



**NAVAL
POSTGRADUATE
SCHOOL**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**GENDER REPRESENTATION TRENDS AND RELATIONS
AT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY**

by

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and
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June 2005

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE June 2005	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: Gender Representation Trends and Relations at the United States Naval Academy			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Joshua Reid Lewis/Shannon FitzPatrick Lewis				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) This study employed quantitative and qualitative methods to examine gender trends and the quality of gender interactions at the United States Naval Academy (USNA). In addition to gender, midshipmen demographics, experiences, personality types, interests, and graduation outcomes were compared within and across gender for graduation years, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2004. Representation of women has increased to the current high of around 16%. Further, the data revealed similarities and differences between men and women in terms of their non-gender characteristics. Women's SAT scores and Cumulative Quality Point Ratios (QPRs) are on par with the men's. Proportionally, women are more likely to be extroverts and varsity athletes than are men. Women are less likely to be technical majors. Women are being afforded leadership experiences to the same extent as men. Perceptions regarding gender relations and cohesion were assessed through focus groups conducted with 110 midshipmen. Although gender representation has increased, and the Administration is credited with improving the explicit climate, there does not yet exist a completely gender-neutral or women "friendly" climate. The preponderance of findings regarding gender interactions at the Naval Academy suggests that male midshipmen have yet to fully accept female midshipmen. The Naval Academy must continue to confront the subsurface issues and dynamics persisting amongst male and female midshipmen. Recommendations include making an institutional commitment to improving gender interactions and company cohesion, securing alumni cooperation, and involving midshipmen in improving the gender climate.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Gender Representation, Interactions, and Relations			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 115	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

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GENDER REPRESENTATION TRENDS AND RELATIONS AT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

This study employed quantitative and qualitative methods to examine gender trends and the quality of gender interactions at the United States Naval Academy (USNA). In addition to gender, midshipmen demographics, experiences, personality types, interests, and graduation outcomes were compared within and across gender for graduation years, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2004. Representation of women has increased to the current high of around 16%. Further, the data revealed similarities and differences between men and women in terms of their non-gender characteristics. Women's SAT scores and Cumulative Quality Point Ratios (QPRs) are on par with the men's. Proportionally, women are more likely to be extroverts and varsity athletes than are men. Women are less likely to be technical majors. Women are being afforded leadership experiences to the same extent as men. Perceptions regarding gender relations and cohesion were assessed through focus groups conducted with 110 midshipmen. Although gender representation has increased, and the Administration is credited with improving the explicit climate, there does not yet exist a fully gender-neutral or women "friendly" climate. The preponderance of findings regarding gender interactions at the Naval Academy suggests that male midshipmen have yet to fully accept female midshipmen. The Naval Academy must continue to confront the subsurface issues and dynamics persisting amongst male and female midshipmen. Recommendations include making an institutional commitment to improving gender interactions and company cohesion, securing alumni cooperation, and involving midshipmen in improving the gender climate.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Completing a thesis is truly a marathon event, and the authors would not have been able to complete this journey without the selfless aid and encouragement of countless people over the past year. We must first express our sincere gratitude to our advisors, Janice H. Laurence and Gail F. Thomas. Their endless leadership, support, attention to detail, hard work, and scholarship has set an example we hope to match some day. To Alan Harmon, Cathy Morgan, Linda Mallory and the whole Institutional Research team for their continuous tutelage, statistical advice, and ever-ready assistance. To Buzz Bowman, for supplying us expert guidance in quantitative analysis. To Brad Johnson, for lending our work his vast knowledge and thoughtful suggestions. To Commander Robert Proano and Commander Lee Schonenberg, for affording LT Shannon F. Lewis the opportunity to experience the LEAD Program. To Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter, USMC (ret.), for taking time out of a busy schedule to impart her incredible experiences and invaluable recommendations. To the company officers of the Naval Academy, for their service and time in putting together the numerous focus groups in support of our research. To the midshipmen, for giving us their most precious commodity, time. Our work was enriched by the honesty and passion of their comments. A very special thanks goes out to Janet L. FitzPatrick, who is not only an amazing mother, but also a phenomenal transcriptionist. We are forever grateful for the hundreds of hours poured over the focus groups' transcription. To both sets of loving parents for their steadfast encouragement, confidence, and prayers. Finally, the authors would like to thank each other for reaching this milestone with the marriage still intact!

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DEDICATION

To LT Myron E. Ludvick, II, a classmate, shipmate, and more importantly, a friend who is deeply missed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

For the last three decades, women have continued to make their mark at the world's most esteemed military academies. In 1975, Congress mandated that the United States service academies open their doors to women with the passing of the Stratton Bill. Accordingly, the summer of 1976 inculcated the first gender-integrated class that ultimately reshaped the organizational climate of the prestigious institutions. The United States Naval Academy's history-making 81 female midshipmen comprised six percent of the first integrated class (Murray & Johnson, 2000). The arrival of female midshipmen would usher in more than diversity within the military culture.

The Naval Academy's transition from an all male institution to a coeducational facility has since met its share of resistance along the way. When the service academies were first gender-integrated, women had difficulty being accepted as legitimate members of the military academy community (Biehn, Boyce, & Herd, 2000). Women struggled with the newcomer status while facing the traditional thinking regarding the military as a 'masculine' occupation.

Although, gender representation at the Naval Academy has gradually increased over the last three decades, this does not mean that a gender-neutral or women "friendly" climate exists. Given the headlines about gender problems at the Air Force Academy and anecdotal reports of gender interaction problems at the Naval Academy, this topic warrants attention.

In an effort to understand the present status of gender representation and relations at the United States Naval Academy, we will identify trends and characteristics by gender and review the history of women's changing roles and acceptance within military organizations. To understand the present status of gender-relations, we will also conduct a qualitative assessment of gender interactions, tapping such dimensions as cohesion, morale, and organizational climate at the Naval Academy.

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the present status of gender representation and relations at the United States Naval Academy by evaluating midshipmen trends and characteristics over time. Further, this thesis will include an assessment of gender trends and perceptions in respect to gender interactions. These in turn could affect cohesion, morale, and climate.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The primary research question this study answers is: To what degree are women represented, accepted, and included at the Naval Academy? The following secondary questions are also answered: (1) How do characteristics and the performance of female midshipmen compare to male midshipmen over time? (2) Have the demographics, characteristics, traits, and graduate outcomes of female midshipmen changed over time? (3) How does the brigade of midshipmen include women at the Naval Academy? (4) What are the positive and negative experiences with gender interactions? (5) To what extent is gender perceived to have an impact on individual performance? (6) How can the Naval Academy improve gender interactions?

To determine trends of midshipmen characteristics over time, data from USNA's Institutional Research were analyzed. The statistical significance of these trends was evaluated using the chi-square or T-test, as appropriate. That is, for selected years (1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2004), demographics, pre-USNA characteristics, Naval Academy experiences, personality types, and graduation outcomes were compared between genders, and within gender, over time. Additionally, data were collected from midshipmen through focus groups and these data were analyzed to assess attitudes and opinions concerning the current status of gender interactions at the Naval Academy. This study further explores those areas identified as potential keys to overcoming obstacles to improve gender interactions among the brigade of midshipmen.

D. BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY

This study examines trends in gender representation and the present status of gender interaction and acceptance while evaluating any possible effects on the degree of cohesion between men and women at the Naval Academy. There is benefit in documenting progress with regard to gender diversity by benchmarking characteristics of women over time and relative to men. In light of the headlines in regard to gender problems at the Air Force Academy, and anecdotal reports of gender interaction “tensions” at the Naval Academy this topic warrants study. The research goes beyond the literature in that it takes a look at the obstacles and attitudes towards acceptance of women at the Naval Academy. This study also identifies the positive and negative effects of gender interactions while determining the attitudes and perceptions of the midshipmen in regards to gender-related issues. The research presents possible ways for the Naval Academy to overcome remaining obstacles to improve gender interactions among the brigade of midshipmen.

E. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

Chapter I of the thesis introduces the research topic. Chapter II presents a literature review on the history of women in the military and their changing roles as well as the inclusion of women at service academies, specifically the United States Naval Academy. In addition, the literature review examines the importance of gender relations at the Naval Academy, positive and negative effects of gender interactions, and attitudes and perceptions in respect to gender interactions. Chapter III details the methodology and data sources outlining the collection of the data from USNA’s Institutional Research and midshipmen focus groups. Chapter IV is an analysis of descriptive statistics of characteristics data. Chapter V includes a content analysis of the focus groups. Chapter VI concludes the thesis with the study’s findings, recommendations, and questions for future research.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background for the research by reviewing the history of women's representation, their changing roles, and acceptance within the military is reviewed. More specifically, the review focuses on the history of women at the U.S. Naval Academy. In addition to an historical background, the review highlights the literature that is essential to comprehending the status of women in the military. This includes the literature on tokenism, organizational culture, survival theories, and gender and leadership.

The role of women in the military has changed dramatically over the past 40 years. This chapter outlines the difficulties women have faced being accepted in a male-dominated occupation. As an indicator of women's acceptance, this thesis, in particular, examines the nature and quality of gender interactions among men and women midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy.

B. LIMITATIONS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing literature on gender interactions in work and military environments is plentiful. The bodies of literature represented in this review were selected based upon their relevance to understanding the current status of gender interactions at the Naval Academy while examining the changing roles of women in military history. Consequently, the work selected for review is a small sample of the extant literature on gender in the military and in the civilian workforce. The research, however, focuses specifically on the gender interactions at the Naval Academy, and the literature related to gender relations at the Naval Academy is limited.

C. REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

In the last four decades, women in the military have increased both numerically and proportionally. For example, the representation of women among active component

enlisted members in 1973 and 2002 was 8,335 (1.8%) and 46,490 (14.3%), respectively. The number and percentage of women among active component officers in 1973 and 2002 was 3,445 (5.2%) and 8,097 (15.3%) respectively (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2002). The representation of women has grown greatly since the introduction of the “All Volunteer Force” in 1973; however, women remain a minority of the total force.

Second to the Air Force, the Navy has made the largest gains in numbers and percentages of assignments accessible to women. Today, women can serve in 91 percent of Navy billets, an increase of 30 percent since 1993. Furthermore, women in the Navy have substantial career-enhancing opportunities. They can fly aircraft in combat missions and serve on combatant ships. Accordingly, sea duty can now be routinely expected of women (Harrell & Miller, 1997). Despite advancements made, women remain excluded from submarine duty and some small vessels, largely because of living arrangement restrictions. They are also excluded from Special Forces units that engage in direct ground combat, such as the Navy SEALs (Sea, Air, and Land teams).

D. CHANGING ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

The role of women in the military has changed since the early days of gender integration (Harrell, Beckett, Chien, & Sollinger, 2002). Specifically, women’s roles have shifted since World War I. For example, approximately 33,000 women served in World War I, with 20,000 of them in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps, separate from the regular Army and Navy (Harrell & Miller, 1997). In World War II, manpower shortages and reports of valuable performance by women in other countries’ armed forces led the United States employ 350,000 women to fill temporary support jobs. As a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) were formed. Women filled nursing and administrative jobs as well as other noncombatant jobs. This influx of women freed up men for combat jobs (Harrell & Miller, 1997).

Following the war, women’s military role was called into question (Thomas, 1994). In 1948, Congress passed the Women’s Armed Services Integration ACT, which

enabled women to serve as permanent, regular members of not only the Army but also the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. However, the act placed restrictions and limits on the women joining the Army. Women were restricted to no more than two percent of the total enlisted ranks and the proportion of female officers could equal no more than ten percent of enlisted women. No woman could serve in a command position, attain the rank of general, or hold permanent rank above lieutenant colonel. This act specifically prohibited women from being assigned to aircraft or vessels engaged in combat missions (Harrell & Miller, 1997).

Over the years, doors for women continued to open gradually. In 1967, the two percent cap on enlisted women and some restrictions on promotions were lifted; in 1972, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) was opened to women. In 1976, women entered the service academies. In 1978, Navy women were assigned to noncombatant ships, and the separate Woman's Army Corps was dissolved. In 1989, two women led their units into combat in Panama. In 1990, the first woman commanded a Navy ship, and in 1991, in the Persian Gulf War, large numbers of women moved forward with their units into combat zones (Hosek, Tiemeyer, Kilburn, Strong, Ducksworth, & Ray, 2001).

Women also benefited from the Department of Defense's (DoD) policy changes in the early 90s. This policy on the assignment of women proceeded in three phases; first with a focus on aviation, assignments to naval combatants, and, most recently, ground assignments. In April 1993, women were able to compete for aircraft assignments engaged in combat. Congress made the second phase possible in November 1993, when it repealed the Naval Combatant Exclusion Law. The law called for 30 days advance notice for proposed changes to assignment policies to combat units, combat aircraft, and combat vessels and 90 days advance notice for changes to any "Direct Ground Combat Exclusion Policy." As a result of the repeal of the Naval Combatant Exclusion Law, 136,000 positions were now made open to both men and women. At the time of the repeal, Congress established important guidelines for the integration of women into previously closed occupations. The guidelines included: a qualification process that was evaluated on the basis of a common and relevant performance standard and not on the basis of gender, the removal of gender quotas, goals, or ceilings, except as specifically

authorized by Congress, and a move away from occupational standards that simply focused on the number of women in an occupational career field (Hosek, Tiemeyer, Kilburn, Strong, Ducksworth, & Ray, 2001).

The third phase evolved in 1994 when additional noncombatant positions became available to women establishing the current day policy for women's roles in the military. Under the new policy, women were eligible to be assigned to all positions for which they were qualified, except that they were excluded from assignment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission was direct combat on the ground (Harrell, Beckett, Chien, & Sollinger, 2002).

Roles for women in the military were enhanced significantly when the direct ground combat rule replaced the risk rule. Under the risk rule, women were excluded not only from combat jobs but also from non-combat units where the risk was judged to be as great as that in combat units. Since 1994, women have been allowed to serve in most combat support jobs from which they were excluded because of the risk rule. Since the introduction of the 1994 policy, nearly all career fields (92%) are open to women (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2002). The only fields that remain closed to women, as mentioned before, are submarine duty, some small vessels, and units that engage in direct ground combat, such as the Navy SEALs.

Expanding numbers and roles have had implications for increasing the number of women in leadership positions and providing more opportunities for women at the various service academies.

E. GENDER INTEGRATION AT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

The U.S. Naval Academy has commissioned professional officers for the Navy since 1845 and for the Marine Corps beginning in 1887. It was not until 1975 that a revolutionary change took root in the foundation of the prestigious institution when Congress passed the defense appropriations bill with provisions for the entry of women to service academies. The summer of 1976 witnessed the inculcation of the first gender-integrated class at the Naval Academy. The history-making 81 female midshipmen

comprised 6 percent of the 1,294 plebes whom the Naval Academy swore in on 6 July 1976 (Murray & Johnson, 2000). Today, women comprise about 20 percent of entering plebes (USNA Class of 2008 Profile). Since the first integrated class entered the Naval Academy, more than 2,000 women graduates have been commissioned into the naval service. These graduates have broken new ground in the military while overcoming extraordinary obstacles in the face of the Academy's predominantly male culture.

The arrival of women was not easily taken in stride by the brigade of midshipmen. In the 1970s, *The Log*, the midshipmen's entertainment magazine, demonstrated that midshipmen thought of women primarily as girlfriends and objects of desire (Gelfand, 2001). An example of this is *The Log's* photographed section of midshipmen's girlfriends entitled "Company Cuties," which began in 1965. Women were hardly thought of as peers in the warrior paradigm. Prior to women's admittance to the Naval Academy, *The Log* was used as a voice for midshipmen's thoughts on the impending arrival of women. Interviews and cartoons illustrated the perceived idea that women were stealing men's places at Annapolis (Gelfand, 2001).

The Naval Academy's transition from an all-male institution to a coeducational facility was kept under the close supervision of Commandant D.K. Forbes. The Dean of Admissions, Robert McNitt, spearheaded the selection of the 81 women. One daunting obstacle immediately faced by the female midshipmen was the overwhelming coverage by the media. The unwavering spotlight hindered the women's desires to not stand out. Such factors as ill-fitting uniforms subjected female midshipmen to stand out even more. Because the percentage of female midshipmen was small, women often found themselves to be the lone woman in the classroom and became subject to civilian and military professors' derogatory comments about women not belonging at the Academy (Gelfand, 2001).

Although women were admitted in their own right to the Naval Academy, full acceptance was long in coming. Women struggled with the newcomer status while facing the traditional thinking regarding the military as a 'masculine' occupation. Integrating females in a masculine institution met considerable resistance. Some male midshipmen denigrated their female classmates with "WUBA" jokes. WUBA, a term that

referred to the midshipmen uniform ("Working Uniform Blue Alpha") was used by male midshipmen as an acronym for female midshipmen, but translated to mean "Women Used By All" (Vojdik, 2003). It appeared as though women achieved membership status, but failed to achieve acceptance. Women continued to struggle for full membership. An example of their struggle surfaced during the Class of 1980's Herndon Ceremony. The Herndon ceremony, which signifies the culmination of Plebe year, demonstrated that a not yet friendly environment existed for female midshipmen as some of their male classmates pulled them down from the human pyramid.

About the same time, the former Secretary of the Navy, James Webb, published an article entitled "Women Can't Fight." Webb's controversial article argued that the presence of women "sterilized" the academy by turning it in to "a test tube for social experimentation" (Gelfland, 2001). The article contributed to the female midshipmen's struggle for acceptance as full partners with their male counterparts while ringing loud and clear for alumna and male midshipmen who disagreed with the presence of women at the Naval Academy.

F. GENDER INTERACTIONS AT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

Although many improvements have been made at the Naval Academy in respect to gender interactions, research shows that challenges still exist. A 1994 GAO report documented continued resistance to women in the service academies: 50 percent of female Naval midshipmen and 59 percent of female Air Force cadets reported experiencing some form of harassment at least twice a month (Vojdik, 2003). One of the most debilitating issues facing today's female midshipmen is physical standards. The difference in physical fitness standards between male and female midshipmen proves contentious. A 1997 service-wide RAND research study, examining progress of the services in expanding opportunities for women, found that "the perception of double standards was held most widely by men and tended to revolve around such things as different physical standards and a perceived unwillingness of male leaders to demand as much of women as they do of men" (Harrell & Miller, 1997).

A recent service-wide study, and more specifically the 2003 U.S. Air Force Academy Working Group Report, illustrates issues haunting gender interactions in today's military. Once again, the issue of differences in physical standards was raised in the working group's report on sexual assault at the Air Force Academy in response to a series of sexual allegations made by female Air Force cadets (The General Counsel of the Air Force, 2003). The working group examined the treatment and support of women at the Air Force Academy and found some male cadets held the perception that women were held to lower standards, or ridiculed women if they could not meet the same physical standards as men (The General Counsel of the Air Force, 2003). Additionally, the report also detailed the perception among some women at the Air Force Academy felt like they were in a "fish bowl," where each female cadet's every move was scrutinized and reflected on female cadets as a group. This report brings it close to home suggesting that the Naval Academy is not impervious to the issues weakening the current status of gender interactions at the Air Force Academy.

The "fish bowl" perception is not confined to the Air Force Academy. A qualitative study conducted with enlisted members across the services found "because of their low representation levels, women reported feeling isolated, highly visible, cut out of core assignments, shunted to clerical duties, and devalued" (Laurence, 1999). The participants in the study also expressed that because they were female, they were presumed incompetent until they proved themselves otherwise. Men were presumed competent until their individual actions deemed otherwise (Laurence, 1999). The study also found that men who belonged to higher integrated units expressed more positive attitudes towards the performance of women than men who belonged to low- or non-integrated units. The findings in this study prove relevant to all gender integrated units, more specifically, the Naval Academy.

