When Identity meets Conformity: ethnic, racial, and national identity in the face of U.S. military service

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Abstract - Given its diverse nature, the U.S. military has long played an influential role in expanding the sociological boundaries of the nation. In the U.S. military, diverse service members learn to engage and interact across ethnic, racial and national borders in order to serve a single cause. This research interviewed current and former members of the U.S. military in order to understand the impact of ethnic, racial or national identity on military service perspectives. According to Frederik Barth, ethnic groups and boundaries can remain salient even when individuals cross boundaries and engage with non-group members. However, as Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory helps to uncover, the U.S. military is effective at creating a new in-group amongst recruits through organizational socialization. As such, it was hypothesized that members of the U.S. military would have their perspectives on military service influenced by their ethnic, racial and/or national identity. It was found that such identities negligibly impacted a service member's view of military service.

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List of tables

1.0 Introduction

‘And what sort of soldiers are those you are to lead? Are they reliable? Are they brave? Are they capable of victory?

…

Their story is known to all of you. It is the story of the American man at arms…

…His name and fame are the birthright of every American citizen. In his youth and strength, his love and loyalty, he gave all that mortality can give.’[1]

General Douglas MacArthur
West Point, N.Y., May 12, 1962

This research is about the individuals who choose to don the uniform of their nation. It attempts to see them not as one of many, but rather to understand them as distinctive and unique. Traditionally, they are faceless members of an organization, whose actions are vital to the making of history, but whose names are often forgotten in the retelling. Their participation in the military is a tradition which goes back ten millenium, with the military institution having outlived empires, kingdoms and entire civilizations. Since the late 19th century, the modern military evolved to provide for the protection and continued existence of contemporary nation-states. Today, their unceasing presence is made possible by the enduring phenomenon of division between *us* and *them.* Geopolitical skirmishes between states, unrest on the domestic front, and private interests all fund a continuous necessity for militaries and for people to serve in them.

Over the centuries, philosophers, academics, and researchers have attempted to understand what drives an individual to serve - and potentially give their life for - their respective homeland. Given the plurality of global militaries, the vast differences between people, and the ever changing

[1] Douglas MacArthur, ‘‘Duty, Honor, Country,’’ (speech, West Point, NY, May 12, 1962), Penelope.uchicago.edu. https://bit.ly/Macarthur-speech.

role of geopolitics there is no concrete conclusion to this query. What is known, however, is that in today's world modern militaries tend to be made up of heterogeneous groups of people; individuals with vastly different life experiences, perspectives and identities. Regardless of their background, each enlistee is uniformly transformed to fit the prescribed mold of their respective military. No truer is this reality than in the United States Military (U.S. military). At the time of writing, the U.S. military is the third largest military in the world in terms of active military personnel with nearly 1.4 million individuals currently serving.[2] Recent demographic trends (see section 4.2) of the U.S. military show growing diversity within its ranks, with an increasing number of service members self-identifying as ethnic or racial minorities and women. Given the influence of the U.S. military on U.S. society, this diversification could have lasting impacts for years to come.

The aim of this research is to understand the connection between U.S. military service and ethnic, racial and national identity. Antiquated studies on military service and identity, which date back to the mid 1900s and before, fail to capture the reality of modern trends and practices. As of yet, few studies have been conducted within the last couple years which focus solely on the U.S. Even less so on the potential effects military integration has on personal identity. Studying such a phenomenon, at a time where identity is at the fore of domestic conversations, could offer a glimpse into the future of U.S. integration efforts in the face of competing identities.

It is clear to most living in the U.S. that conversations regarding identity have begun to enter political and private debates. Groups of people, whose voices have once been silenced over the years on the basis of their ethnic, racial, and national background, have been given platforms to speak out and address their identity publicly. While segregation, systemic racism, and ingrained

[2] World Population Review, ed. "Military Size by Country 2022," accessed April, 2022, https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/military-size-by-country.

prejudices, which have kept groups sidelined, have been broken down over the decades, the lasting impact of these policies and behaviors continue to pervade U.S. discourse.

The fact that the U.S. military, an institution which fosters uniformity and homogeneity amongst its ranks, strives for increasing diversity is no less than sanctimonious. However, the efforts on behalf of the institution to integrate have arguably allowed for greater integration in U.S. society. The role the military plays in building the nation is continuous. As the United States continues to diversify so too must its institutions - both civilian and military. It is with the help of such representation that the United States, and its diverse peoples, can consider themselves first and foremost 'Americans'. How effective, then, is the U.S. military in creating a cohesive identity amongst such diverse groups? Through qualitative means, this research set out to understand just this. Focusing mostly on the formative basic training of the U.S. military, this research seeks to determine how salient personal identity is in the face of U.S. military service.

This thesis is broken down into five sections. The first section is a brief overview of U.S. military terminology and structure to provide the reader with a broad understanding of the complex institution and its various components. Second, this research delves into previous studies on identity and military service. Using Frederick Barth's analyses of ethnic groups and boundary creation, this paper attempts to determine what it means to consider oneself a member of a particular group and the influence this identity has amongst intergroup behavior, particularly in the case of military service. Next, using Henri Tajfel's theory on social identity, this research breaks down in-group and out-group formation and its impacts in the case of military service and identity. Additionally, this research looks at the theory of organizational socialization to better understand how and why an organization socializes its members into its structure and how the U.S. military, as an organization, undertakes such an operation. The third section of this research is

meant to contextualize the findings. This section will break down the relationship between nation-building and the U.S. military, review past and current demographic trends of the U.S. military, and provide an overview of how the U.S. military conducts recruitment and basic training. The fourth section covers the methodology and empirical research undertaken. The final section is where I present my findings in an effort to determine the saliency of identity in U.S. military service members.

This research was sparked by my personal connections to members of the U.S. military. After reviewing academic texts on militaries, I found that often such research does not consider the individual but rather the collective. In order to combat this trite understanding of military members, this research looked at U.S. military members as individuals, rather than as members of an aggregate. I found that within my personal relationships with current and former military members, there exist unheard narratives and uncovered insights which could expand the field of military sociology and broaden our interpretation of what it means to serve your nation.

2.0 Overview of Military Terms and Structures

There is no denying that the U.S. military is a complex institution. In 2015, the Department of Defense (DoD) was named the world's largest employer by the World Economic Forum, employing around 3.2 million people.[3] Of those 3.2 million people, 2.1 million were military personnel.[4] This means, in the United States, about 6.5 individuals out of 1.000 are either active

[3] Henry Taylor, "Who Is the World's Biggest Employer? the Answer Might Not Be What You Expect," *World Economic Forum*, 2015, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/06/worlds-10-biggest-employers/?link=mktw.
[4] World Population Review, 2022.

duty, reservists, or paramilitary. Due to the immense size of the U.S. military, its capabilities are broken down into strict hierarchies and various service branches.

For the sake of this paper, the phrases *U.S. military, the armed services*, and *the armed forces* will be used interchangeably. They are catch-all phrases, representing the six major branches plus the National Guard. The six branches are the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, Coast Guard[5], and Space Force. The seventh branch, the National Guard, is unique in that it holds both state and federal responsibilities, such as support during natural disasters. For this research, '(former) military member' is considered an individual who is (or was) officially employed by the DoD or Department of Homeland Security, and served in any of the seven branches listed above. Thus, they must have undergone the required training, both physical and educational.

Within the U.S. military there exists a complex structure of hierarchies and formal titles. Division exists not only between ranks and seniority, but also between levels of obtained education. The U.S. military is an all volunteer force (AVF), meaning that those serving do so out of their own choosing. Around 200,000 people choose to join the U.S. military each year. Of those, 180,000 are enlisted and 20,000 are officers.[6] To become an officer, an individual must hold a four-year bachelor's degree. They can become officers through four different avenues; 1) via the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), 2) by attending Officer Candidate School (OCS), 3) by enrolling in a military or service academy such as the U.S. Military Academy, or 4) through a direct commission (meant for professionals in the field of law, medicine, and religion). Becoming an officer means undertaking leadership responsibilities and overseeing enlisted personnel. These

[5] The Coast Guard is not under the purview of the DoD, rather it is controlled by the Department of Homeland Security

[6] Department of Defense, "What's the Difference? Enlisted vs. Officer.'' ASVAB Career Exploration Program, accessed April, 2022. https://www.asvabprogram.com/media-center-article/66#:~:text=Enlisted%20personnel%20have%20specialties%20within,provide%20orders%2C%20and%20assign%20tasks.

assignments include planning missions, providing orders, and assigning tasks.[7] Enlisted members, on the other hand, must have at least a high school diploma in order to join the forces. Their responsibilities are specific, often requiring them to perform a definite task and duty. This research focuses purely on enlisted members of the military, be they current or former. The reason for this is the process which they must undertake to join, namely their participation in basic training (see section 4.3). Each branch names their initiation process differently, be it Basic Military Training (U.S. Air Force), Basic Combat Training (U.S. Army), or Recruit Training (U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps). 'Basic training' will be used throughout the paper to represent all forms of initiation training. The path for officers does not require them to participate in traditional basic training. Rather, their initiation process is conducted differently from the basic training of enlisted members. While officers learn to *lead* during their initiation phase, enlisted members learn to *follow*. This distinction follows recruits once they leave basic training and enter into the military workforce.

3.0 Literature Review

The military has been a focus of research for centuries, if not millenia. Therefore, literature on the topic of militaries is extensive. The focus of this research zeros in on theories covering the role of ethnic groups, in-group/out-group dynamics, and organizational socialization in creating a military identity. Given the prevalence of literature on these topics it will be impossible to include all relevant literature. Therefore, the focus of this section is to provide a general synopsis of each aforementioned topic and their relevance to the research.

[7] Department of Defense, "What's the Difference? Enlisted vs. Officer.''

3.1 Frederik Barth's Ethnic Group and Boundary Creation

The concept of ethnicity has often been in debate. There are many definitions of ethnicity, each having been coined and utilized within various fields. Anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Harold Isaacs, for example, accentuate the primordial origins of the word saying that human ethnicity originates via 'basic group identity' whereby belonging is vital to human beings.[8] Sociologist Herbat Gans,[9] believes that ethnicity is symbolic and that the 'symbolic ethnicity' of immigrant cultures will eventually become obsolete as descendents are forced to assimilate. Others, such as Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan emphasize the role of ethnic groups as interest groups capable of mobilizing entire populations while minimizing the role of culture.[10] While contentious in its meaning, for the sake of this research the concept of ethnicity will be drawn from social anthropologist Frederik Barth and his view on ethnic group and boundary creation.

Ethnicity is often considered fluid rather than fixed. This notion emerged when Barth hypothesized that rather than being biologically or territorially determined, ethnicity is influenced by the following:[11] 1) ethnicity is determined by social organization rather than culture; 2) ethnic identity bases itself on self-identification and attribution, and therefore can change; and 3) the basis of social organization is not cultural. Rather, the ethnic and social boundary is determined via

[8] Kathleen Conzen, et al., "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12, no. 1 (1992): 3–41. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27501011.
[9] Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, no. 1 (1979): 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.1979.9993248.
[10] Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan. *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*. Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T. Press, 1970.
[11] Eloise Hummel, "Standing the Test of Time – Barth and Ethnicity," *Observatori: Centre d'Estudis Australians, Australian Studies Centre*, no. 13 (2014). https://doi.org/10.1344/co20141346-60, 49.

interaction with 'others'. The flexible nature of ethnicity means truly understanding ethnicity and its boundaries can be difficult, if not impossible.

According to Frederik Barth, ethnicity and culture are still interlaced. Barth says that culture is simply a way of describing human behavior.[12] Each culture corresponds to a particular ethnicity with certain differences existing between each ethnic unit.[13] Whereas previous research on ethnic units put common culture as a central factor, Barth alludes to this as an 'implication or result' of ethnic group organization.[14] Barth also determined that these boundaries between ethnic units exist even when individuals cross group lines and flow between them. The persistence of ethnic units alludes to a social process by which exclusion and incorporation maintain categories.[15] In short, Barth's theory of ethnic boundaries holds that ethnic boundaries can be maintained even as group members transition between groups. This allows culture to emerge from ethnic group formation rather than being the gatekeeping variable of a given ethnic group.

Important to understanding Barth's view on ethnic groups is the role of boundary creation. Social researchers discovered that ethnic groups maintain their identity even when members engage with non-group individuals.[16] Territorial boundaries no longer play as large of a role in ethnic group creation as was once thought. Hence, boundaries differentiating ethnic groups are not physical. Members of ethnic groups can engage in intergroup socialization and still maintain their perceived belonging to a particular group. Previous research on this subject shows that ethnic boundaries, while complex, are durable in various contexts.[17]

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[12] Frederik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Waveland Press, 1998, 9.
[13] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 9.
[14] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 11.
[15] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 9.
[16] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 15.
[17] **See** Telles, Edward E., and Christina A. Sue. *Durable Ethnicity: Mexican Americans and the Ethnic Core*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019; Ozgen, Z. "Maintaining Ethnic

Individuals who affiliate with an ethnic group are dependent on the role of other group members. Fellow group members must consider each other of the same ilk in order to help form the group. As Barth coins it, members of the same ethnic group must acknowledge that they are 'playing the same game.'[18] Meaning, certain criteria are met and judgements are made regarding the fulfillment of such criteria. By acknowledging the existence of others as being fellow group members, ethnic groups have the potential to expand and diversify social relationships.[19] The value of the in-group perception is necessary in maintaining boundaries when intergroup socialization occurs. Henri Tajfel,[20] who helped pioneer in-group dynamics, believes that being part of an in-group means one considers themselves a part of a social category. Additionally, this form of membership brings with it a feeling of self-esteem, and connection with fellow members.

Vital to boundary formation is the us-vs-them dichotomy. Non-group members, strangers who do not fulfill the criteria to become members of certain ethnic groups, help to maintain boundaries. Contact between individuals of different cultures has the possibility of contributing to ethnic boundary maintenance. However, only if both groups exhibit distinct behavioral differences.[21] That being said, as Barth notes, interactions between ethnic groups could have the tendency to reduce inter-ethnic differences. The reason for this being the social life in which two ethnic groups encounter each other.[22] In diverse societies there is a greater chance for intergroup socialization to occur. Poly-ethnic societies, such as the United States, expect integration to occur

Boundaries in 'Non-Ethnic' Contexts: Constructivist Theory and the Sexual Reproduction of Diversity." *Theory and Society* 44, no. 1 (2014): 33–64. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-014-9239-y; .

[18] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 15.

[19] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 15.

[20] Henri Tajfel, John C Turner, S Worchel, and W.G. Austin. "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour," Essay. In *Psychology of Intergroup Relation,* 7–24. Chicago: Hall Publishers, 1986. 15.

[21] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 15.

[22] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 15.

in the economic marketplace, whereby the state system is controlled by one ethnic group.[23] However, cultural diversity is still allowed to flourish in religious and domestic sectors.[24] Given the frequency in which different ethnicities may interact with one another in a poly-ethnic society, it begs the question what impact this contact may have on the minority group. As Barth notes, merely reducing cultural differences between groups does not lead to a reduction in organization or boundary maintenance.[25] When two groups interact, those comprising the less industrialized and more dependent group have three strategies to choose from when pursuing greater participation in the social system. These basic strategies include: 1) incorporation into the pre-established industrial society and cultural group; 2) accepting their minority status, while seeking to reduce disadvantages which come with it; and 3) choosing to emphasize their ethnic identity while organizing and developing new positions and patterns not formerly found within the society.[26] Each avenue leads to their respective outcomes, these being 1) a retention of a culturally conservative, low-articulating ethnic group; 2) effective assimilation of the minority groups; and 3) an increase in nativist movements.[27] From this, an assumption can be made that the lasting stability of societies is dependent on the actions and behaviors of minority groups and those of the host population.

