combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect. (Department of Defense 1994 quoted in Burrelli 2013:4,5)

This new definition of ground combat opened many more positions to women. It omitted the provision defining combat in terms of ‘substantial risk’ of capture that was present in the previous definition (Burrelli 2013). The “primary mission” specification of this policy allows the U.S. military to enlist women in assignments that included ground combat, while keeping women’s assignments labeled as non-combat. This is important for organizational advancement because many officer positions are only awarded to those with combat experience (Harding, 2012). The policy also included clauses that permitted services to voluntarily restrict assignments of women for several reasons including costs of providing appropriate privacy, when units are

required to “physically collocate²²...with direct ground combat units,” Special Operation Forces missions, and “where job related physical requirements would necessarily exclude the vast majority of women Service members” (Department of Defense , NWLC 2013). These exclusions were optional and in effect, this policy allows the U.S. military to use women when they are needed and exclude them (thus denying equal military status and benefits) when they are not.

In 1998, the United States Senate requested a study of the uses and justifications of such sex based differential treatment in regard to restrictions. This report makes explicit that at the time that the combat exclusion policy was written in 1994, “DOD officials did not consider changing its long-standing policy because they believed that the integration of women into direct ground combat units lacked both congressional and public support” (Gender Issues 1998: 2). Additionally, discourse demonstrated that the Department of Defense believed women in direct ground combat units “would not contribute to the readiness and effectiveness of those units” (Gender Issues 1994:3,4) due to “physical strength, stamina, and privacy issues” (Gender Issues 1994:4).

The 1994 Department of Defense-wide assignment policy quoted above makes explicit that women are to be “assigned to all positions to which they qualify” except for assignments with a “primary mission of direct ground combat.” However, the review revealed that the four additional justifications for exclusion represented the majority of cases. The review found that less than half (46 % or 101,733 out of 221,000) of assignments closed to women were done so due to direct ground combat. Collocation justified 41% (89,755) of closed positions, living arrangements justified 12% (25,663), and special operations justified 2% (3,935) (Gender Issues 1994:3). The physical strength justification was not cited for any positions closed to women.

²² The definition of “physically collocate” later proved to be quite ambiguous in definition and impractical to enforce.

This suggests that despite combat's centrality in discourse surrounding women's assignments, in actuality, it was not representative of the majority of sex based exclusions.

Post-Cold War Non-Linear Battlefield

The 1998 review also took issue with Department of Defense's reliance on the battlefield as a measure of risk and a qualification for distinguishing combat versus non-combat positions, arguing that the post-Cold War battlefield is non-linear and that risk is no longer necessarily associated with such location (Gender Issues 1994:4). As was the case in the Vietnam and Gulf Wars, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom have demonstrated that the direct combat exclusion is often unrealistic in definition and function because there is no clearly defined battlefield and even those in combat support assignments are at risk to be "exposed to hostile fire" (Department of Defense 1998). In order to negotiate the contradiction between adhering to the policy which excludes women from ground combat and the need for women in such placements, the contemporary U.S. military uses tactics similar to previous eras including labeling women's participation as temporary and supportive. For example, U.S. military women may be "attached" rather than "assigned" to assignments to which they are prohibited (Harding 2012). This denotes a temporary status for women much like the special units created for women in WWII and other war efforts.

Negotiations of women's assignments in the U.S. military have been nuanced and largely politically divisive. In 2005, Chairman Duncan Hunter advised Republican representatives to propose legislation that would exclude Army women from "forward support companies" which provide support to direct combat battalions. This justification was given by Hunter: "war will make no distinction between men and women on the front lines. The nation should not put women into the front lines of combat" (NWRC 2013). This statement evokes the patriarchal notion that women, unlike men, need to be protected from harm. The legislation eventually failed to pass after the Army voiced opposition, claiming that 21,925 jobs would be lost. (NWRC 2013)

This political deliberation illustrates a contradiction between patriarchal assumptions about gender and military functionality.

The 1994 combat exclusion policy continued to be scrutinized as more women were tasked with assignments closely resembling ground combat definitions. Research conducted by the National Defense Research Institute (RAND) in 2007 researched Army policy on assignments of women. Several aspects of the language in this policy were interpreted as ambiguous. RAND found that some of the integral wording (specifically the definitions of enemy, collocate, forward, and well forward) within the policy drew no shared interpretation among Congress or Department of Defense officials who were interviewed (RAND 2007; NWLC 2013). RAND found that while Army women were not placed in assignments to which they were prohibited, their personal loyalties and actual work performed could meet definitions described in the ground combat exclusion. RAND notes that Army policy on assignments (which differs from Department of Defense policy) has a purpose to limit “the units to which women can be assigned but not the ways in which female service members can be tasked or utilized once in the theatre of operations.” (RAND 2007: xiv) Army women were “trained, prepared and expected to defend themselves and their fellow personnel...against snipers, agents, saboteurs, or terrorist activities.” (RAND 2007: xvi) These distinctions make the difference between combat and non-combat increasingly difficult to decipher and cause the rationality of such distinctions to be suspect.

Some assignments strategically use women in combat capacities, but their assignment remains explicitly non-combat despite their training and location. Several programs were developed to employ women in counterinsurgency efforts including the Lioness Program in Iraq, the Female Engagement Teams in Afghanistan, and the Culture Support Teams in Afghanistan. Women in these assignments were considered to be “attached” to corresponding male combat units, which enabled the positions to remain in the “non-combat” realm despite their positioning

in ground combat locales and their training for combat situations. The strategic use of gender for the U.S. military women in these assignments does not end with physical contact of personal searches and house raids. American military women in counterinsurgency programs are tasked with trust and relationship building. Military women are described as being seen as a “third gender” and thus able to gain trust, complacency, and information from both men and women in occupied areas (Harding 2012).