In spite of cases of resistance to their presence, women have continued to experience success at the Naval Academy. They have demonstrated excellence in the classroom, on the field, and within the walls of the esteemed "leadership laboratory." The female graduates of the Naval Academy's list of accomplishments in the fleet prove that women are capable of handling the Academy's intense training environment.

However, despite the advances made towards gender interactions at the service academies, current literature shows that there remain issues concerning cohesion and morale that need to be resolved.

G. THE EFFECTS OF TOKENISM

Examining research specifically addressing gender as it affects women's work experiences can better assess the nature of gender interactions at the Naval Academy. Specifically, this section will reflect the importance of research on tokenism as it relates to women in the workplace. The effects of tokenism on small work groups explain how token groups in an organization are under the control of the dominant group and how the organizational structure determines behavior. This section will also outline the three phenomena of tokenism: high visibility, polarization, and stereotyping/role entrapment. Because women comprise only a small portion of the brigade of midshipmen, they are subject to suffering the consequences of tokenism.

Sociologist Dr. Rosabeth Kanter is well known for her study conducted in the 1970s on corporate power, especially as it relates to women. Kanter demonstrates how structural factors such as opportunity, power, and numbers still influence performance and success. She used the word "tokens" to refer to the relatively few women given prominent positions in a particular occupational setting and examines the status of women in work organizations with regard to their relative numbers. Token groups comprise 15 or less percent of an organization and are often treated as symbols or representatives of the social group to which they belong (Kanter, 1977). Therefore, tokens serve as symbols for their group when they fumble and are viewed as unusual examples of their kind when they succeed. Women who do well are considered as exceptions of their group.

Because the token group comprises a small percentage of an organization, the token does not have to work hard to be noticed, but she does have to work hard to have her achievements noticed. This observation leads to the first of the three phenomena associated with tokenism, *high visibility*. Tokens receive a larger share of awareness and attention because of their relatively few numbers. Visibility tends to create performance

pressures on the token (Kanter, 1977). This is attributable in large part of the differential treatment tokens experience. Kanter assesses tokens as the most visible and dramatized of performers. That is, each task performed by a token becomes a public performance. The choice is either to turn their visibility to their advantage or to try to become socially invisible. Choosing the latter is virtually career suicide.

The second phenomenon associated with tokenism is *polarization*. Polarization is a perceptual tendency which the dominant group exaggerates the differences between the tokens and themselves. Kanter emphasizes that the dominant groups becomes more aware of not only their differences with the token but also the commonalities. To preserve their commonality, dominants keep the tokens slightly outside by offering a boundary for themselves. Kanter concludes that polarization, or contrast, ultimately leads to heightening of dominant culture boundaries.

Assimilation, the third phenomenon, involves the use of stereotyping and role entrapment. This perceptual tendency leads to the distortion of the token's characteristics to fit the generalization (Kanter, 1977). Women are pressured to conform to gendered stereotypes as "mother," "little sister," or "seductress" that limits their behavioral flexibility. They must always fight stereotypes and tailor their actions to the desires and tastes of others. Kanter suggests it is easier for tokens to find an identity within the group by conforming to these preexisting stereotypes. Consequently, women risk social backlash when they take on stereotypically masculine roles or behaviors such as an authoritarian leadership style. The threat of moving outside the stereotypes tends to force tokens into role encapsulation, which ultimately limits their career opportunities.

All of these phenomena foster an environment condoning the dominant's group leverage over the token group. Kanter suggests that tokens suffer from their loneliness as they disassociate themselves from fellow tokens to seek advantage. Specifically, loyalty tests comes into play as the dominant group demands tokens to turn against members of their own group. By doing so, women strive to be viewed as the exceptions of their own groups as they struggle to outperform individual tokens. Kanter also suggests that irony persists when the same people treat women as both representatives and exceptions to

their group. In effect, tokenism illustrates how the structure of organizations can affect work behavior, the quality of work life, and the status of women.

H. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

The U.S. Naval Academy's mission to develop midshipmen and build future leaders drives the esteemed institution's organizational culture, identities, and beliefs. Prior to the service academies' doors opening to women in 1976, the Naval Academy's structural factors were embedded within the masculine culture. This section will discuss the organizational framework to include the structure and culture. The elements of the military culture will be examined to include men creating a masculine culture to the exclusion of women. Finally, we will look at how military culture is resistant to change as it relates to its acceptance of women.

Organizations are (1) social entities that (2) are goal-directed, (3) are designed as deliberately structured and coordinated activity systems, and (4) are linked to the external environment (Daft, 2004). The key element of an organization is its people and their relationships with one another. Key to organizations are people's interactions with one another to perform essential functions that help attain goals (Daft, 2004). However, the effects of gender diversity on human behavior in a working environment are challenging and can reduce the effectiveness of communication and increase conflict among workers (Cox, 2001). Managing diversity requires strong leadership maintaining the organizational characteristics that reward and encourage collective effort. The most fundamental of these is organizational culture.

Culture is the set of values, norms guiding beliefs, and understanding that is shared by members of an organization and taught to new members as correct (Daft, 2004). Everyone within an organization takes part in the culture, which in itself is not noticed until new changes are implemented. It is here that the power of culture makes itself visible.

Many organizations deal with cultural differences by exerting strong pressure on new employees to assimilate to existing organizational norms, real differences diminish over time (Cox, 2001). The military organization is no exception. Because of the

pressure to conform, members who have high cultural distance from prevailing norms of the work culture tend to either leave the organization or modify their thinking--and their behavior--to achieve acceptance (Cox, 2001). Achieving an organization's mission and vision through diversity management requires being able to distinguish between a genuine requirement and a preference, convenience, or tradition, and then basing actions on requirements, and nothing else (Thomas, 1999).

The tradition of the masculine warrior image and the combat paradigm are steadfast elements of the military culture. These elements are accompanied by attitudes and traditions of separatism contributing to the military culture's resistance to changes, which include women. As Kanter (1977) suggests, men create a masculine culture to the exclusion of women. The dominant group may use differentiation as resistance to women's integration. This resistance is prevalent in workplaces that have a strong masculine image, such as the military. The military attracts men who are eager to prove their manliness to themselves and others. A heavy emphasis on masculinity may be more related to the material options of constructing work in terms consistent with the broadly shared values of physical strength and courage--values associated with masculinity.

These constructions are challenged by the presence of women. Sexual harassment is an outcome of men's resistance to women in the organization. In a highly masculine environment, the presence of women, especially if they show themselves capable of doing the job, may threaten the masculine self-understanding (Alvesson & Billing, 1997).

The Naval Academy's culture is not unlike any other organizational culture in respect to its slow acceptance of any alteration to its structure. Specifically, admitting previously excluded minority groups to the once exclusive institution caused its cultural structure to suffer a crack. Military sociologist Mady Segal finds that, negative attitudes, discriminatory behaviors, social isolation, and overt harassment often await members of the newly admitted group (Johnson & Harper, 2005). The greater the inertia and tradition associated with the organization's culture, the greater the anticipated resistance (Johnson & Harper, 2005).

I. GENDER AND LEADERSHIP

The U.S. military serves as a reflection of the subgroups of American culture and continues to increase efforts to ensure that the military is strengthened by the contributions of both men and women with diverse backgrounds. A critical contribution made by these men and women is leadership. Leadership development and style are crucial to the longevity and success of a military officer's career. Indeed, leadership is an important skill on which officers are regularly rated; yet the style of leadership is a process rather than an outcome (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, 1997). Female officers may be less able to project a physical leadership style and therefore tend to rely on less confrontational leadership styles. Although women officers may be able to achieve similar outcomes with their subordinates, they may be evaluated as having weaker leadership skills because they employ a less traditional style of leadership (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, 1997).

In a 1983 report of gender differences in Fitness Reports (FITREPS), "men's evaluations contained significantly more narrative material than women's..." Men seemed more qualified, logical, dynamic mature, and aggressive than were women. Men, more so than women, were reported to be effective in training others, have Navy characteristics, be concerned with physical fitness, have a supportive spouse, and improve unit readiness, facilities, and safety conditions of their commands. Women, more so than men, were described as being supportive of equal opportunity programs, impeccable in uniform, and an asset to their command (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, 1997).

In 1993, a follow-up study was conducted on the 1983 study of differences between men and women's FITREPS. The conclusion of the 1993 study indicated that the Navy had made progress with the informal ratee training and formal rater training. It was no longer the case that male evaluators think of "women as cast from a traditional mold and have difficulty in viewing them in active, competitive roles." The study also found no evidence of sexist language in the female officers' fitness reports. In this newer sample, the female officers' evaluators viewed their female subordinates as equally dynamic, energetic, assertive, aggressive, and ambitious as their male peers, if not more

so. However, leadership was seen as the only area that men were still more effective than women. Whether this finding indicates that women are actually less effective leaders than men, that they have less opportunity to display their leadership abilities, or simply that women's leadership styles are different from those of men is an unanswered question (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, 1997).

One interpretation of women's lack of advancement at work corresponding with their educational accomplishments and amount of workforce participation is that women face a glass ceiling of discriminatory barriers (Powell, 1999). During the years from 1977 to 1997, female active duty officer representation rose from 5.9 percent to 14.1 percent (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, 1997). However, women and minority officers tend to be concentrated in administration and supply areas, and underrepresented in tactical operations, the area that yields two-thirds of the military's senior leadership: the general and flag officers of the Services (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, 1997). Contributing to the interpretation of resistance to women's influence and leadership are two of the most prominent and well-developed theoretical explanations for sex differences in social influence: status characteristics theory and social role theory (Powell, 1999). Both status characteristics theory and social role theory predict that men should exert greater influence over others than women do. Both of these theories focus on social structural factors contributing to sex differences in behavior rather than on biological or learned dispositional differences between men and women. The theories emphasize that the sexes differ in their social position and that these structural differences are the root cause of sex differences in behavior. According to status characteristics theory, gender acts as a diffuse status characteristic in our culture because more respect, honor, and importance are attached to men than women. Therefore, men are thought to be more competent than women in many domains. Performance expectations are often self-fulfilling because individuals who are expected to perform well have more opportunity to participate and therefore actually do make more task contributions, thereby enhancing their perceived status and competence and increasing their chances of emerging as group leaders (Powell, 1999).

History has shown a surge in gender integration and an increase in female representation in the military to include the service academies. Women are no longer

restricted or capped from military leadership. The admittance of women to the service academies has provided a significant pathway to top leadership positions. There has been progress (numerically, socially, and professionally) but gender interactions remain a concern. Although women graduates have broken new ground in the military, there still remain obstacles within the Naval Academy's predominantly male culture. Issues concerning cohesion and morale still exist. Consequently, women continue to use coping strategies in their mission to achieve acceptance as full partners with their male counterparts.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains how the research was conducted and data were collected. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the present status of gender representation and relations at the U.S. Naval Academy by evaluating midshipmen trends and characteristics over time. Therefore, the scope of this thesis demanded both a quantitative and qualitative approach. The methodology for this study is divided into two parts: 1) data from the Naval Academy's Institutional Research (IR) were analyzed, to determine trends of midshipmen characteristics over time; 2) data were collected from midshipmen through focus groups and these data were analyzed to assess attitudes and opinions concerning the current status of gender interactions at the Naval Academy. This study further explores those areas identified as potential keys to improving gender interactions among the brigade of midshipmen.

B. THE QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

1. Sampling Method

For this study, archival data were collected from Institutional Research (IR) on midshipmen from selected graduation year groups 1980 through 2004. Specifically, six Naval Academy classes (1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2004) were used to examine trends, across years within gender and between genders within years. Thus, a trend analysis was conducted on a series of "snap shots in time."

2. Variables

In addition to gender representation trends across selected years, selected characteristics and indicators also were examined within gender. Descriptive analyses of demographics, pre-USNA characteristics, USNA experiences, personality types, and graduation outcomes by gender were conducted for this study. The specific variables within these categories and the coding employed for statistical tests are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. 1980-2004 Midshipmen Characteristics Included in the Trend Analysis

Variable	Description	Value
Gender	Categorical Male (M) or female (F) midshipmen	M = 0 F = 1
Race/Ethnicity	Categorical White; Black; Hispanic; Other	White = 1 Black + Hispanic + Other = 0
Prior Enlisted Service	Categorical Prior service before arriving to USNA Y = prior service N = no prior service	Y = 1 N = 0
SAT Scores (Math/Verbal)	Numerical Interval Highest SAT scores submitted to USNA	Integer between 200-800
SAT Scores (combined)	Numerical Interval Highest Combined SAT scores submitted to USNA	Integer between 760-1610
Academic/Military QPR	Numerical Interval Final academic and military QPR submitted (graduates only)	Integer between 2.0-4.0
Introversion/ Extraversion MBTI Score	Categorical Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) I = introvert E = extrovert	I = 1 E = 0
Varsity Athlete	Numerical Interval Participation in varsity athletics Y = varsity athlete N = not a varsity athlete	Y = 1 N = 0
Graduation Outcome	Numerical Interval graduation status – attrited or graduated	Attrited = 0 Graduated = 1
Academic Major	Categorical Major upon graduation Technical = engineering, math, sciences Non-Technical = humanities, social sciences	Technical = 1 Non-Technical = 0
Selected Service	Categorical Service/community selected upon graduation 1 = Navy 2 = Marine Corps 3 = Additional Service 4 = Other	1 + 2 + 3 = 1 4 = 0
Leader	Categorical Striper characteristics Y = holding three stripes or above. N = not holding three stripes or above	Y = 1 N = 0

3. Data Analysis: The Quantitative Approach

This study examined trends, across years within gender and between genders within years. Frequencies or mean scores were compared, as appropriate, using chi-square or Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with post hoc t-tests. Finally, a hierarchical logistic regression was conducted predicting USNA graduation from three sets of variables. The first model included only one academic predictor—SAT score. Model 2 added a personality variable, prior enlisted status, athletics, and controlled for graduation year. Finally, race/ethnicity and gender were added to the equation in model 3. The statistical software package employed was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.

C. THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The focus groups were intended to provide a more in-depth understanding of issues and attitudes related to gender interactions at the Naval Academy while taking a snapshot at the culture within the brigade of midshipmen.

1. Participants and Sampling Method

To identify a varied range of midshipmen’s perspectives on gender interactions at the Naval Academy, the goal was to reflect the four-class system within the brigade of midshipmen. To accomplish this, midshipmen were grouped into categories based on gender and class year. Prior to the selection process, permission was granted from Institutional Research. Table 2 illustrates the cells of focus group categories and the number of focus groups per cell.

Table 2. Number of Focus Groups Conducted Within Sampling Categories

Focus Groups	Class Year		TOTAL
	4/C & 3/C	2/C & 1/C	
Gender			
Male	2	3	5
Female	2	2	4

Each of the nine focus groups comprised 8 to 10 midshipmen participants representing the Naval Academy's entire four-class system (4/C, 3/C, 2/C, & 1/C). The researchers randomly contacted 9 of the 30 company officers for permission to interview their selected midshipmen who fell within the two categories: class and gender. Each midshipman was then contacted via email by the authors for their participation.

A schedule was developed for the focus groups to accommodate the midshipmen. Eight of the nine focus groups were held between the midshipmen's lunch hour and one focus group was held during dinner. The focus groups were conducted over a two-week period from October 2004 through November 2004. The purpose of the tight schedule was to eliminate the amount of discussion among midshipmen outside the focus groups. Focused interviews were conducted as a means to gain and assess midshipmen's perspectives on the current status of gender interactions at the Naval Academy. Focus groups were conducted with midshipmen representing the entire four-class system (4/C, 3/C, 2/C, & 1/C). Separate focus groups with men and women were held within two categories based on class. Specifically, the 4/C and 3/C midshipmen were grouped together as well as the 2/C and 1/C midshipmen.

2. Focus Group Protocol

These focus groups were intended to provide a better understanding of issues related to gender interactions. A structured, standardized protocol was implemented consisting of five questions covering the following topics:

- Culture and climate within midshipman's company.
- Positive experiences with gender interactions.
- Negative experiences with gender interactions.
- Is being a coeducational institution an issue at the Naval Academy?
- Naval Academy's acceptance of women.
- Role of gender on leadership development.

3. Focus Group Process

The focus groups were held in a conference room in Luce Hall—one of the academic buildings at USNA. As a means to control for contamination of interview results, the facilitators were the same sex as the participants. Participants were given a brief synopsis of the intended research and informed of their confidentiality and their rights regarding the tape recording of the group. They were also encouraged to respond through open-ended questions while maintaining the ground rules of the focus group. For each group, five standard questions were asked preceded by an icebreaker question.

Each participant was assigned a number to maintain his or her confidentiality. Upon answering a question, participants would begin their answer with their assigned number to attribute their opinions to their specific number. Generally, volunteers spoke first. Once they spoke, the facilitators asked if anyone else had something to add. To ensure a well-rounded discussion for each question, participants who did not immediately volunteer a response were called upon to give their opinions. This prevented one or two members from dominating the group discussion.

After the focus groups were facilitated, brief summaries were prepared of the major themes that surfaced during the discussions. These summaries were used for data analysis as a way to identify the topics and subtopics that should be coded in the focus group transcripts.

4. Data Analysis: The Qualitative Approach

To prepare the focus group data for analysis, a systematic process was followed. First, after the focus groups were conducted, the facilitators prepared brief summaries of the major themes that came from the discussions. These summaries provided topics and subtopics to be coded in the focus group transcripts.

Second, the summaries, focus group protocol, and information from the surveys were used to develop a list of key issues to be identified in the transcripts. Each focus group was summarized. Additionally, the focus group audiotapes were transcribed and the data were coded.

D. INTERVIEW OF SENIOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP

During the course of this research, an invaluable opportunity arose to interview the first woman to attain 3-star rank, Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter, USMC (ret). This interview was invaluable to the research given General Mutter's list of accomplishments as a flag officer in the Marine Corps. She retired from the Marine Corps effective 1 January 1999. Her last assignment was as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (DC/S, M&RA), Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.

General Mutter agreed to meet with both authors and their advisors in December 2004 in the Washington, D.C. area. A proposed protocol and list of questions was provided in advance to the interviewee to make the most of the limited time. The proposed protocol was not strictly followed as the interviewers asked additional questions to highlight certain points, and the interviewee provided detailed answers enriching the interview process. Permission was granted by General Mutter to tape record the interview. The tapes were later transcribed for data analysis and a copy of the transcription was submitted to General Mutter. These data were used in conjunction with the results of focus groups and trend analysis to help formulate recommendations.

IV. TREND ANALYSIS RESULTS

This portion of the study evaluates the status of gender representation at the United States Naval Academy through evaluating descriptive statistics of midshipmen demographics, experiences, personality types, interests, and graduation outcomes. Specifically, six Naval Academy classes (1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2004) were used to examine trends, across years within gender and between genders within years. Thus, a trend analysis was conducted on a series of “snap shots in time.” Analysis

Table 3 shows the number and percentage of midshipmen entering the Naval Academy by gender for selected year groups since 1980. The representation of female midshipmen has consistently increased over the past 25 years. These gender trends are graphically depicted in Figure 1.

Table 3. Number and Percentage of Midshipmen by Gender and Graduating Class (Selected Years)

Gender	Graduation Year						All Years
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004*	
Female Midshipmen	81 6.3%	107 8.1%	143 10.4%	145 12.8%	198 16.4%	190 16.4%	864 11.5%
Male Midshipmen	1211 93.7%	1217 91.9%	1227 89.6%	990 87.2%	1011 83.6%	967 83.6%	6623 88.5%
Class Total	1292	1324	1370	1135	1209	1157	7487

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Class years include both attrites and graduates

* 11 cases from year 2004 were inadvertently dropped during the data merge.

