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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

Importance of Diversity, Inclusion, and its Effects on the U.S. Military Profession of Arms

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Date: 8 April 2021

Executive Summary

Title: Importance of Diversity, Inclusion, and its Effects on the U.S. Military Profession of Arms

Author: Major Michael W. Thomas, United States Army

Thesis: The United States military assignments and promotion system does not accurately represent the American demographic. Although it represents the culture and beliefs of the people it serves, there is still much to be done to promote inclusion for all, particularly in the Officer Corps.

Discussion: The American people have always looked at the United States military to be the change agent for society. It has been over 70 years since President Harry Truman signed executive order 9981 end segregation in the United States military. However, it is important to examine and understand current military culture, benefits, and challenges that may come with future diversification and inclusion in the military. Unconscious biases, self-efficacy, and physical appearance will be used to evaluate why there is little diversification in the U.S. military and what can be done to promote diversity and inclusion. However, a diverse fighting force will allow the United States to deploy a more lethal, agile, adaptive, and creative military ready to fight and win the nation's interests globally.

Conclusion: Identifying cultural biases through research allows military leaders to have a greater understanding and appreciation for the positive impacts diversity and inclusion provides to the military profession of arms. The research activity evaluates military culture and society equally and brings about balance as each party is aware of their requirements. Although diversity and inclusion present numerous benefits, it should be planned with care to avoid compromising the military's integrity. Minority leaders must continue to pursue challenging opportunities, exceed the physical fitness standards, possess strong self-efficacy, to increase assignment and promotion potential. These traits are necessary as they allow a systematic approach to developing effective and capable leaders throughout all military ranks. The research indicated specific assumptions are surrounding military ranks, which inhibits diverse military units.

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Preface

Throughout my years of military-service, I've always been attentive to who's representing the organization and can they identify with those whom they represent? Historically, minorities were not allowed to serve in combat roles throughout the military and were reduced to serve in support-roles such as supply, cooks, and blacksmiths to name a few. On July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed executive order 9981, which abolished discrimination on the basis of color, race, religion and national origin, the services became integrated. Despite the order many minorities were not provided a fair and unbiased opportunity to successfully serve in those coveted positions. Many settled for the combat support roles and made the best of it but would never ascend to the highest ranks of their respective service, because they were not combat arms. I chose the topic of Diversity and Inclusion and its Effect on the United States Military Profession of Arms because the military is a microcosm of American society. In doing so, I researched different literary works with the intent of indicating why senior leadership in the United States military does not accurately reflect the American demographic. Through the use of predetermined theories, physical fitness and efficacy, I was able to conduct analysis concerning the lack of diversification at the senior leadership level in the United States military. Additionally, the study looks at methodology of diversity and inclusion and the benefits it provides. To understand the consequent benefits and challenges posed by the enactment of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, I accessed the achiever blog website, thus depicting the same. According to the blog, inclusion and diversity fosters strong bonds in any organization to include the United States military by drawing individuals from different religions, races and cultures, thus bringing together a wide variety of talents and skills (Kellie, 2020). Lastly, measures such as accountability, appropriate military fora and chain of command can influence the eradicating of issues of discrimination in the United States military.

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I would like to thank my family for their unwavering support during this arduous process. There were many nights I was not present at the dinner table to continue with this research.

Marine Corps University Mentor and Second Reader:

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Introduction

Many people believe the United States military to be one of the accurate representations of equality in modern society. Still, many unresolved issues from the country's past regarding equality and race linger. While the military reflects the community it represents, there is always the need to recruit a more diverse group, particularly within the Officer Corps. Lack of equality is a prominent feature in the military as most senior positions require people with unique backgrounds and skillsets. Minorities and People of color, especially African Americans in the military, serve as service support specialists or combat services such as logistics and chemical corps.¹ It is essential to understand diversity and inclusion in the military context before evaluating its importance, effects, and what the military should do to improve inclusivity.

Diversity in the military is critical in building a resilient, efficient, reliable, and agile workforce ensuring every member feels inclusive and vital in every mission. Although diversity and inclusion in the military is a good thing that should be encouraged, it usually poses significant challenges during the implementation stage due to varied arguments about the matter.² Some people argue exercising military diversity and inclusion should represent all aspects of the nation's population, including cultural and social status.³ To some extent, inclusion will lead to ignorance of efficiency and performance in the military, which could lead to underperformance or even communication breakdown in the organization due to end fighting.