Despite the subversive aspects of these assignments (in terms of American women performing assignments historically reserved for men), gendered assumptions of bodies are still present. Women in these operations undergo extensive combat training including, yet are rarely expected to use this training and are still considered support to the male ground combat operations (Harding 2012) Thus, although the last barrier to equality (combat) is being traversed (albeit this traversing is complex and nuanced), gendered assumptions about bodies and difference undoubtedly remains a tool for organization and strategy in the U.S. military.

Rescinding the Combat Restriction

The Department of Defense’s official stance in 2009 was that “The DoD policy for the assignment of women ... has successfully balanced opportunities for women in the Military Services” (Department of Defense 2009:3). The same 2009 Department of Defense Report to the White House Council on Women and Girls addressed the combat exclusion policy and the current practice of training and assigning women to positions which involve “combat action.” The Report cited the 1994 combat policy detailed above and qualified women’s involvement in combat action as incidental, stating:

While the policy excludes women from being assigned to combat billets, women may still find themselves in a situation that may necessitate combat action, such as defending them or their units from attack. For this reason, Service members regardless of gender are equipped, trained and prepared to defend the United States. (Department of Defense 2009:3).

The Report claimed “[t]he few closed specialties and organizations present little limitation as measured by promotion and retention rates” and recommended no action be taken to amend or review this policy (Department of Defense 2009:3,4). The Report cited the 2007 review as evidence that the Department of Defense “routinely reassesses the policy” (Department of Defense 2009:4) but did not mention the 2007 findings which indicated ambiguity in distinctions between combat and non-combat positions, as well as in the language used in the direct ground combat definition. This report also did not address the outdated understanding of battlefield.

Despite the Department of Defense’s stance, criticism continued to surface from various arenas pertaining to women’s combat restriction in general and especially to the associated issues of professional advancement. Litigation was brought by servicewomen in 2012, arguing that the combat restrictions excluded them based on sex alone, a factor which affected professional development. The lawsuit stated that “[t]here is no practical difference, in terms of the work that servicewomen do, between ‘assigning’ women to a ground combat unit and ‘attaching’ women to a ground combat unit” (Schoenberg et al 2012).

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services also took the stance that women’s official ban from combat assignments was unwarranted and advised in 2010:

DoD should eliminate the 1994 combat exclusion policy and direct the services to eliminate their restrictive assignment rules, thereby ending gender-based restrictions on military assignments. Concurrently, DoD and the services should open all related career fields/specialties, schooling and training opportunities that have been closed to women as a result for the DoD combat exclusion policy and service assignment policies. (DACOWITS Report 2011:iv)

In 2011, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission was tasked by Congress with reporting on diversity issues in the Armed Forces and produced similar recommendations. This Commission recommended that the “Department of Defense and the Services should eliminate the “combat exclusion policies”...including the barriers and inconsistencies, to create a level playing field for all qualified service members” (Burrelli 2013:7)

In response to such recommendations, in 2012, the Department of Defense began to change its position on the matter and amended the 1994 assignment policy by removing the exclusion surrounding collocation with ground combat units, citing that there is no clearly defined battlefield in modern war (Department of Defense 2012). In 2012, the Department of Defense presented findings and recommendations in the congressionally mandated “Review of Laws, Policies and Regulations Restricting the Service of Female Members in the U.S. Armed Forces.” The Department of Defense also approved specified exceptions from the combat restriction as requested by the Army, Navy, and Marines.

The report detailed that the requests are:

...based on 10 years of recent combat experiences. Commanders are currently restricted from assigning women below the brigade level who may be best suited for these positions, based solely on the 1994 Direct Ground Combat definition (Department of Defense 2012:3).

The Department of Defense opened 13,139 assignments to women through granting such exceptions but did not yet call for the exclusion policy to be rescinded. (Department of Defense 2012) The tone of this report evoked a necessity to increase opportunities for women, with their official vision statement being:

The Department of Defense is committed to removing all barriers that would prevent Service members from rising to the highest level of responsibility that their talents and capabilities warrant (Department of Defense 2012:i)

In this report, the Department of Defense acknowledged that the review is in response to findings from the Military Leadership diversity Commission that gender based regulations create “serious practical barriers,” and reiterated the Department’s commitment to removing barriers. However, the Department left several gender-based exclusions unchanged due to “significant time and resources” and made the following statement which seems contradictory to their vision and their acceptance of existing research:

[t]he Department reviewed all available information from the Military Services and did not find indication of females having less than equitable opportunities to compete and excel under current assignment policy (Department of Defense 2012:iii)

Then, in 2013, the 1994 Department of Defense assignment policy for military women was rescinded with several stipulations. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta made this announcement to Congress:

...DoD is notifying congress of its intent to open all military units and occupations to women thereby ending the ground combat exclusion and eliminating the last barrier to full integration of women into the U.S. military. (Department of Defense 2013 quoted in WREI 2013).

Integration was directed to take place immediately (full integration no later than January 1, 2016) and gender-neutral occupational standards are to be implemented no later than September, 2015. (NWLC 2013, Department of Defense 2013) According to the Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments, “Exceptions must be narrowly tailored, and based on a rigorous analysis of factual data regarding the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the position” (Department of Defense 2013:2)

Despite the official rescinding of the 1994 combat exclusion policy, exceptions still remain, however, including special force units and requested exceptions. Gender-neutral qualifications are called for and physical strength becomes a primary consideration in ways unseen in previous policy. Throughout the history of gender based restrictive policy, physical strength disparities have remained largely implicit. These implications are important because they denote a fixed characterization and can moot inequality claims by evoking military readiness as justification. With the recent focus on combat as the major basis for gender-based restrictions and the 2013 rescinding of the combat exclusion, debate around physical strength has become more explicit. History has demonstrated a shift from social role explanations to biological explanations to justify differential treatment based on sex. This thesis now turns to data on bodies themselves to investigate the social constructed aspects of strength and sex.