By reviewing Barth's theory of Ethnic Groups and Boundaries a trend can be drawn out. That being, 1) ethnic groups are durable within polyethnic societies and during intergroup interactions; 2) that stability in such societies is dependent on both minority and majority actions and behaviors; and 3) that new ethnic groups can be formed and new cultures can emerge. Given

[23] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 16.
[24] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 16.
[25] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 33.
[26] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 33.
[27] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 33.

the diversity of the United States today and the existence of its numerous ethnic groups, there exists the question of how to effectively foster ethnic groups and boundary formation while contributing to a strong and inclusive society?

3.1.1 Ethnic Group and Boundary Creation in Military Settings

Poly-ethnic societies have existed since antiquity. Ancient empires throughout the Middle East, Rome, and Ancient China have all developed militaries to be diverse conglomerations, incorporating the ethnic, religious and racial groups found within their territory.[28] Given the persistence of ethnic group boundaries in poly-ethnic societies, it is no wonder that maintaining peaceful relations between groups is vital for stability. Arguably, it is here where the military plays its greatest role: to foster peaceful intergroup relationships within a society.

This belief is exemplified during the time of the poly-ethnic Habsburg Empire. At the turn of the 20th century, while the empire was composed of numerous ethnicities and religious groupings, the Habsburg army acted as an extension of society.[29] It was this institution which trained Habsburg inhabitants in citizenship and educated them on the new world order.[30] During their time in the military, recruits learned to identify themselves as part of a 'larger political self.'[31] To undertake this process, the military facilitates integration and homogeneity by emphasizing

[28] Nandor F. Dreisziger, *Ethnic Armies: Polyethnic Armed Forces from the Time of the Habsburgs to the Age of the Superpowers*. (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Pr., 1990), Abstract.
[29] Benjamin J. Manuatu, "Guardians of the Empire Nationalism and the Habsburg Army," *Central Europe Yearbook* 3 (2021): 162–79. 164.
[30] Manuatu, ''Guardians of the Empire,'' 164.
[31] Lucian W. Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," in *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, ed. John J. Johnson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 69-68.

hierarchy, rationality, and social mobility opportunities.[32] As articulated in this quote by a Habsburg officer in 1911;

> *Every year in October we conscript men who have, as often as not, undergone a preliminary training in nationalist, anti-Austrian atmospheres and have been educated as irredentists or anti-militarists, or who, being illiterate, know less than nothing of the world; and out of such material we have to fashion intelligent responsible individuals and enthusiastic citizens.*[33]

As this quote indicates, the role of Habsburg military training was to change those who comprised its forces to better serve the monarch through 'patriotic' means. Utilizing its polyethnicity to its advantage, the army of the Habsburg Empire could use their demographic makeup as an appeasement to the ethnic groups living within the empire's territory and to promote ethnic integration and unity.[34]

With the emergence of nationalism in the early 1900s, the role of the military continued to evolve. No longer were individuals serving on behalf of a monarch, but rather on behalf of a nation and the ideals and community it represented. According to Ernest Gellner, a nation's capabilities were dependent on a population which is mobile and literate, with a standardized culture and an interchangeable population.[35] Thus, militaries had to promote education and cultural identity amongst its members, a task which came to be incredibly difficult for poly-ethnic societies such as the United States. As will be discussed in section 4.1, the United States, a nation of immigrants, faced a unique challenge at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Its continued diversity, however unique, was an issue which the U.S. military was poised to help solve.

[32] Sven Gunnar Simonsen, "Building 'National' Armies—Building Nations?" *Armed Forces & Society* 33, no. 4 (2007): 571–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x06291347. 573.
[33] A. Brosch von Aarenau, "Am Vorabend der sweijahrigen Dienstzeit," Danzers Arneezetuna, 12 January 1911.
[34] Dreisziger, *Ethnic Armies,* 3.
[35] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publisher Limited, 1983), 46.

But how effective is the military in diminishing group boundaries? A 2011 study on ethnic boundaries in the Dutch armed forces[36] and a 2012 study on the Israeli Army (IDF)[37] found that ethnic boundaries continued to exist even within the military context. M. Martens found that in the Netherlands minority service members perceived their ethnic boundaries most concretely[38] while the ethnic majority did not consider the ethnic background of fellow servicemen. Instead, the ethnic majority group claimed to look at the ideological resolve and personal character of an individual when making a judgment. However, during moments of irritation between groups or when the military was not mentioned in a given anecdote, the majority population was more inclined to identify their fellow members as belonging to a minority group.[39] Alternatively, ethnic minority servicemen, particularly muslims, mentioned how their personal ethnic identities came to the fore when deployed to muslim majority countries. As one respondent put it when describing their deployment to an Islamic country: 'here you are seen initially as a Moroccan and thereafter as a Dutchman.'[40] Additionally, a respondent in the study by Martens mentioned how ethnic boundaries were redefined after the attack on 9/11. Muslim minority servicemen felt the need to 'explain themselves for actions made by individuals whom they do not know.'[41] It is clear that this study showed the durability of ethnic boundaries even within military settings. As the author mentions, the saliency of ethnic identity is dependent on events.[42]

[36] M.J. Martens, "Ethnic Boundaries within the Dutch Armed Forces: A Case Study at the Royal Marechaussee." Dissertation, Tilburg University. Organisatiewetenschappen, 2011.
[37] Dana Kachtan, "The Construction of Ethnic Identity in the Military—From the Bottom Up." *Israel Studies* 17, no. 3 (2012): 150–75. https://doi.org/10.2979/israelstudies.17.3. 150.
[38] Martens, ''Ethnic Boundaries within the Dutch Armed Forces,'' 35-36.
[39] Martens, ''Ethnic Boundaries within the Dutch Armed Forces,'' 35-36.
[40] Martens, ''Ethnic Boundaries within the Dutch Armed Forces,'' 36.
[41] Martens, ''Ethnic Boundaries within the Dutch Armed Forces,'' 36.
[42] Martens, ''Ethnic Boundaries within the Dutch Armed Forces,'' 60.

D. Kachtan studied the creation, maintenance and perpetuation of ethnicity in the IDF. It was found that ethnic differences, and therefore boundaries, are emphasized on a micro-level. Soldiers on the bottom level perpetuate ethnic differences through daily behaviors and practices.[43] Looking at a case study of two Isreali brigades, Kachtan found that in the IDF ethnic identity does not 'disappear in the course of military service' instead they 'become more obvious and noticeable.'[44] Therefore the author was able to challenge the claim that militaries work as 'melting pots' for their given society.[45] Just as Barth asserts, ethnic group boundaries have the ability to emerge and endure in certain situations while also breaking down and disappearing in the next.[46]

Given that modern day militaries experience situational group boundary development, assuaging intergroup conflict within military society is vital. One way the U.S. military undertakes this process is through the creation of a single military 'ethnicity.'[47] According to James Daley, the military can be considered an ethnic identity due to its strong association with identity. In this text, 'identity' is used as a category of practice. 'Ethnic identity,' in this sense is used practically to define people based on commonalities such as religion, geography, or historic events.[48] It is through these experiences that a group of people is bonded, thus creating an ethnic backdrop to their everyday life.[49] While ethnic identity can be powerful, its potency is not guaranteed.[50] An individual's personal identity, orientation to a reference group, or attributed identity can all influence the strength of one's ethnic identity.[51] To consider the U.S. military as a fully-fledged

[43] Kachtan, 'The Construction of Ethnic Identity in the Military,' 167.
[44] Kachtan, 'The Construction of Ethnic Identity in the Military,' 169.
[45] Kachtan, 'The Construction of Ethnic Identity in the Military,' 167.
[46] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 30.
[47] James G. Daley, and Carlton Munson. "Understanding the Military as an Ethnic Identity," Essay. In *Social Work Practice in the Military,* 291–303. New York: Routledge, 2010.
[48] Daley, ''Understanding the Military,'' 291.
[49] Daley, ''Understanding the Military,'' 291.
[50] Daley, ''Understanding the Military,'' 292.
[51] Daley, ''Understanding the Military,'' 292.

identity, one must understand the initiation process an individual goes through in order to be considered a member of the military group. As will be discussed more fully in section 4.3, rituals are planted into new recruits during basic training, their first introduction to military society.[52] Upon successful completion of the basic training phase, recruits are officially considered a member of the military group. They have adopted new customs, such as a new form of communication, adhere to strict hierarchical principles, and are given the right to wear their military uniform. These customs, unique to the military, separate it from non-military (civilian) life, subsequently creating a coherent military ethnic identity.

It is within the creation of a military identity, that concepts of us-vs-them become all the more poignant. Just like with ethnic boundaries, in-group and out-group dynamics reinforce the military boundary and restructures how an individual perceives themself. Though Martens and Kachtan showed that ethnic boundaries and identities continue to exist within military contexts, their contributions fail to touch upon the incredibly heterogenous and poly-ethnic reality of the United States along with the country's 200 plus years of immigration and integration efforts. The United States' unique past with minority groups meant its military has spent decades, if not centuries, playing a pivotal role in helping to integrate and assimilate newcomers to the country.

The above review of Frederik Barth's ethnic groups and boundary formation theory was meant to show the reader the saliency of ethnic groupings within poly-ethnic societies. In addition, an overview of recent research conducted on ethnic groups within military contexts, provides evidence for how relevant ethnic groups and boundary formation are in understanding military identity and its role in nation-building. The next section is a review of literature on in-group and

[52] Daley, ''Understanding the Military,'' 293.

out-group formation and how social identity and self-categorization influences identity formation in military contexts.

3.2 Henri Tajfel Social Identity Theory - In-Group / Out-Group

As group beings, all humans desire to belong. Through Social Identity Theory, Henri Tajfel elaborated on this idea. Tajfel[53] claimed that an individual obtains a sense of who they are in relation to their group membership(s). This process naturally gives a person a sense of identity by forming in-groups (those who are) and out-groups (those who are not). Social identity is defined as 'the individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to a certain social group together with some emotional and value significance to him/her of the group membership.'[54] In other words, individuals perceive themselves as belonging to a certain group, in so far as there exists salient personal identifiers (e.g. 'I like the color blue') which can thus distinguish them from other individuals[55] (e.g. 'I am a supporter of team Y').[56] Social Identity Theory takes the formation of in-groups and out-groups and supposes that in-group members will seek to heighten their self-image by attributing negative characteristics to the out-group.

Tajfel and Turner (1986) define 'group' as 'a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition to themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the

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[53] Henri Tajfel, John C. Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," Essay. In *Organizational Identity: A Reader*, 56–65, 1979.
[54] Henri Tajfel and Serge Moscovici, "Introduction à la psychologie sociale," *Paris, Larotzsse* (1972): 260-278.
[55] Dominic Abrams, and Michael A. Hogg, "An introduction to the social identity approach," *Social identity theory: Constructive and critical advances* (Michigan: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990): 1-9. 4.
[56] Abrams, ''An Introduction to the Social Identity Approach,'' 4.

evaluation of their group and of the membership in it.'[57] In other words, Tajfel and Turner believe that in-group dynamics are vital in creating group cohesion. Similar to Barth's belief that groups are gate kept by those already existing within the group, so too do Tajfel and Turner consider fellow members vital to group formation. One cannot simply identify themselves as a member of a group without the support and acceptance of those who are already members.

Tajfel also found that perceptions amongst in-group members can be dependent on out-group members. In 1965 Henri Tajfel and John Dawson[58] looked at newly arriving people of color from the British Commonwealth who came to Britain. At the start of their study, their subjects perceived themselves as 'British'. It was only once they moved to the British mainland that their internal perspectives changed. Once they became aware that the majority British population saw them as outsiders rather than fellow Brits, their personal identifications changed. This behavior led to the new arrivals becoming aware of their status as a minority group. Thus, the minority in-group developed new attitudes which dictated how they perceived themselves.

According to Tajfel, national in-groups and out-groups are formed - and solidified - during childhood.. Tajfel found that children are able to perceive the social minority status amongst individuals, regardless of their numerical prominence. This confirmed that ethnocentrism crystallized in children as they learned to prefer fellow nationals over foreigners.[59] In-groups are thus reinforced during childhood, which is an incredibly formative time in an individual's life.

In-group feeling can also be forged later in life. In 1970 Tajfel determined that merely classifying someone as an in-group member is enough to provide them with a sense of affinity

[57] Tajfel et al., "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour." 15.
[58] Henri Tajfel and Dawson John L. M, *Disappointed Guests: Essays by African, Asian, and West Indian Students* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).
[59] Tajfel, Henri, et al., "The Devaluation by Children of Their Own National and Ethnic Group: Two Case Studies," *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 11, no. 3 (1972): 235–43. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8260.1972.tb00808.x.

towards fellow group members..[60] This 'minimal group paradigm', as it came to be known, meant that individuals can perceive themselves as in-group members on the 'basis of trivial *ad hoc* criterion.'[61] This finding by Tajfel led to a revelation; merely perceiving oneself as a member of a group is enough to attribute positive characteristics to fellow in-group members.

Another one of Tajfel's lasting contributions to the field of social psychology came from his experiments on social categorization processes. In 1972 Tajfel published a piece whereby he claimed that positive social identity emerged from comparisons between social groups.[62] He postulated that intergroup comparisons were dependent on a maintenance of positive values distinct to a given group. Thus, membership to a particular group gives an individual a social identity which defines their standing and place in society. This requires an internalization of the group's values. This concept is vital to Tajfel's Social Identity Theory which today is still being used by social psychologists and sociologists to understand in-group and intergroup behaviors.

3.2.1 Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory

Social identity theory places categorization at its center. When a particular category incorporates an individual, social identity becomes relevant. For example, investment in a national team to win the World Cup football match could come down to the social identity one has with that respective nation. This represents the involvement, concern and pride one has with being a member of a particular group. Reference groups, then, become salient when individuals self-

[60] Henri Tajfel, "Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination," *Scientific American* 223, no. 5 (1970): 96–103. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24927662.
[61] Henri Tajfel, and W. Peter Robinson, *Social Groups and Identities: Developing the Legacy of Henri Tajfel*, (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996), 15.
[62] Tajfel and Robinson, *Social groups and Identities*, 16.

categorize via social comparison.[63] Social Identity Theory claims that the social identity of an individual is exemplified via social comparison between in-and-out-groups.[64] Self-categorization theory developed from social identity theory. According to self-categorization theory there is a strong emphasis on social-cognition when it comes to group membership. Where Social Identity Theory focuses on intergroup relations, self-categorization theory attends to the role of intragroup processes. These being, among other, conformity and cohesiveness.[65] Individuals who self-categorize as part of an in-group tend to accentuate their group's prototypes, stereotypes and norms.[66] Research on self-categorization has tended to focus specifically on three areas:[67] 1) social influence, such as conformity and group polarization; 2) social perceptions, such as stereotyping; and 3) group solidarity and cohesiveness.

