RECRUITING G.I. JANE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY’S ADVERTISING MESSAGES ON RECRUITMENT WEBSITES

By

CHRISTINE L. HANLON

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2013
To my children, Mika and Juliana, and my life partner, Arnold. Your inspiration and motivation is acknowledged and appreciated more than you will ever realize. This is "our" dissertation.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my doctoral committee at the University of Florida. Dr. Lisa Duke Cornell of the Advertising faculty served as both my Advisor and methods committee member. Without her guidance and enthusiasm, this dissertation would not have been possible. Dr. Spiro Kiousis of the Public Relations faculty served as the mass communication specific committee member. His Persuasion course was key to developing the persuasion theoretical foundation section of this dissertation. Dr. Kim Walsh-Childers of the Journalism faculty served as the mass communication general committee member. Her personal knowledge and experience with the military (both as an ROTC student and as a member of a military family) helped me gain a thorough understanding of the military culture. Dr. Anita Anantharam of the Women's Studies faculty served as the outside area committee member. Her Advanced Feminist Theory course was the very last course that I took at UF and aided me in strengthening the feminist approach of this dissertation.

This project would not have been possible without the participation of the young women in CAP and JROTC programs who selflessly provided their input. All of the young women were far more determined, motivated, and goal-oriented than I was at that time in my life. I respect and admire each of them far more than they likely realize. I hope they all have successful experiences and remain safe during their time in the United States military. Our military will be stronger due to their efforts and their service is greatly appreciated.

Many CAP and JROTC leaders graciously introduced me to young women in their programs. I appreciate their willingness and dedication to helping me improve the military’s recruitment efforts. I would acknowledge each of them individually; however,
that specific information may reveal the identities of some of the participants. I was genuinely impressed with the CAP and JROTC programs that I had the pleasure to visit and my experiences made me confident that the United States military will remain strong. Thank you for your service.

In addition, I want to acknowledge the assistance of the UF staff and students. Jody Hedge was particularly helpful and I greatly appreciated her assistance throughout the doctoral program. I also want to thank members of the UF doctoral program cohort, particularly Joy Rogers. I am grateful for her motivation, enthusiasm, and friendship.

I would also like to thank the UCF community for their support. More specifically, I would not have had the opportunity to excel if it had not been for the continuous support of many leaders from the Nicholson School of Communication, particularly Carol Bledsoe, Bob Chandler, Shari Hodgson, Rita Graham, Mike Johnson, Boyd Lindsley, Mike Meeske, John O’Hara, Phil Taylor, and Bruce Whisler. Furthermore, I would like to thank my UCF colleagues for helping me through this process. Our casual conversations have been more helpful than you realize. I would like to also thank the NSC staff for their support throughout the past 15 years of my teaching career. The UCF community has been unbelievably supportive and I particularly want to recognize the individual assistance of Melody Bowden (Faculty Center), Al Bross (Testing), Tracy Dietz (Sociology & IRB), Terri Fine (Political Science), Jana Jasinski (Sociology), Shirley Leckie (History), Eric Main (Faculty Center), Bill Phillips (Course Development), M.C. Santana (Women’s Studies), Betty Tallen (Diversity Issues), and Kevin Yee (Faculty Center). Thank you also to the UCF students who heard about my research and brought interesting articles to my attention, particularly Sara Sheperd (COM1000 Fall
2011) who brought the Marsman article to my attention. I am also indebted to the University of Central Florida's Faculty Affairs staff and Professional Development Leave committee for the release time and financial assistance necessary for completing this doctoral program.

There were many teachers who inspired me and acknowledged my intellect, particularly Mrs. Titelbaum (Burnell Elementary School), Sister Ann (Divine Mercy Catholic School), Ms. Lorraine Novak (Merritt Island High School), Mrs. Harrison (Cocoa Beach High School), Dan McCook (Flagler College – WFCF), and Dr. Robin King (Flagler College - Philosophy). Though I may not have acknowledged it at the time, I was empowered by the honors and knowledge that you bestowed upon me.

Professional friends have also helped me make it to this point in the process, particularly Sue Easton (FCA & Rollins College), and Linda Sexton-Nusbaum (Southern College). Your friendship and leadership has been much appreciated.

I would also like to acknowledge my best friend from childhood, Jolie Sprague. Jolie constantly strived for excellence in her academics and she always inspired me. When we were in elementary school, Jolie read a book to an audience in the Bridgewater State College auditorium. On that day, she exemplified Eleanor Roosevelt's famous quote, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

My loving and supportive family has provided a strong foundation for my success. As a child, my mother first introduced me to higher education through summer programs at Bridgewater State College. These first glimpses into academia were particularly important because our family did not have previous experiences with higher education. These experiences helped to break down some of the psychological barriers
that could have prevented me from ever attending college. My father’s continuous support and motivation throughout my college years has been greatly appreciated as well. Without my parents’ financial assistance, I would not have made it through Flagler College.

Most importantly, I want to thank my life partner, Arnold Noorlander. He is my best friend, my greatest critic, and my loudest cheerleader. It is with great patience and determination that he has motivated and encouraged me throughout the doctoral program, and in life, in general. Although our greatest achievements in life are represented by our beautiful children, Mika and Juliana, this dissertation comes in as a close second. He made the home-school-work-life balance a lot easier to navigate. I also want to express my gratitude to Mika and Juliana. Although most of this was too complicated for you to understand, I hope that you do not remember the times when Mommy was absent over the past few years. There were many times that I felt my psychological absence was more damaging than my physical absence. Please forgive me for not providing my attention 100% of the time. The completion of this milestone will open many exciting opportunities for our family. I hope that is what remains in your memories.

There are far too many people to acknowledge in this space; therefore, please forgive me if your name was not listed specifically. I am blessed to have so many wonderful people in my life and I appreciate all of you.

Finally, thank you to everyone who read drafts of this dissertation. Their helpful insights and advice improved the final product. Any shortcomings and/or omissions in this final draft are solely my responsibility.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Recruitment in the United States</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Feminist Perspective</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Overview of Relevant Literatures</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods Employed</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Study</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Military Recruitment</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Theory and Frameworks</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Women in the U.S. Military</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Portrayals of Women</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Effects Theoretical Foundations</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion-based Theoretical Foundation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 METHODS</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Depth Interviews</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 FINDINGS</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Preferences</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing themes</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Information Pertaining to Women</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes that Emerged in the Analysis of Career Sections of Recruitment</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended Improvements</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-2</td>
<td>Four Processing Situations Determined by the Ratio Between Resources Allocated to and Resources Required by the Context of the Persuasive Message (from Buijzen, Van Reijmersdal &amp; Owen, 2010, p. 436).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-3</td>
<td>Marsh &amp; White’s (2003) taxonomy of functions of images to the text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMEDD  ARMY MEDICINE
BDU    BATTLE DRESS UNIFORM
CAP    CIVIL AIR PATROL
DOD    DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DUI    DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE (A CITATION FOR DRINKING AND DRIVING)
ELM    ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL
HSM    HEURISTIC-SYSTEMATIC MODEL
JROTC  JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS
LCMP   LIMITED CAPACITY MODEL OF MEDIATED MESSAGE PROCESSING
MOS    MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY
MPADS  MAN PORTABLE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS
NUPOC  NUCLEAR PROPULSION OFFICER CANDIDATE
QCA    QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS
PCMC   PROCESSING OF COMMERCIAL MEDIA CONTENT MODEL
RA     RESOURCES ALLOCATED
RR     RESOURCES REQUIRED
ROTC   RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS
SAM    SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE
SEAL   SEA, AIR AND LAND (ELITE NAVAL SPECIAL OPERATION FORCES)
UAV    UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES
WAC    WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS
WASP   WOMEN AIR FORCE SERVICE PILOTS
WAVES  WOMEN ALLOWED VOLUNTARY EMERGENCY SERVICE
WIN    WOMEN IN THE NAVY
The United States military is currently tasked with the initiative of opening an unprecedented number of military occupational specialties (MOSs) to women. This project coincides with the military’s more sophisticated use of Web-based recruitment strategies. Each branch has a website dedicated to recruitment, and the websites each employ different recruitment strategies, particularly in regard to the recruitment of women. The goal of this dissertation was to analyze Web-based military recruitment materials that targeted women and to understand how women interpreted these messages.

Using a feminist lens and an interdisciplinary theoretical foundation, this study triangulated qualitative content analysis (QCA) and in-depth interviews. The QCA focused on the recruitment websites of the branches that currently employ the greatest number of women: the Air Force, the Army, and the Navy. In-depth interviews with young women involved in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) and Civil Air Patrol (CAP) organizations were conducted to provide a narrower focus for the QCA, and to inform the analysis of the Web materials.
Through the QCA, eight themes emerged: language issues, demographic representations, activity level, authority, isolation, facial expressions, feminine features, and heterosexist norms. The voices of the participants were integrated to support each theme and to provide specific examples in regard to interpretations. Recommendations for improving Web-based recruitment materials are provided, along with suggested avenues for future research.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Military organizations in the United States have recently increased their active recruitment of individuals from marginalized groups (Bumiller, 2011), particularly women (Dempsey, 2013). Because recruitment efforts were traditionally focused on a heterosexual male audience, it is important to analyze how military organizations are changing their recruitment efforts to target specific groups, especially women. Using a feminist lens, the goal of this dissertation was to analyze Web-based military recruitment materials that targeted women and to understand how women interpreted those messages. All branches of the U.S. armed forces, including the Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy, are currently recruiting women into various positions, from reserve assignments to officer ranks. Thus, analyzing recruitment materials from different branches provided an opportunity to compare and contrast the recruitment methods employed to recruit women.

The United States military has been actively engaged in Web-based recruitment for the past decade, and those strategies have been cost-effective. For example, in 2002, the Army received 14,000 leads via the Web, which led to 1,400 enlistments (Kiger, 2005). Recruiting Command spokesperson S. Douglas Smith noted that the "1-in-10 ratio is the best of any station in the recruiting command" (Kiger, 2005, p. 31). Thus, Web-based recruitment strategies require further investigation because they are proving to be highly effective tools for the United States military. To analyze how the United States military is advertising to women via the Web, a qualitative content analysis was conducted to generate themes that are currently used in Web-based materials intended to recruit women. Additionally, to gain an understanding of how
women interpret these Web-based messages, in-depth interviews were conducted with young women who were being actively recruited by the United States military.

**Military Recruitment in the United States**

The United States armed forces have sophisticated recruitment techniques. According to Enloe (2008), the United States Department of Defense is "one of the largest clients of American civilian advertising agencies" (p. 260), and the U.S. military "probably hires and contracts more social scientists than any other American public institution" (p. 259). In fact, it is estimated that the Department of Defense will spend $556.3 million on advertising alone in 2013 (U. S. Department of Defense, 2012a).

Advertising considerably overlaps with recruitment in the military.

Advertising funds provide for local, regional, national and corporate advertising to access quality enlisted and officer personnel. All advertising is designed to increase public awareness and describe employment opportunities. The Services fund a media mix that includes television and radio; magazines and newspapers; internet websites and banner advertising; informational videos; direct mail campaigns; and recruiting booklets/pamphlets. (U. S. Department of Defense, 2012a, p. 148)

The Department of Defense has a separate budget for recruitment and that budget is estimated at $913.8 million for the 2013 fiscal year (U. S. Department of Defense, 2012a).

The recruiting mission is to maintain the highest quality force possible. Recruiting funds provide support for recruiting commands and stations throughout the United States, to include civilian pay and training; recruiter training; recruiter travel and per diem; applicant meals, lodging and travel; vehicle operation and maintenance; office leases; and operating costs of the Navy’s Flight Demonstration Team (Blue Angels). (U. S. Department of Defense, 2012a, pg. 147).

Thus, even though the military budgets have been recently cut, these budgets still represent a large funding source.
Military recruitment represents one of the few opportunities that the United States government has to market itself (Brown, 2012). The military often works with private-sector advertising agencies to create recruitment appeals, and these gendered messages are often less visible to the public than other forms of advertising (Brown, 2012). These marketing strategies are deliberate and controlled. Over the past decade, the military has changed its recruitment tactics by becoming more technologically engaging through the use of Web-based recruitment materials. In addition, the military has increased active recruitment of individuals from marginalized groups (Bumiller, 2011).

The U. S. Department of Defense (2011a & 2011b) reports that women represent 14.5% of the active military. Historically, a greater percentage of women have been integrated into the Air Force than any other military branch, with women representing more than 19% of active duty personnel (U. S. Department of Defense, 2011b). Additionally, less than 1% of job opportunities in the Air Force are not available to women (United States Air Force, 2013), and the Air Force has a greater percentage of women officers (18.8%) than the other branches (U. S. Department of Defense, 2011b). Thus, from a statistical perspective, the Air Force is the branch that has led in the recruitment of women.

The Navy has recruited a higher percentage of women into active duty (16.4%) than the Army (13.6%) and the Marine Corps (6.8%) (Table A-I). In both the Army and the Navy, women represent approximately 16% of officers (U. S. Department of Defense, 2011b). In comparison to the other branches, the Marine Corps has the most
restrictions in regard to job opportunities for women and the smallest percentage of women in officer positions (6.9%). See Table A-1 for a detailed comparison of the data.

In 2012, women were provided with opportunities in nearly 15,000 military positions that had previously excluded women (Dempsey, 2013), and in January 2013, the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff officially rescinded the direct combat exclusion rule for women in the U.S. military. In a letter to the Secretary of Defense, Martin E. Dempsey (2013), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff noted that,

the time has come to rescind the direct combat exclusion rule for women and to eliminate all unnecessary gender-based barriers to service. The Joint Chiefs of Staff unanimously join me in proposing that we move forward with the full intent to integrate women into occupational fields to the maximum extent possible.

The 2013 efforts by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of Defense will open an examination of all 230,000 military positions that currently exclude women (Barnes & Nissenbaum, 2013), including elite positions, such as those in the Navy SEALs.

To guide the further integration of women into the military, Dempsey (2013) provided “goals and milestones.” According to Dempsey (2013), “this deliberate approach to reducing gender-based barriers to women’s service will provide the time necessary to institutionalize these important changes and to integrate women into occupational fields in a climate where they can succeed and flourish.” To support “the elimination of unnecessary gender-based barriers to service,” Dempsey (2013) recommended the following:

- Services will expand the number of units and number of women assigned to those units – based on ETP [Exceptions To Policy] – and provide periodic updates on progress each quarter beginning in 3rd quarter, FY 2013.
- The Navy will continue to assign women to afloat units as (1) technical changes and modifications for reasonable female privacy and appropriate female berthing arrangements are completed; (2) female officer and enlisted leadership assignments can be implemented; and (3) ships' schedules permit. Integration will be expeditiously implemented considering good order and judicious use of fiscal resources.

- Services will continue to develop, review, and validate individual occupational standards. Validated gender-neutral occupational standards will be used to assess and assign Service members not later than September 2015.

- The Services and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) will proceed in a deliberate, measured and responsible way to assign women to currently closed MOSs [Military Occupational Specialties] as physical standards and operational assessments are completed and as it becomes possible to introduce cadres as described above. The Services and USSOCOM must complete all studies by 1st quarter, FY 2016, and provide periodic updates each quarter beginning in 3rd quarter, FY 2013.

- If we find that the assignment of women to a specific position or occupational specialty is in conflict with our stated principles, we will request an exception to policy.

These “goals and milestones” represent the largest effort to date toward eliminating gender-based exclusions in the United States military. They also represent enormous efforts by the United States military to change its culture through these hierarchical shifts.

Eisenstein (2007) has noted the increased visibility of women in the military. "This visibility is unusual because females are more often than not out of view - made absent, silenced - rather than seen. So the fact that women appear more present needs attention" (p. 17). Such visibility requires our attention and critical analysis to ensure that recruitment strategies are conducive to the effective integration of women in the armed forces.

For women to conform to the hyper-masculine heterosexual culture of the United States military, they must perform a heterosexual gender identity that highlights
masculinity without completely diminishing feminine qualities. Using a feminist lens, the goal of this dissertation is to analyze the message of Web-based military recruitment materials that target women and to understand how women interpret these messages.

**Critical Feminist Perspective**

Both critical theory and feminism share the goal of deconstructing how power is created and maintained in social hierarchies, particularly in regard to media messages. This shared goal creates unique opportunities for understanding the military culture and how the military recruits women. Critical theory challenges "the privileged 'non-position' of social-scientific knowledge by analyzing the modes of its production, the roles it played in society, the interests it served, and the historical processes through which it came to power" (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994, p. 14-15). By viewing recruitment materials via a critical lens, issues regarding the recruitment and integration of women will become more visible. These issues include the representation of women and gendered themes in recruitment materials. Furthermore, the implications and potential consequences that are made visible through this dissertation can help the United States to develop more effective policies and procedures for integrating women in the armed forces.

Gender is a social construction that is not static. According to Zalewski (1995), "gender refers to the socially and culturally constructed categories of masculinity and femininity" (p. 341). Gender is a performance rather than a category based on biological determinants. Through our interactions with others and our performance of self, we construct and reconstruct our gender. Unlike sex, gender performances can be altered, particularly in situations where a different gender performance may provide more opportunities for professional advancement.
An Overview of Relevant Literatures

To analyze how the military is recruiting women, it is important to have an interdisciplinary theoretical foundation, including social science theoretical frameworks from disciplines such as communication, gender studies, psychology, and sociology. Feminist and sociological theories are particularly useful tools for studying the hyper-masculine culture of the military because feminist theories deconstruct hierarchically-based power and sociological theories can help us understand the importance of cultural norms and behaviors. In addition, communication and psychological theories are useful for investigating ways in which the military is using advertisements to recruit women.

Methods Employed

A qualitative content analysis (QCA) of Web-based recruitment materials developed by the United States military was conducted to analyze the messages and develop themes. In-depth interviews were conducted with women enrolled in Junior Reserve Office Training Corps (JROTC) and Civil Air Patrol (CAP) programs to reveal how they interpret messages in Web-based recruitment materials. The in-depth interviews also provided a narrower focus for the QCA. The data were triangulated to strengthen the rigor of the project.

Organization of the Study

The next chapter contains a review of recent scholarly research that served as a foundation for this dissertation. To strengthen the research base, an interdisciplinary approach was taken. Framed in a critical feminist perspective, theories from communication, gender studies, psychology, and sociology were used to develop the foundation for this project. More specifically, the first section of the literature review
introduces the history of military recruitment in the United States to highlight the importance of contemporary recruitment and integration issues. In the second section, feminist theoretical frameworks are used to deconstruct how women are integrated into the masculine culture of the United States military. The third section builds upon the first two sections by using a historical perspective to identify how women, in particular, have been integrated in the United States military. In the fourth section, research focused on media portrayals of women is detailed to explain how military women have been portrayed in the media and media effects theories are also introduced in this section. The final section focuses on a persuasion-based model that explains how young women interpret media messages.

The third chapter focuses on the triangulated methodological design used to address the research questions. This study first employed a QCA to identify emerging themes through an analysis of Web-based recruitment materials that were developed by the United States military. Next, details are provided regarding in-depth interviews that were conducted with young women enrolled in JROTC and CAP programs. The purpose of the in-depth interviews was to gain an understanding of how young women interpret the Web-based recruitment materials that were analyzed in the QCA and to narrow the focus the QCA. The third chapter also provides an overview of these approaches, along with a rationale for using these research methods.

The fourth chapter reports the research findings for each methodological approach and then compares and contrasts themes that emerged in the two data sets. The final chapter provides the conclusions of the dissertation, identifies areas for future research, and acknowledges limitations in this research project.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

History of Military Recruitment

There is a large body of historical research that focuses on how the United States military has used advertising to convince women to support military efforts. Campaigns that sought to involve women in efforts supporting World War II have received considerable scholarly attention, particularly efforts that focused on homeland activities (such as rationing and working in factories to build war munitions), morale boosting efforts (such as the USO), and official military assignments (such as WACs, WAVEs and WASPs). These efforts empowered women to support the military in a number of ways, though none of these programs sought to recruit women permanently into the military culture. Thus, the military has a long history of recruiting women to support military efforts; however, it is a more recent development that the U.S. military has begun to actively recruit women to enlist and serve as permanent members of the armed forces.

The United States has relied upon a volunteer-based military since the early 1970s and, at present, is actively recruiting women into the military forces. In fact, all branches of the U.S. armed forces, including the Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy, are currently recruiting women into various positions, from reserve assignments to officer ranks. Thus, it is important to consider recruitment techniques and the culture of military organizations when increasing numbers of diverse groups are being recruited to serve in them.

Recently, women have been legitimately provided with more opportunities in the United States military than ever before. In February 2012, more than 14,000 military
positions that previously excluded women were opened for women (Dempsey & Panetta, 2013). Additionally, in January 2013, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta rescinded the 1994 Pentagon policy that banned women from combat roles (Barnes & Nissenbaum, 2013). The proposal from the Defense Secretary and the Joint Chiefs of Staff is to fully integrate women into military positions by 2015. Each of the military branches will analyze how integration will work for each MOS (military occupational specialty), and any exclusions must be clearly noted with evidence to provide a rationale. This represents the United States military’s remarkable effort to institutionalize gender-neutral reforms and fully integrate women into the hierarchy of the armed forces.

It is important to study how women are represented in recruitment materials because the text, images, and video included in these materials can frame how women are integrated in the military. According to Brown (2012),

Recruitment materials are a window into the construction of militarized femininity in the form of the American female service member. Recruitment involves overt image making and an attempt to sell particular pictures of military service, making it an especially fruitful site to study the construction of gender by the military. The service branches create normative ideals of militarized femininity for an audience composed of not just potential recruits but their larger communities. The women who enlist are not merely passive recipients of these norms, and they do not inevitably internalize the branches’ ideas of what military women ought to be. But these models of military femininity form the backdrop of their service, shaping expectations both with the branches and in society at large. (pgs. 152-153).

Thus, the critical analysis of recruitment messages, particularly those that are readily available in the online environment, can help us understand how the military constructs the representation of women soldiers in the context of military culture.

In terms of military recruitment, some scholarly inquiries have assessed soldiers’ perceptions of influences in the recruitment process. Harkey, Reid, and King (1988) identified 12 sources of influence and collapsed the sources into five influence
variables. Of the five influence variables, two of the variables focused on mass media influence (an advertising influence variable and a mass media influence variable), and the remaining three variables focused on interpersonal influencers. Although none of the variables were perceived as "heavily" influential, the most influential interpersonal influencer noted was the Army recruiter (who was perceived as having a "moderate" influence). The family influence variable (containing the collapsed sources of father/mother, husband/wife, sister/brother and other relatives) was perceived to have "little influence" and the friends influence variable (containing the collapsed sources of friends and boy/girlfriend) was perceived to have "almost no" influence (Harkey, Reid & King, 1988, p. 725). The military’s recruitment tactics have not reflected the findings from the Harkey, Reid and King (1988) study, however. The military continues to develop and distribute recruitment materials specifically for influencers. For example, military recruitment materials have been tailored to gain parental support (particularly from mothers) for young people who are considering military service (Hamilton, 2010). Influencers, such as parents, high school athletic coaches, high school guidance counselors, and clergy (Enloe, 2008), continue to be targeted in the recruitment process.

Analyses of recruitment materials that disproportionately focused on mothers have noted that tactics aimed at persuading mothers often differ from those used to persuade other groups of influencers (Hamilton, 2010). Recruitment materials targeted to mothers often refer to the notion of Republican Motherhood, a role that positions mothers as responsible for raising patriotic children who are eager to serve their country. Historian Linda Kerber (1980) has documented that Republican Motherhood
has been an important concept for maintaining a patriotic culture in the United States since the Revolutionary War era. In an analysis of print and television advertisements targeting mothers, Hamilton (2010) found that "the advertisements define not only their worth as women, based in their children's accomplishments, but also the parameters of their concerns" (p. 156). Furthering this idea, Enloe (2008) noted that military recruiters have tried to persuade mothers to permit their child to enlist by focusing on the idea that enlistment would be "practicing good mothering" (p. 259). Thus, the recruitment of women has also entailed the recruitment of family members, particularly mothers.