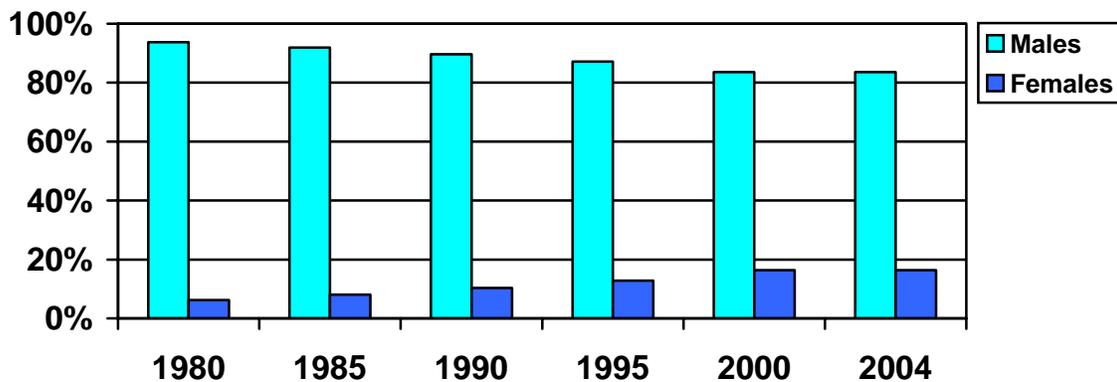


Figure 1. Percentage of Midshipmen by Gender and Graduating Class

As the proportion of female midshipman has grown, so too has its diversity. Table 4 shows trends among male and female midshipmen across the selected years by race/ethnicity. Minority representation has increased among both female and male midshipmen (females - $\chi^2 = 322.667$; $p < .001$; males - $\chi^2 = 3077.944$; $p < .001$; both genders - $\chi^2 = 3396.801$; $p < .001$). Except for year 2000, men and women were comparable in terms of minority representation levels. Women were more likely to be minority group members in that year ($\chi^2 = 5.814$; $p < .05$).

Table 4. Percentage of Midshipman by Race/Ethnicity within Gender and Graduating Class (Selected Years)

Gender & Race/Ethnicity	Graduation Year						χ^2 ^a
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004	
Female Midshipmen	N= 81	N=107	N=143	N=145	N=198	N=190	322.667***
White	93.8	87.9	76.9	75.9	75.8	82.1	
Black	1.2	2.8	12.6	11.0	8.6	4.2	
Hispanic	--	3.7	2.8	6.2	6.6	7.4	
Other	4.9	5.6	7.7	6.9	9.1	6.3	
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Male Midshipmen	N= 1211	N=1217	N=1227	N=990	N=1011	N=967	3077.944***
White	87.9	87.6	82.6	80.5	83.0	81.6	
Black	5.2	3.9	5.9	6.9	5.5	6.5	
Hispanic	2.4	3.4	4.4	6.4	6.0	6.1	
Other	4.5	5.2	7.0	6.3	5.4	5.8	
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100	
χ^2 ^b	2.603(ns)	.006(ns)	2.842(ns)	1.698(ns)	5.814*	.028(ns)	
All Midshipmen	N= 1292	N=1324	N=1370	N=1135	N=1209	N=1157	3396.801***
White	88.2	87.6	82.0	79.9	81.8	81.7	
Black	5.0	3.8	6.6	7.4	6.0	6.1	
Hispanic	2.2	3.4	4.2	6.3	6.1	6.3	
Other	4.6	5.2	7.1	6.3	6.0	5.9	
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100	

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Shaded areas represent the combined comparison group for the Chi Square analysis.

Class years include both attrites and graduates.

Chi Square values depicted on right represent within gender across years

ns = non-significant

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

a χ^2 comparison of minority representation across the selected years

b χ^2 comparison of minority representation within year

Table 5 shows trends among male and female midshipmen across the selected years by SAT scores. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) results, together with post-hoc t-tests (see Tables 6 and 7) indicate that female midshipmen have entered the Academy with higher average SAT verbal scores than men with the exception of 2000 when SAT verbal scores were comparable for men and women. For the selected years, Table 5 together with Table 6 ANOVA results, shows male midshipmen have entered the Academy with higher average SAT math scores than women. Finally, with regard to combined SAT scores, there were no significant differences by gender. However, SAT scores varied across years and there was a significant interaction between gender and graduation year. Prior to 1995, the higher verbal scores for women boosted the total SAT to levels above the average for men. The gender convergence in verbal scores resulted in higher combined SAT scores for men in the classes of 1995 and 2000. Combined SAT scores were comparable for men and women for the class of 2004.

Table 5. Mean and Std Deviation of SAT Scores within Gender and Graduating Class (Selected Years)

Means & Std of SAT Scores	Graduation Year					
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004
Female Midshipmen	N= 81	N=107	N=143	N=145	N=198	N=190
Mean Score/Std SAT Verbal	604 (74)	609 (78)	663 (64)	641 (62)	633 (68)	646 (64)
Mean Score/Std SAT Math	649 (52)	657 (53)	646 (54)	640 (56)	641 (65)	663 (57)
Mean Score/Std Combined SAT	1253 (105)	1266 (110)	1309 (101)	1281 (100)	1275 (115)	1309 (101)
Male Midshipmen	N= 1209	N=1212	N=1226	N=990	N=1011	N=967
Mean Score/Std SAT Verbal	565 (80)	570 (72)	642 (63)	637 (67)	633 (69)	634 (71)
Mean Score/Std SAT Math	(659) (70)	661 (61)	655 (58)	660 (61)	660 (60)	669 (65)
Mean Score/Std Combined SAT	1224 (128)	1231 (112)	1297 (102)	1296 (109)	1293 (109)	1304 (118)
All Midshipmen	N= 1290	N=1319	N=1369	N=1135	N=1209	N=1157
Mean Score/Std SAT Verbal	567 (80)	573 (74)	644 (63)	637 (66)	633 (68)	636 (70)
Mean Score/Std SAT Math	659 (69)	661 (60)	654 (58)	657 (61)	657 (61)	668 (63)
Mean Score/Std Combined SAT	1226 (127)	1234 (112)	1298 (102)	1294 (108)	1290 (110)	1305 (115)

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Standard deviation (std) is indicated in parenthesis.

Class years include both attrites and graduates.

Table 6. SAT Analysis of Variance Results of Gender by Graduation Year

SAT VERBAL

Dependent Variable: SAT_VERB SATV High

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	8233723.069 ^a	11	748520.279	151.775	.000
Intercept	1087823283	1	1087823283	220575.0	.000
GENDER	260271.213	1	260271.213	52.774	.000
GRAD_YEA	1642167.840	5	328433.568	66.596	.000
GENDER * GRAD_YEA	151931.654	5	30386.331	6.161	.000
Error	36825467.0	7467	4931.762		
Total	2867595875	7479			
Corrected Total	45059190.1	7478			

a. R Squared = .183 (Adjusted R Squared = .182)

SAT MATH

Dependent Variable: SAT_MATH SATM High

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	279003.251 ^a	11	25363.932	6.572	.000
Intercept	1202552494	1	1202552494	311583.3	.000
GENDER	88559.955	1	88559.955	22.946	.000
GRAD_YEA	121796.201	5	24359.240	6.312	.000
GENDER * GRAD_YEA	29644.383	5	5928.877	1.536	.175
Error	28818810.8	7467	3859.490		
Total	3279140500	7479			
Corrected Total	29097814.0	7478			

a. R Squared = .010 (Adjusted R Squared = .008)

SAT MATH/VERBAL (COMBINED)

Dependent Variable: COMBSAT Combined SAT

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	8056569.643 ^a	11	732415.422	57.973	.000
Intercept	4577876249	1	4577876249	362355.5	.000
GENDER	45189.228	1	45189.228	3.577	.059
GRAD_YEA	1634827.525	5	326965.505	25.881	.000
GENDER * GRAD_YEA	279376.113	5	55875.223	4.423	.001
Error	94335539.9	7467	12633.660		
Total	1.223E+10	7479			
Corrected Total	102392109	7478			

a. R Squared = .079 (Adjusted R Squared = .077)

Table 7. SAT Comparison “t” Tests by Graduation Year (Selected Years)

Female-Male Comparison “t” & Mean Differences	Graduation Year					
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004
SAT Verbal	4.323*** (39)	5.239*** (38)	3.695*** (21)	.748(ns) (4)	.162(ns) (1)	2.136* (12)
SAT Math	1.266(ns) (10)	.619(ns) (4)	1.675(ns) (9)	3.691*** (20)	4.016*** (19)	1.237(ns) (6)
Combined SAT	2.027* (29)	3.081** (35)	1.345(ns) (13)	1.603(ns) (15)	2.124* (18)	.612(ns) (6)

ns = non-significant

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

Figures 2 and 3 graphically depict the statistically significant interaction of gender and graduation year for SAT Verbal and Combined SAT scores. On average, women outscored men with the exception of the classes 1995 and 2000 when a reversal occurred.

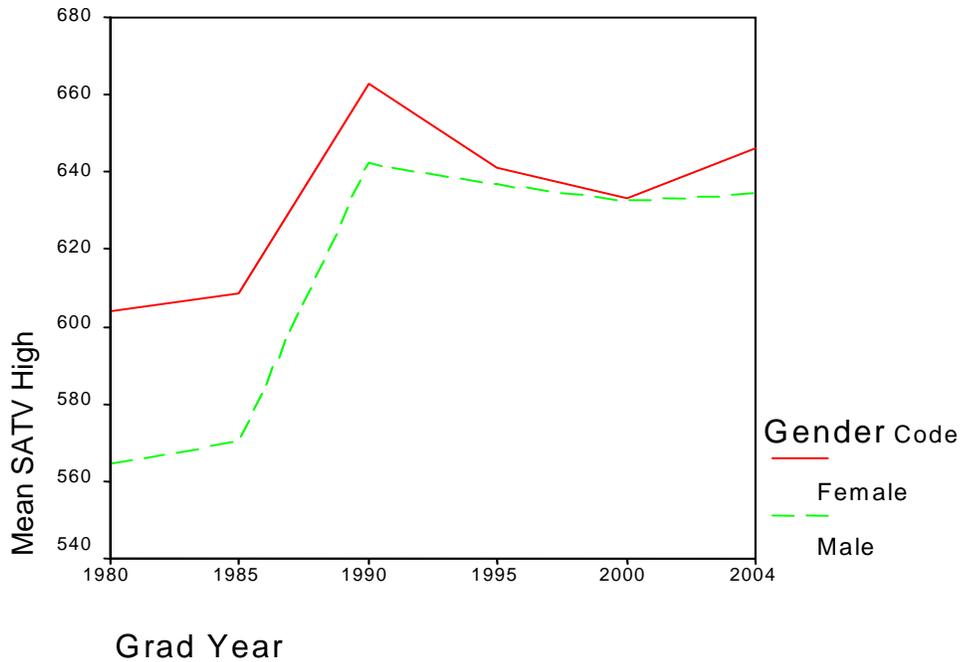


Figure 2. Mean SAT Verbal by Gender

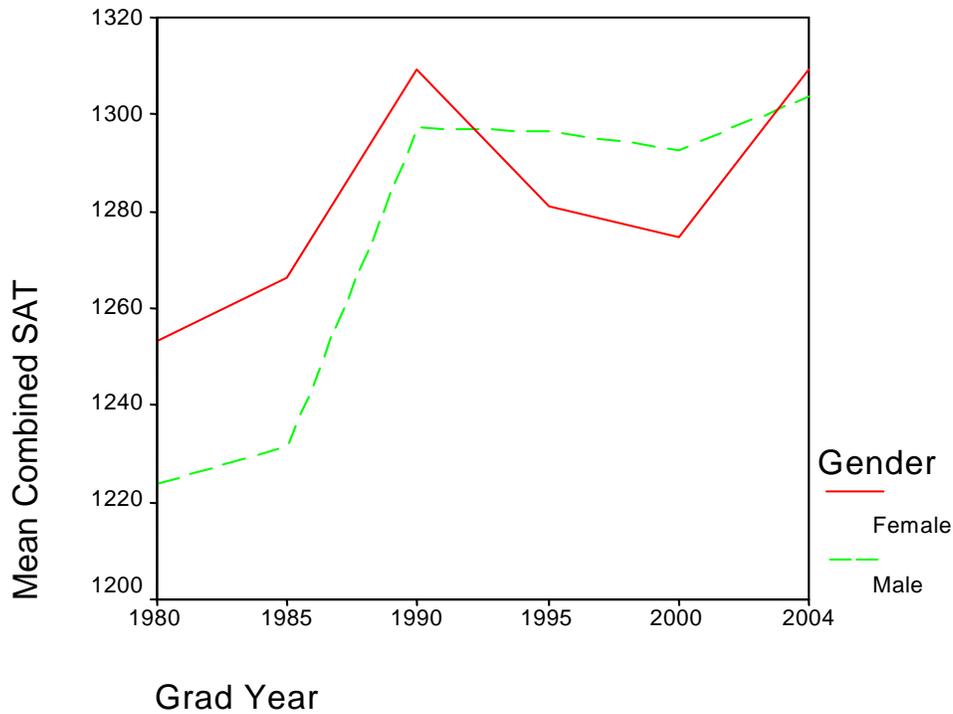


Figure 3. Mean SAT Combined by Gender

Table 8 shows trends in prior enlisted service among male and female midshipmen across the selected years. Chi-Square values for the selected years are significant, showing differences by gender, namely that male midshipmen are more likely to enter the Academy with prior enlisted service than female midshipmen. Figure 4 shows the percentage of male and female midshipmen who had prior enlisted service. A minority of both genders (less than 20 percent) had served as enlisted members with the figures for women showing a particularly low rate (less than 10 percent).

Table 8. Percentage of Midshipman by Prior Enlisted Service within Gender and Graduating Class (Selected Years)

Gender & Prior Enlisted	Graduation Year						χ^2 ^a	χ^2 ^b
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004		
Female Midshipmen	--	N=107	N=143	N=145	N=198	N=190	748.17***	
Prior Service	--	4.7	6.3	5.5	2.0	2.1		3.67(ns)
No Prior Service	--	95.3	93.7	94.5	98.0	97.9		
All Groups	--	100	100	100	100	100		
Male Midshipmen	--	N=1212	N=1227	N=990	N=1011	N=967	4214.12***	
Prior Service	--	15.1	14.5	11.6	8.4	11.0		61.09***
No Prior Service	--	84.9	85.5	88.4	91.6	89.0		
All Groups	--	100	100	100	100	100		
χ^2 ^c	--	8.745**	7.346**	4.869*	9.905**	14.478***		
All Midshipmen	--	N=1319	N=1370	N=1135	N=1209	N=1157	4948.79***	
Prior Service	--	14.3	13.6	10.8	7.4	9.5		61.43***
No Prior Service	--	85.7	86.4	89.2	92.6	90.5		
All Groups	--	100	100	100	100	100		

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.
 Prior enlisted service is not available for year 80.
 Class years include both attrites and graduates
 Chi Square values depicted on right represent within gender across years
 ns = non-significant
 * p < .05
 ** p < .01
 *** p < .001
 a χ^2 comparison of prior enlisted service across the selected years
 b χ^2 comparison of "within prior enlisted" across the selected years
 c χ^2 comparison of prior enlisted service within year

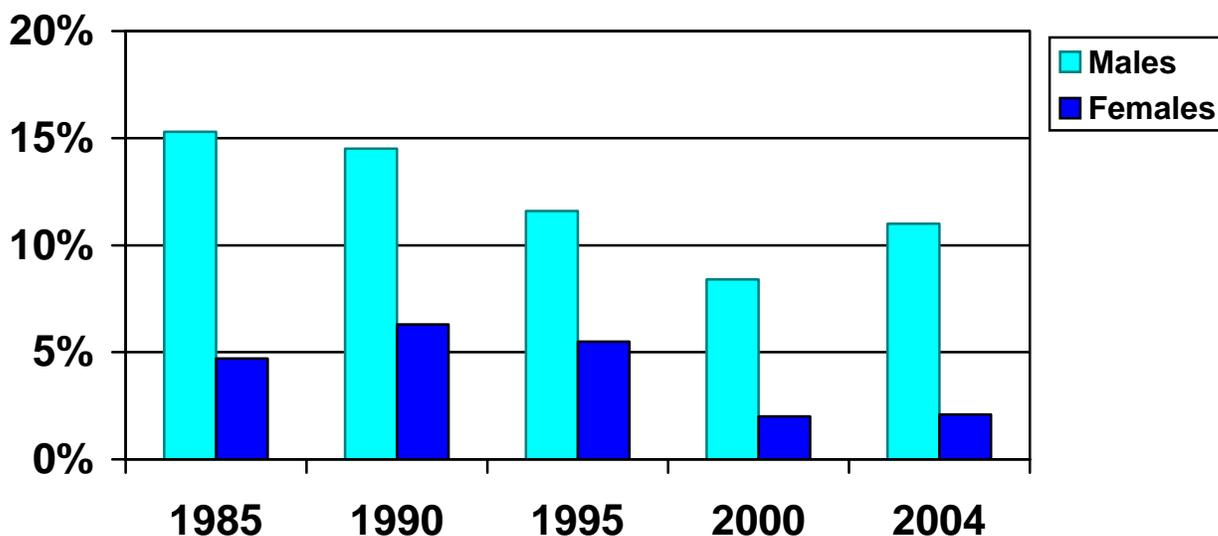


Figure 4. Percentage of Midshipmen who were Prior Enlisted by Gender

Table 9 shows the mean Academic and Military QPR scores for female and male midshipmen for selected years. Gender, graduation year, and the interaction of gender and class year show statistically significant differences (see Table 10). In classes 1990, 1995, and 2000, males had higher academic QPR scores. Males had the highest academic QPR in 1995 (see Table 9) “ t ” = 2.640; $p < .01$. The exception was in class 2004 where females had a slightly higher academic QPR than males. In classes 1990, 1995, and 2000 males had higher military QPR scores “ t ” = 3.430; $p < .001$, “ t ” = 3.069; $p < .01$, and “ t ” = 3.243 $p < .001$, (see Table 11). Military QPR scores for Class 2004 for both males and females were comparable.

Table 9. Mean and Std Deviation of Academic/Military QPR Scores within Gender and Graduating Class (Selected Years)

Means& Std of Academic/Military QPR	Graduation Year					
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004
Female Midshipmen	--	--	N=123	N=134	N=171	N=183
Mean Score/Std Academic QPR	--	--	2.54 (.48)	2.67 (.49)	2.77 (.55)	2.98 (.54)
Mean Score/Std Military QPR	--	--	2.78 (.40)	3.13 (.38)	2.94 (.41)	3.10 (.41)
Male Midshipmen	--	--	N=1133	N=925	N=925	N=946
Mean Score/Std Academic QPR	--	--	2.64 (.53)	2.80 (.56)	2.85 (.54)	2.93 (.58)
Mean Score/Std Military QPR	--	--	2.91 (.42)	3.25 (.39)	3.10 (.41)	3.10 (.40)
All Midshipmen	--	--	N=1256	N=1059	N=1096	N=1129
Mean Score/Std Academic QPR	--	--	2.63 (.53)	2.79 (.56)	2.84 (.55)	2.94 (.57)
Mean Score/Std Military QPR	--	--	2.90 (.42)	3.23 (.39)	3.04 (.41)	3.06 (.40)

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Standard Deviations are indicated in parenthesis

Academic and military cum QPR mean scores and std are not available for years 80 and 85.