Chapter 5: Measuring and Gendering Bodies

Historical review reveals that justifications of differential treatment of men and women in the military changed from a focus on social roles to a focus on risk and combat in the landscape of growing legal equality. While sometimes explicit, all of these rationales contain implicit ideologies of women's innate physical inferiority or social role as 'the protected.' Early military policies took place in a time when women were considered legal dependents of men and when military service was hailed as a patriotic reserve for white male citizens. Thus, justifications rarely needed to be explicit because there was no expectation for equality. As women gained rights as citizens and discrimination was not so readily accepted, justifications shifted to that of risk. As the definitions of combat as an exclusionary concept became increasingly narrow and then rescinded, physical strength rationales became more prevalent and explicit. This shift in justifications from social roles to physical strength is especially important because of the innateness that is implied with justifications based in biology²³. Assumptions of an inherent sex-based physical hierarchy, such as that which is evoked in current and historical U.S. military policy, carry over into other aspects of life and affect social expectations and experiences.²⁴ Furthermore, this historical attachment to retaining gender distinctiveness in assignments and policies throughout changing social climates raises questions about social and political motivations. This section investigates measurements of bodies in order to further highlight the possible role of gendered regulations on bodies themselves, and as a consequence, the meanings about those bodies. Through this discussion of bodies, overall this section aims to further explore the social causes and consequences of gendered regulations through the example of the U.S. military.

²³ Historical parallels can be drawn in terms of scientific justifications for social inequalities, especially race

²⁴ In the military, women's assumed physical inferiority has translated into tangible inequalities as combat exclusion also meant exclusion from eligibility for certain rankings and military jobs. Women were denied veterans care for combat related conditions, despite their involvement in "combat support."

Physical Strength and Sex Categories: How the U.S. Military Demonstrates Difference

Although some contemporary U.S. military policies proclaim gender-neutrality, military regulations have historically relied on a dichotomous understanding of sex: that the categories of men and women are largely distinct, unchangeable, and unchallengeable; that they are stable over time and useful in generating meaningful understandings of difference. This is demonstrated in the sex based distinctions that are written into policies, carried through sex segregated training, and used to apply different standards for men and women. However, as is the case with many sex characteristics²⁵, physical size, strength, and ability vary widely across individuals within the categories of men and women.

For example, considering first only physical size, nationally generalizable data taken between 2007 and 2010 tells us that the average height for American men is approximately 5' 8" (69.3 inches) and the average height for American women is approximately 5' 3" (63.8 inches). Additionally, average weight for American men was 195.5 pounds and for American women, it was 166.2 pounds²⁶. By looking at averages in this way, categorical physical differences by sex appear profound in the general population and differences among individuals in these categories, and the potential influence of training and social use throughout history, are obscured. The chart below shows the variation of height within the categories of male and female as well as the significant overlap.

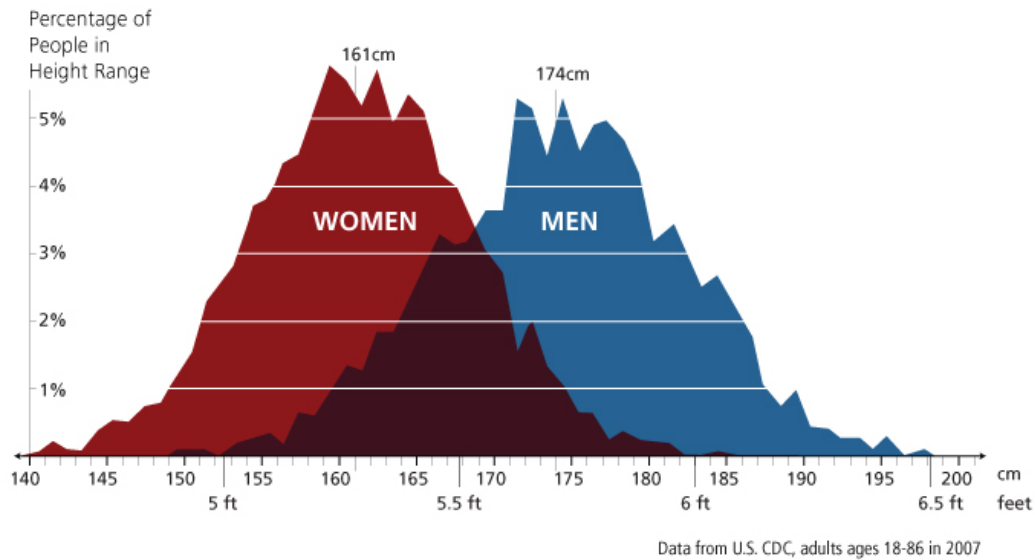
²⁵ An estimated 1 out of every 100 people do not have the combination of internal and external sex organs, sex hormones, and chromosomes that have been traditionally used to determine male or female status (Schultz, 2013)

²⁶ Center for Disease Control, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey

Figure 1

Height of Adult Women and Men

Within-group variation and between-group overlap are significant



Source: Gendered Innovations, 2007

The military has relied largely on averages to make categorical exclusions and defend differential treatment of men and women. Studies finding large differences between men and women in physical size and strength are often cited as a proof that women cannot perform many military roles. Some go so far as to say that allowing women into diverse roles, including combat roles, puts national security at risk (Greggor 2011). For example, findings presented in the *Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the armed Forces* (1992) are often cited by critics as demonstration of the vast difference in physical attributes and performance of men and women. The report cites statistical averages of Army recruits, stating that the average female is 4.8 inches shorter than the average male recruit, weighs 31.7 less, and has 5.7 more pounds of fat. Additionally, the report cites a study which found Army women to possess 55 percent of the upper-body strength that men possess and 72 percent of men's lower body strength (Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces 1992). Ignoring for the moment potential issues (such as including measuring recruits rather than trained men and women),

listing such characteristics in static fashion makes categorical differences seem obvious and irrefutable. However, averages do not give an accurate account of many individuals' capabilities, nor do they give an idea of whether men and women possess the skills needed for a given job. By citing comparative averages, a hierarchy is established but little practical information about individuals is gained (Goodell 2010).