In addition to efforts to persuade parents and other influentials, the U.S. military has also constructed direct appeals to young people. In Padilla and Laner's (2002) qualitative content analysis of military recruitment materials (including pamphlets, television commercials, films, billboards), seven categories emerged from the data: patriotism, adventure/challenge, job/career/education, social status, money, travel, and a miscellaneous category. First, advertisements in the patriotism category appealed to the desire "to defend the country's honor, protect it from tyranny, and to do one's patriotic duty" (Padilla & Laner, 2003, p. 115). The adventure/challenge category typically featured someone "flying a plane or serving in the tank corps" (Padilla & Laner, 2003, p. 115). The third category, job/career/education, focused on the acquisition of a trade, skill, or the ability to pursue opportunities in higher education. The social status category focused on how a "recruit's status could be enhanced by enlisting" (Padilla & Laner, 2003, p. 115). Fifth, the money category, focused on monetary incentives, such as "a cash bonus for enlisting, or noting the soldier's pay" (Padilla & Laner, 2003, p. 115). The sixth category, travel, emphasized opportunities to travel and see foreign
lands. Finally, Padilla and Laner (2002) identified a miscellaneous category that represented recruitment materials that contained "multiple themes in which no single theme dominated" (p. 115). These themes provided a foundation for the beginning of the analysis of recruitment materials presented via the Web.

In an interpretive textual study of military recruitment advertisements in magazines, Brown (2012) examined visual and verbal elements of the advertisements. With the visual elements, she noted appearance issues (particularly hairstyle, use of cosmetics, facial expression, and clothing), the issues related to the activity pictured (active versus passive activity, type of activity, location, the presence of military equipment, groupings of individuals, leadership). For verbal elements, she considered language, which aspects of life (and benefits) were featured, the inclusion of particular words that have a masculine valence (such as adventure, independence, challenge, test, strength, toughness, and courage). Combining these themes noted in the Padilla and Laner (2003) and Brown (2012) studies helped to provide a strong springboard for the qualitative content analysis of Web-based recruitment materials in this dissertation.

Military recruitment necessitates contact with large numbers of potential recruits. According to Marsman (2009), an Air Force Recruiting Service Mission Brief stated that "in order to get one recruit to basic military training, we must make contact with 100 individuals" (p. 42). Traditionally, the Air Force has noted that recruitment efforts are most effective when a recruiter is present in the process (Marsman, 2009). Another key to successful recruitment efforts is the proximity of a military base. "The proximity of an air base creates a synergy whereby Air Force recruiters continue to draw heavily from
increasingly smaller cultures and communities” (Marsman, 2009, p. 45). Routine exposure to military cultures can help reduce recruits' uncertainty about enlisting.

The United States military has identified that Web-based recruitment tools serve as an effective way to reach larger numbers of individuals, particularly those who are in geographically isolated areas and those areas where recruitment offices are not located. Historically, most military recruitment efforts in the United States have targeted specific geographical locations. In fact, recruitment offices are disproportionately represented in the southern states of the United States. "Most of the South Central states are overrepresented, compared to their Upper Mid-west counterparts," which creates a situation in which certain branches, such as the Air Force, "speak with a Southern accent" (Marsman, 2009, p. 46). In contrast, recruits from urban areas only represent about 8% of recruits (Marsman, 2009).

Other challenges for military recruiters include the popularity of tattoos as body art (which often makes them ineligible to enlist), and legal issues (such as DUIs). The U.S. Air Force, in particular, is concerned about recruiting a diverse group of individuals. "As long as we access people who can conform to our military ethos and inculcate our core values of integrity, service before self, and excellence in all we do, we should be casting the net for the most diverse Air Force we can recruit" (Marsman, 2009, p. 47). To reflect the diversity of the United States, several of the branches of the armed forces have created diversity offices in an effort to recruit a more diverse group of individuals.

One way in which the United States military can reach a more diverse population of potential recruits is via the Web. In fact, the military has been actively engaged in Web-based recruitment for the past decade, and those strategies have been cost-
effective. For example, in 2002, the Army received 14,000 leads, which led to 1,400 enlistments via the Web (Kiger, 2005). Recruiting Command spokesperson S. Douglas Smith noted the effectiveness of Web-based efforts when he reported that the 1-in-10 ratio is more effective than face-to-face recruitment (Kiger, 2005, p. 31). Thus, Web-based recruitment strategies require further investigation because they are proving to be highly effective tools for the United States military.

Because recruitment efforts were traditionally focused on a heterosexual male audience, it is important to analyze how military organizations are changing their recruitment efforts to target specific groups, particularly women. Analyzing recruitment materials from all branches can provide an opportunity to compare and contrast the recruitment methods employed to recruit women.

**Feminist Theory and Frameworks**

Feminist theory is a useful framework for understanding the military culture and the military’s tactics for recruiting and integrating women. Feminist theory focuses on the way in which hierarchies are structured in society, particularly patriarchal ones such as those that are prevalent in the U.S. military forces. According to Cirksena and Cuklanz (1992),

"Instead of a unified perspective that can be called 'feminist theory,' many feminist theories share common elements. Each emphasizes different aspects of social relations between women and men, attention to the status of women in society, and the nature of gender. Nearly all feminist theory, no matter how abstract, is grounded in a concern about, and desire to effect change in, the subjugated status of women. Nearly all forms of feminist analysis also attempt to explain, explicitly or implicitly, the sources of women's oppression. Finally, most feminist analysis makes assumptions about the sources of differences between women and men. (p. 18)."
Furthermore, the military's recruitment of women has often been framed as a form of "women's liberation;" however, from a feminist perspective, "women's entry into the military is better understood as the newest stage of militarizing global capitalism" (Eisenstein, 2007, p. 20). Many women enlist in the military due to necessity rather than choice. Due to economic hardships, women have increasingly found the military as a means of attaining job training and educational opportunities (Eisenstein, 2007).

Thus, feminist theories provide a useful framework for analyzing how patriarchal organizations, such as the United States military, attempt to recruit and integrate women. This paper utilizes a number of feminist theories to frame women's participation in the United States military. More specifically, liberal feminism and cultural feminism both provide unique ways of understanding military culture.

Liberal feminism is one of the oldest forms of feminism and is based on the traditional liberal assumption of rationality in human nature. Although not all liberal feminists have the same point of view, and at times contradict one another, there are several features of liberal feminism that can be useful for understanding the integration and recruitment of women in the military. More specifically, there are several features of the traditional liberal conception of rationality, particularly normative dualism, abstract individualism, and universal egoism, that are helpful in applying liberal feminism to the integration of women in the United States military. To apply liberal feminism, it is important to understand these features, how liberal feminism is aligned with these features, and how each of these features are important frameworks for analyzing the integration of women into the masculine culture of the United States military. It is also
important to recognize that there are complex disagreements; therefore, these features are not endorsed by all liberal feminists.

The first feature, normative dualism, is "the view that what is especially valuable about human beings is their 'mental' capacity for rationality" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 40). This is the intellectual argument that has focused on the idea that "once a certain minimum level of rationality has been reached, liberalism grants equal rights to all individuals" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 38). Thus, this idea has focused feminists on changing policies that limited women's opportunities, such as the 1972 passage of Title IX, which provides women with equal opportunity in institutions of higher education. The notion of normative dualism also reveals the male-bias that is inherent in liberal theory, however. According to Jaggar (1983), "the excessive value placed on the 'mind' at the expense of the body" (p. 46) is an obvious example of male bias. This association of "women with body and men with mind" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 46) has been historically reinforced in the masculine culture of the United States military through the sexual division of labor.

Another problem with the notion of normative dualism is that "by ignoring the fact that humans are a biological species, liberals deprive themselves of one important route for identifying human needs" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 42). For example, by ignoring biological gender differences, liberalism is deprived of the ability to create arguments based on issues of reproduction. In the United States military, this "formal equality approach has been criticized for its acceptance of rules and norms developed by men for men, for its failure to value the 'feminine,' and for its opposition to policies or laws that favor women over men" (Zeigler & Gunderson, 2005, p. 5). Thus, although the intent of pure equality
based on rationality can be an effective approach, the weakness of liberal theory is that it does not take biological differences into consideration.

The second feature, abstract individualism, "conceives of human individuals in abstraction from any social circumstances" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 29). In other words, cognitive abstract individualism focuses on individuals rather than their participation in a social group. It involves the notion that individuals are able to act rationally without the support of a particular group and that they are not required to be aligned with a specific group in order to be considered rational individuals. Scholars have noted that the notion of an individual existing outside a social context is illogical and not empirically sound (Jaggar, 1983). Simply stated, communication must be encoded and decoded based on social situations; therefore, if the message is taken out of the social context, the meaning and/or interpretation will be flawed. For this reason, liberal feminism often challenges the notion of abstract individualism that is foundational to traditional liberalism.

Finally, universal egoism refers to the propensity for individuals to primarily consider their own interests. This focus on self-interest refers to the notion that an individual's "natural inclination is invariably to favor what one perceives to be one's own interests" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 31). Many liberal feminists reject the idea of universal egoism. "Instead, they stress the desirability of such 'feminine' characteristics as the capacity for nurturing others and deny that such behavior is irrational" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 45). In this way, many liberal feminists legitimate feminine behaviors by arguing that such behaviors are rational. This argument works particularly well when applied to the United States military's current approach to integrating women because it assumes that
women in the military should exhibit both feminine and masculine behaviors, and that both are rational.

The notion of the legitimacy and rationality of performing both feminine and masculine behaviors leads to the idea of androgyny. According to many accounts of liberal feminism,

“members of an androgynous society would be physiologically male or female (or a variation thereof), but they would be unlikely to show the same extreme differences in 'masculine' or 'feminine' psychology as those characteristics are currently defined. That is to say, there would not be the current extreme contrast between logical, independent, aggressive, courageous, insensitive and emotionally inexpressive men and intuitive, dependent, compassionate, nurturant, and motional women.” (Jaggar, 1983, p. 38-39).

In fact, this is the notion advocated by Zeigler and Gunderson (2005) in regard to the integration of women in the United States military when they state that they "advocate gender-neutral, job-normed standards that will be applied to men and women equally" (p. 5). Liberating individuals from a "sex-role system" would enable individuals to meet their full potential. Furthermore, “by claiming that gender constitutes an arbitrary and oppressive constraint on the freedom both of women and men, liberal feminists argue simultaneously that gender is unjust and that its abolition is in the general human interest” (Jaggar, 1983, p. 39). This particular strain of liberal feminism focuses on how liberating people from the sex role system can benefit the state. To do so, liberal feminist theorists “provide both prudential and moral arguments for the legitimacy of the state” (Jaggar, 1983, p. 39). Thus, liberal feminist theory can be a helpful framework for considering how the military can integrate women, particularly in MOSs that represent new opportunities for women in the military.
Although the notion of an androgynous society may have common-sense appeal to the United States military, it ultimately is not the direction the military appears to have taken. The military has historically integrated women into different ranks based on the notion of difference. For example, one popular argument for integrating women into combat missions is based on the notion that women have feminine qualities that provide a unique skill set, such as in an ambassador role. This focus on difference represents the manner in which the military has historically handled the integration of women. More specifically, there have been suggestions that women are more likely (than men) to be effective in peacekeeping operations and as liaisons with the public, particularly when other women in foreign communities are involved (Stachowitsch, 2012). The assumption is that “by showcasing female soldiers as non-threatening and peaceful,” they could “win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the civilian population” (p. 314). More specifically, the military has found that women are more effective victim advocates for women who are victims in war zones (DeGroot, 2001). Rape is a particularly pressing issue in war zones, and women are more likely than men to be effective advocates in those situations, particularly when the victims are members of masculine cultures. Women’s effectiveness in these roles, however, is likely due to gender stereotypes perceived by the victims rather than a gender difference per se.

Incidents of sexual violence perpetrated by male peacekeepers against local women (Jacobson, 2012) has led some organizations (such as the United Nations) to recruit female peacekeepers (United Nations General Assembly, 2005). The expectation was that the presence of women peacekeepers would decrease incidents of sexual violence; however, “the mere presence of women peacekeepers will not
necessarily change military gender hierarchies and the macho culture within which peacekeeping operates” (Simić, 2010, p. 196). Current research has found that these assumptions are not accurate and that women peacekeepers were not the “magic solution” to these complex issues (Simić, 2010).

The military’s approach to the integration of women has focused on differences; therefore, it more accurately reflects the position of cultural feminists. In contrast to liberal feminism, cultural feminism focuses on the idea “that women and men are fundamentally different and, therefore, should have different rights, roles, and opportunities” (Wood, 2009, p. 66). Critics of cultural feminism note that integration based on difference accepts and legitimizes the patriarchal system. This approach to integration may be used to justify the subordination of women and a division of labor based on difference. Furthermore, this approach may create more difficulties for women who are striving to enter gender-restricted roles due to a further emphasized "sex-role system." On the other hand, some scholars support the notion of difference in the United States military because “evidence from policing and from peacekeeping suggests that the military may well benefit from 'feminization'” (Zeigler & Gunderson, 2005, p. 5). The question is how well the masculine culture of the military will welcome “feminization.” It is doubtful that the idea of “feminization” will be integrated easily, particularly due to previous difficulties implementing changes in the United States military.

**History of Women in the U.S. Military**

Although the United States military has always maintained a hyper-masculine heterosexual culture (Herbert, 1998), that culture has been altered with the integration of "nontraditional" soldiers, such as women. Rather than diluting the masculine culture,
however, the United States military has created "gender hierarchies that are nuanced so
patriarchal privilege is camouflaged" (Eisenstein, 2007, p. 22).

Other masculine work cultures, such as fire departments and police departments have identified areas where women are physiologically different than men. For example, Turner, Chiou, Zwiener, Weaver and Spahr (2010) found that women had a greater relative weight of clothing and gear as compared with men (42% versus 33%). Martin and Nelson (1986) found that when carrying a backload, men do not change their stride, whereas women decrease their stride. These physiological differences do not represent the physical abilities of every man and woman. Furthermore, women often find alternative solutions to physical labor. For example, rather than lift heavy boxes and carry them across a room, people with smaller statures are sometimes more likely to identify a less labor intensive solution, such as using a cart to transport the heavy boxes. Firefighters of smaller statures have learned to carry hoses and ladders so that the weight is more proportionate. Thus, physiological differences are not necessarily based on gender; therefore it is more appropriate to consider each individual’s physicality rather than make gender-based assumptions. Furthermore, it is acceptable for an individual of a smaller stature to implement an alternative approach to accomplish a task; therefore, concerns about physical limitations should be tested rather than assumed.

The masculinity scale of Hofstede's (1994) cultural dimensions is useful for framing the extent to which the United States, and the military in particular, use strict gender roles to restrict opportunities for both women and men. According to Hofstede (1994), masculinity pertains to cultures "in which social gender roles are clearly distinct
(i.e., men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life)” (p. 82). On the other hand, femininity pertains to cultures "in which social gender roles overlap (i.e., both men and women are supposed be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life)” (Hofstede, 1994, p. 83). The United States has a ranking of 62 on the masculinity scale (MAS), compared to a world average of 50 (Hofstede, 2011). This indicates that roles in the U.S. are highly differentiated by gender. "The male dominates a significant portion of the society and power structure" (Hofstede, 2011) and "this situation generates a female population that becomes more assertive and competitive, with women shifting toward the male role model and away from their female role" (Hofstede, 2011). The subculture of the U.S. military is based on a masculine model of power. The strict patriarchal hierarchy of the U.S. military requires that both sexes adhere to masculine ideals.

The sociological approach of symbolic interactionism, particularly Goffman’s dramaturgical analysis, is helpful in understanding how women can succeed in masculine cultures. Dramaturgical analysis is based on the notion that individuals are constantly engaged in role-playing activities. "This is most clearly evident when an individual is "front stage," that is, in public settings that require the use of props, set gestures, and memorized lines" (Brym & Lie, 2003, p. 124). For many women in the U.S. military, the "front stage" is where masculinity is emphasized through the use of uniforms, grooming procedures, and behaviors that minimize femininity. Although femininity is minimized, there is an expectation that women in the military will maintain an appropriate balance of femininity so it does not disappear from their identity
altogether (Herbert, 1998). For example, the U. S. Air Force (2011) has a specific standard for how short a woman can cut her hair: “minimum length is one inch, unless approved by the commander upon recommendation from a military treatment facility for medical reasons” (p. 19). Thus, women are not allowed to wear their hair in a hyper-masculine manner.

Women's body hair is also regulated by the U. S. Air Force (2011). In fact, female airmen (the term used by the Air Force to refer to personnel) are required to “remove leg hair that is visibly protruding beyond the appropriate hosiery or causes a visibly uneven texture under hosiery.” To further maintain appropriate performances of femininity, the U. S. Air Force (2011) has a strict standard for wearing jewelry, particularly earrings:

Female Airmen may wear small (not exceeding 6 mm in diameter) spherical, conservative (moderate, being within reasonable limits; not excessive or extreme) round white diamond, gold, white pearl, or silver earrings as a set with any uniform combination. If member has multiple holes, only one set of earrings are authorized to be worn in uniform and will be worn in the lower earlobes. Earrings will match and fit tightly without extending below the earlobe unless the piece extending is the connecting band on clip earrings. (p. 89).

Femininity is further dictated by limitations for wearing rings and necklaces. “Airmen may wear a total of no more than three rings; wedding sets count as one ring when worn as a set. Rings will be worn at the base of the finger, and will not be worn on the thumb” (U.S. Air Force, 2011, p. 89). Necklaces are not permitted to be visible at any time. If worn, necklaces must “be concealed under a collar or undershirt” (U.S. Air Force, 2011, p. 89). This is just a small sampling of how femininity is strictly managed by the Air Force through dress and appearance standards. These limits to feminine
displays are not exclusive the Air Force. Other branches have similar policies regarding these issues and those who do not conform to the standards are punished accordingly.

Based on Goffman's (1956) dramaturgy, individuals perform an identity and are highly aware of their impression management on the "front stage." Individuals reserve their true selves for the "backstage." According to dramaturgical analysis, there is not a "single self, just the ensemble of roles we play in various social contexts" (Brym & Lie, 2003, p. 124). According to Fox and Pease (2012), "like any social identity, military identity is always an achievement, something dependent upon conformity to others' expectations and their acknowledgement. The centrality of performance testing in the military, and the need to 'measure up,' heightens this dependence" (p. 22).

The dominance of masculinity in the military culture creates an environment in which women may feel the need to adhere to a masculine standard in order to succeed. According to Eisenstein (2007), "women who enter the military enter a masculinist bastion" (p. 24). Thus, on the “front stage,” many military women employ strategies similar to passing to deflect scrutiny and minimize their feminine identities. According to Goffman (1974), passing is simply “the management of undisclosed discrediting information about self” (p. 42). By downplaying certain aspects of the self, individuals can more effectively gain membership into a cultural group that would have marginalized them otherwise.

Historically, it was not uncommon for women to use passing strategies to enter and advance in the U.S. military. Most women who became soldiers during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars engaged in passing strategies that required them to completely disguise their biological self. For example, Deborah Gannett Sampson
presented herself as “Robert Shurtleff” and enlisted in the army for the whole term of the Revolutionary War (Diamant, 1998). By completely disguising every feminine aspect of her identity, she was able to enter the U.S. military as a soldier. Although women have played an important role in the U.S. military historically, most of those roles were subordinate and based on specific gender roles. For example, during the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, women’s duties usually involved nursing, laundry, food preparation, and sewing (Kerber, 1980). Thus, entering the war as a soldier required women to employ extreme forms of passing.

According to Spradlin (1998), “passing is how one conceals normal information about oneself to preserve, sustain, and encourage others’ predisposed assumptions about one’s identity” (p. 598; italics in original). Although the concept of passing has been most frequently used to frame the performance of race (Berlant, 1993) and sexual orientation (Spradlin, 1998; Woods & Harbeck, 1992), it can also be a useful concept for framing how individuals perform gender. More specifically, by employing strategies that are similar to passing, military women can produce an “appropriate” performance that balances masculinity and femininity according to military cultural standards.

Nowadays women are being actively recruited and promoted in the U.S. military without the necessity of completely disguising their biological bodies; however, due to the continued presence of patriarchal norms, many military women engage in strategies similar to those used for passing. These activities often entail minimizing feminine aspects of their identity by adjusting their communication style and exhibiting more aggressive leadership qualities.
By focusing on passing in a workplace where heterosexual activities were the norm, Spradlin (1998) developed passing strategies that are used to "cover" one's identity in the workplace. Three of these strategies can very easily be adapted to explain passing strategies that some military women have employed to alter their gender performance. The first strategy, distancing, focuses on the idea of removing oneself from informal conversations and keeping aspects of one's personal life completely private and ambiguous to colleagues in the workplace. The second strategy, dissociating, focuses on avoiding "guilt by association." In other words, this is an attempt to separate oneself from anyone else in the workplace who is considered outside of the workplace norms. For example, women in the military who engage in dissociating would minimize public interactions with other military women. Finally, dodging entails changing the subject and creating diversions to steer conversations away from inquiries about one's personal life. All of these strategies can be used to downplay feminine features and highlight masculine parts of one's identity.

The balance of femininity and masculinity is narrow in the military, and there are punishments in place for not adhering to an "appropriate" gender performance. In mainstream U.S. society, "performing one's gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect, and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity" (Butler, 1988, p. 528). Similarly, the outright performance or rejection of civilian gender norms is not accepted well in terms of social conformity in the hyper-masculine culture of the United States military. More specifically, there have been instances where military women have been socially punished for producing a hyper-masculine gender performance. Thus, women are expected to
highlight masculine qualities while still maintaining some feminine characteristics (Herbert, 1998).

Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, the only officer reprimanded for the Abu Ghraib prison scandal (which is detailed later in this dissertation), has noted that "female soldiers became more masculine than the men,' and that men tried to defeminize female soldiers by cutting their hair short, insisting on baggy uniforms, and so on" (Eisenstein, 2007, p. 36). Because Brigadier General Karpinski kept her hair long and "wasn't masculine enough for the army," she was “punished accordingly” (Eisenstein, 2007, p. 36). According to Karpinski (2005),

Some women – even straight women – tried to neutralize the men by joining them, cutting their hair and playing down their female characteristics. For my part, I tried to be both an officer and a gentlewoman. Our uniform required us to keep our hair up, off the collar, but we didn’t have to cut it, and I kept mine at shoulder length or longer. (p. 58)

Karpinski maintained a more feminine gender performance by keeping her hair long and blonde, yet she conformed to the style that was dictated by military standards. She believes that “the way to be taken seriously in a man’s world is to force them to engage your intelligence, not to try to change what you are" (p. 59). Yet changing appearances seems to be the standard for military women.

Furthermore, many military women are pressured to balance a certain level of masculinity without performing their gender in a way that is inconsistent with heterosexual cultural norms. The U.S. military attempts to openly identify some of these issues in recruitment materials targeted to women by profiling military women who exhibit traditional gender roles, but are engaged in hyper-masculine activities in the workplace. These issues are detailed later in this dissertation.
Furthermore, gender performance is often associated with the assumptions about a military woman’s sexual orientation. In the military, “masculine women, lesbian or not, are frequently labeled lesbian” (Bonner, 2010, p. 43). According to Shilts (1993) during the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell (DADT) era, there was “a saying among gay women in the military: one accusation means an investigation. Two accusations mean guilt” (p. 5). Now that the DADT era has ended, the fear of investigations has subsided; however, some women who identify as lesbian still do not disclose that aspect of their identity to their military colleagues because military culture remains based on heterosexual norms.