Class years include both attrites and graduates

ns = non-significant

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

Table 10. QPR Analysis of Variance Results of Gender by Graduation Year

ACADEMIC QPR

Dependent Variable: CUM_AQPR Cum Academic QPR

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	65.188 ^a	7	9.313	30.860	.000
Intercept	15861.682	1	15861.682	52562.871	.000
GENDER	2.059	1	2.059	6.823	.009
GRAD_YEA	36.885	3	12.295	40.743	.000
GENDER * GRAD_YEA	2.955	3	.985	3.264	.020
Error	1367.603	4532	.302		
Total	36809.555	4540			
Corrected Total	1432.792	4539			

a. R Squared = .045 (Adjusted R Squared = .044)

MILITARY QPR

Dependent Variable: CUM_MQPR Cum Military QPR

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	68.554 ^a	7	9.793	60.290	.000
Intercept	18897.025	1	18897.025	116332.2	.000
GENDER	3.404	1	3.404	20.954	.000
GRAD_YEA	28.498	3	9.499	58.479	.000
GENDER * GRAD_YEA	2.588	3	.863	5.310	.001
Error	736.179	4532	.162		
Total	43027.958	4540			
Corrected Total	804.733	4539			

a. R Squared = .085 (Adjusted R Squared = .084)

Table 11. Academic and Military QPR Comparison “t” Tests by Graduation Year

Female-Male Comparison “t” & Mean Difference	Graduation Year					
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004
Academic QPR	--	--	1.931(ns) (.1)	2.640** (.14)	1.711(ns) (.08)	1.240(ns) (.06)
Military QPR	--	--	3.430*** (.14)	3.069** (.11)	3.243*** (.11)	1.084(ns) (.04)

ns = non-significant

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

Figures 5 and 6 graphically depict the statistically significant interaction of gender and graduation year for academic and military QPR. Mean Academic and Military QPRs were higher for male midshipmen in the classes of 1990, 1995, and 2000. Gender differences were not significant for the class of 2004.

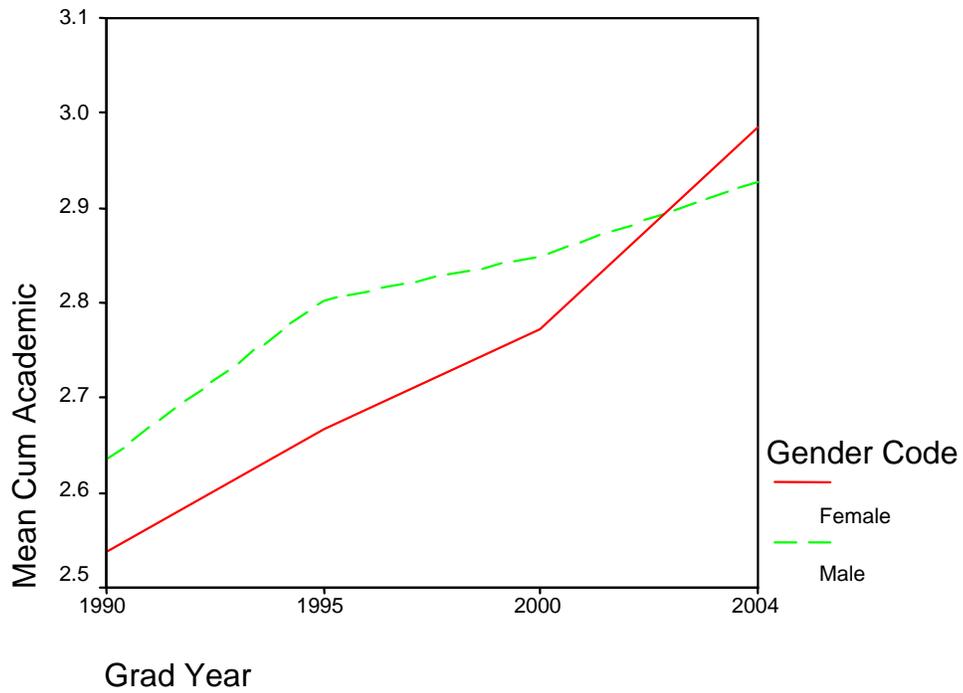


Figure 5. Mean Academic QPR by Gender

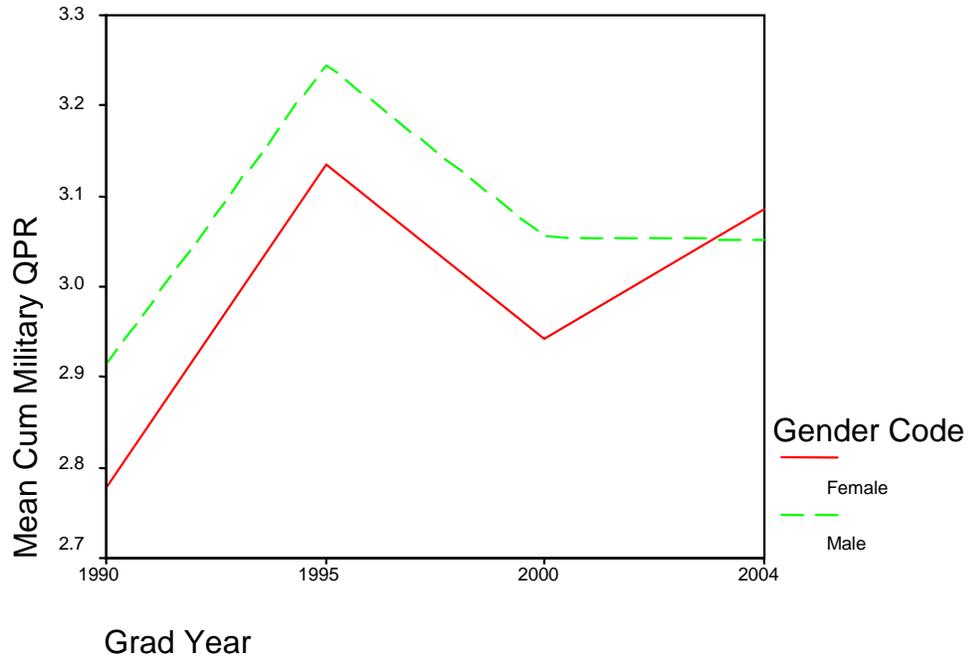


Figure 6. Mean Military QPR by Gender

Table 12 shows trends in varsity athletics among male and female midshipmen across the selected years. Chi-Square values are significant, showing differences by gender, namely that female midshipmen are more likely to be varsity athletes than male midshipmen. Figure 7 shows the percentage of varsity athletes among male and female midshipmen.

Table 12. Percentage of Midshipman by Varsity Athletics within Gender and Graduating Class (Selected Years)

Gender & Varsity Athlete Status	Graduation Year						χ^{2a}	χ^{2b}
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004		
Female Midshipmen	--	--	N=143	N=145	N=198	N=190	20.60***	
Varsity Athlete	--	--	64.3	67.6	46.5	60.5		3.57(ns)
Not Varsity Athlete	--	--	35.7	32.4	53.5	39.5		
All Groups	--	--	100	100	100	100		
Male Midshipmen	--	--	N=1227	N=990	N=1011	N=967	17.77***	
Varsity Athlete	--	--	48.0	48.2	41.3	49.3		31.26***
Not Varsity Athlete	--	--	52.0	51.8	58.7	50.7		
All Groups	--	--	100	100	100	100		
χ^{2c}	--	--	13.67**	19.05***	1.78(ns)	7.97**		
All Midshipmen	--	--	N=1370	N=1135	N=1209	N=1157	4.93*	
Varsity Athlete	--	--	49.7	50.7	42.2	51.2		25.29***
Not Varsity Athlete	--	--	50.3	49.3	57.8	48.8		
All Groups	--	--	100	100	100	100		

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Varsity Athlete status not available for years 80 and 85.

Chi Square values depicted on right represent within gender across years

Class Years include both attrites and graduates

ns = non-significant

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

a χ^2 comparison of varsity athletes across the selected years

b χ^2 comparison of "within varsity athletes" across the selected years

c χ^2 comparison of varsity athletics within year

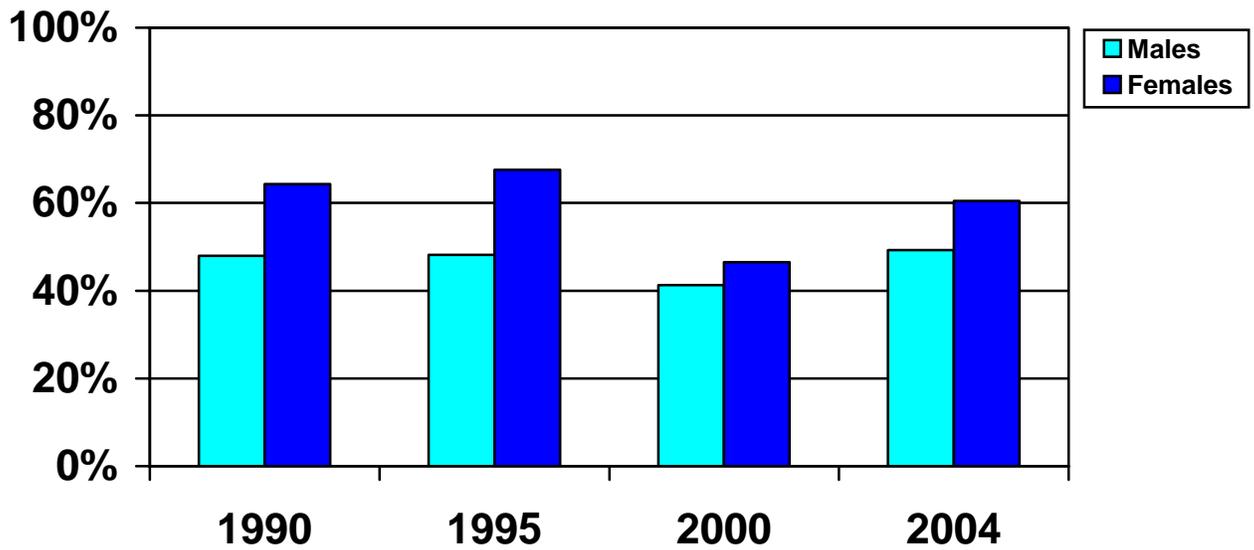


Figure 7. Percentages of Midshipmen who were Varsity Athletes by Gender

Table 13 shows trends in technical and non-technical majors among male and female midshipmen across the selected years. Chi-Square values are significant in years 1985 and 1990 indicating differences by gender, namely that female midshipmen are less likely to be technical majors than male midshipmen.

Table 13. Percentage of Midshipman by Academic Majors (Technical/Non Technical) within Gender and Graduating Class

Gender & Academic Major	Graduation Year						χ^2 ^a	χ^2 ^b
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004		
Female Midshipmen	N=55	N=76	N=98	N=106	N=133	N=155	16.37***	
Technical	70.9	69.7	57.1	57.5	49.6	56.1		53.64***
Non Technical	29.1	30.3	42.9	42.5	50.4	43.9		
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100		
Male Midshipmen	N=891	N=968	N=910	N=810	N=814	N=830	802.26***	
Technical	81.5	81.6	67.1	65.3	58.6	60.5		106.30***
Non Technical	18.5	18.4	32.9	34.7	41.4	39.5		
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100		
χ^2 ^c	3.74(ns)	6.39*	3.95*	2.46(ns)	3.77(ns)	1.03(ns)		
All Midshipmen	N=946	N=1044	N=1008	N=916	N=947	N=991	789.24***	
Technical	80.9	80.7	66.2	64.4	57.3	59.8		149.11***
Non Technical	19.1	19.3	33.8	35.6	42.7	40.2		
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100		

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Chi Square values depicted on right represent within gender across years

ns = non-significant

Class Years Include only graduates

Technical majors: (Engineering, Mathematics and Sciences); Non-Technical majors: (Humanities and Social Sciences)

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

a χ^2 comparison of majors across the selected years

b χ^2 comparison of “within non-technical majors” across the selected years

c χ^2 comparison of majors within year

Table 14 shows similar patterns for both men and women in terms of those who end up selecting Navy upon graduation. For both men and women the “other” category (Not commissioned, but graduated, not physically qualified, but graduated and attrites) shows substantial percentages. Women have higher percentages of the “other category” for selected years (2000, 2004).

Table 14. Percentage of Midshipman by Service Community Selection within Gender and Graduating Class (Selected Years)

Gender & Selected Service	Graduation Year						χ^2_a	χ^2_b
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004		
Female Midshipmen	N=81	N=107	N=143	N=145	N=198	N=190	49.12***	
Navy	59.3	64.5	65.0	65.5	57.6	61.1		
Marine Corps	8.6	4.7	1.4	6.2	9.1	16.8		
Additional Services	--	--	--	1.4	--	2.1		
Other	32.1	30.8	33.6	26.9	33.3	20.0		153.35***
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100		
Male Midshipmen	N=1211	N=1217	N=1227	N=990	N=1011	N=961	619.71***	
Navy	60.1	64.5	65.9	69.0	65.3	68.4		
Marine Corps	12.4	14.0	7.6	11.1	13.7	16.8		
Additional Services	--	.4	.3	.6	.2	.1		
Other	27.5	21.1	26.2	19.3	20.8	14.8		2076.75***
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100		
χ^2_c	.023(ns)	.000(ns)	.038(ns)	.707(ns)	4.27*	3.85*		
All Midshipmen	N= 1292	N=1324	N=1370	N=1135	N=1209	N=1151	665.33***	
Navy	60.1	64.5	65.8	68.5	64.0	67.2		
Marine Corps	12.2	13.2	6.9	10.5	13.0	16.8		
Additional Services	--	.4	.3	.7	.2	.4		
Other	27.8	21.9	27.0	20.3	22.8	15.6		2215.35***
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100		

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Chi Square values depicted on right represent within gender across years

ns = non-significant

Class years include both graduates and attrites

Shaded areas represent the combined comparison group for the Chi Square analysis.

Navy = Commissioned Navy

Marine Corps = Commissioned Marine Corps

Additional Service = Commissioned Air force, Army and Coast Guard

Other = Not commissioned, but graduated, not physically qualified, but graduated and attrites

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

a χ^2 comparison of community service selection across the selected years

b χ^2 comparison of “not commissioned” across the selected years

c χ^2 comparison of community service selection within year

Table 15 and Figure 8 show that graduation rates fluctuate over time for both men and women. Within classes, men tend to have higher graduation rates with statistically significant differences noted for year groups 1985, 1995, and 2000.

Table 15. Percentage of Midshipman Graduates by Gender and Graduating Class (Selected Years)

Gender & Graduation Status	Graduation Year						χ^{2a}	χ^{2b}
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004		
Female Midshipmen	N=81	N=107	N=143	N=145	N=198	N=190	168.89***	
Graduated	67.9	71.0	68.5	73.1	67.2	81.6		
Attrited	32.1	29.0	31.5	26.9	32.8	18.4		23.72***
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100		
Male Midshipmen	N=1211	N=1217	N=1227	N=990	N=1011	N=967	2220.63***	
Graduated	73.6	79.5	74.2	81.8	80.5	86.4		
Attrited	26.4	20.5	25.8	18.2	19.5	13.6		126.49***
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100		
χ^{2c}	1.25(ns)	4.27*	2.09(ns)	6.17*	17.37***	3.07(ns)		
All Midshipmen	N=1292	N=1324	N=1370	N=1135	N=1209	N=1157	2375.20***	
Graduated	73.2	78.9	73.6	80.7	78.3	85.7		
Attrited	26.8	21.1	26.4	19.3	21.7	14.3		101.96***
All Groups	100	100	100	100	100	100		

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Chi Square values depicted on right represent within gender across years

ns = non-significant

Class years include both graduates and attrites

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

a χ^2 comparison of community service selection across the selected years

b χ^2 comparison of “within attrites” across the selected years

c χ^2 comparison of community service selection within year

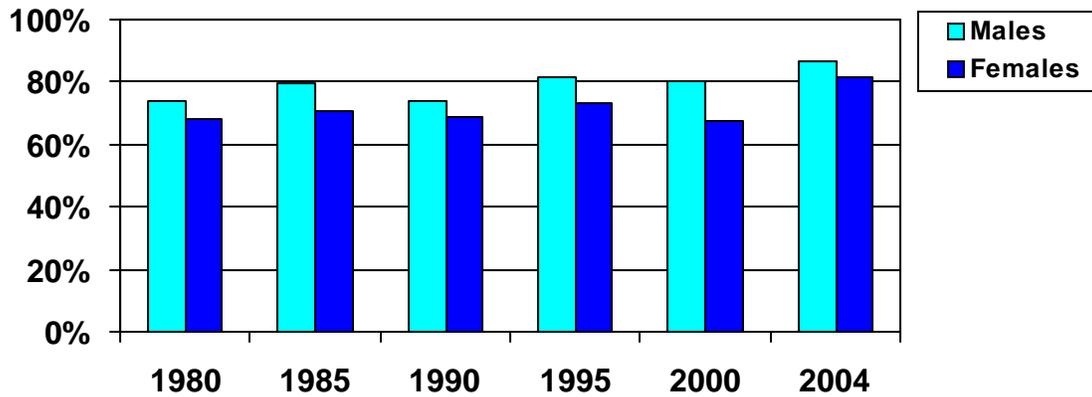


Figure 8. Percentage of Midshipmen who Graduated by Gender

For both male and female midshipmen, extroverts outnumber introverts. Within the classes of 1995 and 2000 there were statistically significant differences, indicating that proportionally more extroverts were women.

Table 16. Percentage of Midshipman by MBTI Score within Gender and Graduating Class (Selected Years)

Gender & MBTI Score	Graduation Year					
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004
Female Midshipmen	--	--	N=92	N=142	N=190	N=190
Extrovert	--	--	58.7	63.4	64.7	60.0
Introvert	--	--	41.3	36.6	35.3	40.0
All Groups	--	--	100	100	100	100
Male Midshipmen	--	--	N=916	N=954	N=978	N=967
Extrovert	--	--	57.1	52.8	52.2	54.9
Introvert	--	--	42.9	47.2	47.8	45.1
All Groups	--	--	100	100	100	100
χ^2	--	--	.087(ns)	5.54*	9.10**	1.67(ns)
Total Midshipmen	--	--	N=1008	N=1096	N=1168	N=1157

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

MBTI scores not available for years 80 and 85.

ns = non-significant

Class years include both graduates and attrites

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

The following table shows midshipmen who were leaders (defined as holding a leadership position of 3 “stripes” and above). For men, the proportion of leaders fluctuates over the years as can be surmised from the significant χ^2 ^b. The interesting finding is that within the years, the proportion of leaders does not differ significantly by gender.

Table 17. Percentage of Midshipman by Leadership within Gender and Graduating Class (Selected Years)

Gender & Leadership	Graduation Year						χ^2 ^a	χ^2 ^b
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004		
Female Midshipmen	--	--	N=143	N=145	N=198	N=190	532.042***	
Leader	--	--	10.5	16.6	12.6	15.3		4.505(ns)
Not Leader	--	--	89.5	83.4	87.4	84.7		
All Groups	--	--	100	100	100	100		
Male Midshipmen	--	--	N=1227	N=990	N=1011	N=967	4115.785***	
Leader	--	--	16.7	20.4	14.5	15.2		18.241***
Not a Leader	--	--	83.3	79.6	85.5	84.8		
All Groups	--	--	100	100	100	100		
χ^2 ^c	--	--	3.673(ns)	1.177(ns)	.497(ns)	.000(ns)		
All Midshipmen	--	--	N=1370	N=1135	N=1209	N=1157	4647.816***	
Leader	--	--	16.1	19.9	14.2	15.2		12.227***
Not a Leader	--	--	83.9	80.1	85.8	84.8		
All Groups	--	--	100	100	100	100		

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Leader is defined as holding 3 stripes and above

Leader data not available for years 80 and 85.