Despite these significant and varied debates, it is true when diversity and inclusion are applied in the recruitment or selection of a military force, it increases innovation and creativity in problem-solving, especially when faced with unforeseen challenges during operations. However, compromising the military units' efficiency and effectiveness is not debatable during recruitment to fit a diverse group. The allocation of resources and training should not be biased

either because competitiveness and ability to perform well in the military are affected by personal attributes, training, and resource allocation.

Background

In the military, *diversity* refers to human-specific traits used to evaluate similarities and differences between persons. The attributes can be categorized as social, biological, or personal even though they do not fully encompass the human variability spectrum.⁴ Religion, education, political affiliation, and marital status form social traits, while the biological diversity aspect encompasses race, age, gender, and place of origin. Personal attributes contain special personal skills, sexual orientation, and personality.

On the other hand, *inclusion* is the process of availing equal chances to different individuals without discrimination based on personal, social, or biological traits. In the military context, this includes providing equal military tasks or opportunities to various groups within the population to ensure all qualified citizens' recruitment. Diversity and inclusion ensure no social-economic, geographic, or demographic groups are discriminated against during any military recruitment process.⁵ Apart from guaranteeing equal recruitment opportunities, inclusion provides a continued presence and participation of all persons from various society segments. This helps build strong bonds and friendships in the military and the community at large.

Cultural beliefs and shared history, especially the slave trade, have led to continued systematic oppression even within the United States military that play a vital role in the under-representation of marginalized communities in the Officer Corps. The under-representation is manifested in several ways, as a report in 2017 to Congress noted that most minority soldiers serve on front line combat positions.⁶ Additionally, pushing minority soldiers to complete

training that is less likely to offer a window or an opportunity that leads to senior positions or ranks.

The historical beliefs and culture that viewed minority groups, especially the blacks, as incompetent, has pushed them to serve in support roles, which continue to affect equal demographic distribution in the military even today. Military leaders have struggled to integrate diverse personnel into Officer Corps throughout history, although the trend seemed to improve in the mid-20th century. Initially, minority groups used to volunteer and were drafted to serve during and after the American Revolution. During the Civil War, approximately one hundred and seventy-nine thousand African Americans served in Union Military while thousands more assisted the fight. In the report presented to Congress in 2017, the researchers noted in 1866, Congress authorized the creation of six colored troops battalions and one thousand American scouts as part of the Army's reconstruction.⁷ Due to the country's state, many people, including government officials and senior military officers, did not consider these segregation recommendations to be unethical, which led to an organization that lacked cultural diversity.

Diversity and Inclusion Benefits

Diversity and inclusion have a plethora of benefits, but the most important one is increased productivity. A diverse group with varying histories, experiences, and backgrounds can increase effectiveness and efficiency, boosting military productivity. Military units that utilize a diversified workforce create an international culture that enables it to increase its output through innovation and creativity to outperform its competitors. Consequently, organizations that encourage diversity and inclusion perform better than their similar organizations or counterparts.⁸ Additionally, when the military encourages diversity and inclusion, the team becomes suited for cross-cultural and international operations. A diversified organization is able to align itself with an organization located across the world and still achieve success because of

its ability to understand cultural norms. However, it is crucial to note in some operations, diversity and inclusion may impede the overall productivity of the military operation due to increased internal conflicts. Internal conflicts can be caused by ineffective communication, cultural differences, or language barriers. Having a diverse workforce can mitigate some of the conflicts and foster a fair and impartial work environment.

Additionally, diversity and inclusion promote innovation, creativity, and adaptability during planning and field operations. The use of cross-functional groups results in the generation of creative alternatives and outside the box ideas. This makes the decision-making process efficient by offering a new perspective and insight that might be oblivious to a non-diverse group. The creativity of a diverse workforce also makes it possible to swiftly develop innovative ideas alongside the previous ones enhancing the team's ability to respond quickly to any situation.⁹ Adaptability is a vital trait that improves the organization's flexibility when dealing with new adversities and niches.