Another issue that women in the military need to address is the notion that foreign "military bases and prostitution have been assumed to ‘go together’” (Enloe, 2000, p. 81). There is a long history of the U.S. military working with local authorities to control native women's sexual behavior so that it benefits U.S. soldiers' sexual desires. The United States Defense Advisory Committee on the Status of Women in the Services (DACOWITS) has monitored the working conditions for women soldiers. In 1987, "DACOWITS members began to make a connection between the treatment of local women around the American bases and the treatment of American women on the bases. They blamed American Navy women’s low morale on the sexist environment created by the 'availability of inexpensive female companionship from the local population and its adverse consequences for legitimate social opportunities of Service women’” (Enloe, 2000, p. 87). As a ship gets closer to port (and the prostitutes), Navy women can find it challenging when male sailors begin talking about women in objectifying ways. Furthermore, male sailors who have an expectation of exploiting women may treat female soldiers differently as the ship gets closer to port. This can
create a hostile environment for women sailors, particularly those in leadership positions. In this way, women are positioned as sexual rivals.

As a masculine culture, the United States military has needed to change some policies and procedures to create a more inclusive climate. These changes were often prompted by events that were highly publicized to the general public through the media. Thus, the media have had an important role in prompting changes in the military.

**Media Portrayals of Women**

Media portrayals of military women are frequent in the newsmedia and in one of the newest forms of mass media, gaming (Tannenbaum and Riccitiello, 2011). Interestingly, the military has a long-established relationship with the gaming industry (Robinson, 2012), and has recently begun using video games as a recruitment tool (Shaw, 2010). Commercial video games often feature situations involving strict hierarchies and graphic violence. The first portrayals of women in video games focused on women as sexual objects, victims, and/or witnesses to violence; however, women are increasingly portrayed in more masculine ways, particularly in regards to aggressive and violent behaviors (Herbst, 2005; Labre & Duke, 2004; Dill & Thill, 2007). In military-based games, military women are often visually represented as capable and effective soldiers. According to Herbst (2005), "the message resonating from the world of gaming - a world that bears close ties to the military and its recruiting and training efforts - is that women can be as violent as men" (p. 321). Portrayals in the mass media, particularly in video games, can both positively and negatively impact the integration and recruitment of women into the military. On one hand, the representation of women as capable and effective soldiers is a positive representation. On the other hand, the representation of
women as violent can be perceived as extremely negative, particularly because this representation contradicts with gender norms.

The United States military's integration of women has been noted in the news media as well. News coverage often portrays military women differently than their male counterparts. The following examples detail how women are rarely noted as participants on the warfront at all, and when they are, their sex and/or gender are often on display in ways that differentiate them and position them as the “other” rather than the norm.

Early in the Iraq war, the story of the capture and rescue of Jessica Lynch was a popular news story in the U.S. media. In the case of Jessica Lynch, the news media largely portrayed Private Lynch "as in need of rescuing as well as a heroic soldier," which expressed "a range of diverging perceptions on women in the military" (Herbst, 2005, p. 313). Interestingly, these reports primarily focused on Jessica Lynch (the only white woman) rather than the other female soldiers, Lori Piestewa and Shoshanna Johnson. Johnson, a single mother of two children, was the first African American woman prisoner of war, and she incurred serious injuries in the conflict (Collins, 2012). Piestewa, a single mother, died as a result of the conflict. In fact, nine soldiers were killed in that conflict; however, that information was diluted by the focus on Jessica Lynch.

Furthermore, Lynch was portrayed in a manner that reinforced traditional gender norms. Lynch was portrayed as "remarkable" because she fired her gun and fought back; however, this type of reaction would be expected of a male soldier (Sjoberg, 2010). Furthermore, Lynch’s motivation for joining the army was framed in her desire to travel. "Her choice, then, was not to fight, or to go to war, but to be a tourist. Instead she
was a *girl* who wanted some adventure and just happened to end up in an army supply tank with a gun in the desert of Iraq" (Sjoberg, 2010, p. 211; italics mine). According to Kampfner (2003), the Jessica Lynch story is "a remarkable insight into the real influence of Hollywood producers on the Pentagon's media managers, and has produced a template from which America hopes to present its future wars" (p. 2). Thus, the Jessica Lynch story is a good example of how the U. S. military uses the media to create gendered messages to create patriotism and gain public support.

In contrast, media reports on the Abu Ghraib sex scandal portrayed military women as torturers and sexual deviants. Megan Ambuhl, Lynndie England, and Sabrina Harman, three of the torturers who were highlighted in media reports, are White women. In addition, Janis Karpinski, the brigadier general of the prisons in Iraq and the only officer held responsible for the incident, is also a White woman (Eisenstein, 2007). In the media reports, Lynndie England represented "masculinity in a female body" (Eisenstein, 2007, p. 35) because she was the woman who used a leash to torture and sexually humiliate the prisoners. These women's actions "do not bespeak their own power or privilege, yet they display the imperial power of white women over Muslim men. They are acting in a heterosexist hierarchical and punishing system of power" (Eisenstein, 2007, p. 42). Ultimately, the three women involved as torturers at Abu Ghraib, particularly Lynndie England, were used by the military as an attempt to legitimize the superiority of the United States' heterosexist patriarchal system and to marginalize the Muslim men (Eisenstein, 2007). Clearly, incidents such as the Abu Ghraib prison scandal are not liberating to women nor are they indicative of "equal opportunity" in the United States military (Eisenstein, 2007).
Military women were also the focus of mass media attention when the masculine culture of the military encountered difficulties becoming inclusive. Scandals such as Tailhook and Aberdeen were highly publicized by the media and often portrayed women negatively or focused on their victimization in a way that minimized their military experience (Eisenstein, 2007).

The Tailhook scandal refers to a series of sexual assaults that occurred during the 1991 Tailhook convention, an annual convention of Navy and Marine aviation personnel. Many researchers have noted that the Tailhook scandal was a result of rising tensions in the military regarding inclusion and exclusion policies for military women (Zimmerman, 1995).

In 1996, the Aberdeen scandal was a major sex abuse scandal that occurred at the Aberdeen Proving Ground, an Army base in Maryland. Widely reported by the media, the incidents led to the Army charging a dozen male officers with victimizing female trainees who were under their command. The Aberdeen scandal involved a range of sexual charges, including sexual assault, rape, and adultery.

As a response to the Tailhook and Aberdeen scandals, military branches have developed stronger victim advocacy programs. Thus, media portrayals of military women have impacted the integration of women in the military in some positive ways. However, overall, military women have been portrayed as victims, deviants, and damsels in distress. By positioning military women as the “other,” many of these portrayals represented them as if they did not belong in the military; therefore, these media representations ultimately hurt the legitimacy of women in the armed forces.
Media Effects Theoretical Foundations

A few theories have been used in previous research as foundations for understanding how visual representations of women in traditional and hypersexualized roles impact viewers. Of these theories, the three most frequently used theoretical foundations are social cognitive theory, gender schema theory (Smith & Granados, 2009), and congruity theory.

**Social cognitive theory.** According to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, children learn about sex-typed behaviors through experiences and observation. Observational learning can be applied to visual representations of women, such as advertisements. When all four sub-processes of social cognitive theory are met, stereotypes can be reinforced and sex-based behavior learned. The four sub-processes are attention, retention, production, and motivation (Smith & Granados, 2009). In regard to gender-specific images, attention is gained largely through a model's attractiveness. Retention is reinforced by repeated exposure. Repetition enables receivers to encode similar and repeated themes in messages. This cognitive rehearsal of themes leads to the formation of scripts that are based on the visual representations. Production involves the reproduction of these scripts. Finally, motivation is enhanced when visual representations are shown in a manner that appears to be rewarded. Stereotypes and sex-based behavior is particularly reinforced when all four sub-processes are enacted in response to a same-sex image that appears to be rewarded or not punished socially (Smith & Granados, 2009).

**Gender schema theory.** Another theoretical foundation that is frequently used to understand media effects of visual representations is gender schema theory. A schema is a cognitive structure that provides a way to organize and interpret
experiences (Wood, 2008). There are four different types of schemata: prototypes, personal constructs, stereotypes, and scripts. Prototypes involve grouping "people, events, and situations into broad categories" by defining a representative ideal example for a category of individuals (Wood, 2008, p. 47). Personal constructs provide a way for individuals to judge others and "allow us to make more detailed assessments of particular qualities of phenomena we perceive" (Wood, 2008, p. 28). Stereotypes are (often misguided) generalizations that are based on social group membership. Finally, scripts are sequences of activities that set expectations for appropriate behavior in specific situations (Wood, 2008). By observing media images, individuals create gender schemata based on what the images represent as socially appropriate behavior for gender-specific groups (Smith & Granados, 2009).

**Congruity theory.** Past research has used congruity theory to analyze the effectiveness of military recruitment advertisements in regard to persuading women (Mollett, 2006). Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) presented the principle of congruity as a cognitive process that is used to negotiate messages. Basically, a message that is consistent with one’s beliefs, gender role, and brand expectations will promote a positive attitude. Conversely, a message that is inconsistent with one’s beliefs, gender role, and brand expectations will promote negotiation to maintain consistency and may lead to cognitive dissonance in cases of forced compliance (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959).

Thus, social cognitive theory, gender schema theory (Smith & Granados, 2009), and congruity theory are useful for considering how women may interpret military recruitment materials that target them specifically. These theories were considered as
themes are developed through the qualitative content analysis and the analysis of the transcripts from the in-depth interviews with women.

**Persuasion-based Theoretical Foundation**

Persuasion theories are useful for evaluating materials intended to recruit women to the military. The purpose of recruitment materials is to advertise military opportunities through persuasive communications; therefore, persuasion-based models that explain the persuasive process are helpful in analyzing recruitment techniques. Deciding to dedicate oneself to military service is a monumental commitment; therefore, the decision to join the military requires cognitive (intellectual) processing and is considered a high involvement decision. Because young people (i.e., high school students) are often the targets of recruitment messages, it is also important to consider how adolescents process persuasive messages. Thus, the Processing of Commercial Media Content (PCMC) model may be useful for understanding how young people process recruitment messages.

The Processing of Commercial Media Content (PCMC) model was created as an investigative framework for understanding how young people process media messages (Buijzen, Van Reijmersdal & Owen, 2010). This model is particularly helpful when attempting to understand how young people process messages because it is based on both adult models of persuasion and theories of children's consumer development and socialization. Furthermore, the PCMC model takes into account issues of interactivity (a common feature of military recruitment Websites) and the integration of persuasive messages in seemingly neutral content. Web-based military recruitment messages often blur the boundaries between advertising and information. The highly integrated nature of recruitment-based advertising provides particular challenges for receivers,
particularly young people, to differentiate between the persuasive and informative messages. These embedded messages require more sophisticated critical analysis than most commercial messages that young people are accustomed to processing because they are not blatantly framed as advertisements (Buijzen, Van Reijmersdal & Owen, 2010).

The PCMC model includes a triple-level model of young people's persuasion processing (based on adult persuasion theories), a RA/RR (resources allocated/resources required) ratio framework to theorize how media content can affect young people's processing of persuasive messages (based on the limited capacity model of mediated message processing), and identifies specific message characteristics that may affect RA and RR (Buijzen, Van Reijmersdal & Owen, 2010).

The triple-level model of the PCMC model is based on previous research that focused on adult persuasion processes, such as Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) elaboration likelihood model (ELM), and Chaiken and Eagly's heuristic-systematic model (HSM; Chen, Duckworth & Chaiken, 1999). The first level, systematic persuasion processing, is based on the elaboration of cognitive processes and has two levels of processing. The first level, critical systematic processing, is elaborative processing that involves an active awareness and critical analysis of persuasive messages. The second level, noncritical systematic processing, "involves a high awareness of the message or brand, without awareness of its persuasive content" (Buijzen, Van Reijmersdal & Owen, 2010, p. 430) and is particularly useful for analyzing military recruitment messages.

The second level of young people's persuasion processing, heuristic persuasion processing, involves a moderate level of elaboration. "Compared with the systematic
process, the recipient uses merely moderate to low levels of message attention and awareness, and a low motivation and ability to process the message. Within the heuristic process, the recipient looks for an easy way to form an overall evaluation of the product or brand and thus relies on relatively simple and low-effort decision strategies" (Buijzen, Van Reijmersdal & Owen, 2010, p. 430-431).

Finally, automatic persuasion processing involves the lowest level of elaboration of the three levels. This type of processing involves implicit rather than explicit attention to the persuasive message (Buijzen, Van Reijmersdal & Owen, 2010). Recruitment messages in commercial video games based on military scenarios are likely to be consumed via automatic persuasion processing.

The PCMC model also has a RA/RR (resources allocated/resources required) ratio framework to theorize how media content can affect young people's processing of persuasive messages. Based on the limited capacity model of mediated message processing (LCMP; Lang, 2000), a receiver's level of processing depends upon the resources a receiver allocates to decode a message in comparison to the amount of resources required to process a message. If the RA is high and the RR is low, the message will be moderately processed, with heuristic or noncritical systematic processing. If both the RA and the RR are high, the message will be processed via high elaboration, thus critical systematic processing will occur. If the RA is low and the RR is high, the message will be too elaborate to process effectively; therefore, automatic or heuristic processing will occur. Finally, if both the RA and the RR are low, it is unlikely that the message will be processed at all. See Table A-2 for a visual representation of the RA/RR ratio framework (Buijzen, Van Reijmersdal & Owen, 2010).
Even though the young people interviewed in this study are in the older stages of adolescence, their processing abilities are not mature. Despite the development of "more mature cognitive skills, they are still in the midst of identity development, which may have important implications for the processing of commercial messages" (Buijzen et. al, 2010, p. 433). Thus, the PCMC model may be a useful tool for understanding how young women process military recruitment messages.

Through an analysis of the United States military’s recruitment of women, the purpose of this dissertation is to expand upon existing research in a variety of disciplines, including advertising and gender studies. In order to gain a more detailed understanding about how the United States military is recruiting women, this project has two goals. The first goal is to analyze the content of Web-based materials that were developed by the military in an effort to recruit women. The final goal is to gain a deeper understanding of how young women in JROTC and CAP programs interpret recruitment messages, particularly Web-based materials developed by the military in an effort to recruit women. The following research questions were constructed to guide this inquiry into how the United States military is recruiting women:

RQ1. What are the primary themes of Web-based military recruitment materials that target women?

RQ2. How are women's opportunities in the military portrayed in Web-based recruitment materials?

RQ3. How are Web-based military recruitment materials interpreted by young women in JROTC and CAP programs?
To address these questions, qualitative content analysis methods were used to investigate the content of Web-based materials, and in-depth interviews were used to investigate how young women in JROTC programs interpret recruitment messages. Specifics regarding the methodological approaches are detailed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS

A triangulated approach was used for this dissertation. According to Lindlof (1995), “triangulation involves a comparative assessment of more than one form of evidence about an object of inquiry. Although it is typically a method of verification, triangulation can also be used to develop a concept, construct, or proposition” (p. 239). This study first employed a qualitative content analysis (QCA) to analyze the media content. Next, in-depth interviews were conducted in order to learn about how intended receivers (young women involved in JROTC programs) accessed and interpreted the media messages. Finally, a narrowed QCA was conducted to focus on the media content that was accessed by participants. This final QCA also ensured that the lens of the young women was taken into account when analyzing the Web content. Triangulated designs are particularly useful when aiming to describe media content and conduct inquiries focused on how receivers interpret messages. According to Staley and Shockley-Zalabak (1989), "the underlying assumption for using triangulation is that multiple sources and diverse data contribute better than single sources and methods to our understanding of research questions and their context” (p. 250). Details about the method are following.

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

From televised food advertisements (Roberts & Pettigrew, 2007) to gambling advertisements (Sklar & Derevensky, 2010) and from beauty product campaigns (Rhoads, 2007) to advertisements for baby videos (Ryan, 2010), QCA has become a useful methodology for studying advertising content. QCAs that have been developed and used to study traditional media can serve as a foundation for developing methods
to analyze Web-based content. For example, research focused on static online advertisements has used methods that were developed for analyzing print advertisements. Additionally, online video advertisements have been researched using similar methods as those employed to study television commercials.

QCA provides an opportunity to develop themes through an emergent design. The intent of QCA research is to promote reflection on and further analysis of dominant assumptions (Hayes & Smith, 1994) rather than a focus on "the objective content of the message" (Marsh & White, 2003, p. 651). Because QCAs of advertisements are based on emergent design, predefined themes based on previous research guided the study, but themes were modified, deleted, and added throughout the study. As themes emerged during the analysis, the themes were reconceptualized and refined. "QCA constantly tests and revises those categories during and after the data collection process" (Thompson 1999, p. 156).

Recent studies based on QCA have bridged the analysis of text-based online content and the analysis of visual content. For example, Marsh and White (2003) used QCA to develop a taxonomy of relationships between online images and text. These types of studies bridge the use of text and images and acknowledge the important relationship of text and images when presented together. An analysis that does not recognize all parts of a Web-based message will likely miss important cues in encoding and decoding the messages. This holistic perspective is particularly important in regards to research focused on Web-based advertisements because a "holistic approach assumes that the whole is understood as a complex system that is greater than the sum of its parts" (Patton, 2002, p. 59).
Many studies have focused on the deconstruction of websites based on features and content (e.g., Chandler, 1998; Chandler & Roberts-Young, 2000; De Moya & Hwang, 2009; Wakeford, 2000). Chandler (1998) identified five generic features of personal home pages: themes, formulaic structures, technical features, iconography, and modes of address. Wakeford (2000) proposed that although Chandler's (2000) 'Generic Features' list was "devised for personal homepages, the organization of these sections is a practical starting point for a study of other kind, or genres, of Web pages" (p. 34). These previous studies lay the groundwork for developing initial themes.

There are differences that need to be taken into consideration when comparing static unidirectional (advertiser to audience) advertisements that are presented traditionally (i.e., print or television) to Web-based advertisements. According to Mitra and Cohen (1999), there are six characteristics of Web text that differentiate it from traditional texts. These six characteristics need to be taken into consideration when adopting a traditional research method, such as QCA, for online media content.

The first characteristic focuses on the overt intertextuality of online content. Unlike traditional texts, the reader can move effortlessly from one text to another via integrated links (Mitra and Cohen, 1999). The second characteristic is that this overt intertextuality leads to a nonlinear text. Rather than having a distinct beginning, middle and end, online content is nonlinear due to the reader's ability to determine the organization of the content (Mitra and Cohen, 1999).

Mitra and Cohen's (1999) third characteristic focuses on the role of the reader/audience. Communication models have often focused on the reader/audience of mass media as the "receiver" who takes in the information in a relatively passive
manner, with few opportunities to engage in "feedback." With online content, however, the reader actively engages the content and makes conscious choices about which content she explores and which content she neglects. The fourth characteristic focuses on the convergence of different kinds of representational strategies within online content. According to Mitra and Cohen (1999), "the written word is not only hyperactive in the WWW text, but its meaning is constantly implicated by the multimedia images that accompany the text" (p. 188). Thus, it is important to consider a holistic approach to QCAs of Web materials.

Fifth, online content has a far more immediate global reach than traditional media texts. Barriers of distance and time are virtually nonexistent. This also leads to Mitra and Cohen's (1999) final characteristic, the element of impermanence of online content. Most information posted on the Web can be removed by the author at any time. Thus, "unlike literary texts, media and communications texts are frequently ephemeral and therefore difficult to preserve for analysis" (Yell, 2005, p. 11). For this reason, this dissertation focuses on online content as a snapshot of the Web – the content frozen at a specific time. Due to the impermanence of online content, the Web-based recruitment materials were captured using Camatasia.

Online advertisements often contain both images and textual messages; therefore, it is important to recognize that an advertisement's entire message is not analyzed if the study is isolated to one of these characteristics. Ideally, a holistic perspective should be employed so that both textual and visual messages are analyzed in relation to one another rather than as isolated variables (Patton, 2002).
**Data collection and analysis.** There are eight strategic steps to conducting a QCA: formulation, foundation, planning, inclusion, familiarization, initial review, comparison, and conclusion.

In the first step, formulation, the problem statement was identified. This QCA focused on an examination of how the United States military is recruiting women via the Web. This is particularly important because recruitment messages may represent a potential recruit’s first impression of military culture. Furthermore, messages that are implied by the text, images, and videos on the recruitment website will likely help to set expectations and norms for the recruits.

In the second step, foundation, I identified theoretical frameworks and the approach to the inquiry. These theoretical frameworks and the feminist approach were detailed in the third step, the planning stage. The literature review above details this foundation. Fourth, the inclusion step requires a carefully developed criteria for the inclusion of specific Web-based recruitment materials in the analysis. Purposive sampling techniques were employed to choose Web-based recruitment materials that were intended for women. Details regarding the sample are provided in the upcoming "recruitment process" section.

During the familiarization step, all of the Web materials included in the sample were reviewed for familiarization purposes. According to Helmers (2006), “this first reaction primarily recognizes the emotional impact of the image. ‘First reactions’ must become more aware; it is essential to move beyond them to achieve a level of understanding of the image” (Helmers, 2006, p. 9). After the first review, the researcher
reconstructed themes (i.e., revised, deleted, added) based on concepts that emerged during the familiarization step.

The initial review step focuses on reviewing each page individually and analyzing all parts of each advertisement's content (audio, textual, visual, etc.) concurrently. Again, a holistic perspective is essential so all parts of the content are analyzed simultaneously rather than in isolation. All content in a webpage works together to create meaning; thus considering each part in isolation will not likely provide an appropriate interpretation of the website.

Helmers (2006) recommends a process for reading visuals that contains five steps. This is a useful framework for reviewing advertisements for the purposes of a QCA; however, two of the steps Helmers (2006) identifies are not included for the purposes of this paper because they were not directly applicable at this point of the project. More specifically, Helmers’ (2006) first step is based on a “first reaction” (p. 9) which duplicates the familiarization step of the QCA, and one of Helmers’ (2006) other steps focuses on the point of production (including interviews with the creators). Thus, three of Helmers’ (2006) steps were used for rereading images during the initial review step of the QCA. In addition, a fourth step was created to reflect previous research concerns. Note that these four steps were in addition to the initial reading that was conducted during the familiarization step; thus, each webpage was read a minimum of five times at this point. Details about each of the steps in the QCA’s initial review are following.

In the first rereading in the initial review, it is important to focus on the formal elements. "Formal elements of the image...relate to the form, or design and
arrangement, of an entire composition" (Helmers, 2006, p. 10). For webpages, the formal elements include the layout, design elements, and Web site attributes and characteristics. The design elements include headline, visual (photograph/art/other), copy, logo, color, typography, and any other elements presented (Rhoads, 2007). Website attributes include the CSS (cascading style sheets), borders, and panels. Website characteristics include links, the use of Flash, audio, video, online games, and other tools used to further engage the consumer.

The second rereading was created as a result of the previous research (not a part of the original steps developed by Helmers). When analyzing textual and visual information simultaneously, it is important to consider how the two forms of information interact. Does the visual have little relation to the text? Are the visual and the textual information closely related? Does the visual function in a way that goes beyond the textual information provided via the advertisement's copy? Marsh and White (2003) provided a taxonomy of functions of images in relation to textual information (Table A-3), providing an effective springboard for developing themes to describe how the textual and visual information interact.

The third rereading focuses on the cultural context in which the image is represented (Helmers, 2006). According to Helmers (2006), "this level of reading engages the image as a persuasive document" (p. 10). The message should be considered in terms of its persuasive intent for potential recruits.