Class years include both attrites and graduates

ns = non-significant

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

a χ^2 comparison of leaders across the selected years

b χ^2 comparison of “within leaders” across the selected years

c χ^2 comparison of leaders within year

Table 18 summarizes the results of a hierarchical logistic regression predicting USNA graduation from three sets of variables. The first model included only one academic predictor—SAT score. Model 2 added a personality variable, prior enlisted status, athletics, and controlled for graduation year. Finally, race/ethnicity and gender were added to the equation in model 3. SAT alone was not a significant predictor of graduation. Although model 2 was statistically significant, its effect size (Cox & Snell $R^2 = .058$) was very small. A small effect size was also noted for model 3. However, the significant coefficient for gender is notable. Controlling for SAT and the available background factors, women were significantly less likely to graduate than men.

Table 18. Logistic Regression Coefficients Predicting USNA Graduation from Sets of Variables

VARIABLE	MODEL 1	MODEL 2	MODEL 3
	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)
CONSTANT	2.209	3.085*	4.831**
SAT Total	1.076	1.144***	1.116**
INTROVERT/EXTROVERT (0=Extrovert, 1=Introvert)		.893	.871
PRIOR ENLISTED (0=NO, 1=YES)		1.097	1.014
VARSITY ATHLETICS (0=NO, 1=YES)		2.264***	2.336***
GRADYR 95		.173***	.177***
GRADYR 00		.166***	.174***
GRADYR 04		.243***	.256***
RACE/ETHNICITY (0=White, 1=Other)			.810
GENDER (0=Male, 1=Female)			.525**
-2 Log likelihood	3725.306	3465.000	3430.176
Chi-Square	3.604	263.910	298.733
Cox & Snell R Square	.001	.058	.065
	N = 4428		

V. FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The results of the focus group portion of the thesis are presented below. Nine focus groups were conducted comprising 8 to 10 midshipmen participants representing the Naval Academy’s entire four-class system (4/C, 3/C, 2/C, & 1/C). A series of five questions were asked: 1) Tell me about your relationships with your peers. Who do you interact with the most? Describe the interactions you have. 2) Do certain types of people fit in better at USNA? What are the characteristics that fit in best? 3) Culture and climate-how do you learn this? 4) To what extent are women accepted at USNA? 5) Does gender play a role in leadership development? The five focus group questions were content analyzed in turn. First, issues that emerged are presented for each of the questions. Evidence for the issues is provided through exemplary quotes from focus group participants and is presented in italics. Subsequent to presenting the issues by question, overarching themes across questions are presented.

A. PEER RELATIONSHIPS

The first focus group question asked about peer relationships. Table 19 summarizes the topics that emerged from the discussions. Specifically, for each of the four groups, the columns depict the category or type of comment whereas the rows indicate the tone of the comments: positive, negative, or neutral.

Table 19. Focus Group Question #1: Tell me about your relationships with your peers. Who do you interact with the most? Describe the interactions you have.

Groups	TOPICS		
	1.First Impressions (Plebe Summer)	2.Avoiding Competition	3.Midshipmen Dating Taboo
4/C& 3/C			
Male			
Female		- +	
2/C& 1/C			
Male		+	
Female	//	- - - - - + + +	- - - - - / - -

+ Denotes positive comment
 - Denotes negative comment
 / Denotes neutral comment

Three prevailing topics emerged from focus group Question 1. First, women are conspicuous and the first impressions they make are lasting. These lasting impressions are ascribed to women as a group—not just as individuals. Second, men typically avoid interacting with women with whom they are in competition. Women feel more accepted by underclass men and those male peers who are not competing with them in-company. Finally, dating within the brigade has met considerable resistance by the dominant group. Men view non-platonic midshipmen relationships as taboo.

Despite the progress women have made at the Naval Academy over the last 29 years, female midshipmen report they continue to experience an underlying tension in respect to their relationships with male peers. Throughout the focus groups, both male and female midshipmen cited specific examples illustrating the sources from which the tensions are fed.

There is a tone about females and of course this is a generalization, but I think part of it comes from the very beginning when you get here and you know that there's quotas about the Naval Academy about females, and so you see a female who is overweight or has trouble with the PRT, but they are smart, or whatever. So, of course that's not the norm, but everybody knows there's quotas and that person got in because of the quota, that leads to an undertone...

(Male, Upperclassman)

The low relative and actual number of female midshipmen operating in a highly male dominated environment makes them conspicuous and confounds individual differences with gender traits.

1. First Impressions

The conspicuousness of female midshipmen is a prime factor in the reactions and impressions of male midshipmen and contributes to the tone of gender interactions and relationships. Specifically, a spotlight shines on a woman's performance and physical attributes the moment she is sworn in at USNA. Her actions throughout plebe summer are not only noticed, but they are defining in her role as a midshipman.

I think a girl that can cut it, like in plebe summer where it all begins, is up there running with all the guys in the front that isn't chit surfing. I know actually, for instance, there's a girl in our company, in our class, that was the only girl in our company and our sister company all plebe summer that didn't go on chit. And, I automatically will always remember that, and I will always kind of give her a bone, and I will always have a little more respect. I mean she's a better runner than me, probably. You can't knock her for that.

(Male, Upperclassman)

The guys will respect a girl so much more here if you can pull your own weight. Like during plebe summer there were some girls that just can't do anything...they can't run...they can't go through the O course, the E course, anything like that and so guys won't necessarily respect them at all. But, if you can, if you are right up there with the rest of the guys and you basically do everything that all the guys can do, they will respect you so much more...Guys will talk behind other girls' backs like, "Oh, she's fat, she can't run, she can't do the O course," or stuff like that, but for the most part, if girls can pull their own weight and show the guys what they are made of, then, for the most part they will be respected by the rest of the guys here.

(Female, Underclassman)

Plebe summer marks not only the start of an intense training period for midshipmen; it also serves as a breeding ground for first impressions. Both upperclass and underclass male and female midshipmen identify first impressions as crucial in formulating relationships and reputations. Physical training during plebe summer is one area where women's performance becomes highly visible. If they "keep up" with the men and "pull their weight," they are rewarded with the respect of their peers. However, if a woman falls behind or is medically excused via "chit" from physical training, she is branded throughout her midshipmen career.

2. Avoiding Competition

A token female midshipman's physical performance is not only noticed, but remembered by the dominant group. In terms of competition, both good and bad performers are avoided. The former are threatening and the latter are unworthy competitors. Accordingly, male midshipmen typically reserve interactions for those women not in competition with them. This tendency is highlighted within the company environment.

It's the females that are consistently the ones in the back, like holding up the group, and maybe that's part of why the in-company relationships aren't as good because the guys in the company remember that...When they get separated during plebe summer...someone in the back remembers that day, "Hey, they are the outsider, they're not with us," like they can't keep up.

(Male, Upperclassman)

The couple of girls that I've hung out with outside the Academy have been in other companies. So, like the PRT standards and stuff like that, it's not apparent. I mean, within company, you know who has failed or who has passed and you know what's going on in-company, issue wise.

(Male, Upperclassman)

Both upperclass male and female midshipmen observed they are more likely to interact with members of the opposite sex outside of company. Upperclass male midshipmen are more likely to express their resentment toward female classmates failing to meet the physical standards. Upperclass men attribute their limited interactions with in-company female classmates to their physical failures. However, upperclass female midshipmen perceive in-company competition as the cause for limited interactions. To better clarify this perception, it is essential to understand the outcomes for which midshipmen are competing.

The brigade of midshipmen comprises 30 companies. Each company consists of roughly 130-140 midshipmen representing the four-class system. At the end of each academic semester, grades are assigned assessing a midshipman's academic, military, and conduct performance. Competition is keen because a small percentage of each class is awarded an "A" or "B." Performance grades are then factored in a midshipman's Order Of Merit (OOM), determining class standing. Class standing plays a significant role in a midshipman's service assignment during First Class year. For many, service assignment spells out four years of anticipation and hard work for a desired service community. Because some communities are limited by the number of billets, competition runs fierce.

Male and female peers perceive in-company competition differently. Upperclass women interviewed were more likely to comment on the perception that men do not like to compete with their female peers.

I think what it comes down to is that girls are a little bit more male in the way they do things as far as competition and as far as the way they conduct themselves with other guys. The biggest thing that I've heard from my male classmates of why women aren't accepted at the Academy is because they are competing with us.

I definitely feel more accepted by guys outside my company, but I think that goes back to the competition factor, because the guys in other companies aren't competing with girls that aren't in their company.

Most of my friends, when I go out and I hang out with, are male midshipmen, but they are not in my company. It's kind of like they have actually had the chance to step back and get to know me aside from being a midshipman...Whereas, like in my company, all they've seen is our interaction here at the Academy and...if they don't see the other side of you, they don't understand, hey, she's just serious here, she's not just a bitch or whatever your stereotype is.

(Female, Upperclassman)

Another factor in gender competition is the peer ranking system. This system also reflects the brewing tension between competing men and women. At the end of the academic semester, midshipmen are required to rank their classmates based on perceived performance. The results are submitted electronically and reviewed by the Company Officer, who has the final word on a midshipman's performance grade. Some female midshipmen perceive the system as biased against them. They found themselves ranked considerably lower by their peers in contrast to the ranking awarded to them by their upperclass company mates and Company Officer.

I think, if I remember correctly, pretty consistently on the ranking system, 4 out of 6 girls in our company were ranked in the bottom 5 by our classmates and that's a pretty consistent pattern from what I remember. It was like 4 out of the 6 girls in our class in our company were ranked in the bottom 5 of all our classmates by our classmates. Personally, my class ranking differed significantly from my upperclass rankings and Company Officer rankings. It's like a ridiculous difference. I was ranked 10th by upperclass and 38, I think, by my classmates. I think there is this huge problem with the ranking system.

I know the underclass guys better than I know the guys in my own class, and I think that is kind of sad, but I don't see any way around it. And since they are the majority, it is a hindrance to performance and other things like that.

(Female, Upperclassman)

Informal gender interactions with year group peers are more strained and less frequent than the more social relationships between female upperclass and male underclass midshipmen. Women consider themselves more "accepted" and "respected" by their male subordinates.

As far as my classmates, like overall, there is really not a whole lot of interaction as far as like when you are hanging out at meal or anything like that. When the underclass guys in my squad, not the plebes obviously, but the underclass guys in my squad, I feel like I have a lot more interaction with them in the halls or at meal or anything like that and those are the people I feel more accepted by, as far as the males in my company.

(Female, Upperclassman)

3. Midshipmen Dating Taboo

I think the girls here are in such a target rich environment, and I would say probably 75% are dating another midshipman, or if not, there's 5 or 6 guys stopping by their room every night to try and date them. So, I think a lot of people just don't even want to be a part of that. They don't want to be that guy that is competing with 5 or 6 guys that stop by the room or if she does have a boyfriend, don't want to be that guy either just stopping by.

(Male, Upperclassman)

With the increasing number of women in the brigade of midshipmen, developing personal relationships has become not only expected, but part of the culture. However, this change within the brigade's longstanding male tradition has met considerable opposition by the dominant group. Men have responded to midshipmen relationships with overwhelming disapproval. Consequently, dating is considered taboo and is labeled as "darksidng." This negative connotation is borrowed from the pop cultural reference and translated accordingly: midshipmen dating midshipmen are lost to the darkside.

Dating in the brigade is accepted by the Administration if the relationships meet the set guidelines. For example, the following is prohibited: upperclass dating plebes,

dating in-company, and dating within a midshipmen's chain-of command. Maintaining a professional relationship is strongly encouraged both on and off the Yard, but some find it more difficult than expected.

I attempted to date a female midshipman once. We were great friends before and flirting and all that stuff. But, as soon as we actually said, "Alright, we are going out," everything...it was just like, you know, constant watching our backs, making sure that things were professional and just the standards of having to have a professional friendship, but still have a professional relationship within the Academy. I mean it was different outside, but we don't get out that often. So, it just really put too much of a stress and we said, "This isn't working."

(Male, Upperclassman)

Despite the Administration's approval in some circumstances, a stigma is associated with all types of midshipmen dating relationships as evidenced by the interviewing process.

The female mid who picked up a bunch of guys out in town would not be looked down upon as much as, you know, than if she picked up a bunch of other male mids. There seems to be more of a stigma with that...

(Male, Underclassman)

Early on, underclass male midshipmen encounter the negative reception dating in the brigade receives. With the passing of time and experience, upperclass men voice their opposition to dating with more substance and resistance. For example, some upperclass men deem dating in the brigade unprofessional and not conducive to working relationships.

I've always been of this thought; I've never dated within the brigade. I have never dated a woman here. I would never date a woman here. I just don't think it's good, not proper.

As far as dating and relationships that have gone bad, I see that there is a bias towards females, the punishment being more lenient towards them than towards the males.

(Male, Upperclassman)

A resounding perception of bias also surfaced in the comments from upperclass men with regard to dating. This attitude stems from the Administration's policy toward

sex in Bancroft Hall. Specifically, consensual sex in Bancroft Hall is grounds for dismissal. However, upperclass men perceive women to “cry wolf” when caught having sex in the Hall. Men view women to claim sexual assault in the face of a pending conduct case to save their Naval Academy career. This perception is derived from rumors surrounding the outcomes of conduct cases, which men observe to be set in favor of women. This perception leads to a fear of developing relationships with female midshipmen.

I think part of the fear of dating in the brigade is that females, actually, whether it’s true or not, can claim sexual assault regardless of whether or not it happened. It just seems like they can always play that card.

(Male, Upperclassman)

Playing the so-called “female card” supports the male midshipmen’s perception that the Administration is not only lenient, but also biased in favor of female midshipmen in conduct cases. Whatever its origins, this perception engenders resentment while hindering progress of gender interactions and ultimately undermines the acceptance of females.

One guy was kicked out of the Academy because he went on a Spring Break trip with a female midshipman and there was alcohol involved, but nobody remembers anything. When she woke up, she was completely undressed, he was undressed, and yet she claimed rape, and he was kicked out. I mean, how can you determine what went on? They were both under the influence and yet because the female claimed rape, he’s gone.

(Male, Upperclassman)

The interview process showed that male midshipmen are not lacking in stories illustrating the consequences of dating female midshipmen. A “he said, she said” element persists and rumors that spark from conduct cases take on a life of their own.

A friend of mine, that everybody here knows, almost got kicked out Youngster year because a girl that he had been not having sex with, but just kind of messing around with in the Hall, turned her roommate in for having sex in the Hall. So, her roommate vindictively turned in a list of guys that this first girl had relations with in the Hall, and all of them got in trouble. A bunch of them got kicked out.

(Male, Upperclassman)

B. FITTING IN AT USNA

Both male and female midshipmen were asked if certain types of people fit in better at USNA. Midshipmen were also encouraged to describe what characteristics fit in best. Table 20 summarizes the two topics that emerged from Question 2.

Table 20. Focus Group Question #2: Do certain types of people fit in better at USNA? What are the characteristics that fit in best?

Groups	TOPICS	
	1. Assimilation/Gender Differentiation	2. Team Orientation
4/C& 3/C		
Male	- - - - / +	+++++
Female		+++++
2/C& 1/C		
Male	- - - - +	+++++
Female	+++++ -	+

+ Denotes positive comment
 - Denotes negative comment
 / Denotes neutral comment

First, assimilation is common for women to achieve acceptance from their male peers. Masculine qualities are attributed to success at USNA. Second, midshipmen consistently stressed teamwork as a significant factor to positive interactions and acceptance within the Academy’s culture and spirit.

1. Assimilation and Gender Differentiation: The Masculine/Feminine Balance

When you first asked the question, I thought specifically of gender. I think that girls here who are more inclined to hang out with guys, who are friends with guys, who rough house with them in the [passageway], you know at night...more like the guys, feel more comfortable around [USNA].

(Female, Upperclassman)

Assimilation is a survival tactic for minority group members to prove their loyalty to the dominant group. For example, upperclass women were more likely to equate “fitting in” at USNA with demonstrating masculine traits. Assuming masculine behavior

while interacting with men rewards women with a certain degree of acceptance from their male peers. However, there exists a danger in being too masculine. That threat lies in being pigeonholed as “butch.”

I think there is a more fine line for females to try and be a sort of a dominant character, because if you are not careful as a female, you will just be described as just “over the top, a butch,” or however you want to describe it. Whereas, if you are not dominant enough, then you are seen as just too feminine. So, I think for the male there’s a little more leeway. But, with a female, it’s a lot finer line that they have to deal with a lot to be a pretty dominant leader.

I think gender does play a little bit of a role in who gets to lead and who doesn’t. Dominant personalities, to me around here anyway, seem to be a male trait. Not saying females are incapable at all, but I think leadership on a level that we have here where they are going to be standing in front of a whole bunch of guys all the time, for the most part predominantly guys, is usually taken over by a male figure.

I think it’s kind of beneficial to have a little negative attitude towards the Naval Academy, and not be like a portable tool, and it seems that the girls are kind of more toolish than the guys are. So, it’s kind of hard to hang out with those kinds of people when you sometimes have problems at the Naval Academy, and they are always not like that. So, it’s kind of like not the same...there’s not interaction there.

(Male, Upperclassman)

Operating in a male-dominated environment, women often tiptoe between two stereotypes: butch and weak. They recognize demonstrating a “dominant” personality as a prerequisite for acceptance at USNA. With that being said, a different generation of women is attending the Academy than before.

Women tend to be pretty strong, independent. We have been taught to think on our own; raised for the next generation of women as opposed to those who have been taught that their role in their life is to be a domesticated housewife. Maybe that’s actually what some of us will become, but we will accomplish a lot more before that time too.

(Female, Upperclassman)

For some, being reared as “strong” and “independent” is not enough for a woman to find her niche at the Academy. Acceptance requires adapting to the dominant group’s environment. To do and act anything less than their male counterparts, is to be perceived

as less of a midshipman by their peers. Women are encouraged by their male peers to be more like men and to meet the dominant group's standards.

I have had a lot of weird experiences here, and I learned a lot about myself. I am a completely different person than I was when I was in high school. So, I think it is important to have a really good sense of who you are, but at the same time, I think it is important to adapt and change as necessary. I think someone who is going to get really emotional, and not adapt well...because things are going to be thrown at you that you never expected and you just have to learn from them, let them roll off your back and you can't get wrapped over it.

(Female, Upperclassman)

There are some girls that I have respect for that can either outrun me or can pretty much pull their own weight. If there are girls that can do what they need to here; however, that's not to go without saying that I also lose respect for some girls that lose their ladylike...they don't stay like a woman you know. Some of them try to become too manly on the other hand. So, there are very thin guidelines for me to follow. There are a few that are still like normal girls, like would be normal girls at other schools, and those are the ones I respect. So, it mostly comes down to physical stuff. Physical and having good social, like being able to communicate with people, and still being like a lady.

(Male, Upperclassman)

To achieve equality, women are required to balance their femininity with performing at the men's standard, especially the physical standard. The physical standard substitutes as a tool for measuring a woman's value. Essentially, meeting the physical standard indicates whether an individual woman deserves her place at USNA. A woman is careful to adapt to her environment, meet the male standard, and remain wary of crossing over to the "weak" side. The concern is being too feminine, which may draw backlash from the dominant group.

I think...guys recognize competition, just because guys are more competitive. I think, overall, if a girl can get out there and put out and guys recognize that I think that's a good thing and...guys respect that and will accept that and they definitely recognize that pretty quickly. Girls that are really worried about what guys are going to think about them, more like someone they are going to date, or kind of they have more of that mentality instead of hey, these are guys I can hang out with, I can sit

here and bullshit with the guys, and I'm not looking for anything else here. I think a lot of times that ends up working out better as far as professional relationships around [USNA].

(Female, Upperclassman)

You have to remember that we are at a military institution and war is fought better by men in some regards. A woman is not going to be able to pick up a pack the same way a guy can and storm in Volusia. Granted women can give me combat rules. I have nothing against that as long as they get the job done. There are just some things though that a male is made for that a woman wasn't. To lead that kind of individual, somebody that is going to storm into Volusia with a modern M16, you need someone that can do that, that has been there and possibly done that, and that's only going to be filled by a male.