Another military study that is widely cited in discussions about women and physical strength in the military went beyond averages to assess whether women in fact possessed the skills needed to perform various jobs. Presented in the 1982 Department of Defense Women in the Army Policy Review, this study was used as justifications for the Army's 1981 "pause" on the rapid increase of women that occurred following the Vietnam era (discussed above). This review points out similar large, categorical differences to argue that women as a group were physically unqualified for many positions currently held by women, as well many positions which were anticipated for the new inclusion of women (Department of Defense 1982)²⁷. The review draws data from a 1980 study measuring the "post-basic training lifting capacity" of 923 men and 493 women. The review used this data to assess the "theoretical capacity of soldiers to perform work..." (Women in the Army Policy Review 1982:2-14) The review drew on this data to create strength categories for individuals and ranked assignments according to their correspondence to these strength categories. For example, the report highlighted lifting capacity, which is depicted in the table below.

²⁷ Very few problems with women's service were documented, especially in Air Force (Steihm 1989)

Table 5

Lifting Capacity of Men and Women					
Men	100%	100%	100%	82%	80%
Women	100%	72%	26%	8%	3%
Cluster	Light	Medium	Moderate Heavy	Heavy	Very Heavy

Women in the Army Policy Review, 1982

This presentation of data certainly highlights the strength differences between the categories of men and women. However, the data also demonstrates an overlap, be it small in some cases, in every category. Thus, while determining the physical strength required for given military assignments makes strategical sense, exclusion of women from certain assignments because the majority of women do not exhibit the physical strength required is unnecessarily limiting (Steihm1989; Schultz 2013). Several interesting points about the Army’s regulation and measurement of gendered bodies can be highlighted through this report. The report lists the reasons which called for this review and new assignment classifications to take place. Among the reasons included, some references to physical strength were included such as, “the Army had not completely researched nor established policy on making job assignment according to an enlistee’s physical capacity. As a result, some female soldiers were assigned to jobs for which they lacked physical capacity to meet job requirements.” (Women in the Army Policy Review 1982:2) While these statements do not quantify whether women were performing their jobs adequately or not, it speaks to assessing physical strength as military functionalism. Some statements evoke a sentiment which speaks to military as a masculine preserve: “Army commanders observed a disproportionately high female content in some units.” (Women in the Army Policy Review 1982) Additionally, the report relied on interviews with the Army women’s male supervisors to ascertain whether the women were successfully carrying out their given

assignment. Interestingly, the report acknowledged the potential problems with this method, by stating:

Sometimes, however, the answers we received might also reflect traditional attitudes toward male-oriented roles, such as bulldozer operators, as opposed to jobs traditionally female-oriented, such as clerks. Therefore, it is difficult or impossible to determine from the interviews the real reasons why females were not performing certain physical tasks. We have shown the results of our interviews because both the males and females agreed that the females were not, in fact, performing some tasks, and to whatever extent it is an attitude problem, it requires attention before it can be resolved. (Women in the Army Policy Review 1982: 1-8)

This statement makes clear that the problem which is assessed through these interviews is whether women are doing the job, not whether physical strength is preventing them from doing the job.

Additional studies have pointed out the overlap that exists in terms of physical measures of men and women. One study, for example, which is cited in a critique of women in traditionally male reserved military positions (Mitchell 1998), discusses a Navy study conducted in 1978-1983 which highlights differences between men and women in a number of physical tests (Goodell 2012). The Navy study tested 24 men and 21 women in an emergency drill situation in which 81% of women and 4 % of men failed to perform one task²⁸ within the time limit. In another task²⁹, 90% of women failed to complete the task on time compared with 36 % of men (Goodell 2012). This study points out certainly that men as a group completed the tasks on time as a greater rate than women, but some women passed and some men failed each task, thus complicating the usefulness of sex as a predictive factor for individual ability. Some studies suggest that sex is not the largest determinative factor when it comes to many of the physical

²⁸ Task was a two-person carry of a 190 pound stretcher up and down an inclined ladder

²⁹ Task was a two-person carry of a 147 pound fire pump down ladders quickly

characteristics and strength measures³⁰. Age, for example, is a characteristic which renders the unspecified physical inferiority of women to be questionable.

Changes in Gendered Measurements of Strength

Contemporary studies demonstrate that training has been shown to improve female performance, thus, further suggesting that measures of physical strength previously cited may not in fact reflect innate inability or be representative of individual potential. A 1997 Army study subjected forty-six women (32 remained to the completion of the study³¹) to a 24-week physical training program which attempted to improve the number of women who could qualify for the “very heavy” Army jobs. Only 3% of women were predicted to qualify for the “very heavy” jobs based on the data used which was used to justify closing many positions to women, as discussed above. The Army 1997 study often referred to as “the Natick Study,” found that training improved women’s physical performance and that the women who qualified for “very heavy” positions rose from 24% at the beginning of the study to 78% after the training. After the training, women’s average lifting strength on a box-lifting task was 118 pounds, or 81 % of the male average. Performance improved on a number of tasks deemed important for assignments deemed “very heavy.” Overall, this study paints a very different picture from the Army study presented at a time when women’s military presence was being stalled.

While the Natick study is not generalizable (neither were the studies chosen to represent women’s physical inferiority in previous Army reports), it demonstrates that physical ability is subject to change with use, training, and social context. At the time of the study, women were prohibited from positions categorized as very heavy, mostly because they were classified as

³⁰ See Phillip Bishop (1987). The study of similarly trained competitive swimmers and non-athletes found that strength differences by sex among both categories were lower than previously thought, were almost entirely linked with muscle size (suggesting differences in habitual behavior), and suggested that Fat Free Weight and Fat Free Cross Sectional Areas may be more useful indicators of strength than sex.