Social identity is tightly bound to group identification.[68] Literature on the topic of social identity and group identification has determined two qualities which are relevant to this paper's current research. The first being that social and group identification takes place when an individual experiences the successes and failures of the group. Such identifiers are even maintained during experiences 'involving great loss or suffering, missed potential benefits, [and] task failure.'[69]

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[63] Volker C. Franke, "Duty, Honor, Country: The Social Identity of West Point Cadets," *Armed Forces & Society* 26, no. 2 (2000): 175–202. http://www.jstor.org/stable/45346361. 176.
[64] Abrams, "An Introduction to the Social Identity Approach." 3.
[65] Tajfel and Robinson, *Social groups and Identities,* 68.
[66] Tajfel and Robinson, *Social groups and Identities,* 69.
[67] Tajfel and Robinson, *Social groups and Identities,* 69.
[68] Blake E Ashforth and Fred Mael, "Social Identity Theory and the Organization," *Management Review* 14, no. 1 (1989): 20–39.
[69] Ashforth and Mael, ''Social Identity Theory and the Organization,'' 21. **See** R. W. Brown, *Social psychology*, the second edition. (New York: Free Press 1986); Henri Tajfel, Instrumentality, identity and social comparisons, In *H. Tajfel (Ed.). Social identity and intergroup relations,* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press 1982), 483-507; J.C. Turner, ''The experimental social psychology of intergroup behavior,'' In *J.C. Turner & H. Giles (Eds.), Intergroup behaviour,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1981), 66-101

Second, that social identification and internalization can be distinguished from one another.[70] For example, while identification often considers the self when determining social categories (I am), internalization tends to incorporate 'values, attitudes and so forth within the self as guiding principles (I believe).'[71] This means that individuals are not beholden to the values and attitudes held by a group. While individuals can define themselves as a member of a certain group, organization or institution, they are free to disagree internally with the values, strategy, and system of authority which exists within such bodies.[72] When it comes to the military context, group formation, belonging, and association is important for the system to function accordingly. Thus, while individuals are expected to bind themselves to the group, their internal attitudes and principles are allowed to stay their own.

3.2.2 Social Identity Theory - In-Group / Out-Group and Military Settings

The idea that the military identity is a social identity has been commonly accepted.[73] Tajfel's Social Identity Theory has been used in social research to understand a variety of military contexts. Those wishing to study group and individual identities find the military context of particular interest. This is because identities and group behavior impact the cohesion of militaries.[74] It is accepted that militaries require a relatively high degree of social cohesion.[75]

[70] Ashforth and Mael, ''Social Identity Theory and the Organization,'' 21.
[71] Ashforth and Mael, ''Social Identity Theory and the Organization,'' 21-22.
[72] Ashforth and Mael, ''Social Identity Theory and the Organization,'' 22.
[73] Mal Flack and Leah Kite, "Transition from Military to Civilian: Identity, Social Connectedness, and Veteran Wellbeing," *PLOS ONE* 16, no. 12 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0261634.
[74] David E Rohall et al., "The Role of Collective and Personal Self-Esteem in a Military Context," *Current Research in Social Psychology*, 01-13, 22 (2014): 10–21.
[75] Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn, "Health, Wartime Stress, and Unit Cohesion: Evidence from Union Army Veterans," *Demography* 47, no. 1 (2010): 45–66. https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.0.0095.

Effective performance is dependent on having individual members function as a group. Thus, friction between individual members cannot be tolerated, especially in a high-stress environment such as military deployments and frontline war zones.

Identity development is vital for military group cohesion to form. Traditionally, identities circulate around categories of nationality, ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, and political ideology.[76] However, when it comes to military contexts, identity can be strongly bound to service members' company, unit or military occupation. Either way, norms and values play a large role in an individual's behavioral and attitudinal choices.[77] The ability for an identity to be prominent in a certain situation is dependent on the accessibility of that identity in the given context.[78] Sheldon Stryker theorized that identities were hierarchical, whereby when identities come into conflict, it is the salience of the identity, as well as the commitment one has to that identity, which determines whether a particular identity is invoked.[79] He believed that the stronger the commitment, the more an individual is able to correlate their identity to their 'wants.'[80] Additionally, the more committed a person is to their identity, the greater the possibility that the individual will perform their role consistent with that of their identity's expectations.[81] Thus, as this research attempts to uncover, the saliency of a U.S. military member's ethnic, racial, or national identity, may be impacted and influenced by their association with their military identity.

Self-understanding and group membership is bound strongly together. As Tajfel pointed out, an individual's understanding of themselves is dependent on having knowledge of their social

[76] Franke, "Duty, Honor, Country'' 176.
[77] Franke, "Duty, Honor, Country'' 176.
[78] Franke, "Duty, Honor, Country'' 176.
[79] Sheldon Stryker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 30, no. 4 (1968): 558. https://doi.org/10.2307/349494. 560.
[80] Franke, ''Duty, Honor, Country,'' 176.
[81] Stryker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance,'' 562.

group membership while also experiencing an emotional attachment to the group.[82] While multiple identities exist in every individual, the most important identities tend to have the greatest influence on an individual's decisions while peripheral identities affect decisions only in particular circumstances.[83] This is true when it comes to the role of individual identities in a military context. Given the impact of the military identity on individuals, their personal identities - be they ethnic, racial, or national - which they held before joining the service, may be relegated to a sidelined role after becoming a member of the military in-group.

Previous research on military contexts and social identity theory have covered topics such as leadership acceptance during deployments,[84] social identity of cadets,[85] and personal self-esteem in the military.[86] Further studies on social identity and the military have confirmed that 'in the extreme military context…soldiers value their professional identity above other social identities.'[87] Combatants, for example, are motivated to fight on the basis of group pressures, such as their regard for fellow comrades, respect for their leadership, worry about their own reputation and a want to contribute to group success.[88] A 2000 study on social identity and military service found that cadets who attended the United States Military Academy at West Point (USMA) were

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[82] Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 255.
[83] Franke, ''Duty, Honor, Country,'' 176.
[84] Marenne Mei Jansen and Roos Delahaij, "Leadership Acceptance through the Lens of Social Identity Theory: A Case Study of Military Leadership in Afghanistan," *Armed Forces & Society* 46, no. 4 (2019): 657–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x19845027.
[85] Franke, ''Duty, Honor, Country.''
[86] Rohall, ''The Role of Collective and Personal Self-esteem in a Military Context,'' 10.
[87] James Griffith, "Being a Reserve Soldier," *Armed Forces & Society* 36, no. 1 (2009): 38–64. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x08327819, **quoted in:** Kara A. Arnold, Catherine Loughlin, and Megan M Walsh, "Transformational Leadership in an Extreme Context." *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 37, no. 6 (2016): 774–88. https://doi.org/10.1108/lodj-10-2014-0202, 7.
[88] David Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. (New York: Little, Brown and Co, 2009).

'prepared effectively 'to fight and win the nation's wars.''[89] Male cadets in particular identify with the 'warrior' image, while remaining noncommittal to UN or non-combat missions.[90] Ultimately showing that the nation is strongly associated with the military identity, at least within the officer ranks.

Military socialization, especially that which occurs during basic training, is effective at disconnecting a recruit from their social past and creating and developing a new identity strongly aligned with the military. This indoctrination phase has an overarching goal for all recruits; 'to train recruits/cadets physically and mentally and instill in them an understanding of, and willingness to live by, the values held by each service.'[91] In other words, the indoctrination of basic training is meant to change an individual from a civilian to a military member, making them a 'part of something larger, a collective group that shares a unique identity.'[92] Thus, basic training has three definite goals: 1) eliminate attributes of an individual which are harmful to military life, 2) give individuals the ability to kill when possible, and 3) instill in recruits the capability of seeing themselves as a collective.[93] This 'powerful identity-shaping process' establishes in recruits new cognitive references such as identity images, values, norms and attitudes which are meant to guide their decisions throughout their time in the military.[94] It is expected that these cognitive changes continue throughout the recruits time serving in the military.

[89] Franke, ''Duty, Honor, Country,'' 195.
[90] Franke, ''Duty, Honor, Country,'' 195.
[91] Dennis McGurk et al., "Joining the Ranks: the Role of Indoctrination in Transforming Civilians to Service Members," *Praeger Security International*, 2006, Abstract. **See also** Paul E. Funk II, ''Enlisted Initial Entry Training Policies and Administration,'' *Department of the Army,* (Fort Eustis, Virginia: August, 2019).
[92] McGurk, ''Joining the Ranks,'' Abstract.
[93] McGurk, ''Joining the Ranks,'' Abstract.
[94] Franke, ''Duty, Honor, Country,'' 178.

Turning military members from individuals to collective members of an in-group is done through strategic training. It is during basic training that new recruits learn how to view themselves as a part of a new in-group and distance themselves from their previous identifying out-group. The role of social identity in creating in-groups, especially amongst military personnel, is to form a collective which functions as a single unit. Members operating within the military context would not be able to perform effectively if they perceive each other as belonging to different groups.

Up to this point in the text there has been a review of how ethnic groups and boundaries are formed and interact with one another, as well as an overview of how social identity influences in-group formation. While these two theories are necessary for understanding personal identity and military identity, there is one more aspect needing to be unpacked; how organizational socialization in the military transforms the behavior, attitudes and identity of group members.

3.5 Organizational Socialization

Socialization is something that all humans participate in. As social beings, human behavior can be understood as social behavior.[95] In certain environments, being a member of and identifying with a group makes one behave differently from those who are not part of the group.[96] This logic can hold true within the military context as well. The socialization which occurs within the military institution is lasting amongst its members. As will be discussed more fully in the next section, organizational socialization which occurs in the military, particularly during basic training, helps to uphold and intensify a feeling of groupness and commonality amongst its members.

[95] Gary Charness, Luca Rigotti, and Aldo Rustichini, "Individual Behavior and Group Membership," *The American Economic Review* 97, no. 4 (2007): 1340–52. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30034095.
[96] Charness, ''Individual Behavior and Group Membership.'' 1340.

Before addressing the role of organizational socialization in the military, one must understand what the concept of organizational socialization is. Organizational socialization is a type of socialization. Human beings engage in different forms of socialization throughout their lives. Primary socialization, for example, occurs during childhood when a child first interacts with its immediate group members (e.g. mom and dad).[97] Other forms of socialization occur as individuals grow and engage with the outside world. Adaptive socialization, for example, facilitates integration and allows for social participation, while negative - or discordant - socialization occurs within groups who are on the margins of society and are considered part of a subculture.[98] Important to note is that different forms of socialization can overlap and no study of socialization should be unilateral.[99] How an individual goes through life and with whom they interact can be influenced by the different stages and types of socialization they are exposed to.

Organizational socialization, plainly said, 'is the process by which people learn about, adjust to, and change the knowledge, skills, attitudes, expectations, and behaviors needed for a new or changing organizational role.'[100] As such, the scholarship which focuses on organizational socialization chooses to look at the way in which individuals transfer from being outsiders (out-group members) to insiders (in-group members).[101] Being part of an organization may contribute to an individual's overall sense of identity. Membership can provide an answer to the question *Who am I*? Thus making organizational socialization a form of social identification.[102] So long as an

[97] Disca Tiberiu Crisogen, "Types of Socialization and Their Importance in Understanding the Phenomena of Socialization," *European Journal of Social Science, Education and Research* 2, no. 4 (2015): 331–36.
[98] Crisogen, ''Types of Socialization,'' 333.
[99] Crisogen, ''Types of Socialization,'' 335.
[100] Brenda L. Berkelaar and Millie A. Harrison, "Organizational Socialization," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.127. Abstract.
[101] Berkelaar, ''Organizational Socialization'' Abstract.
[102] Ashforth, ''Social Identity Theory and the Organization,'' 22.

organization can embody characteristics which are viewed as typical of its members, it can be considered a social category.[103]

When entering into an organization, newcomers experience what Katz[104] calls building a *situational definition.* Outsiders coming into an in-group are at first hesitant about their roles and status in the group.[105] Thus, they must educate themselves on the organization's policies, logistical, role expectations, norms, and hierarchies.[106] Through building a *self definition,* newcomers expect their social identity to make up a large part of themselves. Van Maanen argues that such self definitions 'are learned by interpreting the responses of others in situated social interactions.'[107] This process occurs through *symbolic interactions* whereby meaning for an individual evolves through verbal and nonverbal interactions.[108] Through such interactions individuals learn to 'resolve ambiguity [and] to impose an informational framework or schema on organizational experience.'[109] Thus, within the organization's structure, an individual can obtain a social identity.

3.5.1 Organizational Socialization and the U.S. Military

There is no question that the U.S. military can be considered an organization. Organizations are powerful in that they can influence the values, attitudes and behaviors of members.[110] The U.S.

[103] Ashforth, ''Social Identity Theory and the Organization,'' 22.
[104] R. Katz, "Time and Work: Toward an Integrative Perspective," *Research in Organizational Behaviour* 2 (1980): 81–127.
[105] Ashforth, ''Social identity Theory and the Organization,'' 26.
[106] Ashforth, ''Social identity Theory and the Organization,'' 26.
[107] Ashforth, ''Social identity Theory and the Organization,'' 27. **Quoted in** Warren Bennis and J. Van Maanen, "The Self, the Situation, and the Rules of Interpersonal Relations," Essay. In *Essays in Interpersonal Dynamics*, 43–101. Homewood, IL: Dorsey, 1979.
[108] Ashforth, ''Social identity Theory and the Organization,'' 27.
[109] Ashforth, ''Social identity Theory and the Organization,'' 27.
[110] Stephen C. Trainor, "Differential Effects of Institutional Socialization on Value Orientations in Naval Academy Midshipmen," Dissertation, ProQuest Information and Learning Company, (2004).

military is unique in that it is mostly defined via its organizational structure, framework, and rules.[111] The military organization itself is a complex network of different social groups, and subgroups working in unison to support the traditional military goal: protect the state from external threats.[112] Research by Albert and Whetten[113] conducted on organizational socialization has found differences between two types of organizations: 1) individuals in holographic organizations share common identities across subunits; and 2) in ideographic organizations individuals have subunit-specific identities.[114]Arguably, the U.S. military has characteristics of both a holographic and an ideographic organization. The overarching identity of 'military membership' is broken down into smaller memberships, associated with distinct branches, squadrons, platoons, commands, flights, etc....[115] This lends itself to the idea that identifying with the military organization is not fixed. A recruit's membership with a particular military subunit can change, depending on location, duty, or training. Therefore, their identity to the U.S. military, as a holographic organization, can fluctuate on the micro-level as a recruit moves across subunits.

Men and women who choose to enter into the military overwhelmingly do so at a young age. Statistics on military enlistment show that over fifty percent of recruits are under the age of 25.[116] At this age, the majority of young men and women are transitioning between adolescence

[111] S.A. Redmond et al., "A Brief Introduction to the Military Workplace Culture," *Work* 50, no. 1 (2015): 9–20. https://doi.org/10.3233/wor-141987.
[112] Trainor, ''Differential Effects,'' 1.
[113] S. Albert, and D. A. Whetten, "Organizational Identity," *Research in Organizational Behaviour* 7 (1985): 263–95.
[114] Ashforth, ''Social Identity Theory and the Organization,'' 22.
[115] Different branches have different terms. Flights, for example, are particular to the U.S. Air Force.
[116] Defense Manpower Data Center. Publication. *2020 Demographics PROFILE OF THE MILITARY COMMUNITY*. MilitaryOneSource, 2020. https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2020-demographics-report.pdf.

and adulthood, making their time in the military formative. Thus, an individual who enlists in the military is not only entering at a formative time in their life but they are also entering into a monolithic social system.[117] This system makes the military institution effective at controlling and coordinating the work, living, and emotional experiences of its members.[118] The broad military network also provides its members' dependents with social and living contexts.[119] To a degree, a member's journey through the military mirrors that of the human lifecycle - 'from entry as a skinned-head recruit through the warrior's initiation rites and finally, for some, badged and rewarded retirement.'[120] Any resistance to the military institution would have been planted in individuals at a young age. Values, attitudes, early primary socialization with pre- and non-military relationships, and group identities all have the possibility of instilling negative associations with military service and the organization.[121] However, the longer time a recruit spends existing within the military society, the more distant the recruit grows from their previous identity.[122] Arguably, it is here where the military as an organization differs from other organizations. Membership in the U.S. military exists even outside of the 9-5 work day. Recruits sign a contract whereby they are beholden to the institution for the prescribed number of years. Failure to uphold the institution's expectations could lead to dire consequences, from demotion to dishonorary discharge and even imprisonment. However, merely asking recruits to sign a contract is not enough to create a powerful fighting force. In order for the military to create a force which is loyal to the institution, the organization must socialize their members into the military organization from the get go.