Diversity and inclusions help build employee engagement and trust because when one feels included, they tend to be more engaged. People who embrace the team concept will go the extra mile for the organization. Thus, creating a positive impact on team morale, boost in productivity, and increase organizational retention. People working in an inclusive organization also have better mental and physical health; hence less health leaves due to medical conditions. When the United States military supports diversity and inclusion, respect and trust are automatically built, this trust is sometimes deficient in senior military level.

Diverse squads are more likely to make better decisions, as shown by Cloverpop, an online decision-making platform. Additionally, Cloverpop states diverse institutions or teams outperform individuals or groups lacking diversification by more than 60%. Gender, geographical, and age-diverse teams performed even better, with chances of making the right

decision being higher by more than 73%.¹⁰ This indicates the importance of inclusion, even in the United States Armed Forces.

It is essential to note for Mission Command to be successful, the leaders must build teamwork and mutual trust through consistent demonstration of commitment, competence, and character. This requires creating shared understanding and mutual trust by knowing and respecting subordinate officers within their ranks. Before the twentieth century, the military organizational culture did not seek to promote or create a shared understanding or desire to build trust between ethnic minorities and white soldiers.¹¹ Although the integration of segregated units in the twentieth century through executive order 9981 created some career opportunities for minority groups, it also marked the introduction of institutionalized segregation in the armed services.

Diversity and inclusion management indicates an organization does not encourage or champion violation of human rights and discrimination at any level. This helps to empower marginalized ethnic groups, which in turn contribute to improved organizational performance. For instance, the inclusion of women from all races empowers women while promoting an organization's performance. Organizations should note diversity and inclusion empower employees at an individual level, reflecting the organization's performance and beliefs at societal levels.

While the military leadership tries to increase diversity and inclusion actively, the percentage of marginalized groups enlisted in the support ranks exceeds that of Officer Corps. Basing their decision on the belief military force should be proportionate to the number of persons it serves; the military has aimed to achieve racial balance throughout its ranks.¹² However, this new change in philosophy has encountered both perceptual and structural barriers.

Structural barriers in military recruitment are prerequisites or requirements inherent to an organization's policies that exclude minorities more than non-minorities. Some of the obstacles include the ability to swim, service entry scores, and academic qualifications. Perpetual barriers include beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes that make marginalized groups believe they should or cannot pursue particular jobs or ranks within the Department of Defense.¹³ This is unfair given the current level of society and technology.

Table 1. Ethnic and Race Representation of Selected Reserve and Active Duty in the United States Population

	Rank and Grade	White	Black	Asian	Other	Multi/ Unknown	Hispanic^a
Active Duty	General/Flag Officer (O-7 and above)	87.6%	8.2%	2.1%	0.3%	18%	1.4%
	Officer (all)	76.9%	8.7%	4.9%	1.2%	8.3%	7.7%
	Warrant Officer	66.7%	17.8%	3.2%	1.4%	10.8%	11.3%
	Senior Enlisted	62.3%	20.1%	3.9%	2.3%	11.4%	14.0%
	Enlisted (all)	67.0%	19.1%	4.4%	2.6%	7.1%	17.0%
	Total Active Duty	68.7%	17.3%	4.5%	2.3%	7.3%	15.4%
Selected Reserve	General/Flag Officer (O-7 and above)	91.3%	4.0%	2.3%	0.8%	1.7%	3.0%
	Officer (all)	74.8%	9.8%	4.4%	1.0%	5.8%	6.4%
	Warrant Officer	80.3%	8.7%	2.4%	0.9%	2.9%	6.5%
	Senior Enlisted	76.1%	14.7%	2.4%	1.3%	5.5%	9.5%
	Enlisted (all)	72.7%	17.8%	4.2%	1.5%	3.7%	12.5%
	Total Selected Reserve	73.9%	16.5%	4.2%	1.5%	4.0%	11.5%
U.S. Resident Population (age 18-64, estimated)		76.6%	13.7%	6.1%	1.5%	2.1%	17.5%

Source: Kamarck, Kristy. "Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress." Congressional Research Service. 2019.

<https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R44321.html>

One of the benefits of minority group inclusion is availing a diverse talent for enlistment. A diverse pool of recruits provides unique variety of talent to choose from instead of a single demographic that share the same personal, social, or biological views. Diversification provides

the military with a varied skill set that enhances operational success while promoting performance, adaptability, and innovation. A team that lacks diversity and inclusion resolves issues using the conventional routines and norms, eradicating success and growth opportunities.

