

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: WOMEN IN SUBMARINES: HAVE THE ARGUMENTS  
ABOUT EXPANDING WOMEN'S SEA-GOING ROLES IN  
THE U.S. NAVY CHANGED OVER TIME?

Degree candidate: Darlene Marie Iskra

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Thesis directed by: Professor Mady Wechsler Segal  
Department of Sociology

This thesis explores the issues and arguments that surrounded the debates on expanding sea-going roles for women in the U.S. Navy, and the rationales for these positions. The thesis compares arguments as depicted in editorials, commentary and letters to the editor from the periodicals *Navy Times* and U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* that concerned women's assignment to non-combatant ships in 1978/1979, combatant ships in 1993/1994 and submarines in 1999/2000. My hypothesis is that, over time, the arguments have not changed significantly. Even though women have been serving successfully at sea for over 20 years, the arguments against women in submarines appear to be based on stereotypical cultural expectations of women as mothers, caregivers and sexual partners, similar to those used in the 1970s.

The results validate the hypothesis. The arguments fall into two major categories, Mission Effectiveness and Equal Opportunity, with six subcategories. There were differences in findings from the two publications, with *Navy Times* authors more positive and *Proceedings* authors generally more negative about women at sea. The issues were also clearly divided by gender lines, with 78% of the women but only 36% of men in favor of expanding roles.

Although the arguments evolved over time as it became clear that women can perform military jobs previously thought impossible, the underlying assumptions continued to reflect socially constructed views of the warrior ideal as male, heterosexual, virile, aggressive and physically strong. Women were presented as outside of this ideal, reinforcing the status inequality of women in the military.

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By

Darlene Marie Iskra

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Mady W. Segal, Chair  
Professor David R. Segal  
Associate Professor Melissa A. Milkie

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the issues and arguments surrounding the debate on expanding sea-going roles for women in the Navy in 1978/79, 1993/94 and 1999/2000. My primary focus was to determine if there were any significant changes in the arguments. Secondly, my focus was to try to determine the underlying assumptions of those arguments. If the arguments haven't changed: Why not? The fact is that women have been allowed to go to sea as sailors on ships since 1978. The prohibition against the assignment of women to surface combatant ships was lifted in 1994. So, was it labor force dynamics, social pressure or changing attitudes that allowed for the expansion of women to virtually all sea duty assignments except in submarines? Why not submarines? What are the unique requirements in submarines that have prevented women from entering that realm?

My research and discussion are filtered through my experiences as a retired female Naval officer and equal rights advocate. I came to be interested in this subject area when I noticed that the arguments against the assignment of women to submarines in the United States Navy in the late 1990s seemed to be the same as the arguments that were used against assigning women to ships in 1978/1979 when I first joined the Navy and was assigned to my first ship. Of course, women have served successfully on non-combatant ships and combatant ships, though admittedly not without solvable problems. Thus, I examined both the stated and underlying reasons behind the prohibition of assigning women to submarines.

My theoretical approach is towards a social construction and gender inequality perspective. I suspect that some of the underlying reasons are related to a socially constructed view of the appropriate social roles for women vis-à-vis men, especially those social roles that have a biological basis. Additionally, in Western society, gender is stratified, with men being the dominant gender. Since the male gender has a clearly established status value in our society (Ridgeway 1991:368), what men do is usually valued more highly than what women do simply because men do it (Lorber 2001: 86). Within the institutions that have traditionally been all male, such as the military, there appears to be a tendency to look at women's capabilities and appropriate social roles through a socially constructed and stratified biological and sexual lens. How sexuality affects the actions of heterosexual women (and men) when they are together is speculative, but appears to be the basis of the arguments against expanded roles, e.g. that in a professional situation, men and women working side-by-side will not act professionally, which, it is argued, reduces effectiveness. Thus both gender and sexuality play a part in the arguments concerning expanding women's roles.

Historically, the male warrior model has defined the military. Women were allowed to enter the domain as support personnel aiding in the mission of war, primarily as nurses, but also as cooks, laundresses and other ancillary personnel. As civil society changed, the military was forced to change as well. With women integrated into many new roles, there are different issues that leaders must face with a mixed-gender crew. Those issues are framed as "problems with women." The reason

for this is that the male model is the norm by which all others are compared. Lorber (2001), in describing gender as a stratification system, states, "...one gender is usually the touchstone, the normal, the dominant, and the other is different, deviant, and subordinate. In Western society, 'man' is A, 'wo-man' is Not-A." "The dominant categories are the hegemonic ideals, so taken for granted as the way things should be so that white is not ordinarily thought of as a race, middle class as a class, or men as a gender. The characteristics of these categories define the Other as that which lacks the valuable qualities the dominants exhibit." (P. 86).

Dunivin (1994) characterizes military culture by its "combat, masculine-warrior (or CMW) paradigm" (p. 533). Goldman (1973), in describing the cult of masculinity inherent in the military, defines the warrior as a "man of sexual power and exploits" and "The more combat oriented the locus or setting, the more pronounced the sexual symbolism and mythology" (p. 908). Since the warrior is defined as male and heterosexually virile, all others who do not fit into this ideal are necessarily inferior and are not valued. Thus challenges that occur due to gender integration are seen as the fault of the women...for if women matched the ideal warrior type, the problems would not exist.

The sexual tension in the military is equally tempered by its focus on family and family ties. Goldman (1973) notes, "One is struck by the relative absence of unmarried male officers, the few divorced personnel, and the very few childless families" (p. 907). Although these two seem to be antithetical to each other, the institutionalization of the warrior as a sexually virile CMW and the military man as a

family man works because the two worlds traditionally did not collide. Goldman wrote her article when women were beginning to enter the military in greater numbers, but her insights on the impact women would have on the military are still relevant. Part of the issue with women in the military is the integration of what used to be dichotomous realms of public and private. Women entering the military seem to bring the private realm to the workplace, or at least that appears to be how men view it. Thus some of the arguments focus on what used to be a truly private matter... pregnancy... and all the physical changes that accompany that, along with the fact that sexual relationships caused the condition. In addition there is concern about family (both the men's and the women's) and how they will react when their spouses are in close physical contact with the opposite sex in a confined space, such as those found on ships and submarines.

My thesis attempts to show that the framing of the arguments against expanding sea-going roles for women are based on stereotypes derived from dichotomies which arise from socially constructed ideas of gender and the stratification system of our society. This study contributes to scholarly works on the sociology of gender and issues of gender, work and family.

This thesis focuses on three distinct periods when expanding roles at sea for women in the Navy were publicly discussed. When women were first authorized to be permanent members of the military under the Women's Armed Forces Integration Act of 1948, their naval roles were limited to support roles within the shore establishment. Women worked primarily in nursing, supply and personnel. The

institution, even if it did not embrace, then at least accepted women into the military because they were performing in occupational roles that were traditionally viewed as female. They were statutorily forbidden under section 6015 of this Act<sup>1</sup> from serving at sea except on hospital ships or naval transports. Thus, the first two periods studied revolved around the arguments about expanding roles for women when statutory changes to the Act were made in order to allow women to be assigned to non-combatant ships in 1978, and combat ships in 1993. I compared these arguments to those voiced in the public domain in 1999-2000 when both the Secretary of the Navy and Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) called for a re-look at the assignment of women to submarines.

Some of the literature used in my research refers to the military as a whole, rather than specifically to the Navy. Areas such as military effectiveness, unit cohesion, women in the military, women in combat, expanding roles of women, the military as a greedy institution and citizenship rights and responsibilities not only have broad application to the military as an institution, but can also apply to each individual service, as subsets of that institution. Additionally, arguments about women at sea in the Coast Guard were also used to define arguments in the content analysis. Because of the broad nature of these issues, I assumed that the theories, arguments and conclusions surrounding these issues also applied to the Navy.

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<sup>1</sup>This section specifically states “The Secretary of the Navy may prescribe the manner in which women shall be trained and qualified for military duty in the Regular Navy, the military authority which they may exercise, and the kind of military duty to which they may be assigned: *Provided*, That they shall not be assigned to duty in aircraft while such aircraft are engaged in combat missions nor shall they be assigned to duty on vessels of the Navy except hospital ships and naval transports.” (Public Law 625)

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

My thesis examines the hypothesis that:

*Over time, during Congressional and public debate over expanded roles of women in the Navy, the underlying assumptions regarding women's roles have remained the same. That is, even though there have been institutional changes with regard to women's roles in the Navy, attitudes regarding the impact on the institution because of those changed roles are based on gendered social constructs rather than empirical reality.*

As Segal (1995) hypothesized, cultural values will be overlooked when military necessity warrants. The experience of World War II bears this out, when women were needed to perform many traditionally male job roles in both the military and industrial sectors. After World War II many women were forced out of the workforce, or back into lower paying women's work, so that the men returning from the war could once again fulfill their family obligation as breadwinner (Gluck, 1987; Honey, 1984). Military necessity was also the precipitating force for the expansion in numbers of women after the military went to the All Volunteer Force in 1973. The military used women and minorities to make up for the white males who were no longer enlisting in sufficient numbers (D. Segal 1989). The literature suggests that the reasons for the expansion of women's roles at sea in the Navy followed the same pattern: in 1978 personnel shortages required a change in statute which enabled the Navy to use women to fill sea billets on non-combatant ships so the men could man the combatants.

The expansion of women's assignments to sea in all ships except submarines is a result of the continued reliance on women as "manpower". But if the social and

cultural attitudes towards women in these roles have changed, why has Congress made it almost impossible for the Navy, if it wished to do so, to change its policy of assigning women to submarines?

The literature indicates there is acknowledgement that women can do many jobs that were unimaginable 60 years ago. Social roles for women have changed, but there is a perception that one role will never change, and that is the role of mother/woman as the primary familial caregiver. Does this socially constructed female role color our policy-makers' ideas of women? Do our policy-makers espouse the same equal-opportunity rights for women in the military as they do for women in the civilian workplace? Or do the social constructs and definitions of the roles of "the military" remain conflicted with the roles within "the family" especially for women? My research attempts to examine the underlying factors inherent in the question of why women are still forbidden from submarine duty when women have successfully served in surface ships for almost 25 years.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### A Short Historical Perspective

Women have served in all of America's wars since the beginning of our history, either disguised as men or accompanying the troops as camp followers. During the Civil War, women participated as nurses and spies as well. But women were not formally brought into the military until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: first as nurses in the Army (1901) and the Navy (1908); then as Yeoman (F) and Women Marines in World War I filling clerical jobs in order to free the men filling those billets to fight. During World War II women's roles expanded even further. They performed in every possible position except those involved in actual combat on the ground, at sea or in the air (Holm 1992). All the services except the Marine Corps (Patrow and Patrow 1989) felt that women enhanced the services' mission even in peacetime. Thus in 1948 women were given permanent status in the military via the Armed Services Integration Act of 1948.