³¹ Although attrition has also been cited as a primary reason for women’s inferiority in military positions, a point which also reveals patriarchal ideologies, this thesis remains focused on physical strength.

direct combat positions, although the Natick study report cites women's interest in such positions as a primary reason for the study to take place (U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine. 1997: 2,3). Further, this report recognizes that social meanings of gender are perhaps a greater influence than actual ability through this statement:

While any decision on whether to allow women into, or exclude them from, combat MOS's is likely to be based primarily on political and emotional factors, experimental results on the physical capabilities of women and their response to training can provide a portion of the data upon which the logical aspect of decisions could be based (U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine. 1997: 3)

Other studies show similar strength results, although many still cite a consistent gap between the categories of men and women as justification for male reserve in certain arenas. Indeed, while some research attributes achievement gaps to physical differences such as higher body fat percentages, and lower body mass, less capacity to build muscle in upper body, it remains unclear whether some of these disparities can be lessened through training that is specific to the various physical configurations (Kraemer et al, 2001) and whether such physical differences are in fact integral to the assignments which are in question. For example, research suggests that ACL injury may be associated with gender differences in movement patterns rather than physiological factors (Beutler et al. 2009). This European study concludes that while physical differences exist across people grouped by sex, the differences should not prohibit groups from entering assignments, however the study makes an exception in their recommendations for direct combat units.

The studies discussed in this section reinforce that individual ability is widely variant, that ability can change with training and overlaps in many measures, and that individual ability is not realized though categorical restrictions. Instead, categorical restrictions (instead of basing qualifications on individual ability) point towards more social motivations and social meanings

about gender and the institutions. Additionally, these studies demonstrate that physical ability is not fixed, but changes over time in relation to training and social limitations.

Social Impacts on Individual Physicality

History demonstrates that political climate and regulations affect human bodies as well as human experiences. Social acceptability and encouragement or prohibitions of certain physical activities have often coincided with the efforts and needs of the U.S. military. For example, following World War I, American's poor physical fitness prompted a governmental push for physical activity and the inception of the National Amateur Athletic Federation (Schultz 2013). While traditional femininity largely prevented women from participating in sports and some kinds of physical labor,³² war preparations encouraged women³² to become physically active in new ways. With World War II, many men and women were again found unfit for military service and there was another government sponsored push for physical fitness. While the position of soldier was still primarily reserved for men, women were given new physical expectations (namely in new labor positions) in the name of war. Another push for physical fitness that affected men, women, and children occurred as a result of Cold War competition and antagonism with Russia (Schultz 2013). As military assignment policies demonstrate, the 1960's and 1970's brought considerable changes in the legal application of sex based discrimination in the civil and military world. This era also introduced new legislation that affected women's and girls' access to sports participation and consequently broadened the social acceptability of women's use of their bodies³³. As a result of considerable effort, Title IX passed in 1973 which called for equality of opportunities in federally funded educational opportunities and is the legislation most

³² Working-class women and women of color were not typically excluded from physical labor the same way that white middle-class women were

³³ This increased socially acceptable use was still affected by gendered expectations, a point which will be further explored below.

commonly associated with increasing girls’ and women’s opportunities for sports participation³⁴. It is argued that such changes in social acceptability and availability of athletic opportunities for women have an observable impact on physical measures (Schultz 2013).

Some observations derived through national health survey data depict a changing physical landscape. While measures like height, expressed in the table below, seem divorced from social contexts, some studies suggest that economic prosperity and even gender equality can be measured historically by looking at height³⁵.

Table 6

Mean Height in Inches by Sex		
Year	Male	Female
2012	71.58	66.37
2010	71.6	66.39
2005	71.72	66.59
2000	71.5	66.39
1995	70.08	64.67
1990	70.1	64.56
1985	70.01	64.44
1980	70.05	64.51
1976	69.99	64.4

Integrated Health Interview Series

Additionally, such historical changes demonstrate the malleability of physical characteristics of both men and women. The tables above and below illustrate historical changes in height and weight of American men and women over the relatively recent history. While weight may be

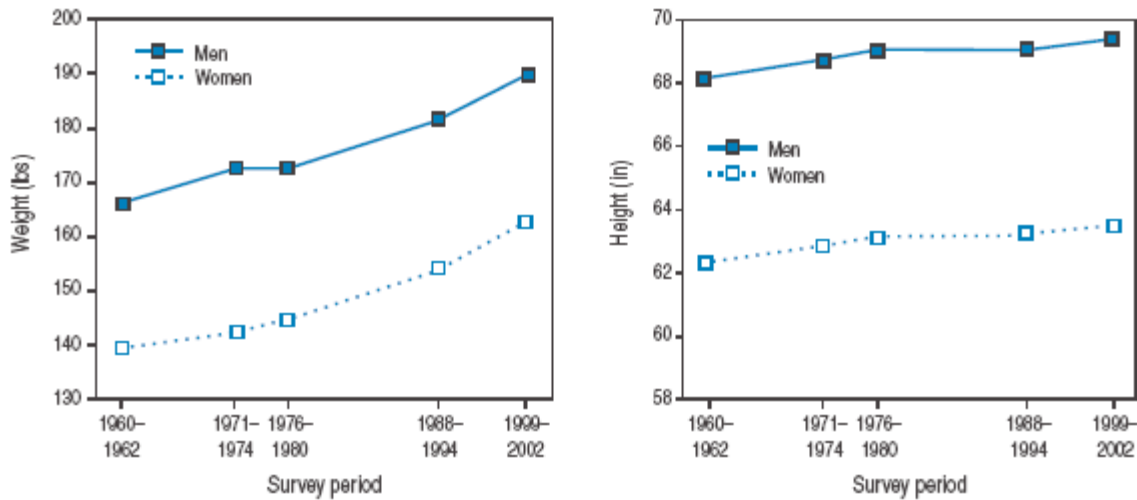
³⁴ However, contemporary studies have found sports opportunities to be unequal in terms of gender, to be difficult to enforce in practice

³⁵ For example, see “Measuring Gender Well-Being with Biological Welfare Indicators” Aravinda Guntupalli and Joerg Baten

associated with increasing obesity, other physical strength measures speak more specifically to the plausible impacts of social organization on physical strength and some are discussed below.