Finally, the fourth rereading of the advertisements involves using a "critical eye to address the emotion" (Helmers 2006, p. 11). This allows the researcher the opportunity to fully address all of the implications of the message and consider possible alternative
interpretations. A critical analysis allows the researcher to develop an understanding of the implications of the messages. This process of rereading the advertisements is necessary for prolonged engagement with the sample.

At this point, the QCA’s dataset was too broad; therefore, I conducted the in-depth interviews to narrow the QCA to only those specific sections that were identified for consideration during the in-depth interviews. The participants in the in-depth interviews identified a primary (and often sole) interest in the Careers sections of the websites. To further narrow the study, I narrowed the QCA to only those webpages within the Career sections that targeted high-school-aged women who were not considering college as an option.

The search feature of the Air Force’s Careers section enabled the researcher to narrow the sample to only those careers that were open to individuals with a high school education. This yielded 120 individual career pages for the analysis. Because the videos were not linked to the Career pages, an analysis of the 77 videos in “Careers” section of the “Videos and More” part of the website was also conducted.

The Navy website did not have a search feature to narrow choices on their website; however, many of their career pages were not focused on a single job description. For example, the Navy has a page dedicated to “Arts and Photography” rather than a specific job within that area (like the Air Force’s Still Photography Specialist and Broadcast Journalist career pages). For this reason, all 60 pages of the Navy’s Career section were included in the study. In addition, the 22 pages in the “Jobs in Demand” section (linked on the homepage) were included in the study. Although one would assume that the “Jobs in Demand” section would simply link to individual career
pages within the Careers section of the website, the “Jobs in Demand” pages are specially developed for that particular section. Although some of the content is similar to that of webpages in the Careers section, the information is often presented differently, particularly in regards to sex differences. In many instances, whether or not the position was open to women was far more obvious in the “Jobs in Demand” pages than in the job listing in the Careers section.

Even though there were fewer individual pages included in the Navy website than the Air Force or Navy websites, the analysis for the Navy took considerably longer due to the integration of videos on nearly every career page. It appeared as if the Navy’s Careers section is in the middle of a period of development because some pages included many links to videos and more sophisticated use of graphics to highlight quotes from sailors. For example, the Submarine Officer webpage included nine videos ranging from 45 seconds to 5 minutes in length.

The Careers section of the Army’s recruitment website included a sophisticated advanced search tool. For this reason, it was quite easy to narrow down the analysis to include only jobs that were active duty, enlisted positions that were open to women. All of these were searchable features via the advanced search tool on the website. This search yielded 131 positions that fit the search criteria. Because the link to the videos section of the website was buried at the bottom of the website, that section was not included in the analysis. All videos that were featured on the homepage and the handful of videos that were linked to via the career pages were included in the final analysis.
Because all users navigated to the Career sections of the websites via the homepages, all content that was presented on the homepages, including links to specific career pages, and videos, was included in the final analysis as well.

The seventh strategic step for conducting a QCA is the comparison step. In this step, themes that were generated throughout the research process were finalized. This required the researcher to conduct a final analysis to ensure that themes were accurately applied. Camtasia, a software program that captures all on-screen computer activity, was also employed at this point to capture the web content that was included in the analysis. Camtasia has an option to record two audio tracks; therefore, the audio source from the computer (particularly audio for videos) was recorded on one track and another track was used to record voice narration containing the analysis. This provides the user with the opportunity to listen to both concurrently, or to remove one track so the user can focus on one of the audio tracks. This provides the opportunity to show the videos with or without the narration in the future. Using Camtasia also serves as an ideal way to capture a snapshot of how the websites appeared at the time of the analysis. Some pages on the websites were updated over the time of the analysis; therefore, using Camtasia provided an opportunity to freeze the images, text and video at that specific time so they can be reviewed in future analyses.

The final strategic step is to develop conclusions based on the themes that emerged in the research process. The main findings were explained through specific examples and screenshots to support the data. A detailed limitations section and insights regarding future research will also be provided during the conclusions step.
Recruitment process. Websites chosen for inclusion in this project were selected through purposive sampling techniques. The recruitment Websites of the Air Force, Army, and Navy were included in the QCA. The Marines and Coast Guard were excluded because the Marines are not recruiting women nearly as actively as the Air Force, Army, and Navy. Even though the Coast Guard is considered a military service, it is excluded from this study because it is considered part of the Department of Homeland Security (United States Coast Guard, 2012).

The only content excluded from the initial QCA of each recruitment-based website were sections that appeared to be irrelevant to participants in the in-depth interviews, such as sections that focused on higher level skill sets (usually requiring a minimum advanced degree or a high level of expertise). These information-rich Websites provide the most effective sample for learning about how the United States military is recruiting women via the Web. Specific details regarding the selection of specific websites and pages for each branch are following.

The Air Force’s official Website (www.airforce.mil) has a link titled “Join the Air Force” that redirects to a recruiting Website (www.airforce.com). Only one area of the AirForce.com Website will be excluded from the analysis. More specifically, a subsection of the “Joining the Air Force” section titled “Direct Commission Officer” (DCO) targeted individuals who already “have a career-relevant degree or postgraduate degree” and are “licensed and eligible to practice” in a specific field (U. S. Air Force, 2012). The participants in the in-depth interviews will not likely qualify for a DCO position at this point; therefore, this subsection was excluded from the QCA. For the
initial analysis, all of the remaining content (i.e., text, video, audio) from the AirForce.com website was included in the initial QCA.

The Army’s official Website (www.army.mil) has a section titled "Join" that provides links to "Active," "National Guard," "Reserve," and "Civilian Service." This project focuses on recruitments to active service; therefore, the "Active" link was selected. The "Active" link redirects the user to the Army’s recruitment Website (www.goarmy.com). The only sections of the GoArmy.com Website that were excluded from the QCA were the "Army ROTC" and "Officership" sections. Because participants in the in-depth interviews were already enrolled in JROTC-level programs and they were not planning to attend college-level ROTC programs for the most part, that particular section was not critical to this study. Additionally, the "Officership" section pertained to more qualified individuals (minimum qualifications required college degrees and/or higher levels of expertise and specialization) than the participants in the in-depth interviews had attained; therefore, that section is also not relevant to this project. All of the remaining content from the goarmy.com Website, including text, video, audio, and links were included in the initial QCA.

It is important to note that the Army.com Website will not be included in this study. That particular website looks as if it is affiliated with the United States Army due to the focus on recruitment; however, Army.com is owned by "FanMail.com, L.L.C. and is not affiliated, owned, or managed by the United States Army or the military and/or government of any country" (FanMail.com, 2012). The site is operated by former military members and families in order to share their "enthusiasm for the US Army and to assist those serving our country" (FanMail.com, 2012).
Similar to the other military Websites, the official website of the Navy (www.navy.mil) has a "Careers" link on the main page that redirects to a recruitment website (www.navy.com). All of the content (i.e., text, video, audio) on the Navy.com website was be included in the initial QCA sample.

After analyzing each of the Websites several times, the researcher was familiar with the content and organization. At this point, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with young women in JROTC and CAP programs in order to gain insight about the Web materials and to narrow the focus of the more in-depth QCA (as detailed above in the methods section).

**Trustworthiness of the findings.** For QCAs, validity focuses on effective construction of research instruments. According to Patton (2002), in qualitative research, "the researcher is the instrument" (p. 14); therefore, the credibility of a QCA "hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor" (p. 14) of the individuals developing the themes. Training, careful attention to detail, and adhering to scholarly standards further strengthens validity. Validity was strengthened in this study through the use of Camtasia software that enabled the researcher to capture every part of the websites, along with the researcher’s commentary for further analysis.

Using Camtasia, I recorded all of the website content as well as an additional track containing my voiceover commentary during the final analysis. The final analysis was captured in 36 video files (15 for the Air Force, 7 for the Army, and 14 for the Navy) that represent approximately 45 minutes of analysis each. I lost all data when I tried to record more than an hour’s worth of analysis in a single file; therefore, I made an effort to limit the length of each Camtasia video file to no more than 50 minutes. Recording
the analysis via Camtasia ensured that a snapshot of the websites was captured at the moment in time when I accessed them for the analysis. This also provided a useful archiving tool to verify content during the writing process and for future analyses. The only disadvantage to capturing the analysis via Camtasia videos is that it required nearly 80 GB of data storage space.

During a QCA, it is also important to ensure that the sample is representative of the website content over time. For example, Labre and Walsh-Childers (2003) returned to the website on two different future dates to ensure the content of the sample was typical of the websites and not an anomaly. If the sample is not representative of the content over time, this needs to be addressed in the study. The initial analyses for this study were conducted over the summer of 2012 and the final analysis was conducted later that same year during the winter months. Although I noted some differences in the websites over that period of time, the overall content remained the same. The largest differences had to do with the addition of content on several pages rather than an overhaul of an entire website.

QCA can be triangulated by method to strengthen the credibility of the study. Thus, the next section details how in-depth interviews with the target audience of Web-based recruitment materials strengthened the findings of this dissertation.

**In-Depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews can provide an opportunity to learn about intended receivers’ interpretations of media messages; therefore, it was important to speak with young women who were being recruited by the United States military to gain their insights about the websites. In-depth interviews, also referred to as long interviews, are "intended to accomplish certain ethnographic objectives without committing the
investigator to intimate, repeated, and prolonged involvement in the life and community of the respondent" (McCracken, 1988, p. 7). These interviews provided the researcher with an opportunity to view the Websites through the lenses of the intended receivers, and the young women’s input was vital to narrowing the QCA for a more focused analysis of the Web content.

Recruitment process. Historically, the United States military has been successful with recruitment efforts in the Southern states (Marsman, 2009). Furthermore, recruitment efforts have been successful in regions that are close in proximity to military establishments, particularly bases. Marsman (2009) noted that "the proximity of air bases creates a synergy whereby Air Force recruiters continue to draw heavily from increasingly smaller cultures and communities" (p. 45). Therefore, Central Florida was an ideal geographic region for recruiting young women for this particular study. Central Florida has a strong military influence due to the proximity of the space program and Patrick Air Force Base on the east coast, MacDill Air Force Base on the west coast, and a long history of military establishments in the Orlando area (i.e., the McCoy Naval Annex, Veteran's Administration, numerous reserve units).

Participants were recruited through JROTC and Civil Air Patrol (CAP; Air Force Auxillary) cadet programs in Central Florida. These organizations are particularly diverse and have a large number of members in contrast to other areas in the state. Participants ranged in age from 14 to 18 years old. Because most of these young women were legally "children" at the time of the interviews, special consideration from the Institutional Review Board was obtained, and parental consent was acquired, when necessary (See Appendices A, B and C for consent and assent forms).
Interviews ranged from just over an hour in length to an hour and a half. As a token of appreciation for their participation in the project, participants were provided with a gift card to the store of their choice. Before beginning the interview, basic demographic information was obtained. The interview was conducted via an emergent design; therefore, an interview instrument was constructed beforehand to guide the interview (Appendix D), but the interview was not limited to the instrument. This was particularly useful as questions emerged during the participants’ engagement in the Web materials, and at times when the young women disclosed personal information about themselves that could not have been anticipated beforehand.

The six young women included in the study were from three different counties in Central Florida. All of the young women were highly involved in JROTC programs through their local high schools and one of the women was involved in both the local JROTC program and the local CAP cadet program. The women ranged in age from 14 to 18 years of age and were from diverse racial backgrounds. Three of the women self-identified as White, two self-identified as African-American, and one self-identified as Hispanic. One of the women who self-identified as White noted during the interview that her family was Puerto Rican. Her JROTC commander also mentioned that she had self-identified as Hispanic on other occasions. Four of the participants self-identified as heterosexual and two of the participants self-identified as lesbian. Three of the young women were Seniors, two were Juniors, and one was a Freshman in high school. All of the young women held leadership positions in the JROTC program and two of them had recently signed enlistment paperwork for the Army. The two participants who enlisted will attend boot camp immediately after they graduate from high school this year.
All of the participants were interviewed in settings that were convenient and comfortable for them. Two of the women chose to meet with the researcher in private rooms at local public libraries and the other four women chose to meet in rooms in the JROTC complex at their high school. In the JROTC complexes, most of the women were interviewed in empty JROTC classrooms where we were provided privacy for the interviews. Due to a lack of private spaces at one JROTC complex, one woman chose to be interviewed in a large closet where guns and ammunition were stored. Although the massive gun room was a bit intimidating for the researcher, the young woman was not fazed by the environment at all. She even commented about how much of her free time was spent maintaining equipment inside the room.

All but one of the participants were interviewed with live versions of the websites available. One of the high schools had a technical issue with their wifi on the day of our interview; therefore, we were not able to view the website live during that particular interview. Fortunately, the researcher had saved some screenshots of the pages that previous participants had expressed interest in; therefore, the screenshots were used as prompts for discussing the websites for that particular interview.

All of the participants agreed to be interviewed again after the next stage of their recruitment process. For young women who are involved in JROTC programs, there was an agreement to meet again during the next school year. For participants who had enlisted in the armed services, there was an agreement to meet after boot camp and/or the initial training regiment. All of the young women agreed to participate in a larger longitudinal study with the researcher.
Data collection and analysis. With the exception of one interview, all of the interviews were audio recorded using Audacity software. There was a technical issue with the microphone for one of the interviews; therefore, the researcher relied upon a back-up plan and used a voice recorder on her cell phone to record that particular interview.

A professional transcriber created initial transcriptions from the audio recordings. Specific instructions were provided to the transcriber to ensure that all pauses (including vocalized pauses) and nonfluencies (such as um, like, etc.) were included in the transcription.

The final transcripts included 197 pages of interview data. Individual transcripts ranged from 22 to 45 pages in length, with an average of 33 pages per interview. These transcripts represented seven hours and forty minutes of interviews, with interviews ranging from just over an hour in length to an hour and a half. The average interview was an hour and seventeen minutes in length. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant based on an online random name generator (i.e., Campbell, 2013).

The researcher then compared the transcriptions with the audio recordings and made minor manual adjustments to ensure that the transcriptions were exact matches to the audio recordings. Most of the adjustments were based on simple errors, such as erroneously transcribing “oddball” when the word choice was actually “admiral” in the following exchange:

Um, she actually works in the public affairs office. She does, like, event planning and stuff. So…pretty cool. She works, like, for the oddball.
Otherwise, the transcriptions were accurate and represented the language of each participant well. Checking the transcripts for accuracy also provided the researcher with another opportunity to become re-familiarized with the interviews.

After ensuring the accuracy of the transcriptions, the researcher went through each transcription individually and color coded themes that emerged through the initial interviews and the reviews of the transcriptions. As more themes emerged that related to the QCA data, additional themes were coded and included in the study. The researcher analyzed the transcripts word-for-word three times before determining that the themes had been well defined and noted in each interview. The interview data was then used to inform the final QCA and the themes were integrated in the final QCA, including the participants’ voices to support themes.

**Trustworthiness of the findings.** Feminist research values the mutual formation of knowledge. To engage in mutual and reciprocal communication, "the interviewer must be prepared to invest her own personality in the relationship through answering questions and validating women's personal experiences" (Langellier & Hall, 1989, p. 203). Although themes were constructed through interconnections in the interview transcripts, it is important to note that the researcher’s subjectivity may have influenced this project.

More specifically, I identify myself as a White, upper-middle class, middle-aged woman. I also have family members who honorably served in the United States Air Force, Army, and Navy. These family members proudly fought in the Vietnam War and in both the European and Pacific theaters of World War II. In addition, my life partner is an active member of the United States Civil Air Patrol (CAP).
Although I have a strong family history of military involvement in my family, I have never lived on a military base, and my father was honorably discharged from the military before I was born. Thus, I have some experience with the military culture even though the military was never a large influence in my personal life or culture. For this reason, I am uniquely positioned as an observer who understands many of the cultural assumptions and practices of the military; however, I am not blinded by preconceived notions about military culture. My unique position is ideal for attaining my goals for this dissertation: to provide insights regarding how the United States military uses the Web to recruit women, and how women interpret those messages. It was also important to self-disclose relevant parts of my identity during the interviews. Self-disclosure represented an important part of the recruitment process for this study, as well as an important tool for maintaining rapport before, during, and after the interviews.
CHAPTER 4  
FINDINGS

In this chapter, I will outline the major findings of this study. Because branch preferences are a strong indicator regarding which websites potential recruits will access, branch preferences are taken under consideration in the first section of this chapter. The voices of the young women who were interviewed for this study are integrated into the content to clarify the issues regarding branch preferences. Recommendations are provided to specific branches for improving the perception of their brand so their branch appeals to a wider audience. In the second section, I explain the foundation for the initial development of themes.

The third section details differentiations in how the different branches integrate information pertaining directly to the recruitment of women in their recruitment websites. Each branch is considered individually, and then the results of a qualitative content analysis of the “Women in the Navy” pages are provided. Six main themes emerged in the analysis of the “Women in the Navy” section of the Navy’s recruitment website: isolation, family and friends, travel, empowerment, activity level, and feminine features. Each of these themes is described and examples are provided to provide details about each one.

In the fourth section the results of the qualitative content analysis of the Careers sections of the Air Force, Army, and Navy recruitment websites are presented. Through the QCA, eight themes emerged: language issues, demographic representations, activity level, authority, isolation, facial expressions, feminine features, and heterosexist norms. Examples that emerged from the participants’ engagement with the content
during the in-depth interviews, along with those that were revealed during the QCA, are used to support each theme.

Finally, this chapter concludes with three case studies of videos that are represented on the recruitment websites. These videos are explained in detail to show how themes are represented in the website materials and how they interact.

The first two case studies focus on featured profile videos from the “Women in the Navy” section of the Navy’s recruitment website: Master-At-Arms (gunner) Melanie Molina, and Aviation Structural Mechanic Amanda Hodges. The third case study focuses on a video from the Surface Warfare Officers career page of the Navy’s recruitment website that features three officers (one female and two male). All three of these videos are good example of intersecting themes that are represented throughout the recruitment websites.

**Branch Preferences**

Each of the young women interviewed for this project had strong feelings about branch preferences. The branch that was affiliated with the cadet program (JROTC or CAP) they were involved in was extremely influential in regard to the young women’s branch preferences. For example, Linda stated:

> Army was really the only thing I knew…and I didn’t want to have to worry about changing services, because it is kind of difficult with the different formalities and everything. And I just love the Army.

The young women noted their comfort level in understanding the formalities, organizational structure, and language of their particular branch. Their familiarity with the branch associated with their cadet program often led them to aspire to join that particular branch.
Several of the participants mentioned that leaders in the JROTC program were their best resources for career opportunities and military options. In regards to the JROTC leaders, Mirinda mentioned that they'll back me up. And ROTC is like, “This is what you want to do, but this is what I think you can do.”

The young women mentioned that their JROTC leaders’ military experience was the primary reason why JROTC leaders were considered highly influential. Previous research has also noted the importance of JROTC leaders as influencers in the recruitment process (Harkey, Reid & King, 1988).

The Air Force was often literally referred to as the “smart branch” by participants in this study. For example, Linda noted that, “I wouldn’t want to be, you know, the Air Force is really smart and I’m not really into that (Laughs).” There was also the impression that the Air Force would require higher education. Agnes stated that, “I didn’t choose the Air Force because they told me I have to go to school for two years, so I was like, the whole point is I don’t want the school, and then on-the-job training.” The misconception that the Air Force is limited to intellectually-based technical careers often led the participants to dismiss the Air Force as an option for them. Although the Air Force prides itself on its technological advancements, they also need support personnel who are not required to obtain higher education. Military police officers, cooks, clerical staff members, and flight attendants are all needed in the Air Force, and these positions often do not have higher educational requirements. If the Air Force experiences difficulties with recruiting support personnel, they may want to consider providing more information about these types of opportunities in their recruitment materials.
The Marines were quickly discarded as an option for the women in this study (further evidence that supports the exclusion of the USMC recruitment website from the QCA). Overall, based on the comments by the young women in this study, if the Marines want to recruit women, there are some considerable image issues that need to be addressed. In fact, the women had very few positive words to describe the Marines. Linda stated, “I feel like the Marine recruiters were very harsh, very kind of off-putting.”

Previous research has noted the importance of recruiters as influencers in the recruitment process (Harkey, Reid & King, 1988); therefore, the off-putting behavior of the recruiters could have negatively impacted potential recruits’ perceptions of the branch.

The young women who were interviewed in this study explained their relationship with the recruiters in more detail. For example, Linda had a particularly close relationship with her Army recruiters:

I’ve known my recruiters for a very long time, so they kind of knew me, and they knew – they kind of called me, not like, their favorite future soldier, but their like, one of the best because they knew they could count on me, they knew I’d be there, obviously all these things in my past, you know, that I had and they – they loved me. (Laughs)

She also likened her relationship to them as a part of her family:

And I love the recruiters; the army recruiters are so amazing. You know, the guy that I actually talked to is supposed to be, like, the hard guy. But he is so nice to me and he loves me and – he’s like an older brother to me. And like, my other recruiter, who’s my future soldier commander, he’s like an older brother to me. I just get along with him so well.

Linda also mentioned her recruiter’s approval of her decision in a positive light:

But it’s so funny. I’ll come in and everybody in the recruiting office knows me, and you know, he’s like, so proud of me, so it’s pretty great.
Linda’s experience with Army recruiters greatly contrasts with her statements about the Marine recruiters. Recruiters’ interpersonal connections are important for effectively recruiting personnel.

Cindy mentioned that the Marines are “more like supply and infantry and all that stuff, and that doesn’t really interest me very much.” Mirinda also noted that the Marines:

are very, um – there’s definitely females in that one, but I’m not very strong, like, I can probably do it if I put my mind to it, but it would be a lot of work. And the Army would be a lot of work too, but the Marines are definitely – they’re the strongest, I guess, if you look at the training.

Selene cited her brother’s experience in the Marines as her primary reason for not considering that branch:

My brother’s a Marine, and he’s getting out in May, and we were talking. He started not really liking the Marines for like 2 years or so, I don’t know. I don’t think I want to be a Marine now because he doesn’t like it.

Selene based her choice on her brother’s experience. Previous research suggests that family and friends are also important influencers in regard to military recruitment (Harkey, Reid & King, 1988).

Several of the participants noted that friends and family members who were in the military were influential in a number of ways, particularly in the choice of a specific military branch. Interestingly, friends and family members who were in the military did not always recommend that the young woman choose their branch. Quite often their advice swayed women to think more about different branches. Uma’s grandfather was in the Army and she has an uncle and brother in the Marines. Her brother encouraged her to look into the Navy instead of the Marines.

Yeah, he told me, um, that their [the Marines’] contracts weren’t the greatest. It has like, certain, you know, I mean, it’s good for the most part,
but there’s like small things that aren’t very good and stuff, and he said when he’s done with his years there, he’s switching to the Navy.

Cindy has two uncles who are both in the Army; however, she is leaning toward joining the Air Force due to a recommendation of one of her uncles:

Um, well, my uncle told me that the Army is good, and then the Air Force is good too. But he feels that the Air Force treats women a little bit better than the Army. I don’t know how, but he told me I should look into the Air Force too, and I’m gonna take his word for it.

The young women were more likely to take advice from friends and family members who were in the military without further critique.

Cindy noted that her mother, guidance counselor, the Colonel (leader of her JROTC program), and uncle were the most influential people in regard to her decision to join the military. She mentioned that her mom was most important in terms of social support and said,

I think – well, I chose my mom because I know that – because she’s always there for me. And then also I know, like, whatever decision I choose, she’ll always stick, like, stick by my side and that she’ll help me a little bit. Like she won’t tell me, “Oh, go here because I like this school,” but she’ll be really supportive and she’s a good resource.