There are two primary reasons for the increased participation of women in the military: national emergency (Segal and Segal 1983; Segal 1999), and shifts in demographic patterns, e.g., when there are not enough men to meet military personnel requirements (Goldman 1973; Segal 1999). The needs of the military have a tendency to override current social norms and lead to using women and minorities as a "reserve" force. Once the crisis is over, there is a desire to return to "the way things were" (Segal 1999; Segal and Hansen 1992). Moore (1996) calls this the recruit/reject hypothesis.

During World War II, the unprecedented mobilization of men required the “mobilization” of women both on the home front and in the military to take over those jobs vacated by men (Honey 1984). Yet after the war, many women were forced out of the workforce, or back into lower paying women’s work (Gluck 1987; Honey 1984). Women in the military were also affected by this shift.

*Women’s Armed Service Integration Act of 1948 (PL 80-625)*

World War II was a watershed event for women in the labor force. Prior to the war, it was common for single white middle class women to work until they got married, when they would give up the single life for the middle class American dream: “the male breadwinner who supported his family and the female homemaker who cared for his domestic needs” (Blau, Ferber and Winkler 1998, 22). Black and other minority women worked to supplement the family income, and were relegated to menial jobs (Blau, Ferber and Winkler 1998; Moore 1996). Regardless of ethnic background or class, women were segregated into occupational roles that were low paying, had few benefits, and little, if any, promotion opportunities (Honey 1984). The pervasive attitude was that if a woman worked, she did it for extra money rather than necessity. The high paying, high status jobs went to men, whether or not they had to support a family (Blau, Ferber and Winkler 1998; Honey 1984; Williams 2000).

Women’s work at that time was limited to clerical, nursing and teaching, in addition to low or unskilled work in factories such as textile mills, rural agriculture or as domestics (Blau, Ferber and Winkler 1998; Honey 1984). A small number of women, primarily college graduates, chose career over marriage as a lifelong vocation,

but the most accepted roles for middle class white women were those of wife and mother (Blau, Ferber and Winkler 1998, 25). However, for the poor, particularly blacks and immigrants, it was necessary for them to work outside the home in order to help support the family, albeit in low-status, low-paying jobs (Blau, Ferber and Winkler 1998: 23). Gluck (1987), in her study of women, work and World War II, states, “Urban women in the 1940’s were accustomed to their work being devalued – be it in the home or in the marketplace. During the war, for the first time in their lives, many women performed jobs that were viewed by the public as necessary and valuable, and that were often physically challenging. Finally valued by others, they came to value themselves more” (p. xii).

Poor women, especially those who were full time workers in low paying jobs before the war, eagerly shifted to the more lucrative jobs left by men (Gluck 1987). The military, however, was still considered a male-only occupation. Manpower shortages and the increased bureaucracy dictated changes in the military institution. The government’s goal was to use women as temporary workers, both in factories and in the military. Recruiting efforts emphasized the heroic service to nation, duty for self-sacrifice and putting the welfare of soldiers ahead of one’s own desires (Honey 1984: 51). There was an assumption that women took war jobs out of patriotic duty, not because they would benefit from them personally, and that they would be filled by housewives, not women already in the work force. Both of these assumptions proved to be false (Gluck 1987: x; Honey 1984: 55).

Women in the military during World War II were originally envisioned as

temporary workers who would be assigned to take over clerical and administrative work and free those men for combat. Soon, however, women were driving trucks, digging ditches, working on machinery, and flying airplanes; women were doing any and all jobs that did not involve direct combat. Although they taught men how to fly airplanes, they were not assigned to operational aircraft or sea squadrons (Holm 1992).

Not being assigned to combatant positions did not protect women from the horrors of war. Sixty-six Army nurses and 15 Navy nurses were captured and imprisoned by the Japanese in 1942, and remained POWs for the remainder of the war (Holm 1992: 45). In the Pacific theater, 565 women in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) received combat decorations (Holm 1992: 91). Women in all the services distinguished themselves and proved that women had the courage, strength, and stamina to perform to male standards.

After the war, however, the temporary nature of women's service came to fruition, and most women were discharged. Some leaders within the armed forces, most notably General Eisenhower, were convinced there was a permanent place for women in the services, and eventually Congress was persuaded that keeping women in administrative roles would contribute to, not degrade, military effectiveness, and would provide a framework for mobilization in the event of another national emergency (Holm 1992).

Although women had served admirably in many occupational roles, the final legislation (Public Law 80-625, Women's Armed Forces Integration Act of 1948) allowed women as permanent members of the armed forces but severely limited their

occupational roles and opportunities. A woman could not enlist if she was under the age of 21 without written consent of her parents; enlisted women were limited to two percent of the authorized enlisted force. Women officers were limited to ten percent of the authorized number of enlisted women and could not have a permanent commission above the grade of Commander/Lieutenant Colonel. This legislation also included a provision that prohibited women from serving on any ship, except hospital ships and naval transports, nor could they be assigned to aircraft assigned in combat missions (Section 210 of PL 80-625, codified in U.S.C. 10 Section 6015).

Additionally, there were specific provisions that prohibited women from claiming their husbands or children as dependents (Section 211). Still, they were authorized “all provisions of law relating to pay, leave, money allowances for subsistence and rental of quarters, mileage and other travel allowances, or other allowances, benefits, or emoluments, of male personnel” (PL 80-625: 368) which, for the era, was unusual. Thus, although women were allowed to remain in the military, social expectations defined what occupational *and* family roles women performed. Since women could not be assigned to ships, their career paths differed from their male counterparts and their promotion opportunities were severely limited. Unlike their WWII counterparts, by the mid-1960s women in all the services were excluded from the occupations considered “mainstream” by the military (Holm 1992: 175).

This remained the case until the women’s movement in the 1960s and 1970s empowered women to push for greater equality in all areas, especially in the workforce. In the 1960s, the restrictions on women’s numbers and rank were lifted,

but the overall percent of women never reached the prior two percent ceiling. Furthermore, the status of military women had deteriorated to the point that they were not considered much more than a “ladies auxiliary” (Holm 1992: 180). This period in history is interesting because women in the military were truly a forgotten entity, stuck in a 1950s model, while women in civil society were clamoring for equality in citizenship rights, occupational roles and personal status. Women in the military began to take notice of the social change, and several court cases in the mid-to-late 1970s gave women many of the same rights as men for dependent benefits, career continuation without regard for motherhood status, and the first opportunities to serve at sea on non-combatant ships (Holm 1992).

In the 1970s, the change to an All Volunteer Force (AVF) required the military to compete for, and recruit qualified personnel from the same labor market as the civilian sector (Goldman 1973; D. Segal 1989). With demographic reductions in the number of available 18-to-24 year old white men, the military became increasingly dependent on male minorities and the untapped pool of women to make the AVF succeed (D. Segal 1989). For example, when the draft ended in 1973, women comprised only 1.6 percent of the force. At the end of FY 1980 it had risen to 8.4 percent and as of March 2000, the percentage had increased to 14.3 (Manning and Wight 2000).

#### *Women at Sea*

Since males of sufficient quality and quantity were not enlisting (Segal and Segal 1983), by the mid-1970s Naval leaders knew that by the end of the decade they

would have trouble manning ships and started seeking alternatives. Then Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Zumwalt, had authorized a pilot program for women at sea in 1972, by assigning women to make up a portion of the crew of the USS Sanctuary, a hospital ship. Women nurses had been assigned to hospital ships during the previous wars, but this was the first time that women were assigned as ship's crew. This pilot program proved that women could successfully perform arduous duty at sea that was previously regarded as men's work. Additionally, Navy women were beginning to realize how much the legal prohibition against going to sea was impacting their careers. In 1976 six women filed a suit in federal court claiming the prohibition was unconstitutional (Ebbert and Hall 1999: 237).

On July 28, 1978, Judge John Sirica ruled that Section 6015 unconstitutionally denied women their right to the "equal protection guarantee embodied in due process clause of Fifth Amendment" (Owens v. Brown 1978: 291). As stated in the decision "The core protection afforded by the equal protection component of the Fifth Amendment is that laws favoring members of one gender and disadvantaging members of the other be reasonably and, beyond that, substantially related to the achievement of some important objective" (p. 308). Thus, the Navy had a mandate to utilize women at sea and precedent for future opportunities was established.

The pending lawsuit, the increase in the numbers of navy women and manpower shortages on ships became the overarching reasons for seeking the expansion of women's roles. The Navy needed the flexibility to assign women to ships so the ships could be fully manned. Additionally, since women were assigned

solely to shore duty, the expansion of women's roles would begin to provide equitable sea/shore rotation for enlisted ranks (Ebbert and Hall 1999). In the late 1970s the Navy submitted legislation to Congress asking to amend the law that restricted women from ships. Congress began hearing testimony about expanded roles for women in July and September 1977. Hearings continued in early 1978.

On Tuesday, March 21, 1978, the Chairman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, the Honorable Richard C. White, convened a hearing on H.R. 7431, "a bill which would permit increased flexibility in the utilization of women aboard naval vessels" (HASC 1978: 1177). The Navy was represented by Secretary of the Navy Graham Claytor and Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Admiral James D. Watkins. Written testimony included correspondence from Secretary of Defense C.W. Duncan. All of the military representatives supported changing the law to allow women on ships. There was one piece of written correspondence opposing the change, from Mrs. Irl N. Duling, Chairman of the Committee Opposing Coed Academies.

Chairman White made it clear that the hearing was being held pursuant to the Defense Authorization Bill to "speed its enactment" if approved, and that there was a question as to whether this proposal was an "initial effort to change the policy concerning the use of women in combat, or is simply an effort to permit increased management alternatives for the use of women in the Navy's non-combat functions in a manner similar to the way women can now be utilized in the Army and Air Force. Manpower management issues are...appropriate for consideration at this time. The

issue of using women in combat has broader implications, and...it is not a subject which can be effectively addressed during these authorization proceedings” (HASC 1978: 1177). Therefore, the total repeal of Section 6015 of Title 10, U.S.C. was tabled.

The Navy had been interpreting the prohibition for assigning women to ships (other than hospital ships and transports) literally. Navy Judge Advocate General (JAG) had interpreted the language to mean that “any assignment to a vessel which has deployed to the high seas-even an assignment of short duration for purposes of an aircraft landing aboard a carrier-is prohibited” (p. 1215). In other words, if a Navy vessel was at sea, a Navy woman could not be on that vessel, even if just to temporarily land on an aircraft carrier to deliver parts or to be transported by sea from one duty station to another. In the written statement by the Chief of Naval Personnel, Vice Admiral Watkins, the Navy endorsed the proposed change to the law for the following reasons:

- the need to “maximize (its) readiness through more efficient use of both manpower and womanpower” (p. 1179);

- the “decline of the male population eligible for military service in the 80’s [sic] and beyond has increased the urgency of efforts” to improve the utilization of women (p. 1179);

- an “increased recognition by our society, including our armed services, of the obligation to provide greater opportunities for women to enjoy full and rewarding careers in the service of their country” (p. 1179); and

-the requirement to provide young women at the Naval Academy the same training and opportunities (at sea) as their male counterparts;

-the “archaic provision” that Navy women cannot go aboard a ship to make repairs, for training or even transport, yet civilian, Army or Air Force women can (p. 1189).