(Male, Upperclassman)

Negative reactions to women revolved mostly around physical strength and standards differences between men and women. The differences between male and female physical attributes continue to be stressed and women are measured against the male standard. Upperclass males demonstrated that they continue to measure an individual woman's worth via her physical performance.

I think that there are a couple of people that hold themselves accountable to do the same physical requirements that males do...I remember from last year, there was one specific woman, she was saying, "I don't have to run for the whole year, and I just come out and just basically walk if I wanted to and still pass." So, I think those people make it easier for themselves, because they don't really care.

(Male, Underclassman)

Men expressed resentment toward women they perceive not holding themselves "accountable" for attaining the male physical standards. That is, if a woman does not push beyond the female standards, her physical performance is remembered and held against her. She is perceived to not "care" how well she does at USNA. Men pride themselves on their physical accomplishments and devalue contributions made by women.

Because women are encouraged by their male peers to be more like men and to meet the men's standards, it is no surprise that a "double standard" exists for women at

the Academy. Standing out makes crossing over from the “butch” to the “weak” side visible to the dominant group and results in backlash. The “weak” side results in women acting more feminine eliciting the label “temptress” from male peers. Some men perceive women using their femininity as an advantage and attribute any success they attain to gender.

2. Team Orientation

The people that have the most trouble here are the people that are kind of individuals. Anyone who really takes their time and effort and puts it into helping other classmates, it really seems like that comes back in return, but if people are kind of a loner and don’t really interact well socially with everyone else, then they kind of don’t receive the same help from their classmates. If they don’t look out for people, people won’t look out for them...

(Male, Underclassman)

Across the focus groups, teamwork was consistently stressed as the single most important characteristic for a midshipman to demonstrate. From training day one, midshipmen are taught the importance of team culture and spirit through learning the meaning and value of “ship, shipmate, self.” Those midshipmen violating that code of esprit de corps are at risk of being ostracized from their peers and branded as social loafers.

Both male and female midshipmen emphasized “fitting in” as dependent on team orientation and not dependent on gender. Midshipmen voiced their respect for peers who are willing to lend a helping hand and willingly to admit she or he is not the best at everything. The focus group participants resoundingly agreed that teamwork, regardless of gender, promotes respect and acceptance amongst the midshipmen.

C. LEARNING ABOUT USNA CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Focus group Question 3 asked about the sources from which culture and climate are learned at USNA. Table 21 summarizes the topics that emerged.

Table 21. Focus Group Question #3: Culture and climate how do you learn this?

Groups	TOPICS			
	1. Initiation	2. Alumni	3. Mentorship	4. Administration
4/C& 3/C				
Male	++ / + - - -		+	
Female	/--/--			/
2/C& 1/C				
Male	- - - - - - - - - - - / / / / /	- - -		// + + + - -
Female	- - - - - - -		-	+

+ Denotes positive comment
 - Denotes negative comment
 / Denotes neutral comment

Question 3 produced rich discussions that can be summarized through four main topics. First, initiation or imparting culture to incoming plebes is important for sustaining the Academy’s coveted traditions. Second, alumni prove to be a dominant group in perpetuating culture to midshipmen. Third, athletes are more likely to receive support and mentorship through their teams than non-athletes. Finally, the Administration is playing a key role in forging positive gender interactions.

1. Initiation

I remember it was the first week after plebe summer some of the guys in my company were...we all lived on Goat Court...and they were already singing songs out the window with a guitar about “WUBAs”...and it was like how do you learn that in such a short time? You had to have heard it from some type of upperclass or something. So, that’s the big thing I remember is that kind of really started the beginning climate...

(Female, Upperclassman)

Imparting culture to an organization’s newest members is the lifeline of tradition. The Naval Academy, a formal organization steeped in tradition, is no stranger to this concept. Focus group findings regarding sources of culture and climate illustrate the importance of imparting culture to the highest degree. Both upperclass and underclass male and female midshipmen resoundingly attribute their indoctrination to Bancroft Hall’s culture to early experiences during what’s called “brigade reform.”

The way I learned the culture and climate and just everybody's attitude towards everybody else was just often experienced and it comes early...when the upperclass would come back after plebe summer. You can just see how it operated. You would start to hear rumors about certain people slowly and then once the year progresses, once in your sophomore year and junior year...“Yeah, you know, I did see this girl doing whatever or stuff like that.” The way I was taught the “WUBA” and stuff that wasn't really like for all girls. That was just for certain ones that have reputations.

(Male, Upperclassman)

Brigade reform takes place directly after plebe summer. This time period involves the return of upperclass midshipmen from summer training and the beginning of the academic year. Brigade reform also marks the first time plebes are introduced to the entire brigade of midshipmen and assigned to a squad and platoon representing the four-class system within their academic year company.

USNA vernacular is imparted from the start. Midshipmen reported that their first exposure to gender-based comments and terms was during brigade reform. It is interesting that “WUBA” once served only as an acronym for the midshipmen's uniform, “Working Uniform Blue ‘Alpha.’” However, not long after the female midshipman's arrival, male midshipmen substituted the meaning for “Women Used By All” and “Women With Unusually Big Asses.” Both meanings serve as pejorative references to exaggerated perceptions of women's promiscuity and weight.

“WUBA” was a salient topic among both male and female midshipmen who participated in the focus groups. The use of the word was recently banned by the Administration. Some midshipmen asserted that “WUBA” is an element of their culture. More importantly,

[“WUBA”] just became part of your vocabulary. It didn't come across to me at least like any offensive quality. I didn't use it as an offensive term, it's just part of everyone's vocabulary...Maybe some [girl] heard [“WUBA”] and then went to their room and cried about it, but I didn't see it. For the most part, to me, it seemed like the females that I interacted with, they kind of embraced it and made T-shirts about it...It's just something that is just sort of like culture like saying, “What's up, dude?”

(Male, Upperclassman)

Interestingly enough, some male midshipmen perceive “WUBA” as non-derogatory in nature despite the fact that “WUBA” carries two extremely derisive meanings for women.

I think there is such a gray area about that situation...there are a lot of females around here that embrace the term and there are t-shirts around that say, “Super WUB” that females wear. There are females trying to steal the shirt, but also some females are offended by it, but I think there are so many females around here that try so hard to fit in. The whole change in the Blue and Gold, I know a lot of females didn’t appreciate that because there are a ton of females around here that don’t want to stand out at all. They just want to be a part of the brigade.

The first time I ever heard of the word “Lobster” was from a female midshipman. So, I guess I don’t know how they wanted us to act if the female midshipmen are calling themselves “WUBAs” and “FARBs” and “Lobsters.”

(Male, Upperclassman)

The word “Lobster” made its debut during the same time period the Administration began cracking down on the use of the word “WUBA.” Male midshipmen invoked “Lobster” to mean: all the meat is in the tail. The inane acronym FARB: Fat Ass Rugby Bitch has also been added to the derogatory terms for women. Each of these gender-based terms is laced with tension and signified the lack of acceptance of women. During the “WUBA” discussion, the issue of dating resurfaced. For example, when asked about the Academy’s culture and climate the following comment from underclass male midshipmen was typical.

There is a big stigma whenever...someone announces that they are dating another midshipman...immediately it seems like there are certain peers that start making jokes about it or have something negative to say about it. Regardless of who it is, it seems that is something that’s really looked down upon for the most part. I know a couple midshipmen...they really all seem to feel that their relationships are almost something they have to hide. You really never hear them talking as much about their relationships as you would a midshipman dating a civilian. It seems like that’s something they kind of keep quiet, not ashamed, but just not wanting to hear more jokes about it. That is just part of the culture here I think.

(Male, Upperclassman)

If women are perceived as “fat” and “bitches,” then it should come as no surprise that midshipmen who date each other are subject to degrading jokes. Upperclass females reported becoming more cognizant of these derogatory impressions following plebe year.

During plebe year, I didn’t really see that much negativity towards females as much as I’m starting to now, because you start hanging out with more of the classes, not just your plebe class, now you’re able to interact with 3,000 more people...I’ve never seen it used against me, but I’ve seen it generally, “Oh, look at that girl,” just because she’s overweight it’s an automatic, “She doesn’t belong here,” because she’s overweight...to me that’s derogatory and that’s built into guys’ minds plebe year that girls don’t belong here for certain reasons.

(Female, Underclassman)

D. ALUMNI

Naval Academy alumni are a dominant group imparting culture to midshipmen. The focus groups revealed that alumni are culpable in hindering the progress of positive gender interactions by resisting change to the institution. Changes made to their Alma Mater, for example, have met with opposition from alumni according to male midshipmen who are more likely to be privy to such reactions.

I hear a lot of alumni, too, about slamming women and stuff like that. I don’t know, maybe you hear it from alumni, “Yeah, I remember the old days,” and things like that so you hear it from them. You hear it from everybody.

Another place where I learned it is talking to past grads. Someone will come up to me and say, “How are the “WUBs” doing at the Academy?” Or, something like that. I’ve heard that on numerous occasions...football games, social functions...It may be tradition, I mean not a good tradition, but it is part of the culture of this place.

(Male, Upperclassman)

Unfortunately, the display of inappropriate behavior is not confined to certain male alumni. Both male and female midshipmen have been exposed to female alumni embracing the word WUBA.

I've been at football games and I've seen female commissioned officers say, "Let's all the "WUBs" get together and take pictures." I mean, we have a commissioned officer saying, "Let's all the "WUBs" get together." What am I suppose to do?

(Male, Upperclassman)

The alumni's reported behavior undermines the Administration's efforts to improve gender interactions at USNA. Those female alumni perpetuating the word "WUBA" contribute to the confusion and reinforce the views of midshipmen who believe the word belongs in Naval Academy culture.

1. Mentorship

Two important elements of mentoring were mentioned during the culture and climate discussion. First, underclass male midshipmen shared examples of upperclass female midshipmen teaching them how to treat women as colleagues. Second, midshipmen involved in varsity or club sports have a better chance of receiving support from their peers and upperclass. The first example of mentoring highlighted a critical tactic for women to achieve equality.

I think it's kind of funny that during plebe summer our squad leader was a female and that was the first I had ever...she told us one of the derogatory terms for females...WUBA. So, she said basically don't...she kind of warned us about that there are a lot of people that had negative feeling towards women at the Academy and she said, "Don't be one of those guys. Don't be those people that use that word. Try not to be one of the people that perpetuate this word." I didn't know what she was talking about...Even if she hadn't told us, I feel certain that I would have learned it pretty fast because...the term became more prevalent when the brigade formed and the upperclass were back.

(Male, Underclassman)

The second example of mentoring depicted the advantages gracing varsity athletes. Female midshipmen were more likely to indicate that participation in sports teams have positive effects on a midshipman's quality of life. Essentially, sports teams act as a refuge and support system for plebes struggling to understand the Naval Academy culture. Non-athletes often lack the reassurance that their athletic classmates are receiving from upperclass teammates.

I think especially for plebes coming in it has to a lot with the teams that they are on, varsity teams...because it tends to be, from what I've observed, tends to be different things. They may be told one thing in-company and they have the opportunity to go to sport's practice and be more familiar with upperclass and the upperclass [say], "Don't worry about it so much. Just relax. You have to do it." Where sometimes classmates that aren't on teams may not get that...they don't get that same kind of reassurance, "Oh, it's going to be ok." It has to do with the upperclass you are exposed to. There are some [upperclass] that kind of...let you in on the big secret...

(Female, Upperclassman)

Sharing "the big secret" is especially useful for female midshipmen lacking role models in a male-dominated environment. The focus groups revealed a sports team is the single most likely group to provide mutual support of women, particularly Fourth-Class women. Additionally, male midshipmen give successful female athletes support and recognition, granting women greater acceptance in the brigade. For those women not on sports teams, absent such support can lead to feelings of isolation.

E. ADMINISTRATION

I think it's necessary for the Academy to introduce the [gender] problem, because you can't really fight something until you are educated about it. So, maybe you hear about it from the [Administration] and they introduce the idea into your head, but then you are less susceptible to it from other means. You're not just going to hear upperclass talking about it and then say, "Well that's kind of neat." You are going to hear it and say, "I know what that is and I know it's wrong."

(Male, Upperclassman)

A prominent topic emerging from Question 3 is the Administration's direct focus on gender climate issues at USNA. Because its leaders drive an organization's climate, the upperclass midshipmen duly noted the positive impact of the current Superintendent and Commandant. Their proactive involvement suggests the Academy community is benefiting greatly from the improved education that faculty, staff, and midshipmen are receiving concerning contributing factors to gender-based issues.

Prior to the current Administration, Academy leadership had varying degrees of involvement in gender climate issues. Several upperclass midshipmen reported being unaware of existing gender-based problems, which suggests that the command's involvement is warranted.

I just happened to have an idea here. Cancer didn't kill anybody...or cancer did kill people before we knew how to diagnose cancer. Just because we couldn't diagnose it doesn't mean it wasn't there killing people. I think that could be the same way as the [gender] problem. The problem was there. Nobody recognized it was there because they didn't know how to diagnose it. When the Academy comes out and says we have this problem, now we know how to diagnose it and now we can say, "Oh, look here, there's all these examples of this problem. It was there the whole time; we just didn't know how to diagnose it correctly."

(Male, Upperclassman)

Based on the focus group discussions, upperclass women appeared most affected by the senior level emphasis and attention to gender-related issues. The upperclass women noted that the class of 2008 is ushering in a new mentality regarding gender-related issues. That difference can be linked to the Administration's decision to educate the class of 2008 regarding the inappropriateness of derisive comments about women. These preventive measures are taken to deter the perpetuation of such words.

Over plebe summer, [Chiefs] straight out told us what "WUBA" meant and that we weren't allowed to use it. Mostly, I've learned it from my guy company mates. One of them the other day mentioned...called someone a "WUBA" and I didn't remember what it meant and I asked them what it meant and I was like, "Oh." So, they will tell me what it means. They don't use it towards me, they use it towards other people, but they don't use it towards me.

(Female, Underclassman)

Despite the Administration's focus on the importance of relationships and stressing the value of diversity and respect for all people, some male midshipmen perceive the Administration to hold a double standard for women.

I think part of the problem is that the Administration has always had kind of a double view...because on the one hand there's the fact that the PRT standards, you have a measurable standard that is different for men and

women, but on the other hand you have the Administration saying there is no difference and everyone should be equal.

(Male, Upperclassman)

In few cases, upperclass men voiced their concerns regarding equitable standards and treatment in response to the Administration’s focus on gender-related issues. Some men noted the differences in physical fitness requirements as a detracting factor from the Administration’s demand for equality. Furthermore, some male midshipmen deemed the treatment of women as “too polite.” That is, mixed sentiments surfaced as to whether the Administration demonstrates gender favoritism.

F. ACCEPTANCE OF WOMEN

Focus group Question 4 asked about how well women are being accepted at USNA. Table 22 summarizes the topics that emerged.

Table 22. Focus Group Question #4: To what extent are women accepted at USNA?

Groups	TOPICS			
	1. Issue of Change	2. Administration	3. Individual Performance	4. Competition
4/C& 3/C				
Male	---	++	+ / + / - /	- - / -
Female	---	+	/ - -	-
2/C& 1/C				
Male	---	- - /	//// / + / / + /	- - -
Female	- - / / /	+++++++	//	- /

+ Denotes positive comment
 - Denotes negative comment
 / Denotes neutral comment

Four topics emerged from Question 4. First, change is met with resistance. Women continue to feel excluded from significant Academy traditions. Second, the Administration’s impact on gender climate transcends gender and year groups. Third, midshipmen attributed individual performance as the determining factor in acceptance. Finally, competition hinders relationships between men and women.

I think the easiest way for me to answer this question is if a family member of mine, if she was a female midshipman, I would not want her to

go to school here just because [women] are not accepted, it's not a good atmosphere for them. I think that's the easiest way for me to summarize my feelings about that.

(Male, Upperclassman)

The arrival of women at USNA required a psychological shift away from a formerly all-male environment. In some ways the acceptance of women has not been complete, as evidenced by the resulting discussions from focus group Question 4. In other ways, women have been very well accepted, thriving in academics, athletics, and leadership, proving beyond question that they are capable of handling the Academy's training program.

1. Issue of Change

The arrival of female midshipmen ushered in more than just formal institutional changes. Informal changes also chipped away at the Academy's traditional culture fueling some male midshipmen's opposition to women's presence. Throughout the interview process, the issue of tradition surfaced repeatedly in response to women's acceptance. Specifically, the tendency to remove or discourage female plebes from climbing the Herndon ¹ monument still exists. Not only have there been cited examples of women being pulled down from climbing Herndon, but their "covers" ² are also tossed back to the crowd. A perception persists among some male midshipmen that women have no place in the Academy's traditions.

I've come in contact with a person that basically said that women shouldn't partake in all the traditions here at the Academy. He said that women...the women's covers should never be put on Herndon because it's a male thing...You know, there is stuff like the cover and a kiss only applies to a male midshipman and a female civilian. He has been the only one that has ever said anything like that but I can't help but think that there are probably other people that might be like that. I don't think that women are completely accepted at the Academy.

(Female, Underclassman)

¹This Naval Academy ceremony is known simply as "Herndon" or the "Plebe Recognition Ceremony." After the second academic semester, the plebe class works together to accomplish the goal of retrieving a white plebe "dixie cup" hat from atop the Herndon monument and replace it with an upperclassmen's hat. Once this is accomplished, plebes are recognized as youngsters or Third Class midshipmen.

² Hats are called covers.

Sometimes bias against females is kind of prominent. [A]t Herndon... someone always tries to pass up a female cover. And, I remember our Herndon; it got thrown down right in front of a female officer. I think it is kind of messed up the way stuff goes down like that around here.

(Male, Upperclassman)

The Herndon ceremony, the symbolic end of plebe year, is one example highlighting women's oddity at the Academy. Adding to their conspicuousness, the recent change to the Academy's Alma Mater also resurfaced. This topic revealed a broad range of reactions.

Kind of what the Admiral and Captain did, the change of Blue and Gold [Alma Mater]. I've heard more females complain worse than males. I think that it almost singles us out more...it never really occurred to me that this was an all-male establishment and we have to change it because of 1,000 females here. It never occurred to me. It was brought up last year at graduation when we sang it. Even alumni talked about why would they change it. I think it's good, but I think it has more bad in it than it does good because it just singles us out.

(Female, Upperclassman)

I think there is a greater acceptance than what there used to be. I think it's fairly evident because the way the Administration is changing now. I mean we've changed our Alma Mater and I think as a whole everyone has accepted it and like the new change. At first everyone was kind of questioning it, but I mean it just went along really smoothly. So, I feel overall we've accepted it and there is always some in the corners whispering about this and that.

(Male, Underclassman)

Changes at the institution have a tendency to "single women out." Some women believed that the Superintendent's direction to modify the first verse of Navy Blue and Gold added to their conspicuousness. Without changing the meaning of the song, the following was implemented in the first and third line respectively: "colleges" replaced "college men" and "Sailors brave" replaced "Sailor men." The intended goal is to ensure the song is fully inclusive of both midshipmen and alumni. However, as an underclass woman described, the fundamental change offered some men an opportunity to exclude women.

Even at the last football game I heard when we sang Blue and Gold, I heard a bunch of guys singing old Blue and Gold, like purposely the sections that have been changed, just to bother people...to me you are just stating that you don't agree that females should be here.

(Female, Underclassman)

When there is change at a military institution steeped in norms and tradition, alumni make their presence known. Again, male midshipmen reported being privy to alumni's inappropriate gender-based remarks. A cyclic transfer of attitudes from alumni to male midshipmen persists.

When I was a youngster, I knew a first class midshipman who had three stripes and on homecoming weekend, while in formation, one of the alumni said, "They'll just let anybody have stripes these days won't they." I guess it gets brought in through the alumni and things like that. Some of the alumni still don't accept women...I have heard of instances where they say, "Do whatever you can to get them out. We don't want them here." It's something that is always going to be around here.