[117] William Arkin and Lynn R Dobrofsky, "Military Socialization and Masculinity," *Journal of Social Issues* 34, no. 1 (1978): 151–68.
[118] Arkin, ''Military Socialization and Masculinity,'' 152.
[119] Trainor, ''Differential Effects,'' 1.
[120] Arkin, ''Military Socialization and Masculinity,'' 152.
[121] Arkin, ''Military Socialization and Masculinity,'' 152.
[122] Arkin, ''Military Socialization and Masculinity,'' 152.

The early stages of organizational socialization into the military begins with recruitment. Recruitment (as will be discussed more in section 4.3) helps define who may carry out the organization's missions or objectives.[123] The U.S. military defines itself as an opportunity for youth to 'grow up,'[124] and for young people to find their place amongst a confusing world. This expectation is reinforced through popular culture (e.g. movies and music which portray military service as heroic). Even recruitment videos project stories of adventure and purpose awaiting the young recruits who wish to join. Once committed to the U.S. military - after participating in a rigorous selection process - the recruit's next step is to undergo the indoctrination phase of basic training.

While some recruits join already embracing, and identifying with, the military culture, others require a development of such an identity. This sense of identity is thus instilled during the military socialization which occurs during basic training.[125] This process (see section 4.3) is known to be degrading, with leaders deconstructing civilian identities to build up a military one within an individual.[126] Recruits, regardless of gender, are expected to fulfill the role of warrior. The warrior ethos requires recruits to place the mission above all else, to never accept defeat, to never quit and to never leave behind a fellow soldier.[127] This mindset, instilled during basic training, is necessary for maintaining an effective and committed force.[128] It emboldens recruits to 'think and behave in ways that show perseverance; responsibility for others; motivation by a higher calling; and ability

[123] Arkin, ''Military Socialization and Masculinity,'' 154.
[124] Arkin, ''Military Socialization and Masculinity,'' 154.
[125] Redmond, ''A Brief Introduction to the Military Workplace Culture,'' 14.
[126] Redmond, ''A Brief Introduction to the Military Workplace Culture,'' 14.
[127] Leonard Wong, "Leave No Man Behind: Recovering America's Fallen Warriors," *Armed Forces & Society* 31, no. 4 (2005): 599–622. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48608662.
[128] Redmond, ''A brief introduction to the military workplace culture,'' 14.

to set priorities, make tradeoffs, adapt and accept dependence on others.'[129] Basic training is also known for its success in developing organizational socialization whereby recruits' values, behavior, and definitions end up being defined by the organization.[130] At least outwardly, recruits must exhibit the same ethics as the U.S. military. Internally, however, their personal opinions may vary drastically.

3.6 Review of Current Knowledge

It is hoped that the reader has been made aware of the relevant literature on ethnic group boundary formation, in-group cohesion, and organizational socialization. The U.S. military is unique in that it combines all three concepts into a single system. The diverse make-up of the U.S. military gives it an unparalleled challenge to create a single cohesive identity amongst its ranks. Through in-group formation, which occurs through organizational socialization during basic training, recruits learn to view themselves as members of the U.S. military over the identities of their civilian life. This transformation is important if the U.S. military wishes to continue playing an influential role in nation-building. As former members return to the civilian world, they take with them the lessons learned and the experiences gained during their time as a service member. This includes the parts of their military identity which had been strategically instilled into them.

The next section of this thesis dives into contextualizing three relevant components. The first is the role the U.S. military plays in nation-building, both historically and presently. This section focuses primarily on the diversity of the organization and its larger role in the integration and assimilation of U.S. immigrants at the turn of the 20th century. Second, there will be a review

[129] Redmond, ''A brief introduction to the military workplace culture,'' 14. **Originally Cited** in Gary Riccio et al., *Warrior Ethos: Analysis of the Concept and Initial Development of Applications*. (Arlington, VA, 2004). https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA428065.pdf.
[130] Arkin, 'military socialization and masculinity,' 157.

of current military demographics in order to get a better sense of where the U.S. military positions itself today in comparison to the civilian world. As the United States continues to diversify, so too must the U.S. military. Failure to do so can lead to long-lasting consequences on the home front. Lastly, there will be an overview of the U.S. military and its gatekeeping processes. More specifically, how recruitment is used to weed out individuals who may not be fit for service and how basic training is used to create group cohesion amongst its members.

4.0 Context

4.1 Militaries and Nation-Building

Academics and researchers who attempt to understand the beginnings of nationalism often fail to permeate military discourse. Relevant literature on the topic has focused mostly on the political, social, and economic influence of national identity.[131] Where militaries do enter nationalism discourse, they mostly pervade the literature within scholarship on war. More specifically, the role of the Great Wars in creating nationalism.[132] Few texts on nationalism engage directly with the role of militaries on nationalist sentiment and nation-building. The role of militaries as transmitters of social values first emerged in ancient Greece, however, this concept did not reach prominence until the early 19th century.[133] Throughout the 20th century countries around the world began relying on their armed forces in order to bring about national integration.[134] During the 1960s and 1970s researchers actively began researching the military as an effective

[131] Barry R. Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (1993): 80–124. https://doi.org/10.2307/2539098.
[132] Posen, ''Nationalism, the Mass Army and Military Power,'' 81.
[133] Ronald R. Krebs, "A School for the Nation? How Military Service Does Not Build Nations, and How It Might," *International Security* 28, no. 4 (2004): 85–124. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4137450. 85.
[134] Krebs, ''A School for the Nation,'' 85.

tool for (ethnic) integration.[135] It has been made clear by texts on nationalism that the boundaries of a nation are formed by more than just physical borders.[136] Arguably, it is here where the militaries play their greatest role. While they are given the role of protecting national interests and national borders, the individuals who comprise the military help to create the nation as well.

The military is a 'total' institution, whereby it strongly emphasizes rationality, hierarchy and national purposes.[137] This 'totality' can influence the social boundaries of a nation. Nation-building, which occurs via a country's domestic military, could be due to a number of reasons. Service personnel themselves may be the reason that militaries are effective nation builders. Soldiers are provided with (patriotic) education, undertake life threatening missions for a common cause, move about the country, and interact with others from different ethnic, social and geographic backgrounds.[138] This *nation-building effect* has the potential to disseminate throughout the wider society. Various mechanisms are at play when this occurs. One thought is that returning service members reintegrate with their society and take with the 'national' inspiration which they learned during their time with the military. An additional mechanism is where civilians see the military as operating for a common cause and begin thinking in terms of shared interests extending beyond those of ethnic groups.[139] As will be discussed in the next section, this phenomenon was witnessed during WWII when newly arriving European immigrants to the United States began to think in national terms after their sons were deployed to fight on behalf of the United States in

[135] Simonsen, ''Building 'National' Armies,''573.
[136] Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (London: Verso, 2016).
[137] Simonsen, ''Building 'National' Armies,''572.
[138] Simonsen, ''Building 'National' Armies,''572.
[139] Simonsen, ''Building 'National' Armies,''572.

Europe.[140] Their 'American' association began to usurp their previous ethnic and immigrant identity. This belief that militaries are effective nation-builders cannot be taken at face value. A myriad of actors and cultural influences can determine the effectiveness of using militaries as nation-builders. Recent examples of nation-building via the creation of domestic militaries, such as that during the Afghan War, ended in catastrophic failure showing that militaries are not omnipotent in their ability to disseminate national values.

Citizenship, according to Lucian W. Pye,[141] is another key component of military acculturation. According to Pye, new recruits, who come from traditional backgrounds, learn to identify themselves in relation to a new world and a larger political self.[142] This process also helps lead to a form of responsible nationalism, that being an understanding by recruits that sacrifices must be made in order to achieve the goals of the nation.[143] That is not to say that such nationalism is innocuous. As was seen in pre-war Japan, such ideologies could very well become hyper-nationalistic movements.[144] Unlike on the state level, where equality amongst citizens is purely theoretical, the military is effective in enacting equality of treatment amongst its members. Morris Janowitz, the father of military sociology, echos this point, writing:

> *'The result is a sense of cohesion and social solidarity, because men of various regional and ethnic backgrounds are given a common experience and come to think of themselves as Indian, Egyptians, or Nigerians, '*[145]

[140] David Laskin, "Ethnic Minorities at War (USA)," Ethnic Minorities at War (USA), International Encyclopedia of the First World War, 2014, https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/ethnic_minorities_at_war_usa.
[141] Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," 90.
[142] Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," 90.
[143] Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," 90.
[144] Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," 90.
[145] Morris Janowitz, *Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations*. (Chicago, London: University of Chicago, 1977), 157.

This mid-20th century optimism regarding integration practices via military service did not last long. A study in 1991 which looked at the military as an integrative mechanism found that 'social integration would be difficult to make happen in the best of circumstances' given that such results 'are not empirically automatic or even likely.'[146]

Though recent examples may question the use of militaries as nation-builders, these do not automatically exclude the military from playing a key role in nation-building in the past, especially within the institution's own country. In the United States, for example, integration in the armed forces preceded integration on the home front. Though racist attitudes continued to exist amongst military members, official laws outlawing segregation in the military did contribute to nation-building at home.

4.1.1 How does the U.S. Military Contribute to U.S. Nation-Building

In the modern-day United States, the military has continued to play a large role in defining the social border of the nation. A reason for this being the inability for prejudiced individuals to self-select their interactions.[147] In the military setting, individuals who would otherwise opt not to interact with members of other ethnic and racial categories are forced to do so. Arguably, this forced integration had lasting impacts on the home front. At the turn of the 21st century, the institution took an active interest in effectively utilizing the diversity of the U.S. population. A 1999, 138-page report by the Strategic Studies Institute[148] reviewed the diversity of the U.S. and

[146] Simonsen, "Building 'National' Armies—Building Nations?'' 574. **Originally cited in** Henry Dietz, Jerrold Elkin, and Maurice Roumani, "The Military as a Vehicle for Social Integration," Essay. In *Ethnicity, Integration and the Military*, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991), 1–26.
[147] Daniel Indacochea, "A Farewell to Army Segregation: The Effects of Racial Integration During the Korean War," 2019. https://indacoch.github.io/indacochea_jmp.pdf. 4.
[148] Lloyd J. Matthews and Tinaz Pavri, *Population Diversity and the U.S. Army*. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1999).

its potential impact on U.S. Army recruitment. The publication gave advice in the areas of Army diversification as it pertains to ethnic, racial, gender, religious and sexual diversity. In the report, the authors argued for reflective diversity within the U.S. Army. That being, the U.S. Army should reflect the diversity of the general population.[149] By increasing diversity amongst U.S. Army recruits during relative times of peace, civilian backlash would be mitigated when conflict arose. There was a belief amongst the civilian population at the time that racial and ethnic minorities would only be used by the U.S. military in times of war, and would be placed on the front lines of battle. This ‘‘Cannon-Fodder'' Allegation', as the author coined it, alleges that ethnic and racial minorities bore the brunt of combat risks during conflicts. This perspective arose from the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars when numerous complaints were raised regarding the disproportionate number of blacks being sent to combat zones.[150] While some research undermines this allegation,[151] the impact of such statements are nevertheless reflective of the infamous treatment ethnic and racial minorities faced within U.S. society.

As the United States continued to grow and diversify, so too did the individuals who served within its ranks. During World War I, the population of the United States stood at 103,268,000.[152] It was in the early 20th century that a sharp rise in immigration took place. The reunification of the United States after the Civil War, along with growing conflicts on mainland Europe, brought in a flood of Europeans from all over. Within the first decade of the 20th century, Italians, Jews, and

[149] Matthews and Pavri, *Population Diversity*, 4
[150] Matthews and Pavri, *Population Diversity*, 4
[151] Charles Moskos and John Sibley Butler, "Racial Integration the Army Way," *ARMY Magazine*, 1998.
[152] United States Census Bureau, "November 2018 - History - U.S. Census Bureau," last modified 2018, https://www.census.gov/history/www/homepage_archive/2018/november_2018.html#:~:text=Following%20a%20U.S.%20Senate%20vote,U.S.%20population%20was%20approximately%20103%2C268%2C000.

Poles were the largest immigrant groups to arrive. In comparison to the original immigrants to the United States, the newcomers did not have a strong bond, whether nationally or politically, to their country of origin.[153] However, despite this relaxed connection, these groups of individuals still maintained a fierce distinction within the U.S.. Italians, Jews and Poles kept their own language, had their own businesses, and read their own newspapers.[154]

It was during times of war that immigrants' allegiances were challenged. At the outbreak of WWI, the U.S. witnessed a number of young German and Irish American[155] men return to their 'homeland' in an effort to support the war front on behalf of the Central Powers.[156] Italian Americans took interest in the war as soon as Italy entered the conflict in 1915 and Jewish Americans began to support the central powers once Russia, infamous for its pogroms, aligned itself with the allies.[157]

The growing diversity of the United States ended up creating a murky path forward for the U.S. military. The creation of a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual military drudged up a host of challenges, including figuring out how to raise and train its members into a unified force.[158] On June 5th, 1917, Congress passed the Selective Service Act which required that all men twenty-one to thirty-one register for the draft. However, immigrants who did not indicate their intention to become U.S. citizens were exempt, as were all non-citizens who were born of enemy nations.[159] The rise of immigrants meant the rise of conscript numbers. Creating a cohesive force required a transformation of the individual self into a group member aligned with the goals of the nation.

[153] Laskin, "Ethnic Minorities at War.''
[154] Laskin, "Ethnic Minorities at War.''
[155] The Irish-American support for the Central Powers came from their animosity towards the British at the time.
[156] Laskin, ''Ethnic Minorities at War.''
[157] Laskin, "Ethnic Minorities at War.''
[158] Laskin, "Ethnic Minorities at War.''
[159] Laskin, "Ethnic Minorities at War.''

During basic training, prejudice between the various ethnic and national groupings flourished. A collection of stories told by draftees, published in 1918, exemplifies these prejudices. While the accuracy of these stories cannot be accounted for, the message still reflects the reality of the time. A particular anecdote by Conscript 2989 states:

> *'Never in my wildest flights of fancy can I picture some of these men as soldiers. Slavs, Poles, Italians, Greeks, a sprinkling of Chinese and Japs – Jews with expressionless faces…are all about me. I'm in a barracks with 270 of them, and so far, I've found a half dozen men who could speak English without an accent. Is it possible to make soldiers of these fellows? Well, if muscle and bone…is what is wanted for material, they have got it here with a vengeance. But then, from the looks of things they have been doing wonders and they may make creditable soldiers of them at that. Goodness knows, they may even make a soldier out of me…here's hoping.'*[160]

Such differences brought about high tensions between immigrants and native-born Americans and in some cases, fights broke out between groups.[161] In order to address these differences, the U.S. military assigned multi-lingual officers, and offered crash courses in English, U.S. History, and Civics for immigrant soldiers deemed effective enough for combat.[162] Notably, ethnic tensions seemed to ease when recruits were shipped to Europe in 1918 as comradery grew amongst the men who fought alongside each other.[163] While 'Americanization' took place on the battlefield and in the training barracks, so too did such changes occur on the home front. Immigrant families soon found themselves associating with the United States more fully once their young sons began fighting on behalf of the nation.[164] Throughout WWI and immediately after, the U.S. military

[160]Crump, Irving. "Conscript 2989." Essay. In *Conscript 2989 Experiences of a Drafted Man,* (New York, NY: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1918). https://www.gutenberg.org/files/36832/36832-h/36832-h.htm.
[161] Laskin, "Ethnic Minorities at War.''
[162] Laskin, "Ethnic Minorities at War.''
[163] Laskin, "Ethnic Minorities at War.''
[164] Laskin, "Ethnic Minorities at War.''

continued the effort to 'Americanize' the thousands of immigrants who joined its ranks.[165] These efforts went on until the mid-1920s, when the U.S. military had their congressional funds for vocational and educational training – meant to elevate minority groups – revoked.[166]

WWII saw a reprisal of official prejudiced and discriminatory behaviours amongst the U.S. military. Black Americans were once again refused the role of soldier and were instead relegated to stewardship roles.[167] Civil rights leaders at the time rallied around a 'double v' victory, meaning they were fighting fascism abroad and discrimination on the home front.[168] Demands to desegregate were met with silence on the part of the U.S. Army. An U.S. Army spokesperson claimed that given the institution's size and power it should not be used as a social experiment.[169] Similar mindsets were taken within the other branches as well. Other minority groups, though given more opportunity, did not fare much better. In 1941 Executive Order 8066 passed, allowing Mexican-Americans to integrate with white soldiers. During WWII this integration brought with it opportunity for Mexican-American soldiers. Mexican-Americans were suddenly thrust into equal status as whites and were given the chance of gaining a higher rank than their white counterparts.[170] Upon returning home from the war, however, Mexican-American veterans were shocked to find that they maintained a second-class citizen status. Although this was a setback for returning soldiers, their time in the military gave them the fortitude necessary to create the G.I.