The Navy emphasized that the change would be consistent with the existing law; that the ships to which the women would be assigned could be considered in the same classification as hospital ships and transports which would “not be expected to be assigned combat missions” (p. 1182). The types of ships to which women would be assigned were “tenders, repair ships, auxiliaries and support ships” (p. 1183). The manning goal would be a “minimum ratio of 1:3 women to men (25%), with a maximum goal of 1:1 (50%)” (p. 1183). Of course, the Navy made it clear that these percentages would not be achieved at first because of the paucity of women in the non-traditional ratings needed to fill the billets.

The Navy presented a five-to-ten year plan for the slow increase of women into both sea billets at the 25% goal and into non-traditional ratings. There were three caveats to the report: the Navy cannot force the growth of women at sea too quickly as it would create an imbalance in the junior ranks, the Navy was not certain how many women would be attracted to this non-traditional occupation nor if they would reenlist in sufficient numbers to meet career force requirements (p. 1188).

Interestingly, the Secretary of Defense, in his written testimony, while endorsing the legislation allowing women on non-combatant ships, also called for the

complete repeal of 10 U.S.C. section 6015 as a long-term solution. While Secretary Claytor approved of the long-term goal, he was satisfied with the step-by-step approach outlined by Admiral Watkins, primarily because it “give[s] us the relief we need and will provide more billets than we have available qualified enlisted women over the next several years...Sound management calls for integrating women into our total force in an evolutionary way so we can maintain steady progress in effectively integrating more women into the Navy” (p. 1194).

During the question and answer period, Mr. Won Pat (a member of the committee) expressed the opinion that “you go into the service virtually to defend our way of life, our country, whether you are a male or a female. So my belief is that whether or not you’re a male or a female you should be subjected to the same rigorous requirements. Why should we then have to be selective with respect to the assignment of women? Women go in, just like men. They go into the service, and they go into some kind of a specialty or duties. So on that basis they are the ones who select the type of duty that they want, and they should then be placed accordingly” (p. 1197).

In response Secretary Claytor indicated that although he wasn’t worried about putting women in danger, “Let me say that I think, should we have an all-out war, I would feel a great deal better for my own personal safety if I were on a destroyer in the middle of the Atlantic than if I were at a desk in the Pentagon” (p. 1197), he was worried about “discipline and operation of a ship, particularly a small ship, under wartime conditions, with no liberty, no opportunity for recreation, to get ashore, crowded together in very small places...I just think that sex is sex, and when they’re

put together for that long, under those kind of conditions, you're going to have trouble" (pp. 1197-1198). He later states "We would not have women on the destroyers, but we would have women on the transports. They're at hazard, but we cannot avoid hazard. What we're trying to do is avoid having them as a part of the combat team" (p. 1211).

There was quite a bit of discussion about women in combat, women serving temporarily in combatant ships, and how to evacuate them if the ship were suddenly to be assigned a combat mission. There was no argument regarding women's safety; that was not an issue. At issue was the concept of women serving as an aggressor. As Secretary Claytor testified, "the other question is: Do you want women in an assault echelon that goes over the top and tries to bayonet the enemy? I think at this stage of the game we certainly do not" (p. 1203). He later states "But when you get to the Navy it's a different problem. There is no hand-to-hand combat in the Navy. There just is none. You do not board enemy ships with a cutlass in your teeth any more. This is all done by electronics and long-range missiles and that type of thing" (p. 1204).

The issue of physical standards was brought up by one of the committee members. Admiral Watkins responded that the Navy was working that issue (determining the physical strength required of certain ratings and assignments), but that it was not a significant issue for the Navy. The issue of modification to existing facilities was also brought up, and again, the Navy assured the Committee that the assignment of women to sea could be accomplished without significant modifications,

or costs, to the ships. This was borne out by the speed with which the Navy assigned women to ships after the law was passed: officers were assigned within 30 days and enlisted women were assigned within 60 days of passage.

Finally, toward the end of the hearing, the floor was opened to people in the audience. Mrs. Irl Duling stated, “The subject of morale for the men has not been covered at all here” (p. 1208). Her written statement elaborated on that issue: “One male Midshipman, class of 1980, shared that his motivation has been greatly reduced: If a woman can do what he is doing, where is the challenge?” (p. 1208). She recommended that women be segregated at their own Academy that would be “geared to their special capabilities and the needs for the Services...(which) would offer specialization in the supportive areas appropriate for women and therefore would not reduce the effectiveness of our military forces and academies as a whole” (p. 1208). She closed by saying that trying to define the “physical stress of each position in our military in order to open them to women and the cost of altering facilities to accommodate female needs on ships and elsewhere approaches the absurd” (p. 1208). Interestingly, in the closing section of the hearing, and in trying to clarify DoD’s stand on the existing legislation, the Committee asked about the assignment of women to submarines. Interestingly, the answer was that women would not be assigned to a submarine for other than temporary duty, for a very short time (2 to 4 days), and only in order to make repairs or the like.

The Committee was concerned about the possibility of this change opening the door to women in combat, and it appeared consistently opposed to that outcome, as

did the Navy leaders who were in attendance. Secretary Claytor made it clear that the demands of a WWII-scenario at sea was not, in his personal opinion, what he would like to see for women in the Navy. The Navy testified that this change would allow them to use their womanpower to meet the needs of the Navy more efficiently, and would thus result in greater combat readiness. They also pushed for the temporary duty provision on combat ships not expected to be involved in combat missions because it would give the Navy more flexibility in assigning women, especially midshipmen, to sea for training and other purposes. The safety of women in a combat zone was not an issue so much as concern about the *idea* of women in combat. At that point in time the idea was unpalatable, even if combat were on a Navy vessel in hostile waters engaging an enemy at great distance. There was little discussion about the issue of fraternization except by Secretary Claytor who said it would be detrimental in a World War II scenario on a destroyer, and the Committee members did not react to that. The focus was on the Navy's needs. The individual issues could be dealt with later.

Senate bill S. 3486 and its companion bill in the House, H.R. 14042, were introduced in September 1978, and eventually became Public Law 95-485. On October 20, 1978, in the DoD Appropriation Authorization Act of 1979, Section 808 amended Title 10, section 6015 to read:

However, women may not be assigned to duty on vessels or in aircraft that are engaged in combat missions nor may they be assigned to other than temporary duty on vessels of the Navy except hospital ships, transports, and vessels of a similar classification not expected to be assigned combat missions.

The Navy began assigning women as permanent members of ships' crews on

non-combatants, and allowed women to be temporarily assigned to combatants for training purposes late in 1978. Ebbert and Hall (1999) state

This...required the Navy to change three things: the ships themselves, to accommodate women; women's training; and women's career paths. In addition, Navy leaders would have to make every effort to gain men's acceptance of the new reality, and they would have to decide how to deal with pregnant sailors aboard ships. Women also faced change. The opportunity to serve in ships would allow them to expand their range of professional skills and, in the case of female officers aspiring to a seagoing career, prepare themselves for the Navy's sternest professional challenge, command of a ship. They would also have to accept radical changes in their personal lives, for now they would face what Navy men had always endured-long periods of duty at sea that separated them from family and friends (p. 238).

#### *Repeal of the Combat Exclusion Law for Women at Sea*

Interestingly, the House Armed Services Committee Personnel subcommittee held hearings regarding women in combat as early as late 1979. In submitting legislation to change the combat exclusion laws, the Navy had submitted a version that called for the amendment of the Title, but DoD had submitted a legislative proposal that called for total repeal. The Navy was less than enthusiastic about this version and the subcommittee concluded that DoD had not adequately thought through its proposal, and dismissed it.

By early 1994 more than ten thousand women were serving at sea (Ebbert and Hall 1999: 324), but women still were not full members of the Navy. Women could not be assigned to combat ships, a key occupational role for advancement to flag ranks in operationally significant billets. There was still some residual concern about the safety of women in a war zone. But this changed soon after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when several non-combatant U.S. Navy ships had sailed into harm's way. As a result, Congress, the Navy and the public realized that being assigned to a non-

combatant ship did not necessarily mean it would be safe (Holm 1992). Additionally, British coalition forces had integrated women onto combatant ships in 1990 (Presidential Commission 1992) and several of these ships served in the Gulf War.

A hearing held in May 1993 on women in combat was the result of several factors. Besides the goals of a new administration, it was clear that women's successes during Desert Storm and assignment to a non-combatant ship did not prevent women from being in a combat zone (subject to all the hazards of a combatant but clearly unable to defend themselves against attack) (Ebbert & Hall 1999). At the hearing, held by the House Committee on Armed Services, Military Forces and Personnel Subcommittee, the Navy requested repeal of the legislation that excluded women from serving on combatant ships.

The Navy's position once again focused on mission effectiveness. Vice Admiral Zlatoper, then Chief of Naval Personnel, argued that women have succeeded in tough assignments in both aviation and on ships, and that force reductions, austere budgets and changing missions require that the Navy draw from the most talented personnel available, regardless of gender, to maintain a high level of readiness and effectiveness. He testified that cohesion "is a function of shared purposes-common risks and rewards-and good leadership, not a function of some mystical male bonding" (HASC 1994: 13). Supporters concurred by relating instances of teamwork, heroism and abilities of women who faced the ultimate life-threatening situation on board a ship: fire. The emphasis, it was argued, should be on allowing the Naval services maximum flexibility in personnel assignments, and maintaining readiness by being

able to utilize their best-qualified personnel (HASC 1994).

The success of women in Desert Storm, and the public acceptance of women in dangerous situations, including being subject to combat, was one impetus for Congressional review of combat exclusion laws and policy. The Navy successfully argued for repeal of combat exclusion laws, and soon authorized the assignment of women to all ships except submarines and Patrol Craft (Ebbert & Hall 1999; HASC 1994).

In April 1993, Congress repealed the law that prohibited women from being assigned to combat aviation. The prohibition against women serving in combatant ships was repealed in November 1993 via the FY 94 Defense Authorization Bill (PL 103-160), but included the provision that the services give Congress thirty days' advance notice of proposed changes to policies in the assignment of women to combatant ships (Ebbert and Hall 1999: 314).