Diversity and inclusion also enforce military and political legitimacy. The military and country's image concerning social equity is improved. Additionally, it ensures no single ethnic group is burdened disproportionately with combat or defense casualties in societies. Addressing political legitimacy through diversity and inclusion helps maintain a workforce that represents the broader society. The balance helps boost social representation in a harmonious and balanced manner ensuring all parties achieve accurate representation.

The inclusion of marginalized groups also presents new challenges that counteract its benefits. One of such challenges that enlisted minorities face in the military is unfair treatment, which instills disrespect and distrust amongst military ranks, undermining the organization's effectiveness, productivity, and efficiency. For instance, statistics show marginalized persons in the United States military are more likely to face court-martial punishments than their white colleagues, which triggers them to question their position, dissuading them from submitting re-enlistment opportunities.¹⁴ Promoting diversity and inclusion in the military does not nullify marginalization but rather enhances institutionalized discrimination, for instance, name-calling, isolation, and passing up for promotion. Many veterans of color struggle with poor financial, physical health, and mental health conditions than their Caucasian counterparts upon completing military service. Poor health condition significantly relates to stressful work conditions in their work environment. Retired military personnel from marginalized communities are also predisposed to have higher rates of PTSD, which increases the strain on healthcare facilities in underserved communities.¹⁵ This unfair treatment further discourages military inclusion efforts of a marginalized population.

Another challenge facing the inclusion and diversity program is the lack of role models and appropriate mentorship. Lack of appropriate mentorship leads to stunted career development due to enlistee's inability to coordinate and connect with current leaders, widening the engagement gap.¹⁶ Military leaders acknowledge the inclusion process is still evolving and needs more effort in terms of research and work to ensure optimal benefits and policies which benefit both targeted minorities and the military.

Lack of talent identification in the military also remains a significant challenge that needs immediate attention. Although the United States military acknowledges every officer has unique talent or skillset, it remains unable to exploit or develop talents accompanied by a diverse workforce. The military has done little about its Officers' talents because it has little information about its workforce talents. However, one should not assume the military does not know much about its officers. The military places emphasis on knowing your service members, for instance, religious background, college attended, blood type, and home of record. Ironically, when it comes to talent development, the military seems to lag, meaning struggle with placing our personnel in positions that groom them for greater responsibility.

While diversity and inclusion present a wide range of advantages, it is worth noting the improper implementation of inclusion can cause more harm that can overshadow the benefits above. The sole purpose of diversity and inclusion should not be to meet compliance but accountability and competence. It is crucial to implement a program that avoids such pitfalls in the military, which is a sensitive element in defense of the country. While the initial cost, which covers training, manning, and equipping, is expensive, the overall benefits offset in enhancing the institutional overall performance and functionality is invaluable.

Lack of leadership involvement also poses a significant challenge in diversity and participation because they fail to align organizational goals and organizational values. When

leaders fail to lead the way, ignoring diversity and inclusion goals becomes a routine. Most marginalized persons in the military complain that the institution lacks a formal diversification structure because their leaders complain they are busy dealing with other compelling issues.¹⁷ It is essential to note organizational change begins at the top, hence leaders should provide all the necessary resources and moral support needed to encourage diversity and inclusion.

The inclusion program also aims to include women, per the United States Department of Defense policies and directives. The policy changes have resulted in eliminating previous bans, which prevented women from taking combat positions and integrated all military occupational specialties (MOS) for female candidates. The inclusion of women in positions previously unavailable to them is an essential aspect of race and gender equality, empowering society through women.¹⁸ Although women's inclusion poses numerous advantages both at the community and personal level, women's inclusion in the military adds additional benefits and challenges in military life, as discussed below.

Unlike men, women operating in military departments offer crucial and unique roles in defense and war. For example, women provide intelligence from the local population in operation fields despite exclusion from an active combat mission. When given equal opportunities, women may outperform men in certain combat operations. An example of this is the Female Engagement Teams (FET) which perform vast array of tasks assigned to engage with local women within the combat zone. The inclusion of these women in combat also ensures the units are properly trained and ready for combat operations. However, sexual harassment, fraternization, and assault remain the biggest challenge for women serving in the military.¹⁹ Addressing these issues should be the primary focus of the military because they interfere with mission readiness. Attaining a sufficient male-female ratio in the military will also increase their voice, which will help curb all forms of harassment, both in garrison and in combat campaigns.