[165] William Bruce White, "The Military and the Melting Pot: The American Army and Minority Groups, 1865 - 1924," 1968.
[166] White, ''The Military and the Melting Pot,'' 5.
[167] Matthews and Pavri, *Population Diversity*, 52.
[168] Morris J. MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965*. (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1981), 17.
[169] MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Force*, 17.
[170] Niko Arrendondo, "The Forgotten Soldiers: Mexican-American Soldiers of WWII and the Creation of the G.I. Forum," *The Undergraduate Historical Journal at UC Merced* 1, no. 1 (2014). https://doi.org/10.5070/h311022630.

Forum, a civil rights organization, meant to advocate for their rights as citizens[171] Japanese Americans, who were infamously sent to internment camps during the war, also served as soldiers. Over 33,000 Japanese Americans served,[172] many in intelligence positions, however their service was marred given their ethnic association with the enemy.[173] Japanese American soldiers, while invaluable to winning the war due to their language and cultural skills, were nonetheless seen as potential traitors and were treated wearily.[174] While WWII saw a number of ethnic and racial minorities serve in the armed forces, the soldiers continued to experience marginalization both in the service and at home. This treatment continued until the next decade, when the U.S. military had no choice but to integrate.

It wasn't until the 1950s during the Korean War, when the number of white soldiers decreased exponentially, that ethnic and racial minorities, particularly black Americans, were given the opportunity to serve alongside white service members. Researchers looking at race relations during the Korean War consider such integration a driver behind U.S. civil rights and desegregation efforts.[175] Professor and Author Gerald Early argues that

> *'[the military] was a major institution, it was a major sociological force, and by 1954 we could look back and say that the integration of the armed services, while not complete and not perfect, went better than most detractors and most critics thought it would'*[176]

[171] Arrendondo, 'The Forgotten Soldiers,' 2.
[172] U.S. Department of the Interior, "Japanese Americans at War." National Parks Service, 2020. https://www.nps.gov/wwii/learn/historyculture/japanese-americans-at-war.htm.
[173] Mire Koikari, "''Japanese Eyes, American Heart'' Politics of Race, Nation, and Masculinity in Japanese American Veterans' WWII Narratives," *Men and Masculinities* 12, no. 5 (2009): 547–64. https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184x09337092.
[174] Koikari, ''Japanese Eyes, American Heart,'' 553.
[175] Neil Schoenherr, "Korean War Had Major Impact on Race Relations in the United States," *NewsRoom*, Washington University in St. Louis, July 25, 2003. https://source.wustl.edu/2003/07/korean-war-had-major-impact-on-race-relations-in-the-united-states/.
[176] Schoenherr, ''Korean War.''

According to Early, the military was the most integrated institution in the United States by the time the Korean War came to an end.[177] Though fraught with imperfections, the U.S. military took the first steps towards forgoing the antiquated Jim Crow laws which existed in full force at the time. In conjunction with civil rights activists, the U.S. military contributed toward changing the sociological structure of the United States.

The Vietnam War was the United States' first truly integrated military conflict. For the first time, ethnic and racial minorities fought alongside white counterparts in desegregated units. Such efforts could have easily influenced national movements. Looking back on this era, there is a strong connection between the anti-war movement and the civil rights movement.[178] Frustration on the homefront grew as the United States opted to focus more on the Vietnam War than on the long overdue desegregation initiatives promised to the people by the Johnson Administration.[179] This frustration boiled over into activism by other minority groups including Mexican-Americans who protested the white majority society.[180] Driving this frustration were the casualty rates coming out of the war. Deaths during the Vietnam War disproportionately affected the lower-socioeconomic classes as well as minorities. Both black and mexican-american servicemembers experienced proportionally higher death rates than their white counterparts during the Vietnam War.[181] This fact reflected the cultural and social structure of the United States, whereby even though

[177] Schoenherr, ''Korean War.''
[178] Herbert Shapiro, "The Vietnam War and the American Civil Rights Movement." *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* 16, no. 4 (1989), 1.
[179] Shapiro, ''The Vietnam War,'' 1.
[180] Regis University, "The Chicano Experience in Vietnam," ePublications at Regis University. Regis University. Accessed May 10, 2022. https://epublications.regis.edu/chicano_vietnam/.
[181] Richard P. Talbot and Jon T. Oplinger, "Social Stratification and Ethnic Mobilization: U.S. Military Deaths in Southeast Asia," *Race, Gender & Class* 21, no. 1/2 (2014): 195–210. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43496969. 208.

integration in the armed forces was mandatory, little was done to create equality amongst the classes.

In the sixty years since the Vietnam War, the U.S. military has increased its efforts to integrate its members. Prejudice and discrimination are not tolerated amongst its ranks, and new recruits are effectively told that their military career would come to a swift end if they were to exhibit any racist behaviors. Current Secretary of Defence Lloyed Austin has even declared that ridding the U.S. military of racists and extremists was a top priority.[182] That being said, just like in the United States, racism still exists in the U.S. military. In 2018 a swastika was scrawled on an Air Force base wall[183] and in 2021 a noose was hung on the bunk of a black service member.[184] While instances like these may make the front headlines, there is evidence that discrimination occurs during the everyday; albeit, it goes widely underreported. When comparing civilain to military case filings on discrimination, one finds a stark difference. In 2019 the U.S. Army saw 23 complaints filed per 100,000 uniformed members.[185] Civilians working for the U.S. Army, on the other hand, filed a total of 220 complaints per 100,000.[186] The disproportionality of these numbers becomes shockingly clear when one considers that the military's uniformed staff are twice that of the military's civilian workforce. It is clear that while the U.S. military had been a trailblazer when it came to integration practices over the past century, there still exists a delineation between white

[182] Gina Harkins, "Secdef Pick Lloyd Austin Pledges to Rid the Ranks of Extremists," *Military.com*, January 20, 2021. https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/01/19/secdef-pick-lloyd-austin-pledges-rid-ranks-of-extremists.html.
[183] Phil Stewart, "U.S. Troops Battling Racism Report High Barrier to Justice," *Reuters Investigates*. Thomson Reuters, September 15, 2020. https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-military-civilrights/.
[184] Gina Harkins, "Sailor Admits to Hanging Noose by Black Crewmate's Rack on Navy Cruiser," *Military.com*, February 4, 2021. https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/02/03/sailor-admits-hanging-noose-black-crewmates-rack-navy-cruiser.html.
[185] Stewart, ''U.S. Troops Battling Racism.''
[186] Stewart, ''U.S. Troops Battling Racism.''

servicemembers and their ethnic and racial minority counterparts. The underreporting of complaints points to a bigger issue; that being an unwillingness amongst servicemembers to report discrimination for fear of retaliation.[187] While segregation is no longer practiced on the official level, and while minorities can hold any rank and position, an obvious disparity still exists. In order to mend this divide, the U.S. military makes fostering diversity within its ranks a priority.

Over the past century, the increase in diversity within the U.S. military allowed for further integration efforts on the home front. Education and incorporating ethnicities into a single force helped to assimilate newly arrived immigrants and their families. Divisive wars in Europe, and the involvement of young immigrant men, helped to create a coherent national identity amongst diverse individuals. The utilization of black men at the turn of the 20th century also contributed to integration efforts, though these efforts were slow and arduous compared to their European, Eastern Asian and Hispanic immigrant counterparts. As the U.S. continues to diversify, so too will the U.S. military. Its role as nationbuilder is dependent on its ability to accurately reflect the ethnic and religious makeup of U.S. society. It is up to the U.S. military, however, to make the institution appear as attractive as possible to all groups of people, regardless of cultural and socio-economic background.

4.2 U.S. Military Demographics Today

The U.S. military is incredibly heterogenous. Around 1.4 million individuals serve actively, with an additional 850,000 reserve forces.[188] According the Council on Foreign

[187] Stewart, ‘‘U.S. Troops Battling Racism.’’
[188] World Population Review, “Military Size by Country 2022.”

Relations,[189] as of 2018, the racial and ethnic minorities in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force are overrepresented, compared to the civilian labor force. The Coast Guard was the only branch which did not have any overrepresentation of a minority group.[190] In 2020, the white population was the majority race in the United States with a total 235.4 million reporting 'White alone' on the 2020 census. However, their numbers decreased by 8.6% since 2010.[191] 2020 saw the Hispanic and Latino minority as the largest minority population, with a population which grew by 23% (well above the average 4.3% growth of populations which did not self-identify as Hispanic or Latino). Most notable of all, however, were the 49.9 million individuals which identified as 'Some Other Race' or a combination of two or more groups. This category increased by 129% compared to 2010 and surpassed even the Black or African American population (46.9 million).[192]

Along with regular U.S. citizens, service members are allowed to be naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, and nationals of the Marshall Islands, The Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and other states which Congress deems vital to national interest. Presently, around 35,000 active-duty military members are non-citizens with an additional 8,000 joining each year.[193] According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2018, the top ten countries of birth for foreign-

[189] Council on Foreign Relations, "Demographics of the U.S. Military," Demographics of the U.S. Military. cfr.org, last modified, July 13, 2020. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/demographics-us-military.
[190] CFR Statistics are not available for the Space Force as the branch was not created until December 2019.
[191] Nicholas Jones et al., "2020 Census Illuminates Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Country," *Improved Race and Ethnicity Measures Reveal U.S. Population Is Much More Multiracial.* United States Census Bureau, August 12, 2021. https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/improved-race-ethnicity-measures-reveal-united-states-population-much-more-multiracial.html.
[192] Jones, ''2020 Census Illuminates Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Country.''
[193] Air Force, "The US Military Helps Naturalize Non-Citizens," *Military.com*, last modified May 11, 2021. https://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/eligibility-requirements/the-us-military-helps-naturlize-non-

born veterans include; Mexico (17%), Philippines (17%), Germany (5%), Colombia (4%), United Kingdom (4%), Guyana (3%), Cuba (3%), Vietnam (3%), Panama (2%), and the Dominican Republic (2%). Around 40% of foreign-born veterans were born in other countries not listed.[194] There is no published data on the number of U.S. military enlistees who hold dual-citizenship.

As immigrants assimilate into the larger culture of the U.S., their participation in the U.S. military may subsequently increase so long as the institution is seen as beneficial.[195] It is here where the U.S. military's emphasis on education plays a large role. With the increasing technological advancements of the U.S. military comes a need for an educated force. As such, members of the U.S. military are given training, education and encouraged to attend university.[196] Today, the U.S. military focuses not on the racial or ethnic make-up of its forces, but rather the intellectual capabilities of its members. As such, it does not accept low scorers of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), a test taken by all incoming enlisted members, and assigns roles within the military based on scores.[197] Officers, compared to enlisted members, go through a separate training process, and are required to have a bachelor's degree. This is notable given that the gap between racial and ethnic minorities serving in enlisted positions and whites serving as officers continues to pervade.[198] This gap reflects the socio-economic disparity in U.S. society between the number of college-educated whites and non-college-educated minorities.

citizens.html#:~:text=Roughly%2035%2C000%20non%2Dcitizens%20are,several%20benefits%20to%20the%20military.

[194] Jeanne Batalova and Jie Zong, "Immigrant Veterans in the United States," Migration Policy Institute. MPI, last modified May 16, 2019. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/immigrant-veterans-united-states-2018#CountryofBirth.

[195] Matthews and Pavri, *Population Diversity,* 59.

[196] Matthews and Pavri, *Population Diversity,* 60.

[197] ASVAB, ''The Official Site of the ASVAB Enlistment Testing Program," The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), last modified March 26, 2021. https://www.officialasvab.com/.

[198] Council on Foreign Relations, "Demographics of the U.S. Military."

Arguably, how the U.S. military continues to handle the increasing diversity of the country will reflect the future integration efforts of U.S. society.

Research continuously cites the U.S. military as the 'best model of social engineering in the nation's history.'[199] In the contemporary United States there exists a strong link between the U.S. military and the 'collective consciousness of the nation.'[200] This is underscored due to the fact that after participating in service, uniformed men and women tend to return to the civilian world and engage in civilian occupations.[201] However, skeptics to this line of thought believe in the adage *out of sight out of mind.* While the United States remains at peace, interactions between the civilian and military world become less meaningful.[202] As the U.S. military increasingly reflects the racial, ethnic, and religious makeup of U.S. society, it appears a new stratification between socio-economic categories is occurring.[203] Historically, recruits used to come from middle-class backgrounds, however, as the economy and educational opportunities grow for recent high school graduates, more recruits are seen coming from the lower socio-economic classes.[204] This shift may negatively impact U.S. society as fewer upper and middle-class individuals partake in the armed services. As present demographic trends of U.S. society continue to change, the role the U.S. military has as nationbuilder will remain ever more poignant.

4.3 Recruitment and Basic Training

Basic training and recruitment processes is vital for forming a cohesive and effective military force. Recruitment is necessary given its function as a gatekeeper. Given that the U.S.

[199] Mathews and Pavri, *Population Diversity,* 53.
[200] Mathews and Pavri, *Population Diversity,* 33..
[201] Mathews and Pavri, *Population Diversity,* 33.
[202] Mathews and Pavri, *Population Diversity,* 34.
[203] Mathews and Pavri, *Population Diversity,* 39.
[204] Mathews and Pavri, *Population Diversity,* 39.

military is an All Volunteer Force (AVF), compelling recruitment campaigns are designed to draw in potential recruits while discouraging those who might not be able to succeed. Basic training is then strategically designed to put a recruit's resolve to the test. For this reason, basic training is meant to be both mentally and physically rigorous.

The decision to join the U.S. military is an incredibly personal one. Recruitment in the U.S. military is done in numerous ways. Some recruiters set up booths in high schools and sell uncertain seniors the benefits of joining the forces straight out of school. Other recruitment campaigns focus on television ads, while still other recruitment tactics come in the form of popular culture. Incentives in the way of education, personal economic growth, and health care benefits also play a role in getting young men and women to sign up. A familial lineage of military service or a desire to fulfill one's patriotic duty are also reasons for joining.

Popular culture helps in the recruitment phase through the use of movies and television. They portray military action on the big screen showing the audience thrilling moments of heroism. Their depictions often show the U.S. military as a strict, hierarchical institution where only the most resolute and patriotic of individuals join. These portrayals are not arbitrary. Rather, in some instances, they are strategically structured through a symbiotic relationship between the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and Hollywood. Through this relationship, the DOD actively works with Hollywood directors to produce movies which portray the institution in the most sympathetic and awe-inspiring of lights.[205] Adhering to the DOD's parameters grants the Hollywood filmmaker access to military personnel and equipment worth millions of dollars.[206] Influential films such as

[205] Laura Powell, "Glorification of the Military in Popular Culture and the Media," Essay. In *Good Intentions: Norms and Practices of Imperial Humanitarianism*, edited by Maximillian C Forte, 167–84. (Montréal, Québec: Alert Press, 2014). 167. http://openanthropology.org/Good_Intentions_Ch8_Militarism_Militainment_PTSD_Powell.pdf.
[206] Powell, ''Glorification of the Military,'' 167.