The move was met with approval from people "on the deck plates". Ebbert and Hall (1999) found that men who had worked with women praised them highly, and those who had not tended to be the naysayers (p. 326). Current Navy policy is that women can be assigned to all ships except submarines and Patrol Craft (SECNAV 1996). As of December 2002, 19,394 women serve on 153 ships, 51 of them with officers only, and 3 with enlisted women only, out of 255 surface ships (U.S. Navy official website as of February 3, 2003). There are still too few bunks for the numbers of women being recruited (800 to 1000 bunks are needed), and it will be at least three years until this is resolved. This situation is the result of some early

decommissionings and delays in new surface ship construction. It also exacerbates manning, retention and advancement problems women in the Navy face (McCullom 2002). The first woman surface line flag officer was selected in FY 2002<sup>2</sup>. The repeal of the combat exclusion law will enable women to aspire to the highest echelons of Naval Service: Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Commanders and Unified Commanders.

*Why not submarines?*

In 1994, part of the reasoning behind not assigning women to submarines was to take a measured approach to putting women in combatants. There appeared to be some acceptance that eventually women would be assigned to submarines, given the fact that the Secretary of the Navy ordered that the policy be reviewed annually (SECNAV memo of 20 July 1995). However, submarine duty remains the last of the three sea-going communities (besides aviation and surface ships) from which women are barred. The official reason for this is in a regulation issued by the Secretary of the Navy which states: “[Women] may not be permanently assigned to currently designed classes of submarines, MCMs, MHCs, and PCs due to the prohibitive cost to modify these ships for appropriate berthing and privacy arrangements” (SECNAV 1996). Although this language does not preclude women from being assigned to newly designed classes of ships, Congress included in the 2001 Defense Authorization Bill<sup>3</sup> a provision that prohibits the Navy from spending money to reconfigure or design any

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<sup>2</sup> RADM (sel) Deborah Loewer

<sup>3</sup> Public Law 106-398 signed by the President into law on October 30, 2000.

new submarines to accommodate female crew members or from assigning women to submarines without Congressional approval.

This legislation aside, the Navy has acknowledged that it could assign women to the larger Trident ballistic missile submarines with little to no berthing modifications, but they remain closed due to career considerations for both men and women (Holland, undated). Female midshipmen have been temporarily assigned to Trident submarines for indoctrination and career orientation purposes, and female contractors regularly ride submarines during sea trials and other underway events (Lopez 2002). However, no women are permanently assigned. Most submariners rotate between the smaller attack submarines and the larger Trident submarines through their careers. This gives them experience in both types, which is considered essential for career progression. If women were only assigned to Tridents, it would not only hinder women's career potential, but it would also deprive some men from being able to rotate freely between the two types (Navy 1999). So, the argument really is about assigning women to the smaller attack submarines

The debate over women in submarines began after then-Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig, in a speech to the Naval Submarine League on June 3, 1999, stated that the Navy must bring more women and minorities into the submarine force (*Navy Times* 1999a). He reminded the group of senior submariners that "A submarine force that remains detached from the main society and grows further and further out of touch with it is, in my opinion, more and more at risk...If the submarine force remains a white male bastion, it will wind up getting less and less support from the public and

Congress” (Stone 1999). This appeared to be at the top of his agenda, but Chief of Naval Operations Jay Johnson indicated in early September that there were no plans to change the submarine all-male policy (*Navy Times* 1999b). Congress later showed that it did not view the all-male submarine force as Danzig had predicted.

For its Fall 1999 Conference, the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services requested information on what it would take to open the submarine force to women, given that a new class of attack submarine was being built. DACOWITS questioned why the new class was not being built with a gender-mixed crew in mind, which would alleviate the costs involved in modifications at a later time (DACOWITS 1999).

DACOWITS recommends that, beginning now, plans for future submarine platforms incorporate appropriate berthing and privacy arrangements to accommodate mixed gender crews...Because submarines currently in the fleet are expected to stay in service as long as 40 years, plans must be made now for gender integrated crews. This would allow the assignment of the most highly qualified personnel regardless of gender (1999: 14).

This recommendation resulted in almost a year of debate, generally within the popular press and naval journals. The Navy responded by saying that the modifications necessary to upgrade privacy and habitability spaces on submarines would be problematical on a submarine because it would entail “further reducing existing below-standard conditions (for both genders); or require the removal of equipment as a space and weight trade-off, which would result in reduced operational capabilities of the ship; or in the extreme, require lengthening the ship to obtain additional space and weight margins. This option would be very costly” (Navy

1999:4).

DACOWITS concluded its Spring 2000 conference by recommending that the Navy would be better served using all its personnel assets for selection to this prestigious service. It recommended that women officers be immediately assigned to the larger Trident class submarines and that the Navy redesign the smaller and newer Virginia class submarines for women while they were still in the construction stage (DACOWITS 2000). As I will discuss later, the rhetoric is emotional and almost always negative from current and former sailors who served in submarines. For those who had not served in submarines, the issue was simply that women can do the job and should be allowed to do it. The additional personnel issues should be able to be addressed through committed leadership.

The submarine community considers itself to be an elite force. According to Moskos' (1988) Institutional/Occupational (I/O) model, the submarine force could be considered to be a more institutional organization than occupational, in both a micro and macro sense. The I/O model constructs attitudes toward one's job as either occupational or institutional. In the institutional model, participants identify military service as a calling or vocation, with intrinsic rewards. The occupational model identifies military service as an occupation in the labor market, with economic rewards. This manifests itself in a variety of ways. By considering itself as "special" or "elite" it defines itself by excluding non-qualified Others. The following is a quote from a retired submariner to a newly qualified submariner, handing down the elite status through mentoring, tradition and ceremony:

You have followed in the steps of thousands of men who have served the U.S.

Navy and the United States with honor. There are men...there are Sailors...and then there are submariner Sailors. Submariners are the best of the best (Hamilton 2002:38).

Institutional organizations also tend to have more traditional views. As a military organization the concepts of duty, honor, country are not just recruiting slogans, but meaningful in an everyday sense. The sacrifices these concepts invoke are lived on a daily basis. Submarine habitability does not meet Navy requirements for either personal space or privacy (Holland, undated). Additionally, when underway, submarine personnel do not have the benefit of seeing natural light for weeks, perhaps months at a time. The tight quarters and lack of privacy can become very stressful. Yet, submariners are proud of their commitment to the “silent service” and the inherent sacrifices that must be made to fulfill that calling. In the institutional model, female roles are limited and defined by traditional patterns of family obligation (Moskos 1988).

Interestingly, the elite status of submarines is defined by “brain” rather than “brawn”. Since all of our submarines are nuclear powered, all submariners, both enlisted and officer, must be nuclear powered qualified. Sailors who volunteer for submarine duty must have high ASVAB<sup>4</sup> scores and be motivated enough to make it through the difficult Nuclear Power School, which entails 18 months of training in nuclear power operation, maintenance and supervision of a nuclear power plant (Benson 2000). Thus I would expect the arguments against women in submarines to be different than those against women in ground combat, i.e., their physical capabilities.

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<sup>4</sup> Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery

In a 1995 report to the Secretary of the Navy assessing the submarine assignment policy excluding women, reasons for maintaining the exclusion focused on consideration of the combat effectiveness of the submarine. The report states:

Submarines are unique. They are able to operate alone, submerged and unsupported, undetected in a hostile environment for months at a time, limited only by food supplies and the endurance of the crew. The vital characteristics of submarines generate competing design requirements, including safety of submerged operations, quieting, equipment accessibility and density. The final design is a trade-off that is dominated by operational effectiveness, engineering constraints and cost. In parceling out available space, structure and equipment needed for submarine stealth, mobility, endurance and payload take priority over habitability. Non-essentials stay ashore. The crew must live in and around equipment. There is virtually no space for recreation (SAIC: 2).

The report concludes by stating

The extreme conditions on submarines-submerged twenty four hours a day for months at a time, in a crowded environment that affords almost no privacy-are a major factor that should drive submarine personnel assignment policy...Introducing women into submarines is less a question of whether they can do the day-to-day work than it is a question of whether the added complications of a mixed gender crew will undermine the operational effectiveness of the ship. Therefore, the focus should not be on women, per se, but on the ramifications of having mixed gender crews in the unique submarine environment. (SAIC, 1995: 4)

Thus the reasons why submarines should be viewed as different from all other ships and remain closed to women encompasses more than the cost and military effectiveness stance the Navy has taken. It includes concerns about the effect women will have on the already tight quarters and lack of privacy that the crew must endure.

The legislative action Congress took in October 2000 ended this particular debate. Earlier in the year, in response to the DACOWITS recommendation to immediately assign women officers to the larger Trident class submarine,

Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD) added to the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (during a session of the House Armed Services Committee), a provision that would prohibit the Navy from assigning women to submarines. It was adopted 31-21 (On Congress 2002). The provision was later modified during the joint House/Senate conference committee to require a congressional review period of 30 days of continuous session of Congress prior to any change in the assignment of women to submarines. It also prohibited any funds to be expended on reconfiguration or new design of submarines for women without this 30-day notice. This was signed into law on October 30, 2000 (P.L. 106-398, 114 Stat. 1654).

It is interesting to note that there were no hearings on this subject, nor was there documented debate in committee or on the floor of Congress during the legislative process. This is surprising given the apparent contentious debate in the public sector, with very emotional views coming from members of the submarine community and their wives, as opposed to the equal opportunity stance taken by DACOWITS and its supporters. However, if the Navy wanted to oppose this legislation, I believe hearings on the subject would have been requested. But the Navy did not and does not want to assign women to submarines as of this writing.

Representative Mark Sanford has stated that redesign of submarines for women should be contingent on wartime requirements (Sanford 2000). This appears to be an implicit acknowledgement that during wartime America does what is needed to ensure the country has adequate personnel and the equipment to accommodate

them, regardless of current public and institutional attitudes. Additionally, the continuing difficulty in recruiting qualified males for military roles (Buyer 2000; Lynch 1997; Scarborough 2000b; Wood 2000) further solidifies Segal's (1995) thesis that more women will enter the military during these times. Thus, even though today's ideas about women in submarines appear to be at an impasse, the future of women in submarines is anybody's guess. As with previous eras, women may be needed in submarines when the pool of male volunteers erodes or when the demand for personnel increases.

### **Gender and Construction of Gender**

Gender is such a pervasive part of our lives that it is something most people do not often think about. Gender is how we categorize ourselves and others and helps determine how we, and others, act or believe we are supposed to act. We feel very uncomfortable as a society if there is ambiguity about one's gender (Lorber 2001).

Sociologists believe that gender is socially constructed through various means along the life cycle. There are biologically based reasons to define a person as male or female, although some people are born with the genitalia of both. Gender identity begins at birth, but this does not necessarily coincide with biological definitions. However, for the most part, girls and boys are defined by their genitalia and then parents, other family and society proceed to construct the expected masculine or feminine behaviors that coincide with that identity.