Several of the participants also noted that one of their parents was very research-oriented and that they wanted to gather as much information about their child’s options as possible. For example, Linda stated,

My father is a very research person, and he wanted to make sure that I wasn’t just going off of, you know, whatever, that I knew what I was going into, that I – . He didn’t want me to change my mind.

Thus, for the young women interviewed for this study, family members were important influencers when it came to choosing a military branch.
The Navy was often disregarded if the young women were not fond of boats or the water in general. Linda stated, “I wouldn’t want to be on a boat.” Similarly, Agnes remarked that:

I can’t do water at all. I can’t be on a boat. I get sick really easily. I know that probably in the Army I’ll have to do it sometime. But the Navy is just 24/7, so it’s like, “I can’t do it.”

Similarly, Keysha noted that

I can’t do it. Like under water, like, I can’t do the water thing. I just can’t. It bothers me.

Mirinda also mentioned the issue with water; however, she also mentioned a perception about the integration of women in the Navy:

They really – I think they really favor males, and they do a lot of swimming, and I’m not a very strong swimmer. But yeah, they do – I really think they do favor, uh, males.

When asked for clarification about the notion of favoritism, Mirinda explained that

Um, because everything I see – well, there’s been some Navy recruiters, and when they show us, like, the slideshows or information, it does, it does say that, um, that they prefer males. I mean, some females have made it, but not many. It’s not very – the chances of a female making it is not - not high.

When asked if the recruiters literally say this or if they have the information on a slide, Mirinda responded that

No, it’s not that obvious, but the training is very, very hard. That it’s very, like, you have to have a lot of strength. It’s not saying that females can’t do it, but it’s saying that most females have not been able to do it. So, like, only the best. They want the best.

Ultimately, Mirinda ranked the Navy last on her list of potential branches, even below the Marines. She stated that “the Navy does physical work, too, but they do a lot of water-type stuff. I’m good on land, not water.”
Overall, the influencers were key to the young women’s decisions regarding branch choices. Young women were reluctant to consider branches that were not recommended by family and friends who had military experience. They were heavily influenced the leadership in their cadet program and by the recruiters who established interpersonal relationships with them. Understanding how branch preferences are established is important in the recruitment process. The young women who were interviewed in this study were extremely reluctant to even look at recruitment websites for branches that they did not prefer and when asked to do so, they were clearly disengaged.

**Developing themes**

The themes developed in Padilla and Laner’s (2002) qualitative content analysis of military recruitment materials included patriotism, adventure/challenge, job/career/education, social status, money, travel, and a miscellaneous category. Although the themes developed by Padilla and Laner (2002) certainly apply to the recruitment websites, they do not reveal issues regarding gender specifically. For this reason, Padilla and Laner’s (2002) themes were used as springboard for a more narrow focus on gender issues. The themes used to analyze recruitment advertisements in magazines in the Brown (2012) study were more relevant to this particular study. Both studies informed the initial development of themes for the qualitative content analysis for this study.

**Integration of Information Pertaining to Women**

The three branches of the United States military that were analyzed in this dissertation (the Air Force, Army, and Navy) have different strategies that are represented on their recruitment websites. The Air Force does not mention sex or
gender explicitly, except when the position is closed to women, whereas the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) has a “(MALES ONLY)” notation next to the job title. Because 99% of the Air Force’s jobs are open to women, there are fewer positions that exclude women (U. S. Air Force, 2013). There are not any other special notations on the Air Force recruitment website that identify women as different from men; therefore, for the most part, the Air Force treats women and men similarly in terms of the formatting and organization of their website materials.

The Army presents information pertaining directly to women using a different tactic. They have a bar that appears on each job listing that notes whether or not the position is open to women; therefore, women are noted explicitly for every position available in the Army. On the bar underneath the image, a green checkmark indicates if a MOS is open to women, and an “X” indicates if the MOS is closed to women (Appendix E for screenshots).

In addition, there is a search filter available so a woman can search Army careers that are “open to women.” This makes it very clear that there are some opportunities that are not available to women; however, it also makes it easy for women to clearly differentiate which jobs are open to them. Many of the young women who were interviewed made positive comments about the “open to women” notations on the career pages. For example, Cindy noted the “open to women” notation immediately when she clicked on a career page:

It says, like, the checkmarks for what you could, like, where you can do the job, like you can – it’s open to women. Unfortunately, you couldn’t be an officer if you do this job, I guess, if it says the “X.” And then – it’s a good thing that it’s open to women and that women can have the same opportunity that men can with certain jobs.
When comparing the formats of the Air Force and Army career pages, the young women who were interviewed clearly preferred the Army’s pages, particularly due to the bar that clearly noted whether or not the position was open to women. Selene stated, “I like it on the bottom because it – it’s easy to see. You can just go to the picture and see right there. And it’s more organized.” Cindy also preferred the Army’s format to the Air Force’s strategy of only noting exclusions. She stated, 

Um, well, I don’t really see anything on the Air Force one saying if it was open to women, so I would say that for this particular website it would be a little bit better because it actually tells you if it’s open to women, which it didn’t really on the other website - the Air Force one.

For the 1% of job opportunities in the Air Force that are not currently open to women (U. S. Air Force, 2013), the Air Force website notes those with the addition of a “(MALES ONLY)” to the job title. This seems appropriate given the larger number of job opportunities that are available to women in the Air Force, particularly in comparison to the Army and Navy. To have a bar on each job listing that notes whether or not the position is open to women would seem unnecessary in the Air Force’s situation. Thus, it makes sense that the Air Force only makes notations to indicate sex-based exclusions on the 1% of job opportunities that are excluded from equal opportunity. However, the addition of a specific notation may provide a way to clarify the level of inclusion for potential women recruits, particularly because the young women in this study were not aware of the level of inclusion. A bar to clarify inclusion could clarify the information for potential recruits.

The Navy uses an entirely different strategy for appealing to potential women recruits. They have an entire section of their website that specifically targets potential women recruits. The “Women in the Navy” (WIN) section is one of the main menu
options in the “Inside the Navy” section of the recruitment website and it contains 14 pages that are dedicated solely to women. The information, however, is presented often in a superficial manner. Although none of the young women interviewed for this study were enticed to click on this section, this direct attempt to appeal to women is worthy of further inquiry and analysis.

When asked about how the information was presented, many of the women questioned why they would need a separate section that reinforced differences. Differences are noted as themes in the text, visuals, and videos represented in the WIN section of the website, though. This is similar to concerns addressed by Megens and Wings’ (1981) over three decades ago in that “women are singled out for special treatment in the recruitment material” (p. 44). Similarly, the WIN section of the Website opens with a direct appeal to women:

What’s it like being a woman in today’s Navy? Challenging. Exciting. Rewarding. But above all, it’s incredibly empowering. That’s because the responsibilities are significant. The respect is well-earned. The lifestyle is liberating. And the chance to push limits personally and professionally is an equal opportunity for women and men alike.

Take on a Role That Defies Convention. The notion of “man’s work” is redefined in the Navy. Stereotypes are overridden by determination, by proven capabilities, and by a shared appreciation for work that’s driven by hands-on skills and adrenaline. Here, a woman’s place is definitely in on the action. And women who seek to pursue what some may consider male-dominated roles are not only welcome, they’re wanted – in any of dozens of dynamic fields.

This introduction effectively highlights some of the main themes that emerged for information provided on these pages: isolation, family and friends, travel, empowerment, activity level, and feminine features. Descriptions and examples for each of these themes are detailed in the following pages.
**Isolation.** Although women were represented in a wide variety of jobs, women in the WIN section were often represented in isolation from other women. They were represented in male-dominated environments; therefore, they appeared more as tokens than as women who were fully integrated into the Navy. Furthermore, the women were often represented as the “first” or only women in specific careers. Previous research has noted that “the Navy has tended to present itself as a male world. Navy recruiting has expressed ambivalence about women, making token reference to the possibility that they might be sailors” (Brown, 2012, p. 161). Megens and Wings (1981) also noted that “women are more often shown with men than with other women or alone” (p. 45). In the WIN section of the website, when the featured women were shown working, their co-workers were all typically men. Very rarely was a military woman shown working with a female co-worker. For example, in the video that highlights Lynn Rodriguez, a Navy diver, she refers to other Navy divers as men without exception. No other women are visible in her working environment. These representations in the videos in the WIN section of the website undercut the idea that women are a regular part of the Navy.

**Family and friends.** References to family and friends are noted on many of the featured profiles in the Navy’s WIN section. For example, Seabee diver Lynn Rodriguez’s personal life is highlighted in the text of the webpage that features her:

> When off duty, Lynn works hard and enjoys “normal” family life. She also likes going hiking, working out, swimming and spinning. This helps her stay in shape when she’s on duty as well.

Similarly, in a featured profile of Intelligence Specialist Carina Stone, her concerns about motherhood are mentioned as a thread in the text on her profile page:

> After getting pregnant, Carina was happy to find out that she didn’t have to give up on her dreams of joining the Navy. She found out about the Navy Reserve and began to consider it as an option. She knew this meant being
away from her son during Boot Camp, training and possibly deployment, but she knew it would have a major positive impact on them in the long run. Issues regarding family and friends are not isolated to the profiles of featured women in the WIN section. These issues are also noted in the text of the “Benefits” section of the WIN portion of the website:

And keeping up with family and friends is easy. The Navy provides mail services, computers and email access so you can stay in touch when you’re away from home. Considering the exciting places you’ll visit, different people you’ll meet and new skills you’ll learn, you’ll have plenty to share.

This emphasis on personal relationships is only evident in the WIN section of the Navy’s recruitment website. In other parts of the website, personal relationships are rarely mentioned at all.

One of the young women I interviewed as a part of this study mentioned the importance of personal relationships when I asked about the disadvantages of joining the armed forces. Mirinda said

Um, well, you can’t – I was going to say you can’t really keep up with your family, but you can keep up with your family. They made ways. But you aren’t home, like, you’re, well, you’re deployed a lot and when you come back home you’re like, kissing everything because you missed it so much. I guess that’s the only thing I can think of. You’re still in contact with your family, but you’re not there as much as you like.

Several of the participants mentioned that they were concerned about personal relationships; however, it is unlikely that this is solely a “women’s issue.”

Travel. Similar to previous analyses of recruitment materials (Brown, 2012; Megens & Wings, 1981; Padilla & Laner, 2002), one of the overall themes for the recruitment materials on the websites focused on travel and the opportunity to visit foreign lands. This theme was further personalized and emphasized in the WIN section through the featured profiles of individual sailors. For example, in the featured profile of
Stephanie Kirkpatrick, an Aviation Boatswain’s Mate Fueler, Kirkpatrick states in a video that “it's awesome to learn about different customs and cultures and travel the world.” In Lynn Rodriguez’s featured profile, the travel theme is used in the text to introduce her:

Growing up, Lynn always knew she wanted to travel the world. She decided to visit the local Navy Recruiter and ended up enlisting right out of high school.

In these ways the WIN section uses the integration of quotes and aspirations from individual women to further highlight and personalize travel opportunities. Interestingly, although travel was frequently mentioned in the WIN section, the majority of comments are vague. Rarely did a featured woman note where she had travelled and/or how much time was spent experiencing different cultures. Details are invisible in that regard.

Empowerment. The notion of empowerment was also represented throughout the WIN section of the website, yet in many ways it was not represented in an authentic manner. Similar to Padilla and Laner’s (2002) social status category, the empowerment theme often focused on how a "recruit's status could be enhanced by enlisting" (Padilla & Laner, 2003, p. 115); however, the empowerment theme was often based on perceived self-confidence rather than leadership and career advancement.

For example, Diving Medical Technician Ashley Wagner states in her video that “The Navy proved to me that I had more to offer than what I thought. It has been a long road and just really, really rewarding for me.” In another one of the featured profile videos, Master-At-Arms Melanie Molina states, “Now, I try to do anything people say I can’t do. If you tell me I can’t do it, I’m just going to prove you wrong.”

This theme is also noted in the text-based summaries of featured profiles. For example, the profile of Amanda Hodges, an Aviation Structural Mechanic, notes that “she is proud that she found her way in a male-dominated field and feels confident that
she can do anything a man can.” In statements such as this, the women in the Navy noted that there was a patriarchal hierarchy and that they felt empowered when they became a member of the culture. The statements are largely self-reports about how the women feel empowered by being a member of the male-dominated culture. Thus, by simply working with men, women are empowered. This “empowerment” is solely based on meeting a male standard. Comparing oneself with a masculine “yardstick” is not an actualized form of empowerment. This “empowerment” theme was exclusive to the WIN section and was not a major theme in other sections of the website that targeted potential recruits.

**Activity level.** Previous research has noted concerns about whether women are represented on recruitment materials in active or passive activities. Unfortunately, women are overrepresented in passive activities (primarily being interviewed) rather than engaged in active work activities in the WIN materials.

For example, Captain Cynthia Izuno Macri is featured as a Gynecologic Oncologist and the Special Assistant for Diversity to the Chief of Naval Operations in a video in the profile section. In the video, she is featured in an interview situation rather than as engaged in work. Her voice is frequently used as a voiceover with images of medical practitioners engaged in work; however, she is not featured as a worker in these images. This is typical of many of the videos featuring women in the WIN section of the website. Individual women’s voices are heard and the women are represented visually; however, they are not visually represented as actively engaged in work.

In another video in the WIN profile section, Intelligence Specialist Carina Stone is portrayed as enjoying time with family, and engaged in hobbies; however, she is not
shown working at all. The only visual evidence that we have of her Navy work experience is when she is seated wearing her battle dress uniform (BDUs) in the static interview shots.

Another video in this section features Stephanie Kirkpatrick, an Aviation Boatswain’s Mate Fueler. Although many action shots of her workplace are featured during her voice over, none of the workplace images appear to feature Kirkpatrick. She is primarily in an interview setting during the video, and is featured posing in dress uniform at the very end. She is not portrayed as actively working in her profile video, and ironically, the few close-up shots in the video of individuals actively engaged in work clearly feature men (Appendix F for screenshots of this video).

**Feminine features.** When the women in the videos of the WIN section had a feminine feature, that particular part of their self seemed to be represented disproportionately. For example, in a part of the video of Ridley Shetler, a Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate (NUPOC), the camera zooms in and focuses on her French manicured nails. This shot focuses on her nails as a marker of femininity (Appendix G). Other videos feature women wearing feminine earrings, including ones that would not be permissible with a military uniform (Appendix F).

Historically, Brown (2012) noted that military women have been subtly feminized through the use of makeup, jewelry, and manicured fingernails. In most of the featured profile videos in the WIN section, women were visibly wearing makeup. This is also similar to the findings of Megens and Wings’ (1981) analysis of a Dutch recruitment advertisement. When comparing how a man and a woman were portrayed, Megens and Wings (1981) noted that “the text may be the same, but notice the difference. The
woman is fresh and clean, her makeup intact” (p. 44). Brown (2012) also noted that the appearance of feminine features in recruitment images may serve as a means of maintaining an appropriate level of femininity as a standard for military women:

Women are offered the chance to take on broader roles and experiences, but their femininity will not be diminished in the process. The Army may be also sending a signal that it is only interested in attracting the type of woman who takes an “appropriate” interest in her appearance, not one who is looking to escape gender roles entirely or who looks or acts in ways society codes as masculine. (p. 157).

The emphasis on feminine features may serve as a way to indicate that potential recruits should not abandon traditional standards of femininity.

Linda, one of the participants in the interviews, had a more masculine hairstyle. Her fauxhawk hairstyle was a variation of mohawk; however, the sides were not shaved and the hair on the top was shorter than a traditional mohawk hairstyle. Due to her more masculine hairstyle, she expressed a concern about whether that would be acceptable in the Army. In doing so, she received some conflicting information from two reliable sources. She said:

I have short hair, so (laughs). They just said that, um, because I didn't ask if I could have my hair short, like, really short, and – because one of my friends who is an MP and she’s a female, and um, she said that I have to have a female haircut because they have to distinguish between males and females if they’re just looking over everyone, but my recruiter said it was fine.

Her friend who is a military police (MP) officer in the Army told her that she would need a female-appropriate haircut; however, the recruiter told her that it would be acceptable as long as it wasn’t shorter than her current style. Therefore, potential recruits have concerns about how balancing their gender performance through their appearance.

According to Brown (2012), the visual and rhetorical emphasis on femininity serve “to reassure a potential female recruit that becoming a soldier will not compromise
her feminine identity and make her unrecognizable to herself. A woman in the Army is still a woman” (p. 159). Thus, potential female recruits are encouraged to maintain an appropriate level of femininity.

**Summary of themes in the WIN section.**

Half of the main themes that emerged in the WIN section were also evident in the content targeting women in the Careers sections of the recruitment websites. More specifically, isolation, activity level, and feminine features are themes that will be revisited in the larger analysis of the Careers sections of the recruitment websites. Themes that were exclusive to the WIN section included family and friends, travel, and empowerment.

There are some issues with having a separate WIN section dedicated to women rather than integrating the information throughout the Navy’s recruitment website. Presenting a separate WIN section positions women as the “other” rather than the norm in the culture. Participants in the interviews questioned the need for this separation and did not find it appealing at all. Because many of the themes are not necessarily exclusive concerns of women, integrating the information from the WIN section throughout the website would more effectively indicate the inclusion of women in the Navy’s culture while also addressing concerns that may be an issue for men as well (such as family and friends and travel).

Also, when female personnel are featured in videos, how the environment is represented should be taken into consideration. Portraying a more diverse workforce that includes more women would lessen the appearance of tokenism.
Additionally, the featured profiles in the WIN section are organized alphabetically on the page by the featured sailor’s last name rather than their rank or MOS. Because the profiles are arranged by name rather than MOS, it is cumbersome to find a profile that relates to a particular MOS or rank. If a potential woman recruit is interested in the NUPOC program, she probably will not be as engaged by a video about a woman who is a Master-At-Arms (gunner), and vice versa. Isolating the videos to a section differentiated by sex and organizing them by last name rather than MOS identifies the sailors primarily based on their sex, with their MOS positioned as a cursory consideration. This primary consideration of the women’s sex over their membership in the Navy marginalizes their military participation. To rectify this issue, the Navy can simply integrate the videos into the specific MOS pages on the “Careers” section of the recruitment website.

Themes that Emerged in the Analysis of Career Sections of Recruitment Websites

This section of the chapter focuses on the results of the qualitative content analysis of the Careers sections of the Air Force, Army, and Navy recruitment websites. Through the QCA, eight themes emerged: language issues, demographic representations, activity level, authority, isolation, facial expressions, feminine features, and heterosexual norms. Each theme is described in detail and then examples are provided to clarify how each theme was represented in the websites. The examples provided emerged both from the participants’ engagement with the content during the in-depth interviews, and from the QCA of the websites.

Language issues. Initially, one would think that the Air Force has taken a neutral stance by not directly addressing women’s issues either by a specific section designed for women (similar to the Navy) or by highlighting the availability of positions for women
into each job description (similar to the Army). This may be appropriate due to the Air Force’s current status as the leader (statistically, in comparison to other branches) in terms of the number of women employed, and the number of job opportunities that are open to women. Women represent more than 19% of the Air Force personnel, whereas women are only represented as 18% of Naval personnel, and 17% of Army personnel (Table A-I). Additionally, 99% of the Air Force’s jobs are open to women (U. S. Air Force, 2013), which represents far more career opportunities for women in comparison to the other branches. Thus, it would be easy to declare that the Air Force does not “call out” gender or sex as a particular issue of concern in the recruitment materials because it is not a limitation. The issue with the Air Force’s website materials is that there is a first impression of neutrality; however, when one thinks more critically about the language used in each of the MOS descriptions, it is obvious that sexism is present on nearly every page in the Careers section of the recruitment website. This embedded, subtle form of sexism is often considered more detrimental because it is ingrained in the culture of the organization. According to Swim and Cohen (1997),

subtle sexism is characterized by openly unequal and harmful treatment of women that goes unnoticed because it is perceived to be customary or normal behavior. Individuals who perpetuate such treatment may be in favor of gender equality...these same individuals may not notice when they or others are treating individuals unfairly based on their gender or they may not realize that such behaviors contribute to unequal and harmful treatment of women (p. 104).

More specifically, the Air Force uses sexist language throughout their recruitment website by referring to “Airmen” at least once on each MOS (military occupational specialty) page. In fact, the language is used in a standard line in the Training section of every career page: “After eight-and-a-half weeks of Basic Military Training, every Airman goes to technical training to learn their career” (italics mine). Although many
people may dismiss this as a part of the Air Force’s culture and jargon, it represents an archaic form of sexist language that has been eliminated from the culture and jargon of many other masculine communities over the past three decades. According to Disler (2008b), “the masculinity associated with the military is deeply rooted in its hierarchical structure and ideology – all reinforced through language” (p. xvii). Furthermore, Miller and Swift (2001) stated that “sometimes what makes a masculine-gender suffix inappropriate is not that the sex of an individual has been misrepresented, but that the reference is to many individuals of both sexes” (p. 34). This type of sexist jargon positions women in a secondary status and reinforces patriarchal organizational structures.

Although the Air Force is the most inclusive branch in terms of the number of MOSs open to women, it is also the branch with the most rampant use of sexist language in the jargon of its culture. The use of the term “airman” positions men as the norm and women as the exception, or “other.” According to Romaine (1999), “language plays an active role in the symbolic positioning of women as inferior to men” (p. 15). According to Disler (2008a), this is particularly true in the Air Force: “if you want to change attitude, then change the language; this, it seems, is the strategy of some in the Air Force who are rushing to camouflage the service’s female presence and its arguably feminine endeavors” (p. 1). Using exclusive language creates a gendered norm and indicates the dominance of men in the culture.

This type of sexist language has been largely removed from other occupations that have been based on masculine standards. For example, in the 1980s, fire departments began to replace the word “fireman” with the term “firefighter.” Similarly,
police departments began to replace the word “policeman” with the term “police officer.”

Even government organizations have changed their protocols in terms of sexist language. For example, in the more recent past, NASA replaced the use of “manned spaceflight” with “human spaceflight.”

Although the Air Force attempts to take a neutral approach by not emphasizing differences (by having a section specifically for women like the Navy, or a specific “open to women” indicator for each MOS), the Air Force effectively makes women invisible due to the lack of references regarding their existence in the texts and furthermore defines recruits as male.

Changing the language will not be an easy task; however, it is necessary. Burlacu (2011) noted that “routine and habit can make people be sceptic and reject a new language or any radical changes in the familiar one” (p. 91). Thus, it is expected that military personnel may find it disruptive to change their language (specifically the use of the “airmen” jargon) to make women “visible” and neutralize their language.

The young women who were interviewed for this project were not outwardly offended by the use of words like “airmen” to refer to all personnel; however, they were aware of the term “airmen” specifically, and they did not necessarily view it positively. For example, Cindy mentioned that

I just feel it’s like part of the, like, I guess, like, their branch. Because I know like, for each and every branch it’s different. So if I did choose the air force, I’d have to learn a bunch of different things because they have – of course, they call them “airmen”, and then they have different ranks and everything. So I guess it’s just something I’d have to get used to.

Thus, Cindy felt that she would have to accept the “airmen” label if she wanted to enter the Air Force.
According to Earp (2012), “psycholinguistic evidence shows that he/man grammar is not a mere curio of convention: these words have measurable (deleterious) effects on the listener, especially females, both in terms of the implicit messages they convey, and the consequences they carry for issues as weighty as choice of career” (p. 15).

Furthermore, military leaders have noted the awkwardness of “airmen” as a forced gender-neutral form of address. Disler (2008a) stated that

I voice my opinion as a 23-year member of the Air Force, as an officer, an educator and an academic with a doctorate in linguistics. Yet, oddly, when I say, “I don’t feel that the creed, the word ‘airman,’ the word ‘wingman’ or the word ‘warrior’ includes me,” some who are superior to me in rank say, “yes, they do” — as if to say, “I order you to feel included in language that excludes your sex, excludes your rank, and excludes you as something ‘other than fighter pilot.’” (p. 1).