Figure 2

Mean Weight and Height Among Adults Aged 20–74 Years, by Sex and Survey Period — United States, 1960–2002



Source: Center for Disease Control

Physical measures of women in sports and in the general population throughout time also illustrate the potential effects of a changing social climate. For example, one study compared the marathon times of women and men from 1925 to 2004 (Crawley et al, 2008 on Cashmore 2005). The study found that the gap between women’s and men’s marathon times has narrowed. In 2004, women’s times were 92.25% that of men’s, while in 1925, women’s times were 67% that of men. Additionally, women’s times in 2004 were greater than men’s times in 1925. This study not only pointed out how ability improved with use and training, but also how social and political forces worked to preserve a sense of male superiority in sports. Retrospection allows us to see how the seemingly drastic difference in marathon times between men and women³⁶ was likely influenced by the social constraints on women at the time. Indeed, the study pointed out

³⁶ (the 1925 men’s record was 2 hours, 29 minutes and the women’s record was 3 hours, 40 minutes)

social and political forces which not only barred women from many physical activities but likely contributed to a social climate which viewed men as physically superior. For example, Cashmore points out that women were not allowed to compete in marathon running until 1985, that women were excluded from many marathon events, and that women's times largely were not recorded between the late 1920's and the late 1960's.

Regulations which separate and police gender are exemplified in Olympics and professional sports as well and much research has been devoted to this topic. This regulated separation of men and women parallels many aspects of U.S. military operations for men and women. As is the case with sports, the military also uses a similar differential system for determining qualifying scores. While it has been argued that the different scoring systems are ultimately helpful to women, such differences also ensure that men and women are not comparable, and that the category of men is unquestionably physically superior. It is this assumed superiority that affects the lives of women across social locations and in and out of the U.S. military. This phenomenon is exaggerated further in U.S. popular culture, where women's displays of physical competence (in sports, the military, and other arenas) is often sexualized, trivialized, or demonized as unfeminine or un-heterosexual. Time will tell how the proposed gender-neutrality will affect this dynamic³⁷ but several factors point to a strong reserve for masculine hegemony in the U.S. military.

³⁷ Many aspects complicate the mandated gender-neutral qualifications including exceptions and lack of consistency in the understanding of the term "gender-neutral" as well as whether "gender-neutral" will simply retain the standards which have been developed for men, thus advantaging men

Chapter 6

Limitations and Future Research

This thesis was exploratory in nature and focused primarily on macro-level measures of social demographics and institutional structure. Because the historical overview was taken from Congressional and U.S. military policy, and was not derived from lived experiences, contextualized components were nearly entirely missing from this thesis. Future research should investigate individuals' lived experiences, especially pertaining to the dynamics of gender performance that operate within this institutional setting. For example, research has been devoted to understanding how gender accountability influences outcomes in sport and in an R.O.T.C. setting but more research is needed to understanding how social pressures to perform masculinity or femininity influence physical performance in combat situations. This social phenomenon can only be addressed by investigating the lived experiences of individuals.

In addition to lived experience, analysis of the particularities of military culture and climate were largely beyond the scope of this study but could offer important implications for understanding the perpetuation of patriarchal ideologies within the institution. Some considerable differences exist in terms of the legal and social aspects in civilian society as compared with military culture. Enlisted military personnel are governed in ways that differ from U.S. civilians. For example, as a condition of enlistment, many rights are denied enlisted military personnel with military strategy and national security being cited as justification. Demonstrating an interconnected and nuanced relationship between the two realms, history has also demonstrated that litigations successfully brought by military personnel are often replicated in U.S. civilian society. Thus, understanding the considerable distinctions between civilian and military culture may offer insight into the perpetuation of patriarchal ideologies within the U.S. military. Additionally, many parallels and intersections exist between the two realms and

understanding particularities of the U.S. military climate may serve in some ways as an exaggerated reflection of U.S. civilian society, where issues of national security are also evoked as justifications for the loss of individual rights.³⁸

Another limitation of this thesis is the lack of intersectional analysis. Indeed, race, class, and sexuality distinctions are a serious omission and only the most surface level institutional assumptions can be made without taking such contexts into account. While race and class distinctions were illuminated in the review of early U.S. military policy, contemporary politics (following the Civil Rights era) that proclaim formal equality obscure differing institutional effects on racial groups. In contrast to the racial and class composition of the early U.S. military, people of color and people of low socioeconomic status now comprise a large percentage of enlisted military personnel, and research has been devoted to understanding this change. Contemporary research should also explore how gendered social meanings of bodies intersect with racialized and classed understandings of bodies to create differences in experiences among individuals (particularly women) in the military. Similarly, sexuality has been regulated through the military in important ways and such regulations reflect implications for both masculinity and femininity. While lesbians and gay men can now serve openly in the military, trans men and women are still barred from service. Research contextualizing the regulations on sexuality, gender identity, and gender presentation could generate particularly fruitful findings in terms of the institutionalization of patriarchal organization through the regulations of bodies.

This thesis investigated one setting's political treatment of bodies in order to illuminate institutionalized patriarchal patterns and dynamics of social organization within that setting. However, studying an institution based on materials produced by that institution is problematic. Policies present a traceable historical record of official doctrine which is quite enlightening on

³⁸ Two contemporary examples include the U.S. Patriot Act and N.S.A. surveillance.

many fronts but does not create a holistic account of the institution. The policies reviewed in this thesis are not exhaustive. The U.S. military is too vast an institution for the scope of this thesis to provide a thorough review. Each branch of the military is distinctive in many ways and more attention should be paid to policies within each branch and how they each progressed. Because social ideals of gender permeate every policy which distinguishes the sexes, it is beyond the scope of this study to analyze the patriarchal assumptions throughout the history of U.S. armed forces. This thesis instead focuses specifically on an institutional understanding of bodies through major, institution-wide policy changes on assignments of women.