Top Gun and *Black Hawk Down* have been produced through such a relationship.[207] The effect of this partnership extends to the recruitment phase of the U.S. military, where young men and women, from all walks of life, enlist to be part of 'the best military in the world'[208] and by extension serve their country. The reason an individual joins the armed services is many. Whether their reason for joining is due to patriotic fervor, employment opportunities, or upholding a familial legacy, an individual, once in uniform, commits themselves - for years or decades - to the U.S. military and becomes a part of its powerful 273-year-old legacy.

As stated above, reasons for joining the U.S. military differ from person to person, the experience upon entering the U.S military is, for the most part, consistent. Though variables do exist which may alter the personal experience of the service member (e.g. location of deployment, military branch, rank, and duty), it is arguably in the best interest of the military to create uniformity amongst its members. It is within the sacred borders of basic training that military traditions are instilled. That which is learned during basic training is expected to continue existing once the initiated individuals leave the confines of basic training.

Upon entering the military world, a service member is expected to adhere to and appropriately follow the rituals imbued in them at basic training. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action or even expulsion from the group entirely. This technique in the U.S. military homogenizes its members, creating a single, coherent, unit with few unique differences. This is exemplified in one of the U.S. Air Force's core values: *Service Before Self*. A motto which is expected to be embodied by Air Force members[209] and requires members to put the organization

[207] Powell, ''Glorification of the Military,'' 170.
[208] (Ret.) General David Petraeus and Michael E. O'Hanlon, "America's Awesome Military," Brookings. Brookings, last modified March 9, 2022. https://www.brookings.edu/research/americas-awesome-military/.
[209] Master Sgt. Stephen Wilkerson, "Core Values beyond the Air Force," Core values beyond the Air Force. Joint Base Charleston, last modified November 10, 2009.

above the individual. This internal transformation is then reinforced through external identifiers, such as a member's haircut and uniform. Through such internal and external transformations the U.S. military becomes its own homogenous 'group' composed of diverse members.

In order to understand how individual identity is reconstructed into a group identity, one must understand the basic structures of basic training. Basic training is used to prepare individuals for events that are unlikely to occur (ie. armed combat),[210] as well as to equip individuals for a military lifestyle. It is important to note that all branches of the U.S. military have similar mechanisms in place which effectively create group cohesion and change recruits from individuals to Airmen,[211] Soldiers,[212] Marines,[213] and the like. The differences between the basic training of each branch is found mostly in duration of the training and emphasis on various mechanical aspects, such as rucking or weapons training.

According to J.D. Fletcher, military training emphases the collective.[214] Functioning effectively as a collective, or group, means individuals must learn, and train, to be a single unit. While all recruits who start out in basic training are strangers, the sense of isolation from the outside world, which basic training purposefully creates, helps to facilitate bonding amongst the new arrivals.[215] During basic training, elite structured commonalities and connections are instilled

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https://www.jbcharleston.jb.mil/News/Commentaries/Display/Article/238065/core-values-beyond-the-air-force/#:~:text=The%20Air%20Force%20core%20values,Force%2C%20into%20our%20local%20communities.

[210] J. D. Fletcher and Paul R. Chatelier, "An Overview of Military Training," (2000). DOI:10.21236/ada408439. II-2.

[211] U.S. Airforce, ed., "Basic Military Training Overview," Basic Military Training - U.S. Air Force, accessed April 27, 2022. https://www.airforce.com/education/military-training/BT.

[212] U.S. Army, "Basic Combat Training," goarmy.com, accessed April 27, 2022. https://www.goarmy.com/soldier-life/becoming-a-soldier/basic-combat-training.html.

[213] U.S. Marine Corps, "Marine Corps Boot Camp: Recruit Basic Training," Marines, accessed April 27, 2022. https://www.marines.com/become-a-marine/process-to-join/recruit-training.html.

[214] Fletcher, ''An Overview of Military Training,'' II-4.

[215] Franke, ''Duty, Honor, Country,'' 177.

through various exercises and training. Recruits are expected to embody the strong normative group behaviors and reject any alternative sources of meaning.[216] These mechanisms force recruits to forgo any ethnic differences in order to contribute to a successful group dynamic and embrace the 'soldier' reference frame.[217] By shaving heads, wearing uniforms, learning military communication, and dictating behavioral norms (ie. When and how to eat, shower, wake-up and sleep), there is an elimination of differences which may have previously caused divisions. According to goarmy.com, the official website for the United States Army, the point of basic training is to transform a civilian into a soldier. Three phases comprise the ten weeks of U.S. Army basic training. During these phases, individuals are expected to internalize the core values of the U.S. Army,[218] thus creating the basic behavior of their new identity. Following Barth's explanation of ethnic boundaries, an establishment of new behaviors is necessary to redefine cultural boundaries and thus the ethnic groups that subscribe to them.[219] Recruits quickly learn that failure to work as a cohesive unit would most likely result in failure to meet the desired goal. It was to the benefit of the entire group to see fellow recruits as possessing the same in-group qualities required for membership.

4.4 Context Conclusion and Research Questions

Up until this point, this thesis should have clarified a few things. First, and probably the most important, is that the U.S. military is an effective group builder. It is efficient at taking in individuals who identify with a multitude of different groups and making them into a single,

[216] Franke, ''Duty, Honor, Country,'' 177.
[217] Franke, ''Duty, Honor, Country,'' 177.
[218] Core Values of the U.S. Army, according to goarmy.com: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage
[219] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 9.

coherent, unit. It creates boundaries between the military (in-group) world and the civilian (out-group) world, which are reinforced during their time in the service. Second, it does this not by destroying the previous identification of its members, but by creating a new identity much more powerful than their old one. Third, because of its effectiveness in reforming identity, the U.S. military has been used for over a century to help form the social boundaries of the United States. By taking in individuals from all walks of life, migrant backgrounds, and religious sects, and training them to align with a single source of identity, the U.S. military has helped to define national belonging. And lastly, the U.S. military goes about reforming identity through a series of gatekeeping tactics. Recruitment campaigns and basic training all help determine who is 'allowed' and 'able' to be a member, and who is 'not'. Once one enters the armed services, and passes the initiation rituals, they are given the right to be an in-group member which, in theory, transforms the identity of the individual.

After reviewing the literature on the topic, this research has pinpointed three gaps which it attempts to help answer. The first is *In current and former U.S. military enlisted recruits, how prevalent is their ethnic/racial/national identity when reflecting on their time in the U.S. military.* In other words, does one's ethnic, racial, or national identity traverse the boundary which separates their civilian identity from their military one? The second question this research attempts to answer is: *How prevalent is the ethnic/racial/national identity of former and current U.S. military members when considering the perceptions of in-group and out-group members(civilians)?* Otherwise said, when reflecting on their time interacting with other group members or non-group members (civilians), does a current or former service member's ethnic, racial, or national identity influence how they see themselves as being perceived? And third, *why do former and current members of the U.S. military reflect on their time in the military as transformative?* Specifically

looking at their time at basic training, what were the main takeaways of that time and how may their interpretation reflect the role of the U.S. military as nation builder?

5.0 Methodology

Qualitative interviews and content analysis were used to better understand the impact of ethnic, racial or national identity on perceptions of military service. It was decided to commit to qualitative methods and analysis because of the way such approaches can help researchers understand the nuances of the human condition.[220] The interviews were designed for participants from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, questions were not intended to be leading, nor were they designed to extrapolate information directly. Rather, questions were designed to be general with the expectation that personal identifiers would emerge naturally during the conversation.

A series of semi-structured, narrative interviews were held with current and former members of the U.S. military to determine their perspectives on the U.S. military and the potential impact their personal identity may have on such interpretations. Throughout the interview, questions were asked to participants in order to cover a series of topics ranging from military identity formation in basic training to their perspectives on the prevalent rules and regulations associated with the military lifestyle.

5.1 Methodological Structure

The methodology for this research was broken down into two parts. The first being the conduction of semi-structured, narrative interviews. Interviews were going to be the focal point of this study as it would allow me to communicate with the respondents more effectively than

[220] Mariette Bengtsson, "How to Plan and Perform a Qualitative Study Using Content Analysis," *NursingPlus Open* 2 (2016): 8–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.npls.2016.01.001. Abstract.

traditional quantitative methods would. It would also give me the opportunity to ask respondents for clarification on certain answers. The interviews were semi-structured and narrative in nature because I wanted to make sure all participants answered the same questions, regardless of ethnic, racial or national background. Maintaining these similarities mitigated the emergence of potential biases where questions may direct a certain group of people to answer in a certain way. The narrative structure was decided upon because I wanted the respondents to provide as much detail as possible. The structure of the interview was chronological whereby the questions began with respondents narrating who they were before joining the military, their ultimate decision to join, and the reaction of their parents. The middle portion of the interview centered around military specific questions such as those about military culture and basic training. And the final question asked respondents to reflect on who they are in the present day.

Once all interviews were conducted, they were transcribed and saved onto a password protected device. I then coded the interviews twice (see section 5.4), the first attempt at coding drew out general trends, while the second attempt was meant to pick out details of the interviews which I might have overlooked during the initial coding process.

5.2 Participant Recruitment

A total of ten participants were found through snow-ball sampling. The snow-ball sampling began by asking my personal military connections whether they would be willing to be interviewed and/or whether they could recommend family or friends who are also in the service. This method of snow-ball sampling led to an unavoidable bias as most participants were within the same network, with some of them knowing each other personally. In an attempt to mitigate this bias, I did interview complete strangers with whom I did not have a personal connection and who I connected with via an acquaintance.

Prior to the interviews taking place, participants were contacted via email or through social media. Each participant was given an interview consent form to review before participation and were given the opportunity to ask me questions. The interview consent form contained an overview of the research goals and what the participants were to expect during the interview. Additionally, participants were assured that they may refuse to answer questions, ask for a deletion of the recording, and retract their statements anytime before publication of the research. Participants were assured of their anonymity and gave their verbal consent to the interviews being recorded. Recordings of the interviews will be deleted on the 7th of June, 2022 after successful completion of this thesis. Until that time, all recordings were stored on a password protected device. Transcriptions of the interviews were not given any personal identifiers. I replaced all names with non-identifying numbers.

Nine of the participants were between the ages of twenty and thirty, with the tenth respondent's age being unknown. The age range was unintentional. While random, the respondents' ages align with the military's age demographics as the majority of military members are between the ages of seventeen and thirty-four.[221] All participants were enlisted members of the military, meaning they do not hold an officer rank and therefore underwent the basic training module discussed in section 4.3.

Of the ten participants, four could be identified as white U.S. Americans with Anglo-Saxon/European ancestry (to be referred to as White U.S. American). Of the remaining six, two currently identify with a mainland European country, speak the language, and have parents from that country, and four participants would be considered LatinX, with roots in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and/or El Salvador.

[221] Council on Foreign Relations, "Demographics of the U.S. Military."

Interviews lasted between seven and forty-five minutes, where I asked between thirteen and fifteen questions. Depending on the answers, I may have requested for the participant to expand on certain responses and provide more details. During the interviews, I did not ask participants to identify their cultural/ethnic/national/racial background, preferring, instead, for such identifiers to come up naturally during the interview. Where participants did not provide such explicit identifiers, I determined the individual's background through an estimation.

Table 1 - Breakdown of Participants

Characteristic		
Sex	Male	**7**
	Female	**3**
Ethnicity / Nationality	White-American	**4**
	LatinX	**4**
	European-National	**2**
Branch	Army	**0**
	Navy	**1**
	Air Force	**6**
	Marines Corps	**2**
	Coast Guard	**0**
	National Guard	**1**
Currently Serving?	Yes	**7**
	No	**3**

Table 2 - Characteristics of Participants

	Sex	Ethnicity / Race / Nationality	Branch	Currently Serving?
Anon. I	M	European National	Air Force	Yes
Anon. II	M	LatinX	Air Force	Yes
Anon. III	M	LatinX	Air Force	Yes
Anon. IV	M	White-U.S. American	Marine Corps	No
Anon. V	F	White-U.S. American	Air Force	Yes
Anon. VI	F	LatinX	Air Force	Yes
Anon. VII	F	White-U.S. American	Marine Corps	No
Anon. VIII	M	White-U.S. American	Air Force	Yes
Anon. IX	M	LatinX	Navy	Yes
Anon. X	M	European National	National Guard	No

5.3 Interview and Interview Questions

During the interview, there were four topics which were covered. These being the following:

1) Identity Formation in Basic Training
2) Ethnic, Racial, National Identity
3) Out-Group perspectives
4) In-Group cohesion

In order to uncover questions concerning identity formation in basic training, I asked respondents to recall the greatest culture shock they experienced during their time at basic training as well as their attempts at adapting to military culture during basic training. Questions surrounding the topic of ethnic, racial, or national identity were not straightforward. Rather, respondents were asked to narrate their life before military service and to reflect on their family's reaction to their decision to join the military. It was hypothesized that topics of identity pre-military service would emerge during such inquiries. Out-group perspectives were brought up during questions which asked respondents to provide examples of how they believe civilians view them while in uniform. Similarly, topics on in-group cohesion emerged throughout the duration of the interview. Questions asking members to reflect on how they behave in-and-out of uniform as well as their interactions with other members all provided insights into how the in-group is formed and maintained.

Other questions, which addressed this paper's theoretical framework, came in the form of narrations. Respondents were asked to narrate their experiences in basic training, their interactions with fellow military members and non-military civilians, and their perspective of their military

service. Patterns were drawn out of these narrations which subsequently directed this research's theoretical approach.

All interviews took place online using a video-calling platform. All but one interview took place without an image. This method allowed me to remove myself from the interviewee. This was helpful in cases where the respondent had a personal relationship with myself. In the video call which did have video, the respondent was unknown to myself at the time, and therefore I believe the results were not impacted by the visual.

5.4 Coding and Analysis

This research was a qualitative content analysis. The purpose of a qualitative content analysis is to elicit meaning from collected data and reach realistic conclusions.[222] Therefore I did my best to maintain a qualitative perspective in order to achieve a level of credibility to make the results of this study trustworthy. Important to understand is that a qualitative content analysis is research which attempts to understand the human condition, bearing in mind all the complexities and nuances which come with such a volatile subject.

I coded the interviews based on the research questions. An inductive review of the data helped to determine the themes which were to be coded based on answers by participants. By using an inductive review I drew out trends from the responses rather than analyze the results with a predetermined expectation of what is to be found. As such, the inductive analysis helped to inform the theoretical framework of my study. In addition to coding answers which mentioned identity formation, ethnic, racial or national identity, out-group perspectives and in-group cohesion,

[222] Bengtsson, "How to Plan and Perform a Qualitative Study Using Content Analysis," Abstract.

additional patterns emerged which reflected theories of social identity, boundary formation, and organizational socialization. In total, I reviewed the transcripts and inductively coded responses which referenced the following relevant areas:

1) Identity Formation in basic training
2) Recruitment
3) Personal ethnic/racial/national identity
4) Outgroup perspectives
5) In-group formation and cohesion
6) Organizational Socialization
7) (Ethnic) military boundary formation

5.5 Issues Encountered

It was my intention to interview a diverses group of current and former U.S. military members. Because of the diverse nature of the U.S. military, it would have been outside of the purview of a master's thesis to have the research participants match the demographic makeup of the U.S. military. Due to a lack of resources, I could not find participants from every demographic background as one would find in the U.S. military. Most notably, I was unable to find participants of Black African or Asian ancestry. I do believe that including Black Africans or those with Asian ancestry into my research may sway the outcome of any further research on this topic. This could be due to the prevalence of identity politics amongst such groups of people in the United States. As such, an expanded version of this research should take place which takes into consideration the demographic makeup of the U.S. military and adjusts participant numbers accordingly to assure the research's reliability.