Table 2: Representation of Active-Duty Armed Forces Females as of 2018

Service Branch	Percentage of total Active Duty Force	Percentage of total enlisted	Percentage of totals senior enlisted, that is, E-7, E-8, and E-9	Percentage of total officers which excludes warrant officers	Percentage of Flag/General officers
Navy	19.7 %	19.7%	12 %	19 %	6.8 %
Army	15%	14.4%	12 %	19.2 %	8.6 %
Marine Corps	9%	8.7%	5.7 %	7.9 %	2.1 %
Air Force	20.2%	19.9%	21%	21.2 %	9.3 %
All DOD	16.5%	16.3 %	13.5 %	18.7 %	7.7 %

Source: Kamarck, Kristy. *"Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress."* Congressional Research Service. 2019.

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Until 2016, undermining women's role in the military has been shared due to stereotypes and biological myths by military leaders and politicians. The most common excuse used to oppose women's involvement is that they lack the physical and emotional strengths necessary to

perform demanding combat duties. However, men are 40% stronger than women, and with the use of modern technology, the importance of power has reduced dramatically.²⁰ Women should, therefore, have their spot in the military because the myths no longer have their place in modern society. Women serving in combat campaigns are also known to improve peace and reduce sexual harassment.²¹ An improved male to female percentage in the military is beneficial because a more balanced sex ratio among the officers reduces sexual harassment to local women, a trend shared with male servicemembers throughout history.²² Science has also proven women are mentally tough and can handle stress just as well as their males counterparts, hence they can undertake any military task.

Discrimination in the United States Military Based on Race

Since 2016, there has been a reduction in the rate of African American promotions in the senior military ranks. Additionally, there are no measures to protect the minority workforce from unconscious bias in the work environment. The 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination during recruitment, assigning duties, and promotion based on color, race, nationality, sex, and religion.²³ All branches are encouraged to foster an environment of fairness for all job operations in all federal and non-government organizations. Title VII Civil Acts of 1964 states that it is illegal to:

- Classify, segregate or limit applicants or employees, which could hint or deprive them of any applicant employment opportunity or affect their status as employees due to their race, gender, color, national origin, or religion.
- Discharge, fail or refuse to hire an individual or otherwise mistreat an individual concerning their terms and condition, compensation, or privileges of employment because of such individuals' traits such as color, race, sex, religion, and country of origin.

However, during the height of the civil rights movement the United States military was reluctant to comply with these requirements. The main reason for this non-compliance has been the prevailing belief that diversity and inclusion aim to fulfill a certain number of people of color or gender, which will significantly undermine the discipline necessary for accomplishing the United States military's mission. Due to this belief, the federal court found out that the 1964 Title VII Civil Rights Act should not apply to military service members on two different occasions. The United States Court of Appeals during the Gonzalez v. Department of Army ruled the Title VII Act should only apply to civilians working in military departments. Gonzales was released from Army service because he was unable to receive a promotion to the rank of Major. Gonzales alleges he was passed over for promotion because of his race. He began to pursue redress through Army board of corrections and through this process his evaluations proved were strong thus receiving immediate reinstatement and promotion to the rank of Major.

Theoretical Frameworks Aimed to Predict, Explain, and Understand Military Inclusion

Developed theories within the military human resource department predict and understand inclusion limits beyond assumptions. The crafted theoretical frameworks are structures that support research theories and studies. Figure one below depicts the interrelationship of existing theories, which include conceptual bonds for this paper. The frameworks covered include social identity, implicit bias, critical, and system justification theories.

System Justification Theory

The system justification theory promotes diversification and inclusion by capturing physiological and social needs that instill the status quo with accepted legitimacy that everyone deems fair, natural, desirable, sound, and even inevitable. According to this theory, marginalized groups are only likely to engage in changes when a group or ego justification motives overcome

the system's strength.²⁴ Group justification motives are manifested in terms of ideology or stereotyping, which may occur non-continuously or explicitly aiming to eradicate underlying existential, epistemic, and rational needs.