(Male, Upperclassman)

I also think some [women] kind of get siphoned into the brigade from alumni...I have had instances where myself and another female minority might be walking by on one of these alumni weekends, class reunions, whatever, and from some of the older alumni I know I have gotten dirty looks. I've gotten all kinds of stuff...snotty remarks under their breath, that sort of thing, and I know that stuff kind of gets filtered into the brigade a little bit.

(Male, Upperclassman)

Because such comments are inconsistent with the Administration's efforts to enlighten and expose midshipmen to a positive gender climate, most male midshipmen are less inclined to continue the cycle, at least openly. However, the effect of reaction by some alumni and ensuing perceptions by present day midshipmen indicates that women's presence continues to be conspicuous and unsettling.

2. Administration

In light of the focus group Question 4 discussion, the Administration proved again to be a salient topic. The Administration's impact on the gender climate has transcended gender and year groups. Midshipmen asserted that the continuing focus on gender-

related issues initially met with resistance; however, midshipmen have noted improvement in gender dynamics within the brigade.

Looking back the past four years, I think we are becoming more accepted as time goes on. I really believe a lot of that is because of Admiral Rempt and Captain Leidig. They're making a lot of points to prove to the guys that we are equal and that we are just as qualified. Last year it was received with mixed emotions, but this year I haven't seen any problems. I feel accepted where I go. I think it's because they are enforcing that.

(Female, Upperclassman)

I do think definitely most people here are more accepting of women, especially with the Administration pushing a lot of gender issues, making sure things are more balanced. But at the same time I think what the Administrations is doing, and then people that don't accept it, kind of makes them a little bit...pushes them farther to not accepting women even more so. So, I think those that don't accept women, they are really on the far end of it. There are not a whole lot of them.

(Male, Underclassman)

An opportunity for obtaining successful integration of women begins with senior leadership. The current environment surrounding the enforcement of positive gender relationships confirms the Administration's level of attention is required.

I think it has gotten a lot better since plebe year. I think a lot of that is the new Administration taking actions. They talked about behaviors, your concerned behaviors will change your attitude...things like changing Blue and Gold, things like the Commandant saying in front of everybody, "Get over it, [women are] here, they're not going anywhere." I think that has helped a lot of attitudes.

(Female, Upperclassman)

3. Individual Performance

My observation is that if you are an outstanding female midshipman, and you hit the books hard and you get the good grades, and you are in good shape, and you are working hard, and you are pulling your own weight just like everybody else, that you will be 100% accepted by the males...To ask whether women are fully accepted, it is really a broad question and I think that the males are fair in taking it by a case-by-case basis. So, if you suck, then no we are not going to accept you, but if you are working hard, then you deserve to be here and be one of us.

(Male, Upperclassman)

Interesting patterns in the discussion of women's acceptance emerged from the focus groups. Regardless of context, both men and women attributed individual performance, not gender, to be the determining factor in acceptance. However, barriers to performance may be heightened for women as a group. Both men and women suggested that female midshipmen have to work harder to gain acceptance amongst their male peers.

Women need to be more qualified than the guys if they want to be fully accepted because if you have a shortcoming sometimes ... some people make comments just cause you are a girl.

(Female, Underclassman)

I think besides looks, the only other way that I've seen that a female gets accepted is by hard core putting out. There is one female midshipman in my class and my company that, she's not the best looking, but I remember during plebe summer every day she would go hard. She pushed herself all through PT and she would come back and learn her rates hard, sort of won my respect. I think that's why I accept her more than the other females.

(Male, Underclassman)

Comments regarding differences in physical fitness requirements persisted in focus group Question 4. Because of their low representation levels, women reported feeling highly visible and physical standards led to women being seen as different. In many cases, both men and women reported that women's acceptance is based on their physical performance. Accordingly, some women felt their every move was scrutinized and reflected on female midshipmen as a group.

I really think a huge part here about measuring females is the physical aspects because if a dude doesn't run good enough, they always say he runs like a girl. There's a guy in our company who was really slow over plebe summer and they were like, "He runs like a girl." I heard that everyday and...that just really annoyed me.

(Female, Underclassman)

A lot of women, even though they aren't physically as sound, they still accomplish that mission to their standards. And, we discussed it many times and I think that's probably the only main thing that [men] don't like [women] in the military. I personally would rather have them in the military because I know there are some people that are better at other

things than you are, especially women. I know women have a certain special quality that separates them from men that can be used in a military situation. I think the biggest problem is the physical aspect.

(Male, Underclassman)

Several midshipmen reported many examples of women having to prove their competency whereas men are presumed competent. Such stereotypes make teamwork and performance more difficult for women. Women who prove themselves individually are noted “exceptions” to women as a whole.

4. Competition

The issue of gender and competition resurfaced throughout the discussion of focus group Question 4. The combination of the strong male dominated population and the traditions associated with the Academy suggest that competition with female peers is not well received. Accordingly, the masculine nature of the Academy does not allow graciously “losing” a leadership position or service assignment to a woman.

In many cases, women reported competition inhibiting their relationships with male company mates. One upperclass woman described how eliminating the competition factor allowed room for friendship with her male peers.

I do definitely feel more accepted by guys outside of my company, especially in my class. And, I realized a huge difference after summer training, because before that I hadn't really met a lot of people outside of my company and then after that, I met a lot of people over summer training. The number of friends I had at the Academy, especially who are male, multiplied... and it was ridiculous. So, I definitely feel more accepted by guys outside my company, but I think that goes back to the competition factor because the guys in other companies aren't competing with girls that are in their company.

(Female, Upperclassman)

Men shared concerns regarding equitable standards and treatment. Losing a striper billet to a woman was attributed to gender reverse discrimination. Some men expressed resentment about perceived “easier” standards for women to attain leadership positions.

It seems like on average the male gets punished more than the woman or even in a situation of stripers, it seems like a lot of times women get the

striper billets that even if you were qualified or more qualified men didn't get. I think it's more of a perception thing than it is really understanding the full situation, but a lot of times I think that's the way it comes off. I mean it seems like almost a reversed discrimination.

(Male, Underclassman)

Another element of competition emerged when discussing the relationships between female officers and female midshipmen. Some women reported having more difficult interactions with female officers. Several factors contribute to this dynamic and competition is thought to be one of them. Focus group participants perceived senior female leadership to be harder on female subordinates. An upperclass woman attributed this to women not knowing how to compete.

I've had more trouble in my interactions with female officers, however, a company officer...I had a huge problem with, which I also had problems with a battalion officer [female], of course, everybody's going to know who I'm talking about...But, honestly I feel that some women, definitely not all women, because I have met some very good female officers, but I think women competing with each other don't really know how to compete. I think a lot of that goes back to male-oriented women and female-oriented women, because females just aren't as competitive and some women just don't know how to compete.

(Female, Upperclassman)

G. GENDER AND LEADERSHIP

Focus group Question 5 asked about gender and leadership. Table 23 summarizes the topics that emerged.

Table 23. Focus Group Question #5: Does gender play a role in leadership development?

Groups	TOPICS		
	1. Stereotypes/Attribution	2. Reverse Discrimination	3. Mentorship
4/C& 3/C			
Male	--- / - / -	-	
Female	-----	-	- / -
2/C& 1/C			
Male	/ -	+ - /	
Female	-----	/ - - - /	+ + + +

+ Denotes positive comment
 - Denotes negative comment
 / Denotes neutral comment

Three topics emerged from Question 5. First, women continue to struggle against beliefs regarding their group membership. Stereotypes affect the dominant group's judgment of individual women; that is, men attribute behavior to personal traits. Second, male midshipmen perceive reverse discrimination or gender favoritism exists in the leadership selection process. Lastly, underclass women reported a lack of mentorship or support from upperclass women.

When you are out at formation and you hear a female say, "Atten-hut," there is laughing going on...It's not as authoritative, it's more of a joke and it's kind of funny. Even last year, we had our brigade commander and we had that big thing about people mocking her. It's just not authoritative. I'm not saying the Administration should look for females with deep voices...I know it's something that can't be helped and again it affects their leadership.

(Male, Underclassman)

1. Stereotypes/Attribution

The Naval Academy formally fosters an environment where female leadership is encouraged and recognized, with women having equal opportunities for obtaining midshipmen leadership positions. However, discussions resulting from focus group Question 5 revealed that the traditional military leadership models remain male-oriented and pose challenges for female midshipmen. The assumption persists that men are the warriors; women are not. Therefore, women continue to struggle against the perceived societal expectations about appropriate feminine roles.

During plebe summer, our first squad leader was a male and when we found out that our second squad leader was going to be a female, at least I was wondering what it would be like. What kind of things is she going to expect from us? Is it going to be any different, whereas, if it was going to be another male, I would have just carried on as usual. So, I would say that gender wouldn't...I don't think it would have an affect on the person's leadership abilities, but I think it would affect the people under them in what they think of their leader.

(Male, Underclassman)

Because the military has traditionally been regarded as a masculine organization, masculine qualities may be looked upon as exemplary of leadership. In some cases, female focus group participants indicated that characteristics and attitudes ascribed to

men are essential for functioning in a leadership position. This suggests that female midshipmen should adhere to masculine behavior if they are to be perceived as successful leaders.

I didn't think [last year's female] brigade commander was entirely qualified because she...um...the only way I really know how to say this is she has no balls. She couldn't stand up and get in front of the brigade and get everybody's attention and nobody gave her any respect and part of that I thought was huge immaturity on the level of the brigade and part of it I think was her inability to take control.

(Female, Upperclassman)

For some male midshipmen, "taking control" requires a physical presence and strength not associated with the feminine role. The recurring topic of physical presence indicates that the physiological differences continue to create barriers for a woman's acceptance. In some cases, the feelings expressed by male focus group participants regarding a woman as a leader demonstrate the stereotypical thinking that women are the "weaker sex." Additionally, women are viewed less capable and incompetent.

I keep going back to the physical stuff about females, but when you have a leader, they have to be leading in every aspect, not just one thing, they have to be physical too, they have to be well rounded. So, maybe it's not such an issue, but I know in the Marine Corps, I know they probably see that everyday. Males and females have two different standards. If a female is not what you need in a commander...I don't want to be carrying her if I'm around. I don't want to have to be pushing her along if she is supposed to be helping me, pushing me along. So, I think it does affect our leadership. So, she is not going to be respected as much.

(Male, Underclassman)

The discrepancy between stereotypic attributes of women and those required in the role of a midshipman have a variety of effects on the acceptance of women at the Academy. For example, male and female focus group participants perceive successful officers as possessing attitudes, characteristics, and a presence more commonly described as traditionally masculine. This may cause women to face greater performance pressures. Furthermore, in a male-dominated environment, women may receive pressure to adopt a stereotypically masculine leadership style.

One of our officers, he's a really large man...and he has a commanding presence about him and he's got the voice, he's got the look, and he's got the size, and that really works for him and can really lead effectively, but a woman like that, I don't know, I don't think that would work. If you saw a really large woman, you would probably turn around and make fun of her. That's pretty wrong I guess, but I think that what a lot of people's reactions would be. So, when you get to that type of leadership, I think that might be different for women and men.

(Male, Underclassman)

Physical attributes were key in the discussion of gender and leadership. Their importance was articulated by the cited examples of women being "made fun of" for their non-authoritative voices and perceived lack of command presence. Based on the focus group comments, a woman is not immediately regarded positively in her leadership role until time is spent with that female midshipman. For example, male midshipmen reported that after spending time with a female leader, their negative perceptions of her weakened.

If I was told my squad leader was a male, I wouldn't have any impression on him until I met him. I would assume that he has done everything he needs to do to be here, but if I was told my new squad leader was going to be a female, I would assume she was worthless until she has proved to me that she deserved to be here...We just assume that guys have done everything they need to do and they deserve to be here and don't with girls. They have to prove it to us first.

(Male, Upperclassman)

From the comments made in the focus group sessions, perceptions of women as leaders fall prey to the fundamental attribution error. That is, women have to prove themselves in leadership positions whereas men are presumed competent until the actions of an individual man prove otherwise.

Sometimes I feel like a woman has to prove that they have power over me, like they have to prove something to me and I have to follow them. But, I think it changes once you start working with the person and you learn that personality and how they lead, and their morals and values, and then gender will play less of a role...I definitely think gender plays a role in the initial development stages.

Women feel like they are automatically inferior for some reason when it comes to leadership, they feel they have to prove themselves more. So,

sometimes they go about [leadership] maybe in a different way than males would. I wouldn't necessarily say that all women do this and all men do this, but I think each person individually has to play off what traits they have better than others. On a whole, I don't think that it makes a huge difference, but there is still that perception that women, even some women believe themselves that they have to work 10 times harder to get the same respect.

(Male, Underclassman)

Male midshipmen were more likely to make the fundamental attribution error in explaining the actions of women. They express negative attitudes about the performance of women. Men were more likely to protect and forgive other males for shortcomings than they were to stand-up for women. For example, men jump to conclusions about what causes the behavior of women. If a female midshipman proved successful in a leadership position, she was seen as the exception.

I think men generally deal with, you start with respect and if you do something to screw it up, that's your own fault. But, if you are a woman here, I think you start with a 0 and if you do good stuff, then you get respect.

(Female, Upperclassman)

Because of traditional gender roles, men tend to be viewed as more capable and competent than women. Thus, women are not seen as having legitimate authority over men. Focus group participants reported many examples wherein women's positive actions are attributed to their situations whereas their negative actions are attributed to their dispositions.

I think as a leader, at least within the brigade, women will have to work harder to assert themselves because people are going to make stereotypes because you are a woman...I mean, if you tell them to do something and they don't like it, they will be like, "Oh, well, she's a bitch," or something like that or if they get mad, "Oh, it's her time of the month." They will attribute it to a woman instead of being a leader, an authority figure. So, they'll find reasons they shouldn't listen to you because you are a woman.

(Female, Upperclassman)

Midshipmen fail to perceive the power of social roles. Because women stand out, they receive considerable attention that heightens pressure on them to perform well. As

stated earlier, midshipmen equate good performance with masculine leadership traits. However, female midshipmen reported being penalized for violating gender role expectations. Reactions to male-like behavior by women typically include being labeled as a “bitch” or assignments that it must be “that time of the month.” Consequently, leaders are expected to be masculine and women are encouraged to act in gender-appropriate ways; thus women face a conundrum.

2. Reverse Discrimination

If you look at the number of females that are in striper positions...they are sometimes over-represented and I think that may be because people are like, “Oh, well if we don’t put a female in something this semester, well somebody will say that we were biased against the females.” If you talk to a lot of the female mids and...come to us first...and ask, “Hey, what do you think about this?” Most of us would say, “Pick the person who is going to do the job because we don’t want to sit here and suffer due to someone who is not going to do the job,” which I think was some of the issues people had with the last female brigade commander.

(Female, Upperclassman)

Over-representation of women in leadership positions proved a very prominent topic within the gender and leadership question. Attitudes expressed during the focus groups suggest that both male and female midshipmen remain unconvinced about the fairness of selection for leadership roles.

I know when my 1st sergeant (senior ranking in-company Second Class) was talking at meal and he said that he and his good friend were going for the battalion positions, and the person that he and his good friend was going up against was a woman, and he said, “Oh, well you’re probably not going to get it because they need to fill women in there.” Like they need a woman in there just so it doesn’t look like...you know...I was like, it’s not a quota. You can’t fill a quota. That ticked me off.

(Female, Underclassman)

Because of their low actual number, First Class women stand out while holding senior leadership positions and their appointments often are attributed to gender. Once women attain these leadership roles, their performance is placed under close scrutiny. Furthermore, their evaluation from midshipmen is not always positive. As mentioned earlier, women are often singled out for humiliation.

In some cases, men were not directly opposed to the representation levels of women in leadership positions. As officers they will be expected to take orders from women, command women, and work as equals with women. Therefore, some male midshipmen felt their exposure to female leadership would better prepare them for the fleet. Upperclass women were also likely to make this connection.

It's not about the male or the female when it comes to leadership. And, as far as females in leadership roles here, I think that's all right. You are going to experience female leadership out in the fleet, too...you might as well get used to it while you are here. So, the people that want to see more males in leadership roles, I don't really agree with that too much. I'm not saying I want to see more female, but I just think that it's good to have a good mix. But, overall, a leader is a leader.

(Male, Upperclassman)

I think it's hugely important for a girl to have leadership positions here. Especially, for the guys working for them. Because when they go out into the fleet, they need a little bit of basis and a little bit of knowledge of how that interaction is going to look...The point is that when guys get out to the fleet, if they never had to work for a female or with a female, and this is a leadership laboratory, I think they might have built up more biases in that time.

(Female, Upperclassman)

Additionally, underclass male midshipmen were likely to hold perceptions of gender favoritism on the part of upperclass males toward female plebes. They perceived upperclass men to present a relatively casual atmosphere for the female plebes. Some underclass men expressed feelings of resentment about a perceived "easier" training environment being conducted with their female peers.

I think as far as leadership goes, especially in the Hall where they are training the plebes, we're all here to be leaders, the harshness towards the males compared to the females, there is a vast difference in how they are treated. It seems like females, in the hallway, especially plebes have it somewhat easier than a lot of the males you see in the hallway. It seems they don't get yelled at as much. The come-arounds on the bulkhead seem friendlier. I think that is kind of a problem that needs to be assessed here at the Academy.

(Male, Underclassman)

3. Mentorship

I have not had a conversation longer than five minutes with any of our [female] First or Second Class...I never see them at all. We only have three or four role models right now because we don't see anyone else or they don't talk to us. They kind of leave us alone. I don't really see that as a great leadership example at all because when I'm an upperclass, I'm not going to be scared to talk to the plebes...If you are trying to improve female mentality in the brigade, you need to show leadership...you need to show initiative that you want to talk to your subordinates or things like that and by avoiding it...I am not very impressed by it.

(Female, Underclassman)

The small number of women at the Academy may isolate some female midshipmen. Because there are few women at the Academy, there are also few midshipmen women leaders as role models. Underclass female midshipmen were more likely to perceive the lack of role models in the areas of personal and professional development. Because women spend much of their time struggling to fit in a male-dominated environment, many of them choose to distance themselves from the underclass women.

The issue of women being harder on underclass women relative to men also surfaced. A number of underclass women expressed the view that upperclass women single them out for spot corrections.

Over plebe summer it was kind of obvious that the female upperclass ragged the female plebes more than the males or the male upperclass yell at the male plebes. I think they felt that it was their duty to yell at us and they wouldn't even be our cadre, they would just come up to us and say, "You need to fix your hair," even though it was what we were suppose to do...I know my roommate and I had multiple females come up during plebe summer...we would be doing exactly what we needed to do, our upperclass would be right next to us and they would say something and it would be like, "Where did that come from?" I think that they felt it was their duty to tell us because we are females that, "You need to do this better," and it didn't seem right that they did that.

(Female, Underclassman)

Some women observed these "corrections" as preventative measures in reducing the focused attention received by men.

I've come across a couple of situations where I've seen some plebes that need to pull their hair up and I'll pull them aside and say, "Hey, this is how you can do it," because for me it gives guys one less thing to say something like, "Oh, she can't even be in uniform right," or "She can't even..." because I've hear that comment too...Maybe they were yelling at you, but maybe their sole purpose was to help you so that you don't become something...just stay under the radar as much as you can.

(Female, Underclassman)

A significant aspect of mentorship for both men and women was discussed regarding the examples upperclass midshipmen set for plebes during plebe summer. A number of upperclass women expressed the importance of teaching and demonstrating positive gender interactions to the plebes, especially male plebes. They felt it was important to impart the camaraderie and respect shared between male and female classmates. In doing so, women are teaching underclassmen to bond and value the relationships with their female peers.