As a result, Disler (2008a) proposed a new gender-neutral word that could be introduced in the Air Force culture:

Having been openly critical of the force-feeding of the term “airman,” I have been challenged to come up with an alternative. I offer the term “flyer.” Semantically, the only significant difference between the terms “airman” and “flyer” is the male suffix. To describe Air Force members as being “of flight” rather than “men of the air” includes not only its female members, but also the missions involving missile flight or space flight. Regrettably this term seems insufficient to the growing importance of the “flight” of digital information across networks — the new medium. (p. 1).

This recommendation differs from the tactics of other air force military organizations from English-speaking countries. For example, the British Royal Air Force’s (2013) “Ranks” portion of their recruitment website states that “the majority of Royal Air Force personnel are airmen and airwomen, who work in ground support roles using specialist skills” (italics mine). Additionally, the Australian Royal Air Force (2013) has a diversity statement on their recruitment website:

Air Force’s ability to deliver airpower in the future will depend on us having the best people for the wide range of Air Force jobs, regardless of gender.
age or culture. We need to ‘future-proof’ Air Force with targeted programs to attract, recruit and retain the very best people. Air Force has developed and implemented a range of diversity initiatives to help personnel have equal access to opportunities. Our diversity initiatives are constantly under review to be relevant, timely and inclusive.

The United States military can use this as a springboard for “future-proofing” their recruitment materials.

Of the three websites under examination, the Army’s recruitment website most effectively uses inclusive language in their Careers section. The Army has a gender-neutral term for their workers (referred to as soldiers), and they use gender-neutral language in most instances on the career pages. There are a few gaffes that require further examination, however. There are some incidences where the Army does use sexist language in the job descriptions (though these are unusual in comparison to the other branches). For example, the overview for the Animal Care Specialist states that “the animal care specialist is primarily responsible for the prevention and control of diseases transmitted from animal to man, as well as the comprehensive care for government-owned animals” (italics mine). In this instance, the term “humans” could easily replace, and more effectively represent the meaning of the sentence, than the word “man.” The use of “man” in this context represents the history of bias in the English language that creeps into our modern language from time to time, if unchecked. Resolving these types of issues is simple compared to changing the branch’s jargon (such as the Air Force’s use of “airmen” to refer to personnel).

There are other issues on the Army’s recruitment website where sexist language occurs; however, some of these represent a larger language issue that is not specific to that individual branch. For example, on the Air and Missle Defense (AMD) Crewmember career page, the job title clearly uses gender-neutral language with the term
“crewmember;” however, in the job duties, one of the bullet points notes that the crewmember will “operate the AVENGER and Man Portable Air Defense System weapons systems.” Man Portable Air Defense Systems, also referred to as MANPADS or MPADS, are a type of shoulder-launched surface-to-air missile (SAM) that was developed by the United States and first introduced into service in the late 1960s (Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2008). Therefore, the Army’s reference to “man portable air defense systems” does not refer to an internal language issue. Rather, the reference to MANPADS is in accordance with the language of the specific weapon system that was developed (and named) prior to the language revolution of the 1980s and has proliferated in use ever since. MANPADS are a widely distributed weapons system; therefore, the reference to it is not isolated to military institutions in the United States either. There are other types of military references that transcend individual branches, such as references to Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), which are more commonly referred to as “drones” in the news media and popular culture. Changing references to technological devices that are not unique to a particular military branch is not the intention of this dissertation. The language issues that are of primary concern are those that create and maintain a patriarchal military culture in a specific branch.

In the Navy’s WIN section, gendered language is alternated so that both “men and women” and “women and men” are used in the text. In addition, the Navy uses gender-neutral language, such as “sailors” and “servicemembers,” when referring to the majority of their personnel; however, there are instances where the Navy refers to their personnel as “Navy Aircrewmen” (Navy – Aviation – Flight Operations). This archaic use of sexist language is rare and irrelevant to the current Navy workforce; therefore,
changes should be made to integrate more inclusive language as an effort to more accurately represent the diverse workforce of the modern Navy.

Although these proposed language changes are important, they may be somewhat superficial when compared to the overall military culture. Reforming language will not necessarily change the military culture. It is important to use inclusive language; however, it is an overstatement to expect the language changes to represent a reformation of military culture. It is, however, a step toward further integration. Using inclusive language is a way that the Air Force can be more respectful to its diverse workforce.

**Demographic representations.** There are differences regarding how race, gender, and age are represented on each of the recruitment websites. For example, men who appear to be White are portrayed most frequently on the Air Force website in comparison to women and men of other skin tones.

Although most of the images on the Army website represent men (particularly White men), there were some images of women. However, when men and women are positioned together in an image on the Army website, the man was more likely to appear older than the woman, and he was more likely to be taller as well. According to Goffman (1978), “one way in which social weight – power, authority, rank, office, renown – is echoed expressively in social situations is through relative size, especially height” (p. 28). This is particularly troubling because the publication that Goffman noted this issue, *Gender Advertisements*, was published more than three decades ago.

The Navy integrates images of women throughout their MOSs and has done a remarkable job with using images that reflect a diverse workforce; however, the focus
on diversity has resulted in the near extinction of representations of White Men in some sections of their recruitment website. Because White men represent 40% of the Navy’s workforce (U. S. Department of Defense, 2010), this is more of a created workforce than a representation of the actual Navy workforce at this point in time.

**Activity level.** Activity level was noted as a theme in the WIN section as well. Overall, although women are represented in many different types of jobs on the Navy recruitment website, including jobs considered hyper-masculine (such as welders), women are disproportionately shown talking about their jobs rather than actively engaged in work. When men are represented on the website, they are more likely to be actively engaged in work associated with their job. When women are shown working, they are often in the background rather than the foreground. In many of the videos, women are shown talking about their jobs in an interview situation; however, they are not shown actively engaged in those activities.

Unfortunately, this theme is not isolated to the Navy’s recruitment website. The Air Force, in particular, has some images of women where they are represented in playful activities, or as simply posing for the camera, rather than engaged in serious work. For example, on the Air Force website, the pediatrician MOS webpage featured a woman wearing glasses who appeared to be middle-aged and White (Appendix H). The woman was wearing BDUs and was with a young girl in what appears to be a medical examination room. The child was wearing a stethoscope and appeared to be playing with it. Although it is not unusual for pediatricians to use their medical equipment in a playful manner to establish rapport with their young patients, it is unfortunate that this is the image that was chosen to represent women pediatricians. This type of an image
reinforces the nurture aspect of expectations for women. It does not focus on the seriousness of her position or the authoritative or intellectual side of her job. It positions the woman pediatrician primarily in terms of her role as a nurturer in this situation. Her professionalism is downplayed as a result of this playful image.

Cindy, one of the young women interviewed for this project, noted that “it does look like she’s just playing around with the equipment, and it could be a little more professional having her – them switch, like actually having her working on the child. So I think it would be a little better.” Another participant in the study, Selene, made a similar comment: “Maybe if she was actually, like, if she was sick or something, you know, taking blood or something – I don’t know, show her actually trying to do something. Maybe that would help.” (italics added to reflect the emphasis in her voice). Portraying the pediatrician as active in her work environment and not limited to a traditional gender representation would have been more realistic.

Playfulness is also represented in the activities of men in the military; however, their playfulness is framed as recreational and separate from their work activities. Furthermore, the men are engaged in recreational activities with their male colleagues, which positions them differently than the pediatrician who was positioned as a nurturer as she plays with the child. The playfulness of the male soldiers is thus positioned as a form of camaraderie rather than as the focus of their job. Furthermore, although men were sometimes represented in the videos as playing with “recreational toys,” such as jet skis, those moments are differentiated by the fact that this was a recreational activity that was not part of their work. These playful scenes are positioned more like “excursions” than regular behaviors that are embedded in their daily work activities. In
contrast, women’s playful activities were positioned as their workplace activities rather than as a recreational activity that was separate from their work environment.

On the Army’s recruitment website, when women were represented, they were often represented as actively working. However, there are some images that represent women as present in the job situation, but not as active participants. Several of the young women who were interviewed noticed the image featured on the air defense artillery officer MOS webpage (Appendix I). Participants were initially attracted to this position because this is one of the newest positions that provides opportunities for women to get closer to combat situations. In this image, a woman is featured in the center foreground and two men are featured on the side in the background. The woman appears to be passive. She has a neutral facial expression and she is looking slightly away from the camera with a vacant gaze. The men in the background are involved in a conversation; therefore, this juxtaposition seems to feature the woman as “other” in the situation rather than as a vital member of the team. She seems out of place and disengaged from the situation. She appears to be subordinate in the situation because she is not engaged as a participant in the situation. Her vacant gaze makes her appear to be waiting for something to happen, rather than proactive in the situation. Selene, one of the young women who was interviewed for this study, noted that the men in the background appeared to be separated from the woman. She suggested an improvement to the photo: “they could have maybe, like, more people standing with her, to show that they are supporting her.”

It seemed that whenever a man and a woman were represented together, the woman was in a more passive role. This passive representation often led the
participants to interpret the man as the authority figure and the woman as the subordinate. This leads directly to the next theme: authority.

**Authority.** As noted in the activity level theme detailed above, women who were represented as passive often led the participants to interpret the man as the leader and the woman as the follower, or the man as the teacher and the woman as the learner. Uma noted this when she described an image on the Teamwork page of the Army Medicine (AMEDD) section (Appendix J for the image):

> He looks like he would be the doctor or the surgeon or whoever, and the woman, um, who’s wearing the same scrubs would be, like, his assistant or co-worker of a doctor or something, um, for assistance or just to be, like, a lookout or she could be, like, a student in training, looking, overlooking or he’s doing to, you know, kind of, like a shadowing type person and see what she could do, um, when she’s in his position, and helping a woman who has been injured or hurt or got ill.

Whenever a man was represented as more active than a woman in the image, the man was perceived as the authority figure by participants.

Uma had similar interpretations that assumed male authority whenever she viewed an image that featured both a woman and a man in the AMEDD section of the Army recruitment website (Appendix K for the image).

> They – it just looks like they’re both, like, Caucasian, male and female. Like, the male would be the teacher helping her out. I think that they’re more focused on, um, you know, her becoming a better student, a better, you know, medical, um, medic person, and that he wants her to become, like, to know her knowledge, to become a better medic, and if he’s sitting there and helping her, um, like, understand it, what she’s looking at and make sure she’s not getting, you know, making sure she’s not getting anything wrong or, um, making sure she fully understands it in case she does not understand something, he looks like he doesn’t want her to just go through it and not understand. But he’s sitting there, going step by step and showing her and describing it and all of that.

Interpretations seemed to assume male authority unless there was specific evidence to the contrary.
Other images confused participants due to the ambiguous nature of the image. For example, on the Army’s recruitment website, the mental health specialist MOS webpage has an image that focuses on a young woman who is sitting in an office setting and appears to be engaged in a conversation with a man (Appendix L). Both of the individuals represented in the image have light skin and appear to be White. This image initially appealed to some of the young women who were interviewed for this study; however, after a moment, the young women questioned their first impression. Initially, the participants perceived that the young woman in the image was the mental health specialist, largely due to the focus of her in the image. The man is only portrayed via an over-the-shoulder shot; therefore, only the side and back of his neck and lower face are visible in the image. In contrast, the woman is centered in the image and her face and body are clearly visible. As the participants tried to interpret the image further, they became further confused by it. Cindy stated, “if they are both in the Army, it looks like he would be the one that’s talking to her, and then – talking to her about whatever is going on possibly.” The image did not clarify who was the patient and who was the professional. This created some confusion for participants who attempted to interpret the image. This ambiguous image forced the participants to question how authority was intended in the image.

**Isolation.** When women were represented in nontraditional jobs, they were most often represented in communities that were dominated by males; therefore, the woman appeared as a token, rather than an example of one of many women who are integrated into that particular MOS. Since Kanter (1977) identified tokenism in the workplace, research about token women has revealed considerable negative consequences for
women in these situations, particularly performance pressures and stress as a result of heightened visibility, social isolation, polarization, and pressure to assimilate (Kanter, 1977; Stroshine & Brandl, 2011; Yoder & Berendsen, 2001).

**Facial expressions.** In the Navy’s videos, female sailors were disproportionately shown smiling (in comparison to male soldiers). These facial expressions sometimes did not represent them as serious soldiers. This was particularly evident in the Army’s AMEDD section of their recruitment website. Women were frequently represented in posed positions where they were smiling, and facing the camera. Similar to the findings of the Megens and Wings (1981) study, military women in the web materials are represented as smiling more often than their male counterparts.

The issue of women smiling could be dismissed by research that has found that women smile often in every day interactions, whereas men typically reserve smiling only as an expression of emotion (Kennedy & Camden, 1983). Although the military has a serious and formal culture, the issue of overrepresentations of women smiling in military recruitment materials has been noted in research for the past three decades (Megens and Wings, 1981). In his landmark publication, *Gendered Advertisements*, Goffman (1978) states that smiles “seem more the offering of an inferior than a superior. In any case, it appears that in cross-sexed encounters in American society, women smile more, and more expansively than men, which appears to be carried over into advertisements, perhaps with little conscious intent” (p. 48). To indicate the determination and strength of the military branch, military women and men should be represented similarly with more serious facial expressions.
Feminine features. In the videos on the recruitment websites, women seem to be portrayed as polar opposites: as hyper-masculine women or hyper-feminine women with military jobs. There are very few representations in between those two extremes. Although previous recruitment materials often did not represent women with or near weapons (Brown, 2012), the hyper-masculine representations of women in the website materials frequently portray women with or near weaponry. The video featuring Master-At-Arms Melanie Molina (in the WIN profile section) is an interesting example of a hyper-masculine representation of a military woman (Appendix M) and the video featuring Aviation Structural Mechanic Amanda Hodges are good examples of this polarization of gender performance. Both of these videos are featured as case studies at the end of this chapter for a detailed analysis.

Hyper-feminine women are sometimes portrayed as more concerned about their appearance and are shown engaged in personal grooming activities, such as styling their hair, applying makeup, and choosing clothes. Over three decades ago, Megens and Wings (1981) found that military women often wore visible makeup in recruitment materials. This is consistent with the images currently available on the recruitment websites.

When men appear to have something on their face, it is camouflage face paint or dirt, both indicating that they are actively engaged in work. Women are typically represented with facial makeup that is not indicative of serious involvement in military activities. For example, military women are often wearing lipstick and eye makeup in the images and videos. This obvious use of makeup emphasizes their femininity and focuses on a superficial aspect of their identity. The gendered use of facial decorations
also further emphasizes men as actively engaged in work and women in more passive activities. Thus, women are positioned superficially while men are positioned as serious soldiers who are necessary to military readiness.

When women are represented on the recruitment websites, they are also disproportionately represented as concerned about personal aspects of their lives, particularly pregnancy, motherhood, and children. This positions them as nurturers rather than focused on martial activities. In one of the Air Force’s videos featuring an Atlas V Chief Engineer, a woman who appears to be White is interviewed. She self-identifies as a mother and then remarks that her job “gives you a big picture of the importance of maintaining our country’s security. I am not a policeman and I am not a firefighter, but I still play a big role in keeping my children safe every night.” This emphasis on her role as a parent is not an unusual representation of a military woman, yet this theme is scarcely represented in videos that feature men.

Similarly, in the video featuring Amanda Hodge in the WIN section, she expresses concerns for the pilots’ families: “I feel responsible for, you know, every day for the pilots, and my co-workers, I work with. If anything ever happened to them - that’s somebody’s wife, husband, mother, father. You know, this is all on you. You have to step up.” These are sincere comments; however, they contrast with the men’s comments in the videos. When men are represented in the videos they are almost always represented as focused on work issues. This overemphasis of women’s concerns about children and families disproportionately focuses on their traditional role as nurturers in society rather than as able soldiers who are prepared to fight for their country.
**Heterosexual norms.** When a service member is featured with their life partner, they were always featured with someone of the opposite sex. In this way, the image of heterosexual norms for relationships are maintained. There are several good examples of this in the video featuring Amanda Hodges. Due to the intersecting themes in that particular video, it has been included in the case studies so it can be analyzed in greater detail. Overall, images and videos representing heterosexual relationships set heterosexuality as the cultural norm for personnel in the armed forces.

**Case Studies**

**Melanie Molina, Master-At-Arms.** The video featuring Master-At-Arms Melanie Molina (in the WIN profile section) is an interesting example of a hyper-masculine representation of a military woman (Appendix M). The video opens to reveal Molina engaged in a boxing activity. As the speed of the video increases, her violent punches are juxtaposed with shells falling from a 50-caliber machine gun. Similar to many of the other videos featuring women, Molina is featured in a working environment dominated by men. There is an absence of other women in her work environment. Unlike other videos featuring women, however, she is shown both actively engaged in training, and in other workplace activities. She is also shown in a leadership position and is portrayed in an instructor role where she teaches men about how to effectively use the weapon. This hyper-masculine representation of a woman is the polar opposite of the hyper-feminine representations of women that are more often featured in both images and videos on the recruitment websites.

**Amanda Hodges, Aviation Structural Mechanic.** Hyper-femininity is evident in the first featured profile in the WIN section. This video features Amanda Hodges, an Aviation Structural Mechanic. In the first twenty seconds of the video, Hodges is shown
applying make-up and styling her hair (Appendix N for screenshots from the video). This portion of the video is shot in a voyeuristic manner where the camera is positioned in ways that seem to invade her private space while we watch her ritualistic private grooming behaviors. The sound of her blow dryer is then mixed with the sounds of jet engines to transition to her job as an aviation structural mechanic on a Navy flight deck. It is unusual that she needs to style her hair before she puts on the masculine helmet necessary for her job, which appears to constrict her styled hair.

Later in the same video, Hodges is shown in her home (Appendix N). The home is a location where women are overrepresented in comparison to men. Inside her home, she is engaged in activities in her kitchen and is shown choosing a feminine pink dress from her closet. The camera shows all of her colorful clothes and then pans across the bottom of her closet to reveal her shoes. Her shoes are all feminine and colorful…until they show her masculine work boots at the end of the closet. Although this effectively shows that a woman can have many different layers to her identity, the focus on her personal activities reinforces stereotypes and downplays her skills and intellectualism in the workplace.

The reinforcement of heterosexual norms is also a theme that is represented in Hodge’s video (Appendix N for screenshots of the video). Although Hodges does not mention a significant other, the visuals allude to a heterosexual relationship. In a silhouetted shot in front of a large aquarium tank, Hodges is shown standing closely to a man. Later in the video, she is also shown walking on the beach and in her kitchen with presumably the same man. These types of images seem to set heterosexual relationships as the cultural norm for personnel in the armed forces.
Interestingly, this video was the first one at the top of the profiles page in the WIN section. The profiles were not alphabetically placed (either by last name or first name); therefore, one must question why this hyper-feminine video was chosen to be first in the WIN section of the website.

**Surface Warfare Officers (assigned to nuclear aircraft carriers).** A good example of an unexpected and disconcerting video is the Surface Warfare Officers video on the Navy website. This video was located at the top of the page for Surface Warfare Officers in the Careers section of the website and features three surface warfare officers; one woman and two men. The woman, Bristol Hartlage, appears to be younger than the men (likely in her late 20s or early 30s), whereas the men appear to be middle-aged. Hartlage is a very feminine blonde blue-eyed White woman and the opening shots feature her wearing a bikini and swimming in a pool. As the camera pans over her body, Hartlage’s voiceover states:

> I think swimming is very cerebral for me because I can think about work, I can think about home. I can think about my family. I can think about just about going faster. I grew up on a lake, so I have always been around the water. I love the water. One of the things I really enjoy doing on the ship is going up to topside when we are underway and just looking out to the water. It’s beautiful.

Side views and shots from underneath the water focus on her body as she swims across the pool, revealing her cleavage, a tattoo on her lower back, and focusing on her body for the first 20 seconds of the video (Appendix O for screenshots from the video). These images and the words that accompany them are out of place, particularly in comparison to the way the male officers are represented in the same video. The men are shown in activities that they can engage in while on the aircraft carrier; however,
Hartlage is positioned in a way that does not appear to be relevant or practical to her position on the aircraft carrier.

Furthermore, cultural references that are typical in the youth community should be taken into consideration when considering the shot of the Hartlage’s tattoo. More specifically, tattoos that are placed on the lower back of a woman are often referred to in a derogatory manner, as “tramp stamps” (Urban Dictionary, 2013). Due to the tattoo’s negative connotation, Hartlage is initially positioned as a sexual object rather than as an intelligent and competent officer.

Other analyses of Navy recruitment materials have also expressed concern about visual representations of women that appear to promote heterosexist norms and ultimately attract potential male recruits (Brown, 2012). Based on previous research and portrayals such as the one involving Hartlage, the representation of women in recruitment materials should not necessarily be considered as an intentional attempt to recruit women into the armed forces. There may be other intentions involved in the representation of women, particularly those that maintain heterosexist norms and seek to recruit men to the services.

In the same video featuring surface warfare officers, the older man (of the two men represented) is barely shown at all in comparison to his younger counterparts. He appears to be a White man who is in his forties. The video features him very little in comparison to the younger officers.

Furthermore, when one considers the representation of older military personnel on the recruitment websites, the near absence of older women is noted. Lisa Duke (personal communication, February 20, 2013) questioned the absence of images of
older military women and questioned whether the absence indicated a limitation in women’s opportunities in the military. The absence of older women could indicate that younger women are recruited, but not expected to enter leadership positions that would lengthen their careers and provide them with a more powerful voice in the military. The absence of older women could indicate that women are encouraged to participate, yet relegated to the lower ranks.

In contrast, younger personnel seem to be overrepresented. One could argue that the younger demographic more appropriately suits the target demographic of potential recruits; however, contrasted with the lack of representations of older women, the overrepresentation of younger women seems to support the notion that women are relegated to the lower ranks.

Furthermore, the two younger officers in the surface warfare officer video are featured in a way that reveals information about their hobbies, which makes them more “real” to the viewer. The younger man, Chris Zundel, appears to be White and in his early 30s. He mentions that he trains for triathlons and is visually represented riding his bike on a trainer on the side of the aircraft carrier (Appendix P). This suggests that he can still engage in his hobbies, and have an active lifestyle, when deployed on a ship. His hobby is relevant to his experience as a Surface Warfare Officer on a nuclear aircraft carrier because he can train while deployed.

The hobbies of the two younger officers represent them differently in the video. The tri-athlete can train on his bike while on the ship; however, there is not a pool on the aircraft carrier that the swimmer can use to continue her swimming routine while deployed. Simply stated, aircraft carriers are not cruise ships with pools and
waterslides; therefore, how the woman officer’s swimming hobby relates to, or is
uninterrupted by, her job, is unclear at best. The video clips of Hartlage swimming only
seems to objectify her in a manner that strips her of her legitimacy as a Surface Warfare
Officer.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was not to “rank order” the branches in terms of their effectiveness in recruiting women. Each branch has positive and negative features that can inform future decision-making processes regarding the (re)development of recruitment websites. The goal of this dissertation was to analyze how the United States military is recruiting women via the Web and how women are interpreting those messages. The aim was to contribute an understanding of military recruitment techniques as well as an analysis of how women are processing Web-based recruitment messages. Thus, this section first provides specific recommendations for improving recruitment strategies in hopes that women will be more effectively integrated into the United States military. Next, limitations that should be considered are acknowledged. Finally, avenues for future research are addressed in detail.