Due to my personal association with members in the U.S. military, the majority of respondents came from the U.S. Air Force. However, as there were no identifying questions which focused specifically on a given branch of the U.S. military, I expected such distinctions to play a minimal role in the nature of the responses.

I encountered an additional issue when it came to the gathering of participants. Right as I began conducting interviews the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war began. This created difficulties, as potential participants were subsequently and suddenly deployed to regions where conduction of an interview would have been difficult, if not impossible. Additionally, as the interviews took place in mid-March 2022, within weeks of the war's beginning, current military members, who did participate in the interviews, likely had some of their responses influenced by the current events. This is made apparent by some responses which referenced the crises directly.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

Given the secretive and selective nature of the military, I was mindful of my positionality as a researcher and observer. Participants who expressed hesitation before the beginning of the interview process were assured that questions would center only on personal perspectives, and they would not be asked specific and detailed questions regarding certain lived experiences or their specific roles or duties in the U.S. Military. Thus, I did not push participants to elaborate where they did not appear comfortable to do so.

I was also mindful that five of the participants had met me previously and knew me on a personal level. In order to avoid any biases this relationship might have, I conducted the interview via Zoom or Facebook Messenger, and did not include video. It was hoped this would create a feeling of anonymity and comfortability between myself and the participants. The participants

were addressed in a professional and respectful manner throughout the whole process, from initial contact to finalization of the interview.

Lastly, given the contentious role the U.S. military institution plays in domestic and global politics, I was mindful not to bring up any personal feelings I may have. Given my ambivalence regarding the necessity of the U.S. military, I directed all questions towards the participant and never voiced personal opinions in order to avoid any influence this may have on the responses given.

5.7 Methodological Reflections

Overall I am quite pleased with the outcome of the interviews. The respondents seemed eager to contribute their knowledge on the subject and shared their perspectives and experiences openly. Though the majority of interviewees did address their nervousness at the beginning of such an interview, by the time the interviews finished, the respondents appeared relaxed and reflective. They also seemed willing to find further participants for this study, however none of the respondents followed up on my requests for additional participants. If this research took place over a longer period of time, I would have repeated my request for more snow-ball sampled participants and would have reached out to individuals who were not within my network. Reflecting on the interviews personally, I am confident in the trustworthiness of this data. This is because none of the respondents expressed hesitation regarding any line of questioning and the majority provided thoughtful and extensive responses to the questions.

6.0 Findings

The previous three sections gave the reader an in-depth look into the direction of this research. It should have been made clear that within the field of nationalism and sociology, the

concept of 'identity' is a mixed term. Group belonging has a strong influence on personal identity, which has the potential to impact other identifications of an individual. The research conducted for this thesis, intended to expand on our understanding of identity as it corresponds to group belonging. Given the history of the U.S. military as a tool for identity (re)formeration, its group members were ideal candidates for better understanding how salient particular identities are. Humans grow up adhering to a particular culture. These cultures are then defined as a particular ethnic, racial, or national group. The heterogeneous nature of the United States means thousands of cultures exist and flourish within its territory. It has been the duty of the U.S. military to construct a single identity from the many millions of ethnically, racially and nationally diverse people who have served. This identity (re)formation is then expected to traverse the socially constructed ethnic, racial, and national borders existing across the United States, and help to better form the boundaries of the nation.

Before conducting this research it was hypothesized that the ethnic, racial, or national identity of minority service members would be prevalent when reflecting on their U.S. military service. Thus, even after undergoing identity (re)formation during basic training, their ethnic, racial, and national identities continue to influence how service members view their position in the U.S. military. After conducting the interviews and coding for the above research questions, it was determined that the majority of interviewees either negligibly mentioned their ethnic, racial, national identity, or did not mention it at all.

6.1 Transformations Through Military Service

It was clear from the outset of every interview that joining the U.S. military was considered a liberation from the respondent's civilian lifestyle. One respondent described joining the military

as 'trying [their] luck,'[223] while another considered the U.S. military as 'something that could be productive.'[224] Some respondents described their joining of the service as 'doing something more,'[225] while the majority believed that joining the military was 'the best opportunity…to provide for [themself].'[226] This 'opportunity' comes in the form of getting an education, and thus bettering themselves socioeconomically. The U.S. military gives members a chance to obtain an education and learn a trade, all while being provided security and stability in the form of health insurance, living assistance, and other social benefits. The safety net means young recruits, who would otherwise immediately join the workforce upon graduating high school, saw the U.S. military as a potential rung on the socioeconomic ladder.

While the majority of recruits listed education and socioeconomic reasons, along with uncertainty in the face of their future, as their reason to join, a number did list a desire to contribute to a larger goal as a deciding factor. One respondent said they 'wanted to do something bigger than [them]selves and belong to something that was…honorable,'[227] while another 'wanted to give back to the safety and security of where [they] grew up.'[228] Ultimately, the respondents varied in their reasons for joining. Notably, however, when asked about their reason for joining the word *Patriotism* was never mentioned, nor did any respondent refer to a sense of *duty* or *responsibility* to the nation.

The process of indoctrination during basic training does not consider personal preferences when (re)forming identity. Basic training, for the majority of the respondents, was a life changing

[223] Anonymous I, interview with author, March 18, 2022.
[224] Anonymous III, interview with author, March 19, 2022
[225] Anonymous V, interview with author, March 20, 2022
[226] Anonymous VIII, interview with author, March 26, 2022
[227] Anonymous IIII, interview with author, March 20, 2022
[228] Anonymous VIII, interview with author, March 26, 2022

experience. When asked to reflect on their time at basic training the majority of respondents made some allusion to undergoing a personal transformation.

> *'So basic training was definitely…a life changer because you go in there and they take your phones away. They come up to you, they scream at you, try to crush you basically so they can build you back up.'*[229]

> *'Everybody around you started to do it. And…when they say they break you down and build you back up, and that…the day you're actually born is the day you graduate from boot camp…'*[230]

> *'It's a breakdown process. First they break you down and then build you up. That's why they train you with physical exercises and all the just general psychological demoralization happens. Because some people need to be broken down to be rebuilt'*[231]

> *'Everything is taught to you by the book. They didn't leave you questioning yourself. They told you how to do things by the book. By the number. Like reading instructions if you don't know.'*[232]

It is clear that in the minds of the respondents, basic training is associated with internal, as well as external, transformations. Even without being asked to specifically recall themselves being transformed, the majority of participants recounted the processes of identity (re)formation as being inherent to the basic training process.

Acceptance into the military institution meant first and foremost undergoing organizational socialization. During the interviews, the respondents reflected on the institution of the U.S. military and how they were socialized to fit into the system.

By joining in their adolescence recruits are able to fit better into the social structure of the U.S. military. As one respondent kept mentioning, their age made them susceptible to influence whilst at basic training.

[229] Anonymous I, interview with author, March 18, 2022
[230] Anonymous IIII, interview with author, March 20, 2022
[231] Anonymous IX, interview with author, March 26, 2022
[232] Anonymous II, interview with author, March 18, 2022

'Since I joined straight out of high school, I was still at that stage of life where I could be molded to what life prepared me for'[233]

'Being so young I digested…information really easily [so] it was pretty simple to adapt to such a new [military] culture so fast.'[234]

'At that time I was very malleable…I was at that stage of my life [where] I could be molded into what the AF needed me to be.'[235]

As was mentioned in section 4.3, socializing recruits that are in their adolescence means it is simpler to transform them to fit the social structure of the military. Many young people, fresh out of high school, are looking to find their place in the world. Arguably, efforts to transform the identity of fully grown adults would be more difficult than to transform young men and women who are already going through a process of change. One respondent, who was 25 when they joined, remembered the immaturity of some of the younger recruits:

'It was the inability for them to stay quiet. I can't believe how difficult that was for these kids…it annoyed me, I remember distinctly.'[236]

Defining adolescents as 'kids', expresses the idea of their immaturity. Kids are still in need of shaping and structure. The U.S. military is aware of this. And so they socialize these young recruits into the structure of the organization throughout basic training and expect them to adhere to the structure during their time in the service.

Part of being a member of the U.S. military means placing the goals of the organization ahead of your own. Similar to learning team building while in basic training, recruits quickly learn that their actions are meant to drive the organization to a particular objective. One recruit discussed coming to terms with this lack of individual choice in the the following way:

[233] Anonymous II, interview with author, March 18, 2022.
[234] Anonymous II, interview with author, March 18, 2022.
[235] Anonymous II, interview with author, March 18, 2022
[236] Anonymous X, interview with author, March 27, 2022.

'Once you're in, you kind of have to live in two different worlds…when you're at work you don't really have an opinion on a lot of things, or at least in public you don't, but in private you might. Personally, I would say you…don't have a choice…you're kind of already locked in that position…no matter what you think it really isn't going to change the outcome even though if everyone collectively thought that it would change the outcome'[237]

Unlike the democratic nation it defends, the U.S. military is not a horizontal plane whereby all other individuals have equal voices. Rather, the U.S. military's meritocratic and hierarchical structure makes it nearly impossible for individual members to express grievances against particular tasks or assigned duties. During basic training one is socialized to understand this system. At basic training they learn how to stand, dress, speak and address superiors. These skills are hammered into recruits so that they can function effectively within the organization.

6.2 In-group Creation and Perceptions

As was discussed in the previous sections, the U.S. military needs to create a cohesive force in order to function effectively. Part of creating such a force is to (re)form the identities of its members, so that they consider themselves part of a group. Throughout the interviews, respondents addressed such endeavors by the U.S. military in the following way:

'They don't really care about if you have the fastest run time or anything like that. They mostly look for [whether you are] good [at] adapting to a team and can perform a good duty as a team.'[238]

'You had to be a team. Individuality is not a thing that is encouraged and it only hurts the team.'[239]

Team-building is strongly correlated to basic training. On the official goarmy.com website, the term is used to describe the process of basic training. 'During Basic' the website states, 'you'll

[237] Anonymous VIII, interview with author, March 26, 2022.
[238] Anonymous VIII, interview with author, March 26, 2022
[239] Anonymous IX, interview with author, March 26, 2022

learn how to work as a member of a team.'[240] Without being asked to specifically state whether team building was a part of basic training, respondents automatically correlated their time at basic training with learning how to operate beyond the individual level and function as a team.

Through team-building, group cohesion is formed. Together, group members *embrace the suck* of basic training. *Embrace the Suck,* while not an official phrase, was nonetheless mentioned by more than one respondent. It means that rather than to fight against the stressful nature of basic training, one should learn to welcome it, recognizing that the 'suck' is in place for a specific reason. One respondent mentioned that the suck was what held people together during basic training.[241] Regardless of ethnicity, race or culture, by *embracing the suck* a strong bond was formed between recruits. As the respondent summarizes it:

> *'I've met … mothers, I've met people with a lot of family issues…Just there's such a large pool of people to pull from…you get to experience and just meet all these different cultures and different backgrounds and different races and everything, it was just such an eye opening experience…there is something about embracing the suck…it brings you closer because you experience that thing together…everyone is missing [their] family, it's a family, it's a home away from home. [And] during that time you don't have anyone else to lean on…except the people who are also going through the same thing.'*[242]

Another recruit recalled the sisterly bond formed during basic training saying:

> *'...we are like sisters during basic training…[us and our] sister platoon…do stuff together training wise…you just feel connected to all of them…even if you don't really know somebody you'd protect them like they were your sister.'*[243]

These quotes exemplify how basic training creates group cohesion. As was discussed in section 4.3 recruits are removed from their civilian lives and go through a stressful process of

[240] "Basic Combat Training." goarmy.com. Accessed May 17, 2022. https://www.goarmy.com/soldier-life/becoming-a-soldier/basic-combat-training.html#:~:text=During%20Basic%2C%20you'll%20learn,Values%20and%20the%20Soldier%20Creed.
[241] Anonymous V, interview with author, March 20, 2022
[242] Anonymous V, interview with author, March 20, 2022.
[243] Anonymous VII, interview with author, March 24, 2022.

mental and physical transformation. By forcing recruits to undergo *The Suck*, they are forced to rely on other group members for comfort as well as to complete tasks. It creates a 'family' amongst otherwise diverse strangers.

Another emergent trend among respondents when asked to reflect on their time in basic training, was the diversity of the training. Both whites and non-whites, U.S. Americans, dual-nationals and non-U.S. Americans recalled how diverse basic training was.

> *'You kind of realize how big the U.S. really is…even though I lived in the U.S. most of my life, I've only been…south, southwest coast, and then joining you realize…there's people from all over. Even just the regional difference from northern California to southern California is very different. They have people from the east coast, the south, everywhere.'*[244]

> *'Going to [basic training] was just different cultures coming into one area and there wasn't a big difference.'*[245]

> *'People who've never seen people of color, and not that they are racist or anything, but it is still a shock to them to see that because they live in such isolated corners. But I guess that is the magic of the military. In the end everybody conforms, everyone blends in, ya know, in the end everybody is the same in that. That's the truth about it…'*[246]

> *'That was the biggest culture shock…seeing all the people, different people, and how different they were to me.'*[247]

Basic Training was built to reduce differences, along with preparing members for the military lifestyle. The respondents recognized this when reflecting on their time during basic training. The process of reducing prejudice amongst recruits is not subvert. In fact it is explicitly stated. A documentary published by Business Insider in 2020 follows the introductory training of new Army recruits. In one scene a drill sergeant yells orders at the newly arrived recruits who are standing at attention. Among the orders is the following speech:

[244] Anonymous VI, interview with author, March 21, 2022.
[245] Anonymous I, interview with author, March 18, 2022
[246] Anonymous IX, interview with author, March 26, 2022.
[247] Anonymous IX, interview with author, March 26, 2022.

'I promise you, if you don't pay attention to what I am about to tell you, you will make your army career very short…you treat everybody with dignity and respect regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, and all other protected categories. Yes?'[248]

The drill sergeants speech is then followed up with a resounding '*YES DRILL SERGEANT!'.* The message is clear; So long as they go through the stages of basic training, everyone is to be accepted as a member of the U.S. military in-group. Exclusion on the basis of any protected category is strictly prohibited. It can be assumed that such speeches are given to all new recruits arriving for basic training, and as such has a lasting impact on both former and current members.

It is clear from the interviews that while the reasons for joining the U.S. military may be unique to the individual, the experience of basic training is similar to all. The experience of basic training helped to transform both their identity and their perspective of others. While prejudice still exists within all groups, including the U.S. military, the institution nonetheless has spent decades attempting to perfect equality. Being part of a cohesive team which is working towards a single goal helps to transcend differences. While being threatened with expulsion from the service for exhibiting xenophobic, racist or sexist ideologies forces recruits to put aside their personal prejudices.

Maintaining a diverse military means breaking all individuals down to the lowest common denominator, that being the uniform. One respondent described the uniform as the greatest culture shock upon entering the armed forces,[249] while another said that wearing the uniform is 'like a switch that turns on in [their] head' which causes them to behave differently.[250] The uniform not

[248] Flanagan, Graham. *YouTube*. Business Insider, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYbbmatf6w4&t=201s.
[249] Anonymous II, interview with author, March 18, 2022.
[250] Anonymous VIII, interview with author, March 26, 2022.

only signifies group membership, but it also details differences within the group. All service members, while on duty, must wear the uniform of their corresponding branch. What differentiates the individual soldiers from each other is their rank. Rank, which is attached to either the cap, collar, or chest area, signals an individual's status within the group. One is addressed not by what they look like, but what their rank is. 'Respect the rank not the person'[251] is a common saying in the U.S. military. It means that one is not shown respect based on who they are, but rather what they have accomplished. This meritocratic structure helps mitigate any contention which might occur between ethnicities, races, and nationalities. While not perfect, it is arguably effective in reducing differences.