Implicit Bias Theory

This theory results from implicit social recognition that aims to examine psychological phenomena in which human beings are known to harbor unconscious beliefs between identity characteristics, including gender, age, race, and social meaning or values. Implicit cognition affects how people view themselves and their interaction with other people.²⁵ An example of this behavior is to unconsciously harbor a perception of a particular group because of the way someone looks or dress. The implicit bias theory is applicable in evaluating diversity and inclusion in the U.S. military as it predicts certain behaviors based on perceived status differences or the validity of those differences. Implicit bias theory hence describes how these associations form stereotypes and attitudes about people having different traits.

Critical Race Theory

The theory represents a collection of crucial stances against existing legal norms and orders from a racial perspective. Critical race theory focuses primarily on how the adopted traditional culture within the military affects people of color, not on an individual level but as a group. The idea acknowledges that racism is woven into the U.S. military fabric. This theory is better used to stress that structural or institutional racism promotes implicit biases in the United States military.²⁶ All institutions either unknowingly or knowingly legitimize, tolerate, or justify discrimination, which includes the military.

Immigration and Race Statuses in the Contemporary United States Military

In 2007, among many active officers in all military departments, including the Navy, Army, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Air Force, 70% represented the whites, 17.4% the Black

Americans, 1.7% Indian or Alaska natives, 3.5% the Asians, 1% the multiracial, 0.6% the Icelanders and 6% were from an unknown race.²⁷ The statistics show there are more blacks in the Army compared to the other marginalized groups. Today nearly 5% of the United States armed forces comprise immigrants, of whom two-thirds naturalized citizens. The most interesting thing with the new military law is that, like native-born Americans, undocumented immigrants are also free to register or apply for selective military service. United States implemented the 2003 National Defense Authorization Act that allows the naturalization of citizens outside of America serving as military personnel to assume United States Citizenship while still in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq.²⁸ These significant steps have made many people volunteer to serve across all service levels in the United States military.

Measures that can be taken to Eradicate Discrimination in the U.S. Military

The military is a notorious and tradition-bound hierarchical institution that often shows reluctance in respecting changing public values, which include discrimination unless directed to act accordingly by the Congress, the courts, or the President. Current measures aiming to put to end discrimination are shockingly inadequate. In the current system, the evident gaps include lack of formal procedures, inadequacy in the chain of command, and inappropriateness of the military for which they rely on courts as a last resort.²⁹ The following measures can thus be put in place to eliminate marginalization in the Department of Defense.

1. Accountability

The current system does not have a chain of command that controls the grievance process; however, the process provides no detailed protocol or rules that hold discriminators accountable for their deeds. Neither Article 138 nor the Equal Opportunity Program describes the procedures taken when investigating discrimination complaints. Lack of official investigation

protocols forces the chain of command to opt for informal investigation procedures, often characterized by delay and more often as unjust. The current process resembles a runaround because the complainants never get a court hearing. A formal investigation procedure will go a long way in helping eradicate minority discrimination in the United States Army.

2. Appropriate Military Fora

Military law and tribunals are based on keeping good order and discipline within the organization and not always what is perceived as justice. Due to this, the United States Supreme Court has observed that court-martial as a prosecution institution is inept in handling the State constitutional laws. The military should have the first opportunity to control grievances against it. The Supreme Court should not have entrusted the military functions, which include preservation of military individuals' rights.³⁰ The military should be charged with such tasks because the lack of independent forums forces the organization to rely on courts as a last resort, which deprives the complainant best guarantee of due justice and the military's legitimation of its independent decisions.

3. Chain of Command and Influence

Military leaders may pursue measures or remedies for discrimination under the general military grievance of Article 138 of the Unified Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) or the DoD (Department of Defense) Equal Opportunity Program. Each scheme requires the military leaders to go through all the chain of command.³¹ All levels should be related, and there should be no independent channels within the system to avoid confusion. The system should provide privacy and be leakproof because most military personnel discriminated against fear reprisal for reporting a superior officer. Lack of a proper reporting channel means officers tasked with the

job are less likely to investigate and address complaints against their colleagues or themselves, especially when the accusation comes from someone of 'subordinate' rank.

Don't Ask Don't Tell

Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy (DADT) aimed to curb the enlisting of a potential military task force based on their sexual beliefs and orientation. The repeal marked a considerable transformation in the military's recruiting and treatment of individuals, which initially banned gay and lesbian members from participating as Corp officers.³² Additionally, less than three years ago, bisexual, gay, and lesbian Americans serving in the military were required to keep their sexual orientation a secret or risk a discharge from the military. The risk of discharge was made even more real when same sex couples attempted to legally marry. A few years ago, the idea of extending military spousal and marriage benefits to couples of the same sex was unimaginable and inconceivable.