Additionally, feminist analysis of the U.S. military demands a more global perspective. The focus of this thesis has been to understand institutional regulations on bodies within the organization. Yet, to forgo the international effects of the U.S. military on women outside of the organization lends to a limited analysis of women's nuanced and diverse associations with the institution. The U.S. military has a pervasive influence on the lives of many women. The effects of the U.S. military felt by women outside of the military are just as complicated, telling, and important as the experiences of U.S. military women. Some scholars even argue that research focusing on women soldiers can dangerously neglect the institution's militarization of the lives of countless women on a global scale (Enloe 2000). The U.S. military influences the lives of women outside of the military in many diverse ways. For example, just as the historical review demonstrated that the U.S. military relied on women for various non-military roles, the same is true internationally. This relationship is further complicated by the dynamics of war and military occupation. Many women are economically dependent on prostitution surrounding U.S. military bases and rapes between U.S. soldiers and women in occupied countries have been documented in various wartimes, particularly in World War II (Enloe 2007). Additionally, highly gendered discourse is prevalent throughout U.S. military operations including the treatment of male

prisoners (Nagel 1998) and the framing of national and international wartime discourse (Nagel and Feitz 2007).

Finally, future research of the patriarchal regulations of bodies within the U.S. military should contextualize the current neoliberal climate which has provided the landscape for increasing privatization. Many international and U.S. military operatives are now outsourced to Private Military Companies, and this industry's worth is estimated at 100 billion per year (Dunar et al. 2007). The number of private contractors employed by the Department of Defense is expanding rapidly, with a tenfold increase occurring between 1991 and 2006. An estimated 100,000 contract workers were employed by the Department of Defense in December of 2006. This privatization of U.S. war efforts is important in the context of this thesis for a number of reasons. First of all, increasing privatization means that employees hired as contract workers are not subject to many U.S. military policies, protections, and accountabilities. Due to the private nature of these operations, and the limited public accountability, demographic data is not readily available and it may be difficult to determine the number of women who are employed through these contractors. However, important questions are certainly evoked concerning how gender operates within a company that performs U.S. military operatives with only limited or complicated accountability U.S. military policies, U.S. law, or accountability to the global image provoked by U.S. rhetoric of equality and human rights protections. Indeed, the employees hired through Private Military Companies fall under an ambiguous international jurisdiction. This situation which has been argued to spur human rights abuses including rapes and trafficking of women in occupied areas by U.S. contracted employees (Snell 2011). Thus, understanding U.S. military policies only offers insights into a very specific sector and may misrepresent the practical operations carried out under U.S. wartime demands. Further, as the Private Military

Industry has emerged as a lucrative financial pursuit in its own right³⁹, analysis must now focus on the financial motivations of the industry itself rather than understanding U.S. military agendas solely as strategy in the interests of national or imperial interests. A feminist analysis is imperative to a holistic understanding of these complex issues.

Conclusion

Investigating institutional policies through a feminist lens illuminated the particularities of patriarchal power in ways that may otherwise be obscured. While the current U.S. landscape of formal equality makes the patriarchal underpinnings of early U.S. military policies retrospectively visible, contemporary policies are more complex and nuanced. For example, the decreased prohibition against women in traditionally male assignments may provide a transformative avenue for some women (although such subversion in itself is complex and should never be taken as granted) but also may work as a legitimizing force for the institution and negatively impact women in occupied areas. These complex social and historical developments illuminate more about the particular relationships between individuals and institutions when viewed through theoretical lenses pertaining to gender and power.

The theoretical perspectives discussed in chapter three have important implications for the scope and legitimacy of the U.S. military power, both for service members and for the world at large. These theoretical perspectives suggest that institutional power must be examined even when equality is official. Social constructionist perspectives are particularly beneficial for analysis of power when corporeal indicators are used as justification for differential social treatment. The policy that excluded women from combat was rescinded in 2013 and the Department of Defense now calls for the implementation of gender-neutral physical standards. A rhetoric of equality of opportunity is certainly evoked and the particularities of the patriarchal

³⁹ See Dunar, et al, 2007

organization which were so visible before may no longer be as evident. But, despite this shift towards gender equality in policy, many indicators suggest that the U.S. military still relies on dichotomous understandings of sex and therefore a gender-neutral framework must be carefully examined. Social constructionist perspectives argue that gender is performed constantly and that men and women are held accountable to their gender at all times. Further, gendered organizational perspectives highlight how institutionalizing gender-neutral policies within a patriarchal society can reproduce and in fact obscure the maintenance of gender hierarchy. New gender-neutral policies may allow more women legal entrance into traditionally male assignments, but they do not necessarily foster actual gender-neutrality within the assignment. Indeed, U.S. military history has demonstrated discrepancies between official policy and actual practice.

In addition to such discrepancies, informal social and institutional mechanisms may profoundly influence women and men in different ways within these assignments. While individuals may subvert traditional gender norms through participation in this institution, gender-neutral policies cannot erase the multiple sources of power that maintain hypermasculinity as crucial to many military projects. Institutional power may work from within and thus gender-neutral policies may not necessarily lessen the patriarchal organization of the U.S. military. Feminist extensions of Foucault's theory on the internalization of institutional power provide a helpful theoretical tool in understanding how these new gender-neutral policies may operate within a hypermasculine setting. Theory suggests that the dominant ideologies held by the institution are often internalized by individuals who strive to enact those values on their own, thus explicit, external enforcement is not always required. In the context of this thesis, feminist extensions of Foucault's theory of power provided important implications for contradictions

involved in the operation of gender in a hypermasculine setting which evokes gender-neutral policies.