**Recommended Improvements**

This dissertation has identified many improvements that are recommended for improving the armed forces’ recruitment strategies. This includes branch preferences, the presentation, use, and integration of images and videos in the Career sections, the need to address and change specific jargon, the use of interactive recruitment tools, and the absence of information (particularly information specific to individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning, and issues regarding violence against women).

**Branch preferences.** Recruiters may want to consider providing more details about the training. More specific details about what makes the training difficult may help young people to gauge whether or not the branch is within their reach (at least in terms
of physical ability). Additionally, there are some Navy jobs that do not require work on a ship or submarine; therefore, the Navy may want to mention that in their recruitment materials. Otherwise, the idea of working on a ship, submarine, or in the water in general is a turn-off for some individuals. That issue may limit the Navy's recruitment base considerably, particularly for career opportunities that are land-based.

As noted in the participants' comments, the Air Force is known as the “Smart Branch.” Although this is helpful for recruiting people for the upper echelon of intelligence, this is not necessarily an effective tactic for recruiting enlisted personnel. Many of the participants noted that they did not believe that they had the cognitive ability that would be required in the Air Force. Because the Air Force also needs support personnel, such as military police, supply clerks, and cooks, the Air Force may want to tone down the intelligence-focus of their recruitment materials.

**Images and videos.** Each branch handled the presentation, use, and integration of images and videos in the Career sections of recruitment websites differently. The Navy effectively integrates a massive number of different images on their recruitment website; however, the Air Force has a tendency to use individual images (or parts of individual images) for multiple MOSs. The Army had a tendency to use the same images to represent multiple careers, particularly in the AMEDD section of their recruitment website. If the Air Force and Army followed the Navy's lead in integrating more images into the careers sections of their websites, they could more accurately reflect the various positions that are available to recruits.

Furthermore, images of posed individuals who are inactive should be avoided. Those types of images were particularly present in the Army's AMEDD section. Action
shots of individuals who are engaged in work activities are more credible and appealing while also representing the seriousness of military culture.

Although all of the websites featured videos, there were differences in the ways they were integrated in the website content. Both the Air Force and the Army prominently feature videos on their homepages and have separate sections for storing the videos on their websites. The Air Force has a section titled “Videos and more” as a main menu choice, whereas the Army has a section titled “Army videos” that seems buried under a small menu area at the very bottom of the homepage. In our interview, Agnes noted the difficulties in locating the videos on the Army website:

I think we should make it easy to find the videos because I still can’t find the videos. But other than that, I think the website’s really, really, like, specific and very, very, like – what’s the word? It’s very easy to find things, except for the videos.

Although some of these videos are linked to in the Careers sections of the Air Force and Army websites, those instances are infrequent. To view the majority of the videos, a user would need to click on a link on the homepage or go directly to the videos section. Simply integrating the videos into the Careers section (like the Career section of the Navy’s recruitment website) will help alleviate this problem.

One positive feature of the Army videos section is the ability to search the videos. Providing a search option makes the section more interesting and user friendly. One of the search tags is “women;” therefore, a user can search for videos that have been tagged with the “women” keyword. The issue with this section is that the search tag is only apparent if the user types that particular word into the search box (then the tag shows up as a search term). Otherwise, it is unknown what search tags are available. Providing information about how the videos are tagged may provide users with more
information for finding relevant videos through the search feature. This technological tool will make this section of the website even more engaging for users. It is important that the videos are also incorporated into the Careers section for individual MOSs as well.

Finally, images and videos that portray women in stereotypical, objectified, and/or tokenized manners should be avoided. Women in the military should be represented in a manner that reflects the integrity of their MOSs. Furthermore, they should be represented in ways that focus on their MOS as the point of emphasis rather than their biological sex. By focusing on a soldier’s sex before her MOS, the branch is overemphasizing her difference in the masculine culture and is minimizing the soldier’s importance in regard to her MOS and military readiness. Representations need to accurately represent the importance of soldiers’ positions rather than focus on their sex.

**Jargon.** Language use, particularly jargon that is specific to a culture, sets norms and expectations for members of groups. Thus, to defend the use of sexist language as a part of the “culture and jargon” of a community is to ignore how these types of references marginalize subgroups and perpetuate a bias against them. More specifically, the Air Force’s use of “Airmen” is unchecked because efforts to critique it (such as Disler, 2008a) have not resulted in a change in this regard.

If the Air Force discounts the importance of this cultural change, perhaps that is a reflection of the current state of gender integration in the branch. Although women are integrated in terms of numbers and job opportunities, the Air Force continues to struggle with issues related to gendered violence, particularly sexual harassment, domestic violence, and rape (Stefanek, 2011). Changing jargon in any community with such a
long history of tradition is not easy, and changing the language will certainly not
eliminate the incidence of these gendered crimes; however, it is a step toward further
integration. This change would represent a marked change in the Air Force culture and
would signal that gender integration is necessary and vital to the branch.

Certainly, whenever there is a change in the protocols of a community with such
a long history, such as the Air Force, there will be confrontations and pushback from
some individuals. It is important that the Air Force takes this step to fully embrace
integration and to move towards providing a safer environment for women.

The notion of changing the language is simple enough. Pointing out a problem is
easy in comparison to providing options for viable solutions. Finding an alternative for
“Airmen” is not easy. Although this dissertation may reveal some issues in the
recruitment process, the goal is to provide viable solutions that can be integrated to
improve military recruitment efforts.

It may seem like an obvious change to replace “airmen” with a gender-neutral
term that represents the aircraft-focus of the branch (similar to the Navy’s use of
“sailors”); however, “aircrew” already has an established meaning that sets itself apart
from “airmen” in the Air Force. More specifically, “aircrew” refers directly to Air Force
personnel who work directly with the maintenance and flying of aircraft. It would not be
appropriate to use “aircrew” to refer to personnel in other positions within the Air Force,
such as medical practitioners or military police. Other terms, such as
“airpeople/airperson” and “airstaff,” seem cumbersome and awkward. Another term that
has been proposed, “flyer” has been noted as “insufficient to the growing importance of
the ‘flight’ of digital information across networks — the new medium” (Disler, 2008a, p.
1). To reflect and reinforce the “air” focus and technical elitism of the Air Force, I recommend that the Air Force consider “AirTech” as a viable option to replace the use of “airmen” as a reference to their personnel.

The “AirTech” term represents a more inclusive option while also having a focus on the air and technological aspects that differentiate the branch in the United States military. “AirTech” would also be applicable to a wider range of MOSs, such as medical practitioners and military police officers, than other proposed terms. It also represents a truly gender-neutral term; therefore, it does not “call out” sex like alternatives such as the Royal British Air Force’s use of “airmen and airwomen.” AirTech is a modern gender-neutral term that reflects how the Air Force is differentiated from other branches of the armed forces. Integration of the AirTech term into the Air Force culture can represent a cultural shift that provides a more accurate portrayal of its current workforce.

**Interactive recruitment tools.** Young women who were interviewed noted the effectiveness of interactive experiences even in the face-to-face recruitment process. Agnes detailed her experience with an interactive van that an Army recruiter had brought to the JROTC program one day:

> It’s just like, they have this van thing, and you go in and they explain the army to you and stuff, like, basically the jobs that they have and they show you videos and they talk to you about it. And then you go out and they talk to you some more about stuff and you would talk to recruiters and then – they had like this fun thing that they had. You can do the corn hole. If you make the corn hole, you can get a prize. And then there was a football thing and a pull-up thing. When you do a certain amount of pull-ups you get a water bottle. It was really fun though because that’s how I talked to the recruiter.

Thus, Agnes enjoyed her interactive experience with the recruiters. Interactive experiences can also be created online and the Air Force, Army, and Navy have begun
taking advantage of these tools. More specifically, Facebook and other social networking sites, live chat features, online games, and downloadable apps are integrated into the recruitment websites as strategies for reaching out to potential recruits and influencers who may be vital to the recruitment process.

Facebook is the most visible social networking tool on the recruitment websites. For example, the Air Force has a “U.S. Air Force Recruiting” Facebook page that is shown live via a widget at the bottom of the homepage of their recruitment website. Similarly, the Army has a widget that shows a live feed from the GOARMY.COM Facebook page. Unlike the Air Force’s Facebook feed (which is visible immediately when the user scrolls down the homepage), the Army’s widget is buried in a small section titled “Community.” In the “Community” section of the Army homepage, the user must toggle past the live “Discussions” area to view the Facebook feed.

With over 15 specialized Facebook pages, from *US Navy Life* to *Women Redefined* to *Navy Latinos*, the Navy has the most targeted Facebook pages of the branches. Although the Navy does not have a widget that presents a live feed to Facebook on its homepage, it provides more specific information to subgroups. Widgets that present live feeds to individual Facebook pages are embedded on some pages within the recruitment website. For example, at the bottom of the Chaplain page in the “Careers” section, there is a widget containing a live Facebook feed to the Chaplain Facebook page. Although all of the Navy Facebook pages have not been integrated into the recruitment website pages yet, this represents a more targeted strategy than other branches have implemented. Furthermore, most of the Navy Facebook pages appear to be actively monitored and include frequent posts to engage users.
The only social networking link on the homepage of the Air Force’s recruitment website is to Facebook. This is unusual due to the Air Force’s positioning as the technologically elite branch of the military. By providing more opportunities for social networking on their recruitment website, the Air Force can use their technological expertise to target recruits more strategically.

In addition to the Army’s live Facebook feed, the Army has links to Google+, Flickr, YouTube, and LinkedIn on the bottom menu bar of every webpage. The Army does not have a link to a Pinterest account on their recruitment website. According to comScore, Inc., “Pinterest is fastest growing social media site in both unique visitors and clicks on search engines” (Walker, 2012). Additionally, Experian reported that Pinterest “is especially popular among women, who account for 58% of Pinterest’s traffic” (Indvik, 2012). To further engage potential women recruits, the Army should add a link to Pinterest on their recruitment website.

The Navy is the most sophisticated branch in terms of the integration and maintenance of social networking tools. In addition to having links to Google+, Flickr, and YouTube (all similar to the Army’s recruitment website), the Navy has an innovative “NAVYforMoms” social networking website (located on an external website at www.navyformoms.com) that specifically targets mothers as influencers in the recruitment process. This social networking site provides mothers the opportunity to interact with other Navy Moms and view targeted recruitment materials. In addition, the Navy has links to two Twitter accounts (America’s Navy and USNavy), MySpace, Tumblr, and Pinterest.
Another commonality regarding innovative features on the recruitment websites is the inclusion of live chat features as a strategy to engage users and answer questions. The most innovative live chat is represented by the Army’s Sergeant Star, an animated character who “interacts” with the user. The animation and audio of the avatar is sophisticated, particularly in comparison to the spartan appearance of traditional chats; however, there were many times when the live chat feature was not available and the times when it is available are not clearly posted. For that particular feature to be effective, the live chat needs to be clearer in terms of availability.

The Navy has a live chat feature that is on a template that shows up on every page, but it is quite mundane in comparison to the Army’s Sergeant Star. The Navy’s live chat feature is available more than 12 hours a day every day except for weekends (7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays and holidays. The times and specific holidays are clearly indicated on the website. The abundance of information about the availability of the feature makes it more user friendly than the Army’s Sergeant Star; however, the chat was unavailable during the availability periods quite often. More often than not, I received the following message when I attempted to access the chat during the availability period: “Unfortunately none of our Recruiters are available at this time due to high traffic levels OR you have reached us outside our normal hours of business. Please continue to browse our site and try back again.” If availability periods are clearly posted, the appropriate staff should be available during those times to monitor the chat.

Similar to the Navy, the Air Force’s live chat feature has clearly stated hours when it is available and the hours are extensive (14 hours a day nearly every day). When compared to the Army’s Sergeant Star avatar, the Air Force’s live chat features
initially appeared to be spartan. This is particularly unusual since the Air Force is often considered the technologically elite branch of the military. A more innovative live chat would be a better reflection of the Air Force’s focus on technological innovation. Upon further investigation, however, the Army’s Sergeant Star only provides generic responses and is not staffed by a real person on the other end. Thus, even though the avatar seems innovative at first, it is often frustrating because it is not a “real” chat. Although it is labeled a “chat,” it is more like an animated search box in functionality.

Another negative feature of the Air Force and the Navy’s live chat features is the fact that they require the user to complete forms and a profile before they can access the chat feature. A more simplified process for accessing the chat may reduce barriers for users to take advantage of the live chat feature on the Air Force’s recruitment website.

In terms of online games that engage the user, the Air Force is leading the pack. The Air Force’s sophisticated and engaging online game, “Airmen Challenge,” involves the user and provides an opportunity to compete with other players via social networking sites. The use of animation, music, sound effects, and an authoritative voice narration, makes the “Airmen Challenge” superior to games represented on the other recruitment websites. The issue with the Airmen Challenge, though, is that it only works well if the user has an appropriate computer and internet connection. For example, the first time I tried to access the game, it was practically unplayable due to lengthy load times for graphics and animation features. After accessing the game with a faster computer and better internet connection, the game was faster and easier to play. This is an issue that the Air Force needs to address so that all users can play the game,
regardless of their computer’s capabilities. Furthermore, there were not any women characters represented in the lower levels of the game and then it appeared to be only a small handful of women characters available at the highest levels of the game. This issue of representation should be addressed to more fully engage both men and women in the game, and to provide more legitimacy for women soldiers.

The Army also has some web-based games; however, they are pedestrian in comparison to the Air Force’s Airmen Challenge. Both the Air Force and the Navy have downloadable apps that are promoted on their websites. The Air Force apps are game-based and are designed for iPhone and Android devices. The Navy app is simply an app-based version of their recruitment website.

When using the iPhone Navy app, the WIN option appears as the first menu item in both the “Navy Videos” and “Navy Photos” sections of the app. Usually menu items are ordered alphabetically; however, the menu items in these sections appear to be random in terms of order. If WIN was intentionally included as the first menu item, this may be a intentional recruitment technique that is being employed via the app.

Each of the branches should analyze how the other branches are using interactive tools for recruitment purposes. None of the recruitment websites stand out as a leader in terms of interactive experience; however, these tools can be improved through further development.

In terms of Facebook and social networking, the Navy is utilizing the most targeted strategies; however, the Navy can integrate more social networking links to videos and other resources throughout the website. In regards to live chat features, the Army’s Sargeant Star is technologically superior; therefore, the Air Force and Navy may
want to incorporate an animated feature into their live chats. The Army’s Sargeant Star could be improved with the addition of clear information regarding the nature of the pseudo-live feature and its availability, though. The Air Force’s Airmen Challenge online game and game-based apps are visually appealing; however, the necessity of a faster computer and internet connection (for the Airmen Challenge) limits the potential of this particular tool. Overall, interactive experiences require further investigation, both as a face-to-face recruitment tool and a strategy for further engaging potential recruits online and via apps.

**GLBTQ.** Content analyses are limited to the content that is available; however, sometimes it is interesting to note what is not available in the content. More specifically, information specific to individuals from the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (GLBTQ) communities and information about violence against women was absent from the websites. This exclusion was particularly unusual due to the frequency of media coverage for these two topics.

Now that the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell (DADT) era has ended, the armed forces can integrate information specific to individuals from GLBTQ communities into their recruitment websites. This is particularly important because the United States military began actively recruiting individuals from GLBTQ communities literally the day after DADT ended (Bumiller, 2011). Excluding this information may indicate that DADT is not completely removed from military culture.

Two of the participants in the in-depth interviews identified as lesbians and both of them indicated concerns about how this part of their identity would fit in with military
life. Linda noted that she was not willing to hide this part of her identity and was concerned how military life would exclude her partner:

I actually know somebody who was, not kind of directly – I don’t know – that was kicked out because they were gay. And so, I mean that was actually, I was worried about that, and I was fighting for DADT to be repealed because the way that I live, I can’t hide it. I’m too comfortable with who I am, so I’m very glad, to say the least. But it is – it’s still very hard, you know, to think if I had somebody, um – and I mean, I’ve talked a bit. I’m kind of – there’s somebody right now, but they wouldn’t be able to live on base with me. They would have to live off base, and so it’s not going to be like, okay, let’s move in together. It’s a, “You’re gonna live here, and I have to live here.”

These types of issues are not noted on any of the websites. Due to the increasing number of GLBTQ individuals who will likely join the armed forces now that the DADT era has passed and the military is actively recruiting from these communities, this is a population that the armed forces should consider more directly in their recruitment materials. This sentiment was specifically introduced by two of the young women interviewed. As lesbians, both of these young women noted that they would have been extremely hesitant to enter the military during the DADT era. Both expressed an inability and lack of desire to hide their sexuality, as well as a concern that the DADT policy was still somewhat reflected in the United States military’s personnel policies, particularly those that address the constitution of marriage. The lack of health insurance benefits for partners was also expressed as a concern that may reflect outdated policies that are still in place. This is even more disconcerting when one considers the many other spousal benefits that are exclusive to heterosexual military personnel, such as housing, relocation benefits, access to the commissary on base, and local merchant discounts that require official military identification.

A link to a website containing information about GLBTQ issues would be helpful for people from those communities; however, it would be more effective to integrate
information specific to GLBTQ individuals throughout the website. If the information is isolated to a specific section, a sense of normalcy is not attained.

Other English-speaking cultures have integrated GLBTQ concerns into their military recruitment materials. For example, the Australian Royal Air Force (2013) has a specific notation on their Diversity website that highlights these specific concerns:

Members from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community: Air Force actively supports members of the LGBTI community through a range of measures. Air Force has worked hard to develop inclusive policies and entitlements that are not limited by member’s gender, personal circumstances or sexual orientation. Air Force actively supports personnel attendance at conferences and LGBTI community events, and has developed a guide which provides practical advice and support for LGBTI members in Air Force. Ongoing engagement and cooperation with the external, wider Defence LGBTI community group ‘DEFGLIS’, who can be contacted via their own website www.defglis.com.au, is an integral aspect of Air Force’s ongoing diversity strategy.

By addressing GLBTQ issues via the recruitment websites, the armed forces would have a more transparent way of addressing concerns. Furthermore, including information specific to individuals who identify as GLBTQ would clearly indicate the end of DADT and the inclusion of GLBTQ individuals in the modern armed forces.

**Violence against women in the military.** Information about violence against women (or protection for women) was also absent from the recruitment websites. Although some of the young women who were interviewed as a part of this study had heard about violence against women in the military, many of them were uninformed about the extent of these issues and the protections that the military is currently employing to reduce such incidents.

For example, several of the young women thought that the requirement to have a “buddy” with you at all times in the military was to prevent terrorist acts or the likelihood
that they would be robbed. Cindy stated, "I don’t know. If someone were to randomly try to rob you or something, I guess it would be a good thing to have somebody with you so you can like – if one of you guys had a phone, call 911 and get some help." When asked to clarify, Cindy mentioned that other people would be after her money. She was not concerned about personal safety in regards to sexual violence.

Mirinda felt similarly about the “battle buddy” (JROTC required one buddy) and “wing buddies” (CAP required two buddies) concepts. She stated that it was important to have a “buddy” because:

You never know. I mean, you could be using the bathroom and there’s a fire and all you know is – you’re using the bathroom, you can’t hear anything, or you’re like, washing your hands and then over the sound of the alarm you can’t see the smoke rising or whatever. The person can call, “There’s a fire!” or something.

Even with several prompts, most of the young women did not associate the “buddy” system as a deterrent of sexual violence.

In fact, several of the young women in the study dismissed the notion that another soldier would inflict harm upon them. For example, Selene mentioned that the buddy system is important because if one gets hurt, or, like, killed, then there’s another person who can call for help. Because if you’re alone and you get injured, and you can’t – or die – like, you can’t really do anything about it. I mean, you’re already dead. But if you have a friend, they can call and say there’s, you know, something going on over here, they can call and get help.

When asked for clarification about the perpetrator, Selene stated, “Like, overseas, you know, other people can attack you.” When asked about why the buddy system was also a rule in the States, she replied, “I guess someone could invade their base, you know, try to begin a war. Along with everyone, could come and attack them. You have someone there in case that would happen.” Her concerns were clearly about an enemy
attack rather than an attack perpetrated by another soldier. She was also more concerned about the attack prompting a larger conflict (i.e., war) rather than it being a physical attack that sought to violate the soldier as an individual.

Several of the interview participants confidently cited the soldier’s honor code as evidence to dismiss the possibility of soldier-on-soldier violence. For example, Mirinda stated:

When you go into the military, you go through – you work hard, like, your maturity is obviously very high, you worked hard. You didn’t do all that just to get into the military just to sexually harass somebody and possibly get kicked out. Like, it’s also, like, when we do stuff for ROTC, we sign the honor code, that we not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate anyone who does. You sign that code. You agree to yourself that you won’t do that when you get there. So there should be no reason – I mean, some people do it, but there’s not a high chance of it because you don’t go there to do that and you are aware.

In regards to sexual harassment, Mirinda further noted that

I think it’s lower in the military than in civilians, because there’s some crazy people out there in civilians and there’s crazy people in the military, but they, they’re too well-trained and brought up and built into a certain form of, like, a mold, like a model, to do that.

There was an overall perception that immoral acts rarely occur in the military due to the honor code. These uninformed views were unusual given the increased attention to these issues in the news media. As young people become more media savvy, this will become a greater concern for military recruitment.

Linda mentioned that she had seen some sexual harassment videos during the Army’s Future Soldier program; however, that is a program that most people do not begin until after they sign enlistment paperwork. Linda stated that,

I mean, their videos are super cheesy. (Laughs) But I mean, I guess some people would, like, some females would look at it – because it’s also like, telling females, you know, if something – if some male is trying to come at you, you know, you can go to your squad leader or your whatever, you
know, talk to them, tell them, and the guy will get in trouble and will get reprimanded. It’s not, like, sometimes in the civilian world, where if you would go and say or report a claim and that, you know, maybe nothing will happen, or a slap on the wrist. Well, in the army, it’s a really big deal. You can get kicked out.

The young women who were interviewed felt very strongly that a perpetrator’s behavior would not be tolerated in the military. As noted above, several of the young women cited the honor code and Cadet Creed to support the idea that sexually inappropriate behavior is not acceptable in the military culture.

Although sexual harassment videos are being shown in the Future Soldier program, it is important that the facilitators follow up properly after the videos are shown. According to Linda,

But I know, like, we were watching the cheesy video, and it was a bunch of guys and I was the only girl. And I think they were like, “Okay, so which one of you, if you saw something going on that wasn’t supposed to be happening would report it?” And I was like (laughs). I was the only one raising my hand. I was like, “I don’t care what you guys think of me, you know. You’re doing something wrong, you’re doing something wrong.”

When asked about her thoughts about why the young men did not raise their hands, Linda replied that “people don’t like telling on people. And that’s like a thing in our society right now, you know.” When asked about how the facilitator handled the situation, Linda noted that they did not address it and continued with the rest of the program. If young men entering the military are clearly indicating that they will not report acts of sexual misconduct, that provides military leadership with an opportunity to engage in a conversation to educate recruits about this issue. The absence of that conversation condones inaction and disengagement while setting a standard for maintaining a neutral stance in regard to sexual misconduct. Disengagement and
inaction will not lead to less victimization. It will only maintain a level of secrecy and condone cover ups that can further victimize the victims.

This is especially important because sexual misconduct in the military is becoming increasingly visible in the media. For example, in the past year, the documentary “Invisible War” was nominated for an Oscar in 2013 (Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 2013) and won the Audience Award for a documentary film at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival (Sundance Institute, 2013). “Invisible War” is a documentary about rape in the military, and it focuses on the experiences of women veterans who were raped by fellow military personnel while serving for the armed forces. The more that sexual violence in the military is publicized, the more women are going to question the military's stance on and responses to these issues. The military should provide information to recruits about how detrimental these types of acts are to military readiness and what specific actions have been taken to protect their soldiers. This information could serve as a warning for potential offenders as well. The addition of this information could send the message that the branch does not tolerate these types of behaviors.