Due to the Don't Ask Don't Tell Repeal, lesbians, gay, bisexual, and transgender (or the LGBT) in the United States military no longer need to hide their sexual orientation anymore. Historically, persons under the LGBT category have experienced progress and acceptance in society, with some of the breakthroughs being experienced in the last decade. During the United States Supreme Court trial, the court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act or DOMA, which forms Section 3 of the constitution.³³ This has forced the federal government to deny more than a thousand military personnel the benefits of legally marrying a spouse of the same sex that had been freely available since the introduction of DADT in 2010.

Additionally, in the United States military, sexual orientation no longer forms grounds for discrimination or dismissal from military service or the federal government employment. The inclusion and acceptance of LGBT minorities have significantly reduced their stress, which comes with hiding sexual identity leading to an improved overall mental state of the force.³⁴

Although some members wish to make this impossible by defending their views from a religious perspective, the inclusion has increased overall performance. Anyone found sexually harassing, stalking, or victimizing persons under this category within the military can be court-martialed. The introduction of tolerance and awareness programs in military training will help counter the previous notorious and homophobic culture in the U.S. military.

How Others Interpret the Challenge – Interview Analysis

While I identified throughout my paper what I pinpointed as the main challenges based upon research, I knew it was imperative that I incorporate the thoughts and experiences of others to support or disprove my declarations. Therefore, I conducted structured interviews to get a feel for the opinions of others and to highlight similarities and differences.

Participant Profiles

In deciding who to interview, it was necessary for me to choose a diverse group of individuals possessing firsthand experience pertaining to the challenge of diversity and inclusion. Moreover, I would like to reinforce that minorities include all non-white male and female officers and ask their opinions on challenges regarding the current and future state of the military. Many of my participants were hesitant and later declined to be interviewed despite my guarantee of anonymity. The cause of this response is intriguing, maybe they declined out of fear reprisal or maybe they desire to support from behind the scenes. No matter how negative a situation may become, these are the individuals who only provide positive feedback in an attempt to win favor over their colleagues. Fortunately, I was able to receive an interview from one of the five potential interviewees. I will call this participant Officer X.

1. Officer X – An Active-Duty Officer

This individual is a non-minority that I felt may have a unique perspective because of their time in service. Many significant changes have occurred since they joined the military such as the acceptance of openly gay soldiers, the observance of religious practices other than Catholicism and Christianity, and the inclusion of females within combat arms branches. I wondered how they would view the military's approach to change, if it has done enough to develop relationships with its minority service members, and how they fit in the military's long-term plans.

In conducting this interview, I asked myself what did I intend to gain from the interview? I arrived at the conclusion that what I wanted to gain first-hand experiences they have endured in the military albeit positive or negative. As I am early in the process of conducting research regarding this challenge, I wanted to open a discussion with Officer X and allow the conversation to flow wherever it may.

Interview Structure

The interview was conducted via telephone. I capped the interview at 30 minutes. I began the interview by asking some preliminary questions about their background.

- How did you obtain your commission? How many years of service do you have?
- What is your military occupation? Have you experienced a combat deployment?

Then I changed the dialogue by posing a few open-ended questions:

- How would you rate the health of the military? What specifically makes you feel that way?
- Give me an example of when you felt the military increased your opportunity to progress your military career. Provide an example of when it hindered your ability.

- How do you see yourself in the military? How do you fit or why do you not fit?
- What is good and what is bad about the military? Has your overall opinion of the military changed over time?

I presented follow-up questions as needed, but the interviewee did such a thorough job responding to the questions that there was usually no need for further prodding.