Contradiction are illustrated in research that shows women in hypermasculine settings sometimes hold themselves to dominant standards of femininity and purposefully limit their own physical strength performances (Silva 2008; Brace-Groven 2004; Wellard 2006). In such examples, patriarchal organization is maintained despite gender-neutral institutional policies partly because women and men internalized and strove to maintain patriarchal understandings of men and women in terms of traditional social meanings and hierarchy (particularly a physical strength hierarchy). Additionally, theory and research demonstrates how women can internalize the dominant hypermasculine ideology of the U.S. military in order to gain acceptance, thus performing some traditionally masculine behaviors without subverting or challenging the patriarchal, hierarchical conceptualization of gender.⁴⁰ The above highlights important structural components while theories of female body comportment (Beauvoir 1952; Young 2003) speaks more specifically to how bodies and physicality are connected to national ideologies and institutional practices in complex ways. This thesis contributed to the theoretical understandings of contemporary gender-neutral institutional policies by viewing these new institutional developments through a feminist lens that considers the social construction of gender and bodies as an important tool in the organization of the U.S. military. This thesis highlighted particularities in the shifts in the operation of patriarchal organization throughout different historical eras and pointed to a continued patriarchal orientation despite growing gender-neutral rhetoric and policies.

Specifically, this research has illustrated the institutional maintenance of patriarchal social organization through the regulation of bodies in several ways. First, the historical review

⁴⁰ This was theorized to be the case in the prisoner abuses at Abu Ghraib a woman participated in the sexualized and gendered (feminized) abuse of prisoners. (Enloe 2007; Nagel 1998, 2007).

of U.S. military policies on the assignments of women revealed that assignment restrictions largely coincided with gendered social roles throughout the ages. The U.S. military changed its policies in accordance with military needs and social meanings of gender roles, which transformed over time with social pressures. Indeed, increasing inclusion of women in the post-Vietnam era transpired as a result of multiple pressures, both functional and social. The expiration of the Selective Service Act provoked the military to recruit and enlist more women in order to fill the needed positions. The non-linear landscape of contemporary warfare also meant it was not easy for the military to draw clear cut lines in regard to combat zones, thus making combat as a male-only preserve less defensible. Concurrently, social movement activity including the passage of the Civil Rights Act and litigations brought by the women's movement generated pressures for gender equality from outside the U.S. military. The military's assignments of women followed a path within these parameters. However, it seems apparent that the U.S. military maintains a particularly rigid attachment to gender roles.

This thesis points to the prevalence of gender as an organizational parameter which was persisted throughout the historical periods studied, not only in the lives and relationships of individual men and women, but also as a tool involved in the organization of individuals to serve strategic war efforts. Historically, patriarchal social organization has held particular relevance in terms of war. The mobilization of men and their willingness to fight and sacrifice themselves required a reciprocal understanding of women as needing and appreciating this protection by men. Even if actual accounts demonstrate a more nuanced situation where many women are in fact not protected by the military, this rhetoric has shown to be quite powerful. With this justification in tow, distinctions between men's and women's roles in military service have been protected with impressive vigor, even while the military allows for the inclusion of more women within its traditionally male roles. This contradiction is indicative of a complicated relationship

between military functionality, pressures for equality, and pervasive attachments to patriarchal ideologies of gender.

Second, justifications more explicitly evoked gendered bodily difference (most often physical strength) with increasing formal equality as many gender differences were no longer taken for granted to the same degree that they were in earlier eras. However, social roles and patriarchal ideals of gender and bodies continued to be prominent factors in justifications for assignment restrictions. Despite the historically traceable political origins of social meanings pertaining to the bodies of men and women, these cultural expectations were extremely powerful when they were thought to be inherent or natural. Although countless distinctions still remain between the treatment of women and men in the U.S. military, the rescinding of the combat restriction policy marked an end to this particular long-time justification for different legal treatment. History has demonstrated that allegiance to the gender structure is strong, and has regenerated itself in the past to keep up with changing social expectations. This most recent change in combat restrictions represents the current social landscape of official equality. Since equality of opportunity is the official American rhetoric, discourse surrounding gender has increasingly moved to physical strength justifications to explain differences in status of men and women. However, data on physical strength over time and in relationship with training and opportunity show that the physicality of bodies is not static and that one's sex is not alone predictive of their abilities. Additionally, experiential data has demonstrated women's effectiveness in war. These factors speak to social, rather than biological or even functional reasons for the lasting gendered hierarchy of available assignments. Further, "Operation Enduring Freedom" and "Operation Iraqi Freedom" included more women than any previous war and combat programs demonstrated interesting new configurations of traditional and

subversive patriarchal gender roles.⁴¹ Thus, military strategy may use gender ideologies in complex ways, but foundational aspects of a patriarchal gender structure seem to be retained nevertheless.

Third, this thesis demonstrated the institutionalization of formal equality that is seen in the contemporary U.S. military. Of particular importance is the connection that has historically and currently been made in military and popular culture between military service and social rights. Indeed, highlighted throughout this research is a trend towards an association of equality (of civil rights) with service in or approval of U.S. military operations. The U.S. women's movement has a rich and complicated history with the U.S. military. Connections between responsibility for Selective Service registration for women (and the underlying threat of wartime responsibilities for women if conscription was reinstated) and the validity of the Equal Rights Amendment remain salient today. This dynamic speaks to the increasing inclusion (of people of color, women, and gay men and lesbians) seen as a legitimizing mechanism for the U.S. military. However, a number of contradictions are pronounced throughout this research which renders questionable some of this rhetoric of increasing equality. For example, history reveals that women's assignments did not follow a linear path of increased opportunity, but rather waxed and waned with political climate and military need. Additionally, as gender-neutrality becomes official policy, many symptoms of a hypermasculine institution have remained intact or have been exacerbated.

Further, this thesis argues that increasing formal equality in an institutional setting should not be accepted as unquestionable progress but should be understood as representing complicated, nuanced arrangements that require careful investigation. As is arguably the case in many "color blind" U.S. laws, official rhetoric of equality in fact obscures the racist structural

⁴¹ For example, the Lioness Program

conditions which cause racialized outcomes (Bonilla-Silva 2006). Similarly, gender-neutral policies and qualifications deserve serious attention, especially when notions of physical differences are evoked, since studies have demonstrated that even physical strength is understood and realized through gendered social meanings. This changing landscape of the U.S. military towards increasing inclusion and formal equality must be carefully examined, not only for the purposes of seeking equality for women and other marginalized groups within this institution, but for understanding how such contemporary policies may shape this institution and its influence in society on a national and global scale.

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