Gender identity is the subjective feeling and internalized view of how one perceives oneself...as male or female, or perhaps along a continuum between

(intersexed). A person's gender identity may or may not correspond with the person's sex or gender, and it is unrelated to sexual orientation (Howard and Alamilla 2001:31). How a person comes to define his or her gender has been studied by sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and others. There are four basic perspectives that are used to study gender: essentialism or biological perspectives, socialization or interpersonal origins of gender, social constructionism and structuralism, only the last three of which are sociological in approach and assume that social behavior is learned (Howard and Alamilla 2001; Wood 1999). Structuralism will be addressed in a later section. Additionally, gender status inequality is also socially constructed (Ridgeway 1991), and is relevant to this discussion as it pertains to the military.

*Essentialism:* Essentialists “assume everyone is born with a particular sex, this sex is associated with a corresponding gender, and both are fixed from birth” (Howard and Alamilla 2001: 31). This perspective focuses on how the biological makeup of a person influences not only physiological features, but also the development of gender and gendered behavior (Andersen 1997; Wood 1999). The theory states that these biological differences naturally result in and explain the gender differences between men and women (Andersen 1997: 28) that these differences are unchanging and complementary to the other sex, and that the differences “shape sex differences in social behavior” (Howard and Alamilla 2001: 31). For example, since women give birth, it is generally believed that women are inherently better at caring for and nurturing children and that men are incapable of giving the kind of nurturance that children need. This assumption has become ingrained in our society and has framed

how men and women's social roles have evolved.

Although both Acker (1992) and Andersen (1997) acknowledge that there may be a causal link between biological sex and gender, both explain the construction of gender as a social process. The biological argument can focus on the sex chromosomes, the role of hormones, and/or the differences in brain structure and development in how gender is developed both physiologically and behaviorally (Wood 1999: 44). Andersen (1997) explains that these various biological differences are used to validate the argument of biological determinism, which states that these biological differences naturally result in and explain the gender differences between men and women (p. 28). Andersen goes on to debunk the argument of biological determinism through references to different empirical studies and research (Andersen 1997: 28-30). Wood, in contrast, indicates that other research shows a link between behavior and hormones, behavior and brain development, and behavior and chromosomal makeup (Wood 1999: 43-47).

Wood (1999) states "Although virtually no researchers dispute the influence of biology on gender, there is substantial controversy about *how* strong and how immutable biological forces are. Those who hold an extreme version of biological theory maintain that our chromosomes and other biological factors program, or determine, masculine and feminine behavior" (p. 46). Even so, she caveats this by stating, "Biological theories tell us only about physiological and genetic qualities of men and women *in general*. They do not necessarily describe individual men and women" (p. 46).

*Socialization:* Socialization is a process that begins with the assumption that children learn appropriate behavior according to what gender, race, class, age, ethnicity, etc. they belong (Howard and Alamilla 2001). The process of socialization is used to encourage and discourage certain behaviors in males and females. Agents of this process include our family, teachers, friends, the media and religious teachings. Although as Americans we are exposed to similar cultural expectations and sanctions regarding gendered behavior, as individuals we can vary in our response to these influences. However, the severity of sanctions for inappropriate behavior can, and usually does, act as a powerful system of social control (Andersen 1997). Socialization perspectives present gender differences not as innate and biological but as a result of social and cultural forces (Howard and Alamilla 2001:31-32).

*Social Construction:* Social construction of gender is the study of the processes by which expectations of behavior by gender are passed on through society. These processes occur through both individuals, such as parents, relatives, and friend, and through society's institutions, such as expectations of behavior within schools, churches and the military. "The process pervades society and it begins the minute a child is born" (Andersen 1997: 19). For the individual, gender construction begins with the assignment to a sex category based on what the genitalia look like. Gender construction is aided by gender markers: those items, such as names, clothing and toys, that society stereotypically assigns to boys or girls (Andersen 1997; Lorber 2001). One's assigned sex category then establishes a pattern of gendered behavioral expectations (Andersen 1997). As a social institution, it is a way for individuals to

organize their lives, through society's expectation of work and family roles. Gendered stereotypes and societal roles based on gender are contrary to choosing people for different tasks in society on the basis of talent, motivation and competence and thus is also a system of stratification (Lorber 2001: 85).

The expectation of gender appropriate interactions are based on an individual's unconscious theory of gender and influences how one sees oneself and others (Wood 1999). Everyone "does gender" without thinking about it, and as a society we assume it is bred into our genes. But gender is "constantly created and re-created out of human interaction, out of social life, and is the texture and order of that social life" (Lorber 2001:83). Thus the social construction of gender is a progression. It is not fixed and ideas about what is appropriate for one's gender can, and does, change, both individually and institutionally (Lorber 2001:85).

*Status Inequality.* Gender is a nominal (or ascriptive) characteristic that has become status valued through social construction. "A nominal characteristic is any socially recognized attribute on which people are perceived to differ in a categorical rather than graduated or ordinal way. Religion, region of origin, ethnicity, race and gender are all nominal characteristics in our society" (Ridgeway 1991:368). This is in contrast to graduated or achieved characteristics such as wealth or education, in which individual levels may vary. Both race and gender have clearly established status value; assumptions are made that it is more valuable to be male rather than female, white rather than black (Ridgeway 1991:368).

The social conditions that bring this about include social structural inequality

in access to socially valuable resources; interaction with those of similarly endowed resources, which creates a status hierarchy; and situational formulation of performance expectations based on shared goals, which become self-fulfilling, as compared to the contributions of others (Ridgeway 1991). Nominal characteristics become the basis for status inequality through a series of interactions in which the shared goals of those with the most resources are perceived to be equated with sameness in nominal or ascribed characteristics. “Others” or those whose nominal characteristics are different are then relegated to a lower status and power. “Others” will defer to the higher status group, since they control the resources (for a complete analysis of this process, see Ridgeway 1991). Thus, cultural beliefs about worthiness and status are developed. In our society, the group with the most resources is the white male.

Society may determine the assignment of roles, the expected behaviors, and the values associated with them, but they are segregated by gender and defined by the highest status group (Wood 1999:56-57). One of the expected and primary roles of a man is to be the provider and bring in an income to support his family (and maintain his access to the resources) while women are expected to be the nurturers and caretakers of the family (Cohen & Durst 2001; Goldscheider & Rogers 2001; Orbuch & Timmer 2001). Much of the feminist literature treats these gendered expectations as problematic, resulting in women’s disadvantage (e.g. Acker 1992; Andersen 1997; Goldscheider & Rogers 2001; Orbuch & Timmer 2001). Because in our society these gendered roles are not equally valued, women are seen as socially subordinate to men (Chodorow 2001; Mahoney 2001; Britton & Williams 1998), with a lower, and

inequitable status (Ridgeway 1991, 1997). When women attempt to break out from traditional role assignments, they are ostracized at worst (Andersen 1997), or said to have “role conflict” at best (Kanter 1977). Ridgeway (1997) theorizes that the salience of gender in the workplace and women’s status inequality also explains why men react negatively when women attempt to compete at the same level as men (p. 222).

Inter-role conflict, or the difficulty in fulfilling the expectation or standard of performance in two equally important roles, is the crux of the issue with women in the labor force. Segal (1986) has defined both the military and the family as “greedy institutions,” which require of an individual a great commitment in time, loyalty and energy (p. 9). These conflicting expectations are the basis for much of the criticism about women in the military, and the view that women’s foray into the military is problematic. Alternatively, in an organization such as the military, which has been defined as a male institution, one’s gender is of overarching salience to the perception of ability. The traditional male warrior roles are sacrosanct as male roles.

Women have breached some of those traditions by serving on surface ships and combatant aircraft. But ground combat and submarine specialties remain male bastions. Any inroads into those specialty areas are perceived as a status threat. Thus, it is socialization and interaction processes that define and construct expected gender behaviors. Gender is imbedded within the social structure of society, and within the social institutions we deal with on a daily basis: the family, schools, religion, the government, and the military.

## **Defining Masculinity**

Socialization and interaction processes define and construct expected gender behaviors. The male gender is sometimes defined negatively as “not feminine” rather than positively masculine (Chodorow 2001:37; Kimmel 2001). Freud’s oedipal theory is used by some to attempt to explain why boys define masculinity as repudiating femininity (Chodorow 2001, Kimmel 2001). Since children’s first identification is with their mothers, a girl’s gender identification is consistent with this earlier identification, but a boy’s is not. A boy must separate himself from identity with his mother to become something she is not. Because in our society there is a pervasive father-absence, boys identify with and “develop a sense of what it is to be masculine through identification with cultural images of masculinity and men chosen as masculine models” (Chodorow 2001:37) rather than actual male role models with whom they can physically interact. So, a boy’s identification of self as masculine often is an idealized and stereotypical version of what a man really is.

Additionally, men’s roles are defined in our society as non-familial. “Women... are primarily defined as wives and mothers, thus in particularistic relation to someone else, whereas men are defined primarily in universalistic occupational terms” (Chodorow 2001:38). So, while men can also be husbands and fathers, they are primarily defined in terms of their work or profession: accountant, businessman, doctor, salesman, policeman, and in the military: soldier, sailor, airman, or Marine. Plus, while women are stereotypically nurturing, caring, nice, and easy to get along with, some men are aggressive, loud, obnoxious and think they can get away with

most any kind of rude behavior, which they generally can, under the guise “boys will be boys.” Pollack (2001) believes this behavior hides a number of insecurities in boys, including vulnerability, powerlessness and isolation (p. 107). Many researchers, including Lorber (2001), Chodorow (2001), Kimmel (2001), and others, conclude that this causes boys to grow into men who denigrate others in order to build their feelings of self-confidence and self-worth. They can only feel good if they feel they are better than others they deem as not equal, such as men of color, gay men, and women. This behavior is becoming less socially acceptable as women, and others, enter the public realm.

Hegemonic masculinity epitomizes the stereotypical male model. Kimmel (2001) defines hegemonic masculinity this way:

The hegemonic definition of manhood is a man *in* power, a man *with* power and a man *of* power. We equate manhood with being strong, successful, capable, reliable, in control. The very definitions of manhood we have developed in our culture maintain the power that some men have over other men and that men have over women (p. 54).

Lorber (2001) describes the hegemonic ideal as white, middle class, male and heterosexual (p. 8). Brannon (1976), as cited in Kimmel (2001), describes the four “rules” by which virtually all American men are measured:

1. “No Sissy Stuff!” One may never do anything that even remotely suggests femininity. Masculinity is the relentless repudiation of the feminine.
2. “Be a Big Wheel.” Masculinity is measured by power, success, wealth, and status. As the current saying goes, “He who has the most toys when he dies wins.”
3. “Be a Sturdy Oak.” Masculinity depends on remaining calm and reliable in a crisis, holding emotions in check. In fact, proving you’re a man depends on never showing your emotions at all. Boys do not cry.
4. “Give ‘em Hell.” Exude an aura of manly daring and aggression. Go for it. Take risks. (p. 55).