6.3 Boundary Maintenance and Out-Group Perspective

Part of being socialized into the organization means transforming out-groups members into in-group members. As alluded to previously, this process is done during basic training however it is maintained throughout their time in the service by other in-group members and through out-group interactions and perspectives. During basic training, in-group dynamics are formed through team-building exercises. Recruits are forced to rely on each other to not only accomplish tasks, but to also make it through the rigorous 8-12 week training course. Once they leave basic training and enter into a military career, recruits continue to rely on each other as they are separated from their civilian friends and family and are often forced to spend even major holidays working. A respondent who works on submarines described the relationship to other U.S. military members in the following way:

'There are few places where you find such camaraderie, intimacy amongst men, intimacy not so much as emotions, I would say more in the realm of you really know every person whether

[251] Anonymous IIII, interview with author, March 20, 2022.

you like them or not. You know their spouses, you know about their kids…they're your family in those situations, in a tin can underneath the ocean…'[252]

Being removed from outgroup members, and isolated from the civilian world, means military members maintain the close bonds they formed during basic training. It enables them to continue operating as members of an established in-group.

Upon graduating from basic training, recruits begin to interact once more with the civilian world. It is here where the military in-group, which was built during basic training, is solidified. The out-group (civilians) begin to view recruits not as fellow civilians, but rather as belonging to another world entirely. When asked about how they believe civilians perceive them, the respondents expressed a host of mixed experiences and emotions:

'[in uniform] people look at you differently. I don't know if it's fear or uncertainty…for people who do know about the military they look at you with respect and maybe even look up to you.'[253]

'When you hear the military you think of the army. You think guns, war, people [dying] left and right, and that was the mentality my mother had.'[254]

'I would say in uniform, when people see us, they see us as proper…[we are doing] something more than ourselves, right? We are defending our country, ya know? 'Cause America is very patriotic towards their military.'[255]

'I would say people kind of immediately have irrational biases towards you, like when you're in uniform…they already have an expectation for you.'[256]

'If you ask the average pro-military American, they are pretty proud of you. A lot of people have sons, daughters, grandsons, nephews, in the military. So seeing us in uniform reminds them…of their own children…people say 'thank you for your service.''[257]

[252] Anonymous IX, interview with author, March 26, 2022.
[253] Anonymous I, interview with author, March 18, 2022
[254] Anonymous II, interview with author, March 18, 2022.
[255] Anonymous II, interview with author, March 18, 2022.
[256] Anonymous VIII, interview with author, March 26, 2022
[257] Anonymous IX, interview with author, March 26, 2022.

'They still did not like us all that much. But they didn't really necessarily say anything about it.'[258]

Recruits find themselves categorized by out-groups as soon as they begin to mix back into the civilian world. Some recruits experienced this phenomenon even though they had 'just finished training and [hadn't] started [their] job yet.'[259] Regardless of how a recruit feels personally, they perceive themselves as being categorized by out-group members due to their affiliation with the military.

When asked about how they are viewed by outgroup members when they are not in uniform, and thus able to blend in more easily, respondents answered in a mixed fashion. Some believe they are able to conform to the out-group when outside of uniform. Others claim that outgroup members can notice military members based on distinct physical characteristics and behaviors.

'I think they knew that we were marines because everyone thought marines looked the same to people out there.'[260]

'The haircut is pretty hard to hide, if you know where to look…I try not to act military.'[261]

Not a single respondent mentioned their ethinic, racial, or national identification when answering how the out-group perceived them, both in or out of uniform. Rather, they perceive themselves as being categorized by out-group members based purely on their association with the U.S. military. Even respondents with a minority status or different national identity mentioned that when being out of uniform they see themselves as 'blend[ing] in with the rest of the people,'[262] or

[258] Anonymous IIII, interview with author, March 20, 2022.
[259] Anonymous II, interview with author, March 18, 2022.
[260] Anonymous IIII, interview with author, March 20, 2022.
[261] Anonymous IX, interview with author, March 26, 2022
[262] Anonymous X, interview with author, March 26, 2022

as being perceived as 'just another bystander.'[263] Whether the military and its identity transformation initiatives had any influence on this outcome would require further study. What can be ascertained is that when discussing out-group perceptions of the U.S. military in-group, ethnicity, race, or national identification of military members does not play a large role, if any.

Notably, boundaries do exist between nationalities in the U.S. Military, however slight. One respondent with a European identity, mentioned that upon entering basic training they saw the other recruits as 'all still pretty American' and didn't 'see much of a difference' amongst them.[264] Whatever differences which may have existed between the recruits, it was the opinion of this respondent that all were first and foremost 'American'. By acknowledging this, the respondent indicated that they perceived themselves from an out-group perspective. They were aware of their non-U.S. nationality during their time at basic training. Another respondent, with U.S. nationality, discussed non-nationals serving as being 'honorable' and 'selfless' for their willingness to serve 'our country.'[265] Within the same response, this respondent elevates the status of non-U.S. nationals who serve while also noting that the nation does not belong to them. Arguably, being a non-U.S. national does not appear to hinder the experience of the respondents nor the integration process they all must go through to be considered a member of the U.S. military in-group.

6.4 Ethnic, Racial or National Identity and Military Service

As was stated before, this research purposefully did not ask leading questions. Rather, topics of ethnicity, race and nationality were expected to come up naturally in responses. While it

[263] Anonymous III, interview with author, March 19, 2022.
[264] Anonymous I, interview with author, March 18, 2022.
[265] Anonymous VII, interview with author, March 24, 2022

was expected that ethnicity, race, and nationality would play a large role in military perceptions, it was found the opposite was true. Only one respondent directly correlated their perspective of military service with their ethnicity. The respondent begins the very first question by stating that they 'come from a family of immigrants,' they then go on to talk about how their father, an immigrant from El Salvador, 'joined the Navy' making military service a part of their family.[266] The respondent then says that the military has 'been a way for [their family] to find a place in American society.'[267] This statement alludes to the U.S. military as still being a method of integration for non-americans, minorities and immigrants. Interestingly, this particular respondent was the only respondent to mention national pride, saying 'I still feel proud, I guess, to be American.'[268] This statement indicates that both the American and immigrant identity exist simultaneously without any nullification occurring. Within the U.S. military, both the American and immigrant identity can coexist, supporting its role as nation-builder. The U.S. military's position as a nation-builder means that even today its members' participation influences how the social boundaries of the nation can be stretched.

In an effort to elicit a final allusion to an ethnic, racial, or national identity, every interviewee was asked a final question. This question was meant to elicit how they saw themselves. Respondents were asked to describe themselves as they would to a stranger from Iceland. Some respondents required clarification, as to whether I wanted them to describe their military selves or their personal selves. This I found interesting as they made a distinction between who they are in the military world and who they consider themselves to be personally. This alludes to an internal difference between the two 'selves'. In response I asked them to mention whatever they believed

[266] Anonymous VI, interview with author, March 21, 2022
[267] Anonymous VI, interview with author, March 21, 2022.
[268] Anonymous VI, interview with author, march 21, 2022

was the most important. The majority of the respondents indicated that such a question was foreign to them and required a moment of reflection.

Of the ten respondents, only three referenced their ethnic, racial, or national identity during this last question. Their responses were as follows:

'I would say my name and say that I am from this country and that I speak the language fluently, that I lived there for a long time.'[269]

'...um, and that my ethnicity is Mexican and I can speak two languages fluently.'[270]

'I am from San Diego, California, that's where I lived most of my life…'[271]

How and why people view themselves is a difficult question to ask, it is an even more difficult question to answer. This research helped better understand whether or not a recruit's ethnic, racial, or national identity influences how they perceive their military service. Within the military context, it appears recruits consider themselves first and foremost a member of the military. Their ethnic, racial, or national identity rarely - if at all - influences this perception.

6.5 Final Considerations to the Findings

This research set out to better understand the influence of ethnic, racial and national identity on military service. Through organizational socialization and in-group formation, cultural boundaries are overlaid with military identities. By interviewing both white U.S. Americans and non-white Americans, as well as dual-nationals and non-U.S. American citizens, the research expected to find discrepancies between answers based on the respondent's ethnicity, race, or nationality. This ended up not being the case. The outcome of this research found that while some participants did mention aspects of their ethnic, racial or national identity, others did not.

[269] Anonymous I, interviewed by Dana Coggio, March 18, 2022.
[270] Anonymous III, interviewed by Dana Coggio, March 19, 2022.
[271] Anonymous VI, interviewed by Dana Coggio, March 21, 2022.

Therefore, what this research's findings allude to is that identity, while most pertinent, is not prevalent in all aspects of a person's life. A military member's perspectives on military service are not ostensibly influenced by their ethnic, racial, or national identity. And if they are, they rarely - if at all - outwardly consider the influence this identity has on their military service.

As was expected, when discussing their views on military service, the military identity was all encompassing. What was not expected was the degree to which ethnic, racial, or national identities were not discussed. This unexpected finding could be due to a number of reasons. On a more study-specific level, the outcome may be reflective of the small sample size. And/or the fact that the majority of respondents were LatinX or White-U.S. American. Interviewing Black-Americans or Asian-Americans could elicit a different outcome, one where ethnic or racial identity plays a larger role in perspectives on military service. Or, this study's outcome could reflect the reality of the U.S. military and its basic training protocols. It is a possibility that basic training is truly effective at having a person differentiate their ethnic, racial and national identifiers from their military service. However, this interpretation does not explain why the respondents of the study did not mention their ethnic, racial or national identity when asked how out-group members perceive them when not in uniform. A larger sample size in a future study may find a different outcome to such a line of questioning. Second, this study's finding could lend itself to another, more general, theory. That being while identity is heavily discussed in U.S. domestic politics and in academic circles, the average person does not consider their ethnic, racial, or national identity on a regular basis. Even less so if one is a member of a homogenized organization such as the U.S. military.

After analyzing the interviews, I was able to draw a single conclusion. The determination of which should come as no surprise to researchers studying identity. Namely, that personal

perspectives on military service are just that, personal, and so they vary considerably by individual. There were no patterns in the responses which could be attributed to the respondent's ethnic, racial, or national identity. Whether this outcome is due to the transformative experience of basic training and the respondents' subsequent years of military service cannot be directly correlated without further quantitative studies. What it does offer is a glimpse into the world of the U.S. military and an avenue of identity transformation which has an ability to transcend previous identifiers without removing them entirely.

7.0 Conclusion

> '...when I think of his patience under adversity, of his courage under fire, and of his modesty in victory, I am filled with an emotion of admiration I cannot put into words. He belongs to history as furnishing the greatest examples of successful patriotism. He belongs to posterity as the instructor of future generations in the principles of liberty and freedom. He belongs to the present, to us, by his virtues and by his achievements.'[272]
>
> General Douglas MacArthur
> West Point, N.Y., May 12, 1962

The U.S. military is a nation-builder. For better or for worse it helps to push and expand the social boundary of the United States. Those who serve enter the force from all walks of life and for many different reasons. Within the confines of the U.S. military, individuals are all equally transformed into a member of an elite in-group. Diverse identifiers are enveloped by the overarching military identity instilled in recruits. This process impacts not only the individual service member, but also the wider U.S. society. Being allowed to serve one's nation is not only considered a great honor, but also a right for any citizen.

[272] MacArthur, ''Duty, Honor, Country.''

This research expanded on the current understanding of identity. It attempted to better grasp three things. These being the salience of a person's ethnic, racial, and national identity in the context of U.S. military service; how U.S. military members believe they are perceived by in-and-out-group members; and why the U.S. military utilizes transformation of individuals to nation-build and how U.S. military members regard this process. It found that while ethnic groups and boundaries are salient in the face of competing identities, the U.S. military identity nonetheless is effective at overriding any previous identity. In the military context, the U.S. military transforms members to see themselves as service(wo)men first and their ethnic, racial, or national identity second. This includes seeing fellow in-group members as members of the military organization first and their ethnic, racial or national identity second. This does not mean that the ethnic, racial, or national identity is removed from the individual, rather, these identities do not influence the service member's military identity. This finding holds with Barth's belief that identity is not a zero-sum-game. Individuals can cross ethnic and cultural boundaries without losing an identity in the face of gaining a new one. As individuals entered into the U.S. military culture, they learned to identify with its membership while maintaining their previous identifiers. Necessary to success in the U.S. military is to put one's membership in the armed services first and their previous identifiers second.

This research also helped clarify how in-group cohesion amongst military members is formed and how in-group member's view the perceptions of out-group members. Following Tajfel's Social Identity Theory this research tracked how in-group formation occurs during basic training and is maintained once an individual begins their military service. Additionally, military members are acutely aware of their status as non-civilians and therefore attribute meaning to their in-group status through comparison to out-group civilians. They are socialized into this

organization which trains them to think and behave as a single unit while establishing a dependency on each other and to the organization. Due to this strong in-group cohesion, there exists a distinct out-group. Civilians view U.S. military members with pride, skepticism, animosity, or indifference. Nonetheless, in-group military members are aware of their separation from the civilian out-group because of their military membership. According to the respondents, their ethnic, racial or national identity does not play a role in how they believe out-group members view them. This shows a strong association with their military membership as being an overriding identity, more impactful to out-group members than their ethnic, racial or national identity.

The time a person spends in the U.S. military is lasting. The bond between service members continues throughout a person's time in the service as they are continuously separated from their civilian life and forced to rely on fellow service members for support, emotional or otherwise. Individuals enter military service and undergo a transformative process. It is within the walls of basic training that those who grow to become members of the in-group learn to perceive others as equals. Today, ethnic, racial or national barriers do not exist within basic training. As the respondents mentioned, U.S. military conformity drives integration amongst members. Diverse groups learn to cooperate and function as a single unit, placing the organization above the self. These transformative practices are then expected to continue once an individual leaves the confines of the U.S. military and enters into the civilian workforce, thereby effectively integrating the poly-ethnic U.S. society and stretching the nation's social borders.

To truly understand the value of ethnic, racial, or national identity in the face of military identity, a longitudinal study must be conducted which tracks the personal identity of individuals before, during and after their time in the U.S. military. Such research would involve having service members reflect on their time in the military and their perceptions of military service while

tracking the frequency with which identity is discussed. By undertaking such research, a better understanding of identity saliency in the face of transformations could be uncovered.

For now, the qualitative research undertaken for this thesis provides a curious trend: ethnic, racial, and national identity is not prevalent in reflections on military service. A person's membership with the military in-group is a powerful identifier for an individual. As such their ethnic, racial, or national identity does not drastically, if at all, influence their perception of military service. This does not mean that the ethnic, racial, or national identity has been replaced with the military one, rather that such identities are not relevant in the military context.

This is not the first research which attempts to look at ethnic, racial, or national identity in the military context. In fact, this research merely adds to the growing literature, all of which juxtapose each other in some instances while supporting each other in others. What can be gleaned from this study's findings is that identity is difficult to define, and even more difficult to square entirely. Every human is unique, and as such so are their personal reflections on who they are. Even when forced to transform themselves to behave a certain way, to speak a certain way and to interact a certain way, a person's identity is unique to themselves. While the U.S. military may be effective at overriding a personal identifier when creating its military group cohesion, it could not possibly remove such identifiers entirely. Nor would it want to. Fostering diversity in the U.S. military is not just beneficial for the organization itself, but it also benefits the U.S. society as a whole. The more diversity is allowed to flourish in the U.S. military, the more diversity will be fostered on the home front. Allowing anyone to serve in the U.S. military regardless of ethnicity, race, nationality, culture or religion, means allowing anyone to be considered a member of the United States.

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