I did [plebe summer training] and that was crucial to show the plebes how [men and women] interacted. We knew that we could impart our closeness on them as a company, but also that male/female interaction. Also, it is really good to have a female there, where we just pick up on certain things that some people might find offensive or might not be as sensitive to issues.

(Female, Upperclassman)

H. SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP THEMES

The key topics emerging from focus group Questions 1 through 5 converged to form overarching themes. The themes can be deduced from the importance of first impressions, competition, the Administration, and the issue of culture and climate as they relate to gender interactions and the acceptance of women. Each overall theme blankets the sub-themes found in the content analysis of the resulting topics.

The first higher order theme is that women are conspicuous and they are not seen as individuals, but as a group. Furthermore, first impressions of women are not individual first impressions, but rather gender first impressions. A female plebe's

summer relationships and reputation precedes her throughout her Naval Academy career and mark not only her, but women in general.

The notion of competition surfaced in focus group Question 1 and continued to surface as a recurring theme throughout the remaining questions. The focus groups suggest that in a male-dominated environment, being outperformed by a woman threatens a male midshipman's masculinity. Consequently, in-company gender interactions suffer, leaving room for downward comparison. Men have women to look down on, and because of rank, women may feel superior only to underclass males. Thus, women are more likely to develop better relationships with their male subordinates.

An additional higher theme is the Administration's role in forging positive gender interactions. The focus groups suggest that although gender problems and misperceptions have not yet abated, the Administration is credited with facilitating vast improvements in the gender climate. The issue of change, specifically the changes made in the name of gender-related issues, also received attention as several midshipmen noted a decline in the brigade's initial resistance to changes implemented by the Administration. These modifications have continued to improve the overall attitude and tone of the brigade.

The importance of imparting culture to the Academy's newest members also appears to be a higher order theme. Specifically, brigade reform serves as a breeding ground for perpetuating those exclusionary behaviors and gender-based comments falling under the realm of "tradition." This theme also illustrates the impact alumni are having on inhibiting gender interactions. That is, male midshipmen observed alumni inappropriate behavior and comments to easily filter its way down to the perceptions of present day midshipmen. This cycle undermines the Administration's efforts to foster a positive gender climate, making it that much more difficult for women to overcome outdated perceptions in their quest for acceptance.

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VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women are more fully integrated, but they are not necessarily accepted. There is integration, but there's not necessarily acceptance. That's not true everywhere, but in some cases they are not fully accepted and so it's acceptance that we have to work on.

(Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter, USMC (ret.))

A. OVERVIEW

The above quote, from an interview conducted with Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter, USMC (ret.), the first woman nominated by the President of the United States for three-star rank, speaks to the fact that integration does not necessarily beget acceptance. With over 30 years of service, General Mutter retired from the Marine Corps effective 1 January 1999. Capitalizing on her knowledge and expertise, General Mutter's words were used in conjunction with the results of focus groups and trend analysis to help formulate recommendations. In this chapter, findings of this research are summarized, followed by recommendations to the leadership of the Naval Academy pertaining to the findings. Last, recommendations for further research are proposed.

B. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

First, the objectives of the research and the research questions are reviewed followed by a quick synopsis of pertinent topics found in the literature review. Then, the findings from the trend analysis and focus groups of this thesis are recounted. Finally, recommendations are offered.

1. Research Questions

The methodology of the research was intended to answer the primary research question of this study: To what degree are women represented, accepted, and included at the Naval Academy? The following secondary questions were also addressed: (1) How do characteristics and the performance of female midshipmen compare to male midshipmen over time? (2) Have the demographics, characteristics, traits, and graduate outcomes of female midshipmen changed over time? (3) How does the brigade of midshipmen include women at the Naval Academy? (4) What are the positive and

negative experiences with gender interactions? (5) To what extent is gender perceived to have an impact on individual performance? (6) How can the Naval Academy improve gender interactions?

Of the secondary questions, the first two were answered by examining the data provided by Institutional Research. Questions 3, 4, and 5 were answered by focus groups conducted with male and female midshipmen. The final question was also answered by the same focus groups in addition to the interview conducted with Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter, USMC (ret.).

2. Pertinent Topics from Literature

The effects of tokenism play a key role in explaining how female midshipmen are under the control of the dominant group, the male midshipmen. High visibility, polarization, and assimilation are the three phenomena of tokenism suggesting how the organizational structure determines behavior (Kanter, 1977). All of these phenomena foster an environment condoning the dominant's group leverage over the token group. Tokenism illustrates how the structure of organizations can affect work behavior, the quality of work life, and the status of women.

The structure of the Naval Academy organization is embedded in the warrior culture. As Kanter suggests, men create a masculine culture to the exclusion of women. The dominant group may use differentiation as resistance to women's integration. The Naval Academy's culture is not unlike any other organizational culture in respect to its slow acceptance of any alteration to its structure. The greater the inertia and tradition associated with the organization's culture, the greater the anticipated resistance (Johnson & Harper, 2005).

Resistance may also be seen through the interplay of gender and leadership. Although women are no longer restricted or capped from military leadership, leadership development and style continue to differentiate men from women. That is, women may be less able to project a physical leadership style and therefore tend to rely on less confrontational leadership styles (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, 1997). According to the status characteristics theory and social role theory, men are thought to be more competent than women in many domains (Powell, 1999). Performance

expectations are often self-fulfilling because individuals who are expected to perform well have more opportunity to participate and therefore actually do make more task contributions. Because the largest contribution midshipmen can make is through leadership, women often find themselves slighted in their leadership experiences.

3. Findings

It is important to keep in mind that this research is based in large part upon focus group discussions. Although focus groups provide in-depth coverage of topics or content, this comes at the sacrifice of breadth of coverage. Further, the sample size was limited and may not be representative of the brigade of midshipmen. Thus, the reader is cautioned not to generalize these findings to “all” midshipmen or to all groups mentioned by the midshipmen who participated in the focus groups.

The preponderance of findings regarding gender interactions at the Naval Academy suggests that male midshipmen have yet to fully accept female midshipmen. The dominant warrior culture prevents the acceptance of women as full partners in the brigade of midshipmen. The token status of women heightens this differentiation leading women to be seen as different, remaining in the spotlight after 29 years of integration. The data below indicate that attribution error, stereotyping, lack of mentoring, and exclusion hinders positive gender interactions.

a. Fully Qualified

An examination of Institutional Research data confirmed that representation of women has increased to the current high of around 16%. Although this percentage might meet some definitions of critical mass, 16% is hardly a substantial portion of the brigade of midshipmen. As a highly visible perpetual minority group, it is difficult for women to achieve genuine acceptance and integration.

The data revealed similarities and differences between men and women in terms of their non-gender characteristics. Women’s SAT scores and QPRs are on par with the men’s. Proportionally, women are more likely to be extroverts and varsity athletes than are men. Women are less likely to be technical majors. These notable differences may be a function of selectivity on the part of women choosing to attend USNA and selectivity on the part of USNA in terms of the women it admits. That is, the

majority of women attracted to the Academy are strong, extroverted, athletic women who find support in their sport's teams.

The quantitative data also show women are being afforded leadership experiences to the same extent as men. Taken alone, these characteristics might suggest success and acceptance of women at the Academy. However, in sharp contrast, the qualitative data show women are often resented. The subsequent findings are concerns from select women at the Naval Academy.

b. Gender Superiority

An important part of human behavior involves comparing ourselves to others for self-assessment purposes. When the standard against which women are measured is the male standard, women come up short in a predominantly male environment. That standard acts as an impediment to equality in a highly competitive environment that employs a success metric created by and geared toward men. Downward comparisons tend to improve an individual's outlook and confidence. Consequently, because of rank, female midshipmen feel superior only to underclass midshipmen; specifically, male subordinates. Thus, women are more likely to develop a healthier and leveled relationship with male subordinates than their male classmates. This trend is in keeping with the social psychological notion of "downward comparison."

In a male dominated environment, being outperformed by a female threatens a male's masculinity. Therefore, the dynamics of a competitive company environment prevent women from bonding with their cohort. Women find themselves pitted against their male classmates who do not relish competing with their female peers. As a result, there exists a power and leadership struggle in which domination substitutes for leadership.

c. Lack of Company Cohesion

The predictable result of the company environment described is that many women do not bond with their male peers. There is a lack of company cohesion that needs to be addressed. Even those women who hold leadership positions find their authority challenged, that is, they feel obligated to prove they are worthy of their leadership billet.

Many men that participated in this study attribute women's success to gender favoritism or reverse discrimination. Male midshipmen believe reverse discrimination is prevalent amongst the decisions made by the Administration. They hold these perceptions close while such oppressive thinking prevents male and female midshipmen from developing healthy working relationships. Consequently, the company "team" is weakened.

d. Culture and Climate

The military has long been entrenched in a masculine warrior tradition serving as a rite of passage into adulthood. When any dominant group is integrated with minority members, majority group members tend to elevate their importance by exaggerating real and perceived differences. At USNA, team cohesion is inhibited when women are not included because of their differences. Male midshipmen stress these differences to exclude women from a once all-male environment.

Male midshipmen in our study often emphasized on the negative without emphasizing the strengths of women and the contributions they make to the team. In this highly competitive environment, male midshipmen view "different" as suspect or inadequate. Both male and female midshipmen have strengths to contribute; however, women often feel obligated to compete with the men using the male standard to avoid doubts cast on their abilities. Within the company environment, cooperation is an invaluable skill that fails to be developed and exercised. Team culture and spirit suffer accordingly.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to assess gender interactions at the Naval Academy; specifically, how well women are represented, accepted, and included. By applying General Carol A. Mutter's invaluable insight to the findings presented here, a number of recommendations are offered that will assist the Naval Academy leadership in continuing to improve the gender climate for the brigade of midshipmen. Some subsequent recommendations necessitate time and resources, but all require a continuing institutional commitment of involvement in gender-related issues, ranging from direct

focus on reducing male resistance to full gender integration to indirect focus on issues of company cohesion.

1. Make an Institutional Commitment to Improving Gender-Related Issues

I think (reluctance to accept women in leadership positions) dissipated a whole lot. I have to say it's very personality and unit dependent; there are some units that have built up this macho persona, and they are going to have trouble accepting a woman in their unit let alone a leader in the unit [because] they are used to having things a certain way and their expectations are different.

(Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter, USMC (ret.))

For the past 29 years, Academy leadership has had varying degrees of involvement in gender-related issues. A prevalent theme echoing throughout the focus groups was the current Administration's proactive involvement regarding the gender climate. This direct focus by the Superintendent and Commandant has communicated a tone to the brigade that gender based inappropriate behavior is not tolerated. The Naval Academy simply cannot afford a reduction in focus on gender-related matters. Projecting and maintaining equitable standards and treatment will enhance the acceptance process.

The persistence of perceived male gender superiority and varying levels of discriminatory behavior highlights the underlying tensions still existing at the Academy. Off-color jokes perpetuating such derogatory terms as "WUBA," "FARB," and "Lobster" dehumanizes a group struggling to fit in a male-dominated environment. These words are also used to reinforce differences between men and women. Male midshipmen attempt to gain favor with the dominant group through such unprofessional behavior. To combat this behavior, the authors suggest the following: 1) introducing and forbidding such words, their variations, and the underlying principals to plebes prior to brigade reform would help eliminate them from the Academy's vernacular; 2) instruct midshipmen, particularly plebes, they have an obligation to regulate such behavior; 3) train plebes on how to report such inappropriate behavior, particularly from the upperclass; 4) Academy leadership must impress upon midshipmen such behavior will result in punitive measures.

The Naval Academy must continue to confront the subsurface issues and dynamics persisting amongst male and female midshipmen. This requires embracing the leadership challenge of teaching the value of positive leadership, good followership, and full teamwork to all, including the dominant group. Leadership cannot be substituted with domination simply because the environment allows it. Additionally, midshipmen need to be taught that it is unacceptable for a leader to portray the Navy as a man's Navy only. Certainly it would be seen as a leadership failure if even tacit approval was given for expressing the view that the Navy was a white man's or Christian's organization. Discriminatory behavior at any level demonstrated against ethnic and religious minorities has met quick and decisive punishment. Why, then is it acceptable to discriminate against women? Why are utterances that it is a man's Navy tolerated? Midshipmen must grasp and live the concept that today's leader needs to accept diversity. Otherwise, a leadership failure falls on everyone's shoulders.

2. Improve Company Cohesion

Women have met fully the expectations for their success as midshipmen and future junior officers; however, acceptance eludes them as evidenced by the lack of company cohesion. In a competitive environment steeped in tradition and norms, being different is the same as being wrong.

Women from the focus groups reported facing greater performance pressures than men while experiencing ostracism from their male classmates. Simply, women are not bonding with their cohort. This is a direct result of the power struggles and leadership failures. Again, domination is prevalent among male midshipmen who believe women should not outperform them. Essentially, midshipmen are not working as a team. Women are devalued as team members and viewed as adversaries with respect to attaining performance grades, leadership positions, and service assignment. Male and female midshipmen need to learn cooperation is an invaluable skill. If company officers are educated on the internal conflicts and dynamics hindering company gender interactions, they may be able to identify causes and institute preventative measures while better forging integrated teams within their companies.

3. Secure Alumni's Cooperation

One of the values in the Naval Academy is loyalty. My question was, loyalty to what and to whom? I don't think there is enough attention paid to that because it ends up being loyal to each other, to the peer. Let's face it, it will take an 18 year old awhile to figure out loyalty to the institution and that the institution is larger than they are or their buddy or the football team...A difficult concept to get across to young kids is this idea of the greater good.

(Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter, USMC (ret.))

There exists a tendency for midshipmen to place loyalty to peers above loyalty to values, which contributes to a tolerance of behaviors that can lead to gender prejudice and discrimination. Peer ridicule and ostracism and loss of reputation are factors bearing on midshipmen's reluctance to correct such behavior. Another unfortunate factor is the Academy's alumni. The focus groups suggested that the alumni's loyalty to the all- male tradition filters its way through generations of male midshipmen. Whether some alumni project their steadfast prejudices during formal parades, football games, or reunions, midshipmen have a tendency to bring such views back with them to Bancroft Hall. Unfortunately, certain male alumni are not the sole culprits. Midshipmen reported some female alumni referring to themselves as "WUBAs." Embracing the word perpetuates derogatory terms and in the process confuses midshipmen as to why commissioned officers are using it. The authors suggest Academy leadership, to extent possible, secure the help of the alumni through regularly published newsletters such as *Shipmate Magazine*. The education process is not only new for the brigade, but also the alumni.

4. Give Midshipmen Ownership

The Coast Guard Academy, one of their best practices is a good program that works with alcohol as well as gender and assault...it's run by cadets and the whole premise of it is you want to make good decisions so that you can stay in school and graduate. You came here for a reason. You are here for a free education or you want to be in the Coast Guard.

(Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter, USMC (ret.))

Although, the Administration should be commended on its focus and progress in improving the gender climate, the authors recommend that future changes involving gender-related issues be more hands-on for the midshipmen; otherwise, resistance and cynicism may follow. Specifically, engage midshipmen leadership in planning and

executing measures in putting the brakes on “WUBA” and loyalty to values above peers. Because midshipmen are the implementers, policy changes should not appear to be overtly the Administration’s doing.

5. Reevaluate the Physical Readiness Test

An inevitable issue to address is the PRT. This physical test continues to be a highly visible symbol for the midshipmen that “women are weak.” Instead, its real purpose is demonstrating the condition of a midshipman’s cardiovascular health. However, men continue to exaggerate the importance of different physical test standards, which encourage the perceived double standard. The authors recommend the test be modified to emphasize women’s strengths alongside those of men’s. If women are able to prove themselves in the physical test arena, credibility and acceptance will come much easier.

6. Establish Mentoring Opportunities

Another concern to address is the lack of female mentors for female midshipmen, in particular, underclass women. The Academy leadership should consider appropriate measures to provide increased opportunities for role modeling of successful female officers for the benefit of male and female midshipmen. The midshipmen should consider the disconnect between upperclass and underclass women. Not only should female officers be called upon to fill such roles, but also upperclass women. The authors recommend training for upperclass females in this area to ensure opportunities are in place for underclass women.

7. Screen and Train Faculty and Staff

The [USAFA] Superintendent did tell me that when he went to the Air Force Academy, he could look around at the squadron commanders, company officers, particularly the officers, and say, “These guys are all going to be Generals some day.” When he came back as the Superintendent and looked around, he said, “I couldn’t say that now.” He was really concerned about the quality of the leadership. On *60 Minutes*, I saw one of the [USAFA] company officers and he didn’t have a clue that there was a problem; and if at that level they don’t have a clue, that tells me they’re not doing their job.

(Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter, USMC (ret.))

There may be concern that some officers, and perhaps even some civilian faculty, may tacitly or overtly endorse sexist attitudes and behaviors. Because changing a climate begins with the models and exemplars, the Academy leadership should implement a program combating such attitudes. The authors recommend senior leadership develop a screening and training program for faculty and staff geared toward gender attitudes. That is, screen those officers nominated to USNA and train those assigned. Not only will this facilitate a positive gender climate, but it will also force those who contribute to midshipmen development to evaluate their attitudes and behavior.

D. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As with any research, this thesis left uncharted territories to be pursued and investigated for further questioning. In this light, the authors have four recommendations for further research. The first recommendation concerns the focus group sample. This thesis attained views from male and female midshipmen regarding gender interactions at the Naval Academy. What would be useful to know is the alumni's view on gender integration and changes implemented at the Academy in general. Can the alumni offer specifics why they do not want women at their Alma Mater?

A second area this thesis did not cover is graduation rates in respect to culture and climate. That is, is the Academy's culture and climate responsible for lower graduation rates of female midshipmen? The third recommendation would be to investigate what the other service academies are doing to enhance gender interactions. This information would be useful for the Naval Academy to make comparisons and choose to adopt aspects considered effective. Lastly, the impending change-of-command will offer new focus group data to be collected under the new Administration.

**APPENDIX: OUTPUT OF LOGISTIC REGRESSION
COEFFICIENTS PREDICTING USNA GRADUATION FROM SETS
OF VARIABLES**

REGRESSION MODEL #1 FOR GRADUATION

VARIABLE	Exp(B)	S.E.	WALD	SIG.
CONSTANT	2.209	.501	2.508	.113
NEWCOMSA	1.076	.039	3.607	.058
N = 4428				

Model Overall Percentage: .851

***-2 Log likelihood: 3725.306**

*** Chi-Square: 3.604**

REGRESSION MODEL #2 FOR GRADUATION

VARIABLE	Exp(B)	S.E.	WALD	SIG.
CONSTANT	3.085	.566	3.962	.047
NEWCOMSA	1.144	.041	10.779	.001
NEWINEX	.893	.088	1.650	.199
NEWPRIOR	1.097	.148	.387	.534
NEWVARS	2.264	.093	77.036	.000
GRADYR95	.173	.181	93.383	.000
GRADYR00	.166	.180	99.435	.000
GRADYR04	.243	.185	58.604	.000
N = 4428				

***-2 Log likelihood: 3465.000**

*** Chi-Square: 263.910**

REGRESSION MODEL #3 FOR GRADUATION

VARIABLE	Exp(B)	S.E.	WALD	SIG.
CONSTANT	4.831	.594	7.024	.008
NEWCOMSA	1.116	.043	6.563	.010
NEWINEX	.871	.089	2.424	.120
NEWPRIOR	1.014	.150	.008	.927
NEWVARS	2.336	.094	80.926	.000
GRADYR95	.177	.182	90.491	.000
GRADYR00	.174	.180	93.699	.000
GRADYR04	.256	.185	54.073	.000
NEWETH3	.810	.109	3.726	.054
NEWGEN	.525	.114	32.070	.000
N = 4428				

***-2 Log likelihood: 3430.176**

*** Chi-Square: 298.733**

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