Interview #1 – Officer X

Officer X feels as though they have progressed through their military career about as far as they possibly can. Officer X has consistently performed well on their evaluations, almost always ranking in the top 10% amongst their peers. When asked about their fit within the military, they responded with all leaders have a responsibility to provide opportunity for all subordinates regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation. Additionally, Officer X brought up problems of race and how many minorities and females are not provided opportunities to excel. When I asked them to clarify this statement for me, X delved into a personal story in which they felt another Officer was granted an opportunity over an equally qualified Officer who happens to be a minority. X went on to explain how the individual was not offered a key developmental position upon arriving to their installation. In their service, most times it is customary that the Officer with the most experience is provided an opportunity to interview to serve in a key billet. This is of vital importance amongst Officers for future promotion potential. The right one can set you up for success for the remainder of your military career. Officer X stressed how their officer record brief (ORB) was far more extensive than their peers. I followed up with asking whether they felt this oversight was done by the leadership because of race or gender. Officer X response from the leadership was it was not their time. Officer X became emotional and reflected

on the current state of the nation and the need for the military to take an aggressive stance on diversity and inclusion. Lastly, Officer X stated that there have been strides made as it relates to diversity, but more minorities need to be included when making decisions on the future of force.

Recommendations

- **Pursue an aggressive recruiting campaign that targets underserved community high schools with minority officers leading the charge.**
- **Include Diversity and Inclusion into Leadership and Professional Development sessions.**
- **Establish permanent positions for Diversity and Inclusion teams at the unit level that are task organized outside of their assigned organization.**
- **Establish virtual mentorship network assist senior leadership with promoting Diversity and Inclusion programs.**
- **Establish a partnership with the School of Human Resource Management Professional to attend formalized Diversity and Inclusion training.**

Conclusion

Identifying cultural biases through research allows military leaders to have a greater understanding and appreciation for the positive impacts diversity and inclusion provides to the military profession of arms. The research activity evaluates military culture and society equally and brings about balance as each party is aware of their requirements. Although diversity and inclusion present numerous benefits, it should be planned with care to avoid compromising the military's integrity. Minority leaders must continue to pursue challenging opportunities, exceed the physical fitness standards, possess strong self-efficacy, to increase assignment and promotion potential. These traits are necessary as they allow a systematic approach to developing effective and capable leaders throughout all military ranks. The research indicated specific assumptions are surrounding military ranks, which inhibits diverse military units.

¹ Griffin, "Making the Army Safe for Diversity," 2082.

² Lutz, Amy. 2008. "Who Joins The Military? A Look At Race, Class, And Immigration Who Joins The Military?" 16.

³ S.Weshusing, "Equality within Military Organizations," 6.

⁴ Kamarck, "Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Service," 4.

⁵ McClellan, "Disparity in Black Officer Promotions: A Survey of Racial Attitudes Among the U.S. Army," 19.

⁶ McClellan, "Disparity in Black Officer Promotions: A Survey of Racial Attitudes Among the U.S. Army," 8.

⁷ Griffin, "Making the Army Safe for Diversity," 2082.

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- ⁸ Lutz, "Who Joins the Military? A Look At Race, Class, And Immigration," 171.
- ⁹ McClellan, "Disparity in Black Officer Promotions: A Survey of Racial Attitudes Among the U.S. Army," 19.
- ¹⁰ Wong, Kellie. "Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace: Benefits and Challenges." Engage Blog. Accessed October 27, 2020. <https://www.achievers.com/blog/diversity-and-inclusion/>
- ¹¹ Lutz, "Who Joins the Military? A Look At Race, Class, And Immigration," 9.
- ¹² S. Westhusing1, Ted. 2006. "Equality within Military Organizations." 12.
- ¹³ Kamarck, Kristy. "Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services," 17.
- ¹⁴ McClellan, "Disparity in Black Officer Promotions: A Survey of Racial Attitudes Among the U.S. Army," 27
- ¹⁵ Griffin, Mary C. 1987. "Making The Army Safe For Diversity: A Title VII Remedy For Discrimination In The Military," 2082.
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- ²⁰ Westhusing, "Equality within Military Organizations," 8.
- ²¹ Griffin, Mary C. 1987. "Making The Army Safe For Diversity: A Title VII Remedy For Discrimination In The Military," 2082.
- ²² Westhusing, "Equality within Military Organizations," 9.
- ²³ Griffin, Mary C. 1987. "Making The Army Safe For Diversity: A Title VII Remedy For Discrimination In The Military," 2082.
- ²⁴ McClellan, "Disparity in Black Officer Promotions: A Survey of Racial Attitudes Among the U.S. Army," 96.
- ²⁵ Griffin, "Making The Army Safe For Diversity: A Title VII Remedy For Discrimination In The Military," 2083
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