**Limitations**

There were several limitations that should be acknowledged in regard to this dissertation. First, this analysis is limited to a specific snapshot of the recruitment websites. Due to the changing nature of websites, it is unlikely that the recruitment websites will remain the same for very long. Thus, this analysis is limited to one specific representation of the recruitment websites.

Another limitation that requires attention is the fact that most of the participants were provided the opportunity to engage the recruitment website content live and at
their leisure. Although this provided a less focused approach, this approach provided few opportunities for comparing and contrasting participants’ interpretations of specific pages. Due to the exploratory nature of that part of the study, the participants’ freedom to explore the websites was necessary. Future research should consider narrowing the participants’ access to particular images for further analysis.

Furthermore, technical issues prevented one of the participants from having the opportunity to navigate the recruitment websites at her leisure. Instead, she was provided with screenshots (that had been previously identified by other participants) as prompts for discussion.

Finally, my demographic and cultural position differed considerably from that of the participants. These differences may have required more time for building rapport and trust during the interview process. This difference also required that I take other cultural differences into consideration. For example, the young women who participated in this study tended to label men as authority figures more often than women, even when women appeared to be engaged in active roles. In this regard, there were a few times when my interpretations of an image were drastically different than the interpretation of a participant. We all have grown up in a patriarchal society; however, I have the benefit of age and a strong feminist awakening. For this reason, I am probably more likely to view gender issues with a more critical eye and identify unearned male authority with greater sophistication. This is not to say that their interpretations are in any way inferior to mine. Quite the contrary, their interpretations are simply different, and in this project, more legitimate than mine because they are the target audience of the recruitment materials. Engaging in the in-depth interviews gave me the opportunity
to understand the lens through which these young women interpret messages. It is important to understand that the participants may not have mature cognitive processing abilities. Because young people are accustomed to processing commercial messages that do not require sophisticated critical analysis, they may not have the experience necessary to interpret less obvious messages in media content.

The young women who participated in this study tended to label men as authority figures more often than women, even when women appeared to be engaged in active roles. In this regard, there were a few times when my interpretations of an image were drastically different than the interpretation of a participant. We all have grown up in a patriarchal society; however, I have the benefit of age and a strong feminist awakening. For this reason, I am probably more likely to view gender issues with a more critical eye and identify unearned male authority with greater sophistication. This is not to say that their interpretations are in any way inferior to mine. Quite the contrary, their interpretations are simply different, and in this project, more legitimate than mine because they are the target audience of the recruitment materials. Engaging in the in-depth interviews allowed me the opportunity to understand the lens through which these young women interpret messages. The cognitive skills of these young women may not be matured because they are still undergoing identity and physical developments due to their age. According to Buijzen (2010), “this may have important implications for the processing of commercial messages” (p. 433). Although their cognitive skills may not be mature, it is important to recognize that this will be an issue for any study that focuses on teenagers.
Avenues for Future Research

This study provides many different avenues for future research. Recruitment websites should be further analyzed to address how potential recruits navigate recruitment websites and how they perceive website images. Longitudinal studies can provide a deeper understanding of how women are integrated in the military. Quantitative research can provide additional evidence about recommendations for improving recruitment tactics. Racial issues, female leadership in JROTC programs, and appeals to influencers should also be considered in future research.

Recruitment websites. Future research should consider in-depth interviews with larger numbers of young women in JROTC and CAP programs to further understand how potential female recruits perceive website images and how they navigate recruitment websites. Researchers who focus on analyzing participants’ use and perception of websites should consider how the websites will be presented in the study. Initially providing participants with live websites can help researchers identify how users navigate the websites. Using eye scanning programs can be helpful for collecting data focused on navigational issues, particularly when the research focuses on the frequency and duration that users engage in particular sections of the websites.

For depth research about specific images that are provided via websites, it is more effective to save the screenshots so they can be used as specific prompts during the interviews. This method would also allow more opportunities for comparisons to reveal similarities and differences in interpretations.

A depth analysis of the interactive tools is recommended. Triangulating qualitative content analysis methods with in-depth interviews with potential recruits would provide more information about the appeal and effectiveness of these tools.
Other military organizations’ recruitment websites should be analyzed as well. Themes that emerge from analyses of the United States Coast Guard and the National Guard’s websites should be compared and contrasted with the results of this study. Even though women represent a smaller percentage of the Marines’ workforce, their recruitment techniques should not be neglected. Future research should consider the similarities and differences in how different military organizations represent women in their web-based recruitment messages.

**Longitudinal research.** It is also important to conduct longitudinal studies to understand women’s experiences in the United States military, particularly now that nearly all combat roles are open to women. In-depth interviews should be initiated with young women involved in JROTC and CAP programs and then the women should be re-interviewed periodically during their military experience. This data will provide a deeper understanding of how women negotiate the hyper-masculine culture of the United States military.

**Quantitative research.** Now that themes have been developed through the qualitative content analysis, future research should analyze the websites using quantitative content analysis methods to provide more evidence of ways the websites can be improved for recruitment purposes. Previous military recruitment research in the United States has focused more on quantitative analyses than qualitative analyses; therefore, it is recommended that the themes found through this qualitative content analysis be used to conduct a quantitative content analysis of the text, images, and videos. The quantitative analysis will provide additional evidence for convincing military leaders to make specific changes in an effort to improve recruitment strategies.
Quantitative research focused on the images in the recruitment websites should consider the perceived race, sex, and age of the individuals who are represented. Additionally, attire (i.e., type of uniform or civilian attire), facial expressions, and activity level (i.e., actively working, passive) should be taken under consideration.

**Racial issues.** Future research should take racial issues under consideration. In previous studies focused on the integration of women in masculine work communities, racial differences have been noted as important for understanding women’s experiences. For example, Yoder and Berendsen’s (2001) studied African American and White women firefighters and noted differences in power based on race. Although both groups experienced gender subordination, African American women were additionally subordinated by race, whereas White women experienced White privilege. White privilege, as detailed by McIntosh (1990), is an unearned and unconscious privilege that is sometimes neglected in critiques of hierarchies. Although it is important to study marginalized groups, it is also important to consider White privilege in the current patriarchal hierarchy of the military. McIntosh (1990) states that:

> It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Although patriarchal hierarchies are often identified in the United States military, it is also important to consider the implications of White privilege in regards to issues of power and subordination.

**Female leaders in JROTC programs.** Interestingly, one of the young women, Linda, noted the absence of women leaders in the JROTC program. She commented,
“After I become an officer, I want to be an ROTC instructor after I retire because I actually have never seen a female ROTC instructor.” The absence of visible female leadership in the JROTC programs was noted as a lack of evidence that women could succeed in the military. The military’s recruitment of female JROTC instructors could help alleviate this issue; however, future research is necessary in this regard.

**Cross-cultural research.** Comparing and contrasting the United States military recruitment websites with other English-speaking countries’ military organizations would provide further insight into how women are being recruited. Countries that use English as their primary language for their militaries are a natural fit for cross-cultural analyses. Additionally, it is important to recognize that many countries use English as their administrative language (primary language for their militaries and other government organizations); therefore, military recruitment materials (particularly websites) for countries such as India may be included in future analyses. Appendix Q for specific recommendations. Broader analyses may consider comparisons with non-English speaking cultures that are similar to the United States in terms of culture (such as Germany), and those that have stark cultural differences (such as Thailand). It would also be beneficial to consider similar analyses of recruitment websites for countries that are adversaries of the United States to compare and contrast recruitment strategies.

**Influencers.** Each branch had a separate section of its recruitment website dedicated to specific influencers. More specifically, the Air Force has a section titled “Parents & Family,” the Army has a section titled “For Parents,” and the Navy has a section titled “Families and Advisors.” As noted by the titles of the sections, each branch takes a different approach to targeting influencers via their recruitment website. Future
research should compare and contrast these websites to identify themes and provide the branches with recommendations for improving these particular sections.

**Final Thoughts**

Participants who enlisted in the military felt proud of their decision. Agnes explained her family’s history to clarify how her enlistment marked a decisive change in her career path:

> My dad never finished high school, my step mom never finished college. My mom dropped out of college. My sister dropped out of high school. They thought that I was going to be the one who dropped out of college too like my sister and my mom. And I was like, “I’m just going to prove everybody wrong.” So I did something with my life. So I’m proud of myself. They’re all proud of me, but I’m proud of myself because I didn’t want to walk into the same footsteps as them.

This pride in making a decision to join the military was evident for other young women as well. For example, Selene mentioned that

> It makes you feel better about yourself, knowing, that you’ve made a change, you know, kind of like going out overseas or even just, you know, being in the military, knowing that you have the – what’s the word? You have the option to make a change or help, you know, change America, I guess, and better it, so…just having the knowledge of that kind of makes you, yeah, feel better.

Many young women, similar to Selene and Agnes, are excited about the opportunity to enlist in the United States military. Many of these young women are interested in serving in combat roles and those opportunities will be available in the near future.

> It is important to study recruitment materials targeted at potential recruits and to analyze how young women interpret these messages. With increasing numbers of women likely to enter the armed forces, it is essential that external reviewers provide analysis and commentary regarding these recruitment materials.
The problem with the recruitment websites at this point in time is that they often portray women in stereotypical and/or objectified ways. Brown (2012) concluded that “the representations of women in recruiting material taken as a whole serve to at once normalize the participation of women in the military and to erase it” (p. 155). Because women are depicted as tokens, their participation does not seem normalized in the military culture. Although there appears to be an effort on the part of each branch to integrate women in to its recruitment website, women are not portrayed in a manner that indicates equal participation.

The good news is that there are improvements that the military can implement to more accurately portray military women on their recruitment websites. First and foremost, it is important for each branch to remove images that portray women in stereotypical ways, as tokens, and/or in an objectifying manner. These images should be replaced with images that portray women as active, serious participants.

This dissertation analyzed how the United States military is recruiting women via the Web and how women are interpreting those messages. By identifying themes and addressing issues regarding the representation of women in the military, this study contributes to a more sophisticated understanding of military recruitment techniques. The avenues for future research clearly address areas where scholars can continue to analyze the United States military’s recruitment techniques, particularly in regard to potential young women recruits.
## APPENDIX A
### TABLES


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>Marine Corps</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
<th>Total Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women Officers</td>
<td>15,727</td>
<td>8,464</td>
<td>1,325</td>
<td>12,291</td>
<td>37,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Officer Personnel</td>
<td>97,240</td>
<td>52,852</td>
<td>21,822</td>
<td>65,487</td>
<td>237,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Women Officers</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Enlisted</td>
<td>60,224</td>
<td>44,022</td>
<td>12,352</td>
<td>50,307</td>
<td>166,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Enlisted Personnel</td>
<td>463,605</td>
<td>267,746</td>
<td>179,335</td>
<td>263,542</td>
<td>1,174,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Women Enlisted</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Cadets-Midshipmen</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>2,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cadets-Midshipmen Personnel</td>
<td>4,618</td>
<td>4,525</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,341</td>
<td>13,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Women Cadets-Midshipmen</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Active Duty Women</td>
<td>76,694</td>
<td>53,385</td>
<td>13,677</td>
<td>63,552</td>
<td>207,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Active Duty Personnel</td>
<td>565,463</td>
<td>325,123</td>
<td>201,157</td>
<td>333,370</td>
<td>1,425,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Women in Active Duty</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A-2. Four Processing Situations Determined by the Ratio Between Resources Allocated to and Resources Required by the Context of the Persuasive Message (from Buijzen, Van Reijmersdal & Owen, 2010, p. 436).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RRC</th>
<th>RAC low</th>
<th>RAC high</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RRC low</td>
<td>No or low elaboration of context; low resources available for RAPM</td>
<td>Moderate elaboration of context; high available resources for RAPM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRC high</td>
<td>(Imminent) cognitive overload; low available resources for RAPM</td>
<td>High elaboration of context; low available resources for RAPM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RAC, resources allocated to context; RRC, resources required by context; RAPM, resources allocated to persuasive message.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions expressing little relation to the text</th>
<th>Functions expressing close relation to the text</th>
<th>Functions that go beyond the text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decorate</td>
<td>Reiterate</td>
<td>Interpret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change pace</td>
<td>Concretize</td>
<td>Emphasize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match style</td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicit emotion</td>
<td>Author/Source</td>
<td>Develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienate</td>
<td>Humanize</td>
<td>Compare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express poetically</td>
<td>Common referent</td>
<td>Contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Transform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage</td>
<td>Graph</td>
<td>Alternate progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate</td>
<td>Exemplify</td>
<td>Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translate</td>
<td>Model cognitive process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize</td>
<td>Isolate</td>
<td>Model physical process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contain</td>
<td>Inspire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Locate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Induce perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate</td>
<td>Compare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parallel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condense</td>
<td>Concentrate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Define</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a graduate student in the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida, and I am conducting research on military cadets under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Duke Cornell. The purpose of this study is to learn about cadets' perceptions of the military programs and other military organizations. The results of the study may help military organizations better understand how to recruit and retain cadets. These results may not directly help your child today, but may benefit future cadets. With your permission, I would like to ask your child to volunteer for this research.

The cadets will be interviewed one-on-one about their thoughts and experiences; however, they will not have to answer any question they do not wish to answer. The interview will take place at a time and location that is convenient for the cadet. The interviews typically last about an hour and a half. With your permission, the cadet will be audio-taped during the interview. The audio recording will be accessible only to the research team for verification purposes. At the end of the study, the audio recording will be erased. The cadet's identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. We will replace their names with pseudonyms (fake names). Participation or non-participation in this study will not affect the cadet's grades or promotion in the cadet program.

You and your child have the right to withdraw consent for your child's participation at any time without consequence. There are no known risks or immediate benefits to the participants. A $20 gift card will be offered to the cadet as a token of appreciation for their participation. Group results of this study will be available in March 2013 upon request. If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact me at [phone number] or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Lisa Duke Cornell, at [phone number]. Questions or concerns about your child's rights as a research participant may be directed to the IRB02 office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611, (352) 392-0433.

Christine Hanlon

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily give my consent for my child, ________________________________________, to participate in Christine Hanlon's study of military cadets. I have received a copy of this description.

____________________________________  __________________
Parent / Guardian                                                Date

____________________________________  __________________
2nd Parent / Witness                                           Date
Hello [participant’s name]. My name is Christine Hanlon and I am a student at the University of Florida. I am trying to learn about how students think about military organizations, such as the ROTC/CAP program. I will be working with several students at [name of school or after-school program]. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer some questions about your involvement in the ROTC/CAP program and your feelings about military organizations. We will spend about an hour and a half talking one-on-one about your thoughts and experiences. There are no known risks to participation. You do not have to be in this study if you don’t want to and you can quit the study at any time. Other than the researchers, no one will know your answers, including your ROTC/CAP leaders, teachers and classmates. If you don’t want to answer a question, you don’t have to answer it and, if you ask, your answers will not be used in the study. I also want you to know that whatever you decide, this will not affect your grades or promotion in ROTC/CAP. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer and you can end your participation at any time without consequence. Your parent/guardian said it would be okay for you to participate. Would you be willing to participate in this study?
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS

Protocol Title: Perceptions of Military Organizations

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study:
The purpose of this study is to learn about cadets' perceptions of the military programs and other military organizations.

What you will be asked to do in the study:
You will be interviewed one-on-one about your thoughts and experiences. You will not be required to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. The interview will be audio-taped; however, the audio recording will be accessible only to the research team for verification purposes. At the end of the study, the audio recording will be erased.

Time required:
An hour and a half.

Risks and Benefits:
There are no known risks or immediate benefits to the participants.

Compensation:
A $20 gift card will be offered to the cadet as a token of appreciation for their participation.

Confidentiality:
Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file in my faculty supervisor's office. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report.

Voluntary participation:
Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. We will replace your name with a pseudonym (fake name). There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study:
You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:
Christine Hanlon (Interviewer), tel. 407-340-9372
Dr. Lisa Duke Cornell (Faculty Supervisor), tel. 352-392-0447
Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:
IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611; tel. [redacted]

Agreement:
I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: ___________________________ Date: __________________

Principal Investigator: ______________________ Date: __________________
APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semi-structured in-depth interview regarding perceptions of military organizations

Pre-Interview
Prior to the interview, the researcher will screen participants by asking basic demographic questions and some questions related to their experience in the cadet program:
- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Rank in ROTC/CAP
- Length of time involved in ROTC/CAP
- Involvement level in ROTC/CAP
- Overall satisfaction with ROTC/CAP

Interview Guide
(Prompts: United States military recruitment materials)

1. Tell me about how you got involved in ROTC/CAP.
   Probing question: What did you perceive as benefits to joining ROTC/CAP/CAP?
   Probing question: What did you perceive as challenges?

2. Tell me about your experience in ROTC/CAP/CAP.
   Probing question: What benefits have you gained as a result of your ROTC/CAP/CAP experience?
   Probing question: What challenges have you dealt with as a result of your involvement with ROTC/CAP/CAP?
   Probing question: How do you think your ROTC/CAP/CAP experience will benefit you in the future?

3. Do you think gender impacts an individual's ROTC/CAP/CAP experience? If so, how?
   Probing question: Has your gender impacted your ROTC/CAP/CAP experience? If so, how?

4. Tell me about the military branch that is most appealing to you.
   Probing question: What are the benefits of this branch in comparison to the others?
   Probing question: What types of opportunities are appealing to you?

5. Tell me about the military recruitment materials you have seen.
   Probing question: Where have you seen these materials? TV? Online? School?
   Probing question: Have you accessed the military recruitment websites? If so, which one(s)? What were your thoughts about those websites?
6. Let's take a look at the recruitment website of your preferred military branch. As you navigate the website, tell me your inner thoughts. State when you click on something. Explain your inner thought process for choosing certain parts of the website over others. Explain what appeals to you and why you choose to click on certain parts of the website. 
Probing question: How does this website make you feel? 
Probing question: Are there any drawbacks to this website? If so, explain. 
Probing question: Do you think this website effectively recruits women? Why or why not?

7. Do you think you will join the military? If so, which branch? Why? 
Probing question: What are the benefits of joining the military? 
Probing question: What are the drawbacks of joining the military?

8. Tell me about who helps you make decisions about big life decisions. 
Probing question: Who helps you make decisions about your future career? 
Probing question: Rank these people in terms of their influence. Who influences you the most? Who influences you the least?

9. Do you think gender impacts an individual's experience in the military? If so, how? 
Probing question: What benefits do you think women have in the military? 
Probing question: What challenges do you think women have in the military? 
Probing question: Do you think there is equal opportunity in the military? Why or why not?

10. How are soldiers portrayed in the media? 
Probing question: How are soldiers portrayed on TV? Movies? Video games? 
Probing question: Is there a gender difference in how soldiers are portrayed by the media? If so, what are the differences?
APPENDIX D
SCREENSHOT OF AN ARMY MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY THAT IS OPEN TO WOMEN

This image was retrieved on January 31, 2013 at
APPENDIX E
SCREENSHOT OF AN ARMY MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY THIS IS CLOSED TO WOMEN

This image was retrieved on January 31, 2013 at

APPENDIX F
SCREENSHOTS OF STEPHANIE KIRKPATRICK, AVIATION BOATSWAIN’S MATE FUELER, FEATURED IN THE “WOMEN IN THE NAVY” PROFILE SECTION OF THE NAVY’S RECRUITMENT WEBSITE
These screenshots are from the video that was retrieved on January 31, 2013 at
APPENDIX G
SCREENSHOT OF RIDLEY SHETLER’S (NUPOC) FINGERNAILS FEATURED IN THE “WOMEN IN THE NAVY” PROFILE SECTION OF THE NAVY’S RECRUITMENT WEBSITE

This screenshot is from the video that was retrieved on January 31, 2013 at http://www.navy.com/inside/winr/profiles/ridley-shetler.html
This image was retrieved on January 31, 2013 at

http://www.airforce.com/careers/detail/pediatrician/
APPENDIX I
IMAGE FROM THE AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY MOS WEBPAGE OF THE ARMY WEBSITE

This image was retrieved on January 31, 2013 at

APPENDIX J
IMAGE FROM THE TEAMWORK PAGE OF THE ARMY MEDICINE (AMEDD)
SECTION OF THE GOARMY.COM WEBSITE

This image was retrieved on January 24, 2013 at
http://www.goarmy.com/amedd/health-care/medical-team.html
This image was retrieved on January 24, 2013 at

This image was retrieved on January 27, 2013 at

APPENDIX M
SCREENSHOTS FROM THE PROFILE VIDEO FOR MASTER-AT-ARMS MELANIE MOLINA, FEATURED IN THE “WOMEN IN THE NAVY” SECTION OF THE NAVY’S RECRUITMENT WEBSITE
These screenshots are from the video that was retrieved on January 31, 2013 at http://www.navy.com/inside/winr/profiles/melanie-molina.html
APPENDIX N
SCREENSHOTS FROM THE PROFILE VIDEO FOR AMANDA HODGES, AVAIITION STRUCTURAL MECHANIC, FEATURED IN THE “WOMEN IN THE NAVY” SECTION OF THE NAVY’S RECRUITMENT WEBSITE
These screenshots are from the video that was retrieved on January 31, 2013 at http://www.navy.com/inside/winr/profiles/amanda-hodges.html
APPENDIX O
SCREENSHOTS OF BRISTOL HARTLAGE, SURFACE WARFARE OFFICER, FEATURED IN THE “CAREERS” SECTION OF THE NAVY’S RECRUITMENT WEBSITE
These screenshots are from the video that was retrieved on January 31, 2013 at http://www.navy.com/careers/nuclear-energy/surface-warfare-nuclear.html
APPENDIX P

SCREENSHOTS OF CHRIS ZUNDEL, SURFACE WARFARE OFFICER, FEATURED IN THE “CAREERS” SECTION OF THE NAVY’S RECRUITMENT WEBSITE

This screenshot is from the video that was retrieved on January 31, 2013 at http://www.navy.com/careers/nuclear-energy/surface-warfare-nuclear.html
APPENDIX Q
MILITARY RECRUITMENT WEBSITES OF OTHER ENGLISH-SPEAKING MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS

Australian military organizations*

British military organizations
British Army - http://www.army.mod.uk/
British Royal Air Force - http://www.raf.mod.uk/careers/
British Royal Navy - http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/

Canadian military organizations*

Indian military organizations
Indian Air Force - http://indianairforce.nic.in/
Indian Army - http://indianarmy.nic.in/
Indian Navy - http://www.nausena-bharti.nic.in/

* - The Australian military organizations (the Royal Australian Air Force, the Australian Army, and the Royal Australian Navy) and the Canadian military organizations (the Royal Canadian Air Force, Canadian Army, and Royal Canadian Navy) both have a main recruitment website that includes the main military branches for their particular country.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Kampfner, J. (2003 May 15). The truth about Jessica: Her Iraqi guards had long fled, she was being well cared for - and doctors had already tried to free her. The Guardian.


Sjoberg, L. (2010). Gendering the empire’s soldiers: Gender ideologies, the U.S. military, and the "War on Terror." In L. Sjoberg & S. Via (Eds.), Gender War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives (pp. 209-217). Santa Barbara, California: Praeger.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Christine Hanlon has been teaching communication courses in higher education for the past 15 years. She currently teaches specialized sections of SPC1608 (Fundamentals of Oral Communication), COM1000 (Communication), and COM4014 (Gender Issues in Communication) at the University of Central Florida. Her work has been published in the Florida Communication Journal and several editions of Teaching Ideas for the Basic Communication Course. In addition, Christine has served as President of the Florida Communication Association twice in the past decade and was a recipient of UCF “Teaching in Excellence” (TIP) awards in 2006 and 2011. Between semesters, she enjoys traveling with her life partner and children.