The “repudiation of the feminine” also manifests itself in acute homophobia (e.g., Kimmel 2001; Savin-Williams 2001; Messner 2001a, b). While boys want and need closeness and association with other boys, societal rules only allow this type of camaraderie while doing activities such as sports, camping, hunting and other “masculine” activities (Hantover 2001; McGuffey & Rich 2001; Messner 2001a) such as military service. Any other shared activities would be suspect as being of a homosexual nature. Thus “The lives of most American men are bounded, and their interests daily curtailed by the constant necessity to prove to their fellows, and to themselves, that they are not sissies, not homosexuals” (Kimmel 2001:54). This fear “keeps men exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity, including sexual predation with women. Homophobia and sexism go hand in hand” (Kimmel 2001:59). This may be particularly true with young men just joining the military who still need to “prove” their manhood.

In brief, sociologists define the ideology of the hegemonic male as white, heterosexual and middle class who maintains his high status through sexism and homophobia, putting “the Other” down in order to maintain his power, his control and to validate his masculinity.

### **Gendered Institutions and the Military**

Gender is imbedded within the social structure of society, and within all our social institutions. As a sociological perspective, structuralism addresses the macro-level (i.e., societal and institutional) patterns inherent in societal attitudes towards gender, race, age, class, sexuality and other social positions. It enables us to study

questions of power and inequality in the social structures that make up our society, and which govern the allocation of resources and opportunities. This perspective “emphasizes how a pervasive system of male dominance affects these allocations” according to gendered and other categories (Howard and Alamilla 2001:34).

Lorber (2001) defines gender as a social institution, and as a social institution it is one of the major ways human beings organize their lives (p. 84). It is structured in such a way that it “divides work in the home and in economic production, legitimates those in authority, and organizes sexuality and emotional life” (Connell as cited in Lorber 2001:87). Our social order is organized around racial, ethnic, class and gender inequality (Lorber 2001: 87).

The military has been described as a gendered institution, which Acker (1992) defines as an institution in which “gender is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life” (p. 567). She goes on to say that gendered institutions are “institutions historically developed by men, currently dominated by men, and symbolically interpreted from the standpoint of men in leading positions, both in the present and historically. These institutions have been defined by the absence of women” (p. 567). Although Acker’s definition was not specifically intended to define military institutional structure, she uses the military as one example of a gendered institution. There is little argument that this definition explains military culture in general and why assumptions of behavior based on gender continue.

Acker (1990, 1992) also describes the development of our societal norms as

being a gendered process. If the institutional structures of our social institutions (economic, political, religious, educational, etc.) were constructed by men for men, it stands to reason that our social roles, that is, our “culturally prescribed expectations, duties and rights that define the relationship” (Andersen 1997: 31) between two actors, were also defined by men. Institutions such as the military were defined by the *absence* of women. Acker (1992) concludes that despite the changes that have occurred in our society in regards to women’s roles, both past and present, males still dominate the central institutions, of which the military is one (p. 567).

When women compete with men in the public sector, it is with the intent of equality or performing to the current expectations of the job. This is seen as a “neutral” standard. But Acker states, “One conceptual mechanism is the positing of an abstract, general human being, individual or worker who apparently has no gender. On closer examination, that individual almost always has the social characteristics of men, but that fact is not noted” (1992: 568). Major General Holm, in her history of women in the military (1993), makes a statement about women’s military integration that was referring to the World War II timeframe, but can easily apply to today: “The women are expected to adjust and to conform to the rules laid down *by men for men*” (p. 104). It is these gendered expectations that are the source of the arguments against women entering non-traditional, military roles. Since gender is effectively salient in this environment, “status beliefs create expectations that have self-fulfilling effects” (Ridgeway 1997:222). The higher status group resists change, and the assumptions about “others” cannot be changed without multiple experiences with disconfirming

information (Ridgeway 1997:222). The hegemonic male standard is presumed to be the only acceptable standard.

### **Social Construction of Masculinity in the Military**

The military is a social institution that serves society by providing for the nation's security and ensuring that the nation's security interests are upheld in the global context, with its primary emphasis being on combat performed by warriors (Dunivin 1994). Traditionally, basic training has been seen as a rite of passage where boys are transformed into men (D. Segal 1989). This is accomplished through socialization processes that include physical endurance and strength, discipline, conformity, competition and aggression (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1990).

Kimmel's (2001) four "rules" for developing masculinity describe aspects of this socialization process very well. Dunivin (1994) calls the resultant attitude about the military profession a "cult of masculinity" (p. 534), as does Kimmel (2002). In boot camp, men were trained to be warriors who eschewed and actively feared being labeled as "sissy," "girls" or any other number of derogatory female descriptions (Segal 1999; terms also used to denigrate gays as described in Savin-Williams 2001, and others). This depiction of a warrior is analogous to Weber's "ideal type": a socially constructed image that is an exaggeration of its real world persona for the purpose of capturing its essential features (Ritzer 1992:222-223). The warrior ideal is not only male, but *not* female (Dunivin 1994), similar to the ideal of the hegemonic male.

Within the military services, the Navy has been a conservative organization,

which clings to tradition, and sees the concept of independent command at sea as the epitome of Naval professionalism (Borrebach and Fitzpatrick 1994; Builder 1989). This independence, or at least the traditional concept of the independence of Navy commanders, appears to lie at the heart of resistance to change, especially when it comes to including non-traditional personnel into the fraternity.

Naval tradition personified both the sea and ships as female, which could provide both comfort and tragedy. Many naval traditions and folklore sprang from the relationship of women, the sea and ships, and women on board ships were actually considered to be good luck (De Pauw 1982). There are also historical accounts of women leading their nations in war, on both land and sea (Fraser 1989). Nevertheless, the United States Navy did not allow women as permanent members of ships' crews until late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This created an ethos of exclusion and male privilege (Goode 1982) that has been difficult to overcome.

As described above, roles for women in civil society have been socially constructed, but those roles are slowly changing as members of society recognize the inherent inequalities and seek change (Bianchi and Spain 1996). The myth of the separate spheres of work and family described by Kanter (1977) continues even as increasing numbers of women, especially married women, enter or remain in the workforce after childbirth (Bianchi and Spain 1996). In the military, this socially constructed myth remains the ideal...that the military is *manned* by heterosexual men, and the women take care of the family, following the soldier, sailor, airman or marine to wherever the military sends him.

As a greedy institution, the military has an expectation of unlimited commitment, loyalty and energy of the individuals who are a part of it (Segal 1986), with a traditional expectation that the families of the service members would be willing to be a part of that commitment, a supportive and understanding adjunct to the male service member. It has been what is known as a “two-person career” (Papanek 1973). The military as an institution has been dependent on its insistence on heterosexuality, as it has relied on the unpaid work of dependent wives since its inception. This was a reflection of the expectations society had for the role of man as breadwinner and woman as family caretaker. It has only been since 1988 that the military formally removed the wives’ participation in voluntary (military family) activities from being reflected on the officer’s annual evaluation (Britton & Williams 1998). Despite this formal exclusion, wives, especially of Executive (XO) and Commanding Officers (CO) in the Navy, are still expected to participate in family support activities, and may informally affect an officer’s evaluative standing among peers.

American women have been rejecting the exclusive roles of wives and mothers, as evidenced by the increasing numbers of women, both married and single, in the workplace (Bianchi and Spain 1996). Some women work to help with the family economy; others are pursuing their own identity and career goals. This is also the case with regard to military families (M. Segal 1989). The increase in the number of women in the military, and women officers assigned to CO and XO billets, with no spouse or with a spouse in pursuit of his own career goals, and the increase in female

spouses of male service members pursuing their own career goals, has forced the military to change its policies with regard to spousal support of the service member's career (Durand 2000; Segal and Segal 1999). Yet, attitudes are more difficult to change, even in the face of practical considerations.

There is also a trend for men to want to spend more time with their families (Williams 2000). This is true of military personnel as well, a trend that Moskos (1988) has suggested is leading to an occupationally minded force in contrast to the traditional institutional model. But it is my thesis that institutionally, interpersonally and at the individual level, there remains an underlying attitude that women's roles in the military should be limited 1) because of their socially constructed roles as mother and caregiver and 2) because of an underlying performance expectation that women will not do as well as men in a traditionally all-male environment (Ridgeway 1997). The historical and ongoing debates on the expansion of women's roles draw on these traditional role paradigms.

### **Maintaining Hegemonic Masculinity in the Military.**

In the military, the epitome of the hegemonic male is the senior officer. It is at this level that the decisions are made about policy, and through the hierarchy that is the military, the application of those policies. The military is a hierarchical system with two unequal groups, officers and enlisted personnel, and a system of ranks within the groups. The institution maintains a system of inequality within the strata of rank. All enlisted personnel must defer to officers; and each rank must defer to the rank above him or her. This system inherently makes men, especially men at the lower

ends of the ranks, feel powerless.

As in society, individual males in the military do not feel they have power (unless they are very high in the chain of command). “Manhood is equated with power-over women, over other men. Everywhere we look, we see the institutional expression of that power-in state and national legislatures, on the boards of directors of every major U.S. corporation or law firm and in every school and hospital administration” (Kimmel 2001: 38). Kimmel explains that men have power as a group, and have been raised to believe that they are entitled to feel that power, but they do not feel powerful, and thus feel frustrated and angry (Kimmel 2001:38), especially when they see this entitlement being shared by women and “others.” “Men’s feelings are not the feelings of the powerful, but of those who see themselves as powerless” (Kimmel 2001: 38). The military is the last bastion where men as individuals can feel powerful doing men’s jobs. This manifests itself in the strongly felt attitudes that only men have the psychological drive, motivation, and physical strength required to be a military warrior.

Competitiveness and aggression are the keymarks of the military system. From a work perspective, the military is an “up-or-out” system: either you get promoted or you get out. This is much more stringent for officers than for enlisted personnel, and puts a lot of pressure to compete favorably against your peers. For both officer and enlisted personnel, the competition between peers is manifest in annual evaluations that require ranking within groups once you reach a certain rank. These comparative rankings, however, can and do impact promotions and

opportunities to fill billets of greater responsibility. Nonetheless, the impact on male bonding and friendship is like being on a sports team...individual achievement is desired, yet in order to win you have to rely on your fellow teammates. Thus, the construction of hegemonic masculinity in the military is reinforced by those typically male traits that value competitiveness, loyalty and team spirit in the workplace.

Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin (1999) report that in a meta-analytic study by Eagly et al. (1992) there was only a slight overall tendency for male leaders to be evaluated more favorably than female leaders. But, in situations where there is a directive, autocratic leadership style, such as that generally found in the military, there is a moderate-sized tendency for women to be evaluated more negatively than men (p. 198). They also theorize that this manifests itself as a legitimacy problem that creates a situation where expectations of performance are based on stereotypical gender beliefs. Since women are assumed to be more caring and democratic in their leadership styles, when they try to use the more autocratic leadership style, it can negatively affect their evaluations, and by extension, their standing within the peer group. A lower evaluation creates a status inequality situation within the wardroom that may make it more difficult for women to be seen as equals in the workplace.

A penis is the essential element of manhood, but penis as power and penis as machine as described by Bordo (2001) is also a social construction that is used to great effect in the military. Attitudes and behaviors are learned through interactions with more experienced personnel, who serve as role models. Status inequality attitudes are frequently informally (and in today's military, illegally) taught through "jodies"

(marching songs). Ditties such as “This is my weapon, this is my gun; one is for killing, the other for fun,” reiterates penis as power, penis as machine and the overarching status of men over women regardless of race or social class. In this way, even (non-open) gays in the military have a higher status than women (Britton & Williams 1998).

McGuffey and Rich (2001) describe the Gender Transgression Zone (GTZ) as a physical area where boys and girls conduct heterosocial relations and negotiate the social hierarchy and gendered behaviors on the playground. Parallel to this, a GTZ can be said to be taking place within the entire military workplace as women venture into previously all-male occupations. In 1980 women in the military were only about 8.5 percent of the force, and were mostly nurses and administrative workers. Women today make up about 14 percent of the force, and in addition to their ‘traditional’ roles, also command combatant ships, fly fighter aircraft, and support combat operations on the ground overseas (Manning and Wight 2000). This statistic does not reflect the fact that in the lower ranks, women make up about 25 percent of the force (McCullom 2002).

Since the military is also an internal labor force that hires for promotion from within, women are a small, but growing, minority at the higher ranks, but many more women as a percentage of the force are joining the military than ever before. Men still have all the high status (i.e., highest ranking) jobs, however. Even though women are becoming more fully vested in the military, there are still a few areas that women have not been allowed to pursue: direct ground combat roles and service on submarines

(Manning and Wight 2000). While there are probably power relationships ongoing between males in the military, gays and women have been the primary focuses against which to maintain both institutional and individual male power. Inequality in opportunity is manifest in men's continued control of power at the highest echelons in the military and in Congress.

### **Arguments about Expanded Roles for Women in the Navy.**

There are two primary areas in which arguments, both pro and con, depend on to forward their reasoning for the policy advocated. As Segal and Hansen (1992) found, these are Military Effectiveness and Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities. Both sides use varying arguments within these two areas to argue their case. Segal and Hansen (1992) analyzed the values and goals that influence policy through a content analysis of congressional testimony from 1941 to 1985, and found that the majority of the testimony during this timeframe concerned whether or not new military jobs (expanded roles) should be open to women. They determined that 97 percent of the speakers coded during this period expressed a value rationale in their arguments (p. 301), either pro or con, which cited either military effectiveness only, citizenship rights and responsibilities only, or a combination of both to defend their position (p. 304).

The primary opposing arguments to the expanded roles for women are usually couched in terms of military effectiveness, while the proponents of expanded roles tend to use both the military effectiveness and equality arguments to defend their position (Segal and Hansen 1992). Table 1 shows the varying arguments within these

two areas. These same categories will be used in my later analysis. The issues and rationale for both sides are explained below.

**Table 1**  
**Outline of Arguments Regarding Expanded Women’s Roles**

<b>Military Effectiveness</b>	<b>Citizens’ Rights and Responsibilities</b>
Needs of the Navy	Equal Opportunity
Warrior Ethic	Career Issues
Fraternization	
Family Issues	

*Military Effectiveness.*

Military effectiveness, the ability of a military to successfully accomplish its missions, is dependent on several variables. Although the amount and type of military hardware are important parts of the equation, personnel manning and readiness are just as important to the military’s success. Thus, variables like retention, attrition, individual commitment, trust in the system, unit cohesion, and morale, both the sailor’s and his family’s, are important to maintaining military effectiveness (D. Segal 1989). The arguments against expanding roles for women invoke all of these variables to explain how women negatively affect effectiveness.

1. Needs of the Navy

The Navy requires personnel to crew its ships and shore installations. As discussed earlier, since World War II, the Navy had used women in shore installations

in order to free men for sea duty. With the All-Volunteer Force this started to change, as not enough men, at the end of the Vietnam era, were interested in entering the military, but many young women were intrigued by its opportunities. The use of women for new non-traditional roles gave rise to several arguments having to do with the basic assumption that the Navy had to stoop awfully low for its personnel needs and it would be its ruin.

Readiness and Efficiency. Harrell and Miller (1997) conducted a limited study of 14 military units in all four services on the effect of gender integration on readiness, cohesion and morale. The major finding was that gender integration had a relatively small effect on readiness, cohesion and morale in the units studied (p. xvii). Those units that did have problems were traceable to other issues, such as pregnancy in already undermanned units, conflicting groups along division or work lines, fraternization that was not properly dealt with, and lack of committed leadership. They found that the major problem area was double standards in performance expectations and responsibilities, which undermined women's credibility and created hostility in junior enlisted men (p. xx).

Other studies on social and task cohesion indicate that it is task cohesion (the pursuit of a common goal through unit cooperation) that is important to military readiness; in fact social cohesion (emotional bonding) may have inadvertent negative consequences (D. Segal 1989; Stewart 1991). Rosen, et al. (1996) cited and conducted several studies that indicated that in mixed-gender units in the Army, with the number of women ranging from ten to thirty-five percent, there was no significant effect on the

operational performance of the unit. However, they also found that about one-third of men who entered the units with negative attitudes leave with those attitudes unchanged, even when performance results are positive.

Privacy. The costs associated with the berthing and toilet facility changes needed to accommodate women revolve around the issue of privacy. In our society the biological functions for men and women are separated, and in the Navy this is no exception. The issue is really one of cost to make the changes to meet the Navy's policies on privacy between men and women, costs that critics say could be used to upgrade the fleet or other equipment.

Pregnancy. I include this topic under "Needs of the Navy" because of its impact on, and the arguments about its effect on combat readiness. The Navy has decided that it can live with a small percentage of women getting pregnant while on sea duty, generally less than 15 percent, although this number is not written anywhere in policy. This is a topic of continuing concern for the critics of gender integration.

While there is ample evidence to refute the biological theories of gender identity and social roles (Andersen 1997; Borrebach and Fitzpatrick 1994; Messner 1998, among others), pregnancy is the one area that is irrefutably biological. Pregnancy in the Navy is considered problematic by some when speaking of the associated medical surveillance (pre-natal medical appointments) and unplanned losses on ships. A shipboard environment is inherently dangerous and can be environmentally hazardous to a fetus. Thus, Navy policy requires that a pregnant woman be reassigned ashore at the 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy; she is also removed

before that if the ship is deployed, underway and cannot guarantee medical evacuation within a six hour period (SECNAV 1995a) or if the Commanding Officer orders it. In order to get a relief as soon as possible, the Commanding Officer sends an Unplanned Loss Report to the Bureau of Naval Personnel as soon as the pregnancy is confirmed. Depending upon her qualifications, there may be a lag between the time she leaves the ship and her replacement arrives, and this may affect the ship's maintenance or operational capabilities. Additionally, because of pre-natal medical surveillance and other pregnancy related absences, there is a perception that women will cost more than men in terms of attrition and lost time (Ebbert and Hall 1999; Mitchell 1998; Segal and Segal 1983).

During the 1940s, pregnancy was not an issue because women who were or became mothers<sup>5</sup> were discharged. The social norms of the era dictated that women belonged at home with their children. The rules regarding pregnancy in the Navy changed in the 1970s as a result of litigation (Holm 1992). Current Navy policy states "pregnancy and parenthood are compatible with a naval career" (SECNAV 1995a: 1). However, the Navy concedes that pregnancy could affect a command's operational readiness by temporarily limiting a servicewoman's ability and availability to perform her assigned tasks. This issue gained momentum as more women were assigned to ships. Unplanned losses can occur for a number of reasons, but the primary reason for women on ships is pregnancy and other medical reasons (Garcia 1999).

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<sup>5</sup> Women who became mothers through adoption or marriage to a man who had custody of his children by a prior marriage were discharged, as well as those women who became pregnant (Holm 1992).

A woman's increased visibility during pregnancy creates performance pressures (Kanter 1977b) and her exemption from physical training requirements translates into a perception of a double standard of special treatment and that she is not carrying her load (Harrell and Miller 1997). Additionally, the cultural expectation of a pregnant woman is that her role and priorities are shifting, and her military responsibilities will suffer (Segal 1999). On submarines, the concerns revolve around (1) medical evacuation (MEDEVAC), as helicopter transfers are very dangerous from submarines, (2) unplanned losses and (3) concerns of fetal exposure to nuclear radiation (SAIC 1995). While downward trends in attrition and pregnancy are apparent (Garcia 1999), and the Navy's pregnancy rate at sea is considerably less than the rate for women in the civilian sector (Mottern 2000), it does not alter the opinion that most critics consider any pregnancy aboard ship problematic. Men can be unplanned losses also, for reasons ranging from disciplinary infractions to family obligations. But these are not considered a gender issue. These are looked at as individual problems for men, unlike the pregnancy issue, which is perceived as a potential problem for all military women.

## 2. The Warrior Ethic

There are several issues included in this schema, all revolving around why women cannot be combatants.

Physical strength differences between men and women. There is the fear that women do not have the strength to perform certain traditionally masculine tasks and thus the increase in the number of women in a unit will degrade its capabilities

(Devilbiss 1990; D. Segal 1989). Proponents argue that technology has reduced the requirement for physical strength (Holm 1992; Segal 1999). This is especially true in the Navy, where many shipboard functions have been automated and heavy work is relegated to civilian shipyards. In addition, the changing mission of the military, from war fighting to deterrence and peacekeeping (Moskos, Williams and Segal 2000), has broadened military roles in a direction favorable to women (Goldman 1973; Segal 1999). It can be argued that the Navy has not fought a true naval battle since World War II; technology in the form of long-range radar and over-the-horizon targeting has made close-in ship-to-ship combat obsolete. Except for Special Forces, there is no hand-to-hand combat in the Navy. Navy ships rely on electronics, torpedoes, and long-range missiles to engage the enemy (Holm 1992). Further, no other country currently has a fleet able to challenge the United States Navy, given its overwhelming force and technological advantage.

Prisoner of War (POW) Issues. Although not normally an issue associated with women at sea, this is an area of concern for those who have stereotypical ideas of the separate and proper roles for men and women. There is fear that if a woman becomes a POW, she will be susceptible to rape or that the other male POWs will do everything in their power to protect her, including collaborating with the enemy. The experience of woman POWs during World War II runs counter to these concerns, where the woman nurses who were POWs took care of the men, and who apparently were not sexually assaulted by their captors (Danner 1995). Critics point to the experiences of the women POWs during Desert Storm as proof of their concerns, although Rhonda

Cornum, in her memoir, generally avoided the subject of sexual assault (Cornum 1992). The proponents of equality for women, though, counter that this is a risk of war and accept it as such (Holm 1992). This concern for the treatment of women as POWs is a socially constructed value that women should be protected. This protection value stems from a belief that women are not able to endure physical or emotional endure abuse like men, and thus are not suitable to be combatants.

Double Standards. As reported by Harrell and Miller (1997), the perception of double standards is an area of concern for male sailors. Men perceive that women with less than average performances are being retained, while men with equal or better records are being dropped from special training programs, such as jet training. “Norming”, the establishment of standards that take into account performance highs and lows, is perceived as a lowering of standards. The Physical Fitness Test (PFT) is one of the areas that has received considerable attention, because there are age and gender-normed standards. The PFT is a measure of fitness and is not intended as a qualification standard for physically demanding jobs (jobs such as those in aviation or diving, have separate [and equal] qualification standards). Cohn (2000) indicates that the PFT differences cause some critics to pose this as a reason why men will refuse to accept women as equals. Cohn argues that the “PT protest is about far more than gender-normed fitness standards: it functions as a socially and institutionally acceptable way of expressing a variety of negative feelings about women in the military – feelings that are no longer as acceptable to state directly” (2000:133).

As enumerated by Cohn (2000), numerous editorial and opinion pieces use the

different PFT standards to report that in order for women to make it in previously all-male occupations, standards have been lowered, or separate standards are developed for women (Mitchell 1998; Scarborough 2000a; Webb 1979), which lowers military effectiveness. Also, men resent having to assume additional responsibilities if a woman is pregnant or otherwise not physically able to perform her tasks. Pregnant women are exempted from physical exercise and hazardous duty, which adds to the impression of a double standard (Yarbrough 1985).

In an opinion piece, Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, Naval Academy graduate, and later Secretary of the Navy James Webb (1979) writes that mixed-gender training at the Naval Academy has resulted in unequal treatment of men and women. He contends that standards for plebe training have been lowered, there is a double standard in the administration of discipline, and midshipmen are no longer being trained to be effective combat leaders. His thesis is that military leaders need to be strong, aggressive warrior types so that they can lead men into battle. Webb was of course speaking from the Marine Corps Vietnam war era paradigm of military combat...not the combat of aviators and shipboard personnel, the realities of the soldier-statesmen requirement of today's military leaders, nor the changing missions of humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and anti-terrorism (Moskos, Williams and Segal 2000). Nonetheless, these perceived double standards continue to be cited and believed.

Proficiency. There are questions of how women would perform in a combat role, both physically and psychologically as well as the combat performance of men

who might risk themselves or the unit to protect the women (Devilbiss 1990; Segal 1978; Wilcox 1992). The reality is that the primary danger to Navy ships in recent years has been susceptibility to mines, fire, occasional ordnance accidents, and more recently, terrorism (Rancich 2000). Ships do not have to be combatants to be subject to these hazards. The real test of performance and combat stress is how the ship's crew responds to the ever-present hazard of fire and flooding. Little has been said publicly about the performance of women on the USS Cole during the terrorist incident while in port at Aden, Yemen in October 2000. However, women were an integral part of the crew, and two women were killed in the terrorist incident (Ricks and Vogel, 2000). What has not been told is how the whole crew worked to save the ship, successfully, regardless of gender (Medwick 2001). In the Navy, there are no jobs closed to women because of job-related physical requirements (Rabkin 1999). Even the Presidential Commission of 1992 found that there are few differences in physical strength tasks between combat and non-combat ships (p. 31).

Traditional Gender Attitudes. This area of the warrior ethic describes the socially constructed notions of women, work, family, and traditional gender roles. In the military, the social and institutional structure is geared towards the military man and the stay-at-home wife who can provide the flow of family support needed in this greedy and sometimes total institution. Critics fear women at sea will somehow make the American family fall apart (Franke 1997). Proponents counter that these notions are outdated, and focus on the social attitudes that women are equal and can be both mothers and sailors (Franke 1997; McConachie 2000).

One of the arguments within the traditionalist repertoire is that the military is being used to further social change in our society without regard for military effectiveness (Holm 1992). The reasoning is that it will cause personnel turmoil, morale and discipline problems, and upset unit cohesion (D. Segal 1989). This argument was also used by opponents during the integration of African-American men into the military in the 1940s (Segal and Hansen 1992), during later debates surrounding the issue of allowing homosexuals to serve openly in the military (Ebbert and Hall 1999) and in the Owens v. Brown case. In Owens v. Brown, Judge Sirica ruled that “defendant’s concerns about undermining morale and discipline argue more for prudent planning in the assignment of women to Navy ships than for not beginning the process at all” (p. 309).

Proponents counter the argument by indicating the full integration of African-American males into the military showed an acceptance of changing values and goals by the American public and that the expected turmoil and other fears did not permanently affect combat readiness. They also cite Navy policy that the integration of women into sea-going jobs is evolutionary not revolutionary (HASC 1993). Finally, the social changes that affect society must ultimately be reflected in policies that affect the military (Segal and Segal 1983).

### 3. Fraternization.

This area includes sexual misconduct and the competition for sexual favors (Segal 1978; Roncolato and Davis 1998) and are cited as detriments to unit cohesion and morale, and thus the ability of a unit to accomplish its mission (Devilbiss 1990).

Other detriments include sexual and gender harassment (e.g., hostile attitudes, sexist remarks, undermining of authority), and the fear of false sexual harassment charges (Segal 1999). Segal (1978:121) indicates that these issues are somewhat alleviated by the “power of social norms to prevent undesired behavior.” Others cite peer pressure as an effective deterrent (Roncolato and Davis 1998). The Navy has found that education, rigorous and fair enforcement of the expected standards, and committed leadership are keys to ensuring all in a unit are treated, and act, professionally (Ebbert and Hall 1999; Holm 1992; Roncolato and Davis 1998). Leadership also has been cited as the solution to fraternization problems (Roncolato and Davis 1998).

As with racial integration, the successful integration of women can be seen as a leadership issue (Firestone 1984). Personal memoirs (e.g., Barkalow 1990; Cummings 1999; Disher 1998) clearly indicate that the extent to which a leader embraces diversity and upholds standards of conduct and respect towards others has a profound effect on the command climate, the integration and acceptance of women, and the unit’s morale and cohesion. Reardon and Reardon (1999) provide a model for facilitating change in the Army based on how business executives are trained. However, the effect of leadership on integration is an area that has not been fully developed in the field of military sociology. The focus appears to be on the extent of sexual harassment rather than the underlying causes and methods to alleviate it in the military. Gender harassment is barely addressed. Yet, gender harassment also contributes to a hostile work environment, and is shown to have even greater effects on many military women than sexual harassment (Rohall and Segal 2002).

Environmental harassment is defined by Firestone and Harris (1994) as “general rather than personal sexual teasing and jokes, suggestive looks and gestures, and sexual whistles, calls, and hoots” (p. 26). This contributes to increased stress, medical expenses, reduced job performance and satisfaction, reduced self-esteem, loss of productivity, lowered morale, absence from work, and job turnover (Firestone and Harris 1994: 28). There is a cause-and-effect here that critics fail to note. The consequences of environmental harassment are cited as reasons why women negatively affect military effectiveness rather than addressing the underlying problem. Yet, even though it is clear that some of the issues with women in the military have to do with the extent of harassment, focus has been on how to change policies towards the issue (Ebbert and Hall 1999; Firestone and Harris 1994), rather than holding leaders accountable for the command climate which is under their control (Ebbert and Hall 1999; Reardon and Reardon 1999). Segal and Bourg (2002) recently published a paper on this subject, but widespread empirical research has been lacking.

Devilbiss (1985) in a participant-observational study of her own Air National Guard unit came to the conclusion that commonality of experience may be the binding thread for unit bonding. She further suggests that buddy relationships are more likely than romantic attachments to occur in a mixed-gender working group. She suggests that as a result of the lack of privacy, more familiarity in the form of a closer working relationship might actually decrease the potential romantic attraction (p. 541). The Navy has not conducted specific studies on mixed-gender crew cohesion, nor has there been a comparative study showing efficiency differences between gender-integrated

and all-male ships. However, inspection teams evaluating ship performance have found no difference between the two (Presidential Commission 1992).

#### 4. Family Issues.

Family issues revolve around family separation, family integrity, but especially the spouses' concerns regarding their husbands going to sea and living in a close environment with women. They also include the cultural expectation that women are the primary caregivers and that family roles are primary for women.

This argument revolves around the concept of the family as a greedy institution, and the associated responsibility of women in that institution (Segal 1988), with the pervasive cultural values about appropriate roles for women (Segal and Segal 1983). The nature of Navy life and the personal sacrifices one must make to pursue a military career appear to conflict with women's family roles. Society's shift in attitudes toward divorce and unwed motherhood has resulted in more single parent families, both male and female. There are more dual-military, dual-earner and dual-career couples (Segal and Segal 1999; Segal 1999). These changing demographics have resulted in increased support to military families, and the recognition that the spouse's morale and well-being affect the motivation and performance of the military member (Segal and Segal 1999).

As service members come to think of the Navy more as a job or an occupation, rather than a calling or a profession, the behavioral expectations for work-related activity will reflect those of the greater society (Moskos 1988). Prime example are the young enlisted women who reflect society's attitude that they should be able to have a

child whenever they want (Thomas & Uriell 1998), regardless of the responsibilities or demands of their job. Additionally, there is a trend for men to want more time for their families, and of not wanting work to infringe on their home time (Williams 2000). This is as true in the military as in the civilian sector (Martin and McClure 2000).

Women's integration in the Navy in the 1940s was met with skepticism by both military men and civilian society. Women's moral character was impugned, even though military leaders attempted to dispel the rumors of lesbianism, promiscuity and wantonness by facts (Moore 1996). Women's integration into ships in the late 1970s was met with resistance from both military men and their wives. Women going to the first ships open to women in 1978 were the cream of the crop, volunteers who had been at the top of their classes, yet they had to prove themselves in the predominately male environment (Holm 1992). The wives, however, thought women would reduce morale and cause marital stress and breakup due to adultery. There was also fear that the women would cause more work for their husbands because they could not handle certain tasks (Ebbert and Hall 1999; Holm 1992).

These same concerns have surfaced in the debate over women in submarines (Donnelly 1999; Grossman 2000). The Navy does not take the concerns of the spouses lightly, as they do affect morale and retention (Segal and Segal 1999). Leadership is again seen as the key to alleviating and mitigating these concerns (Roncolato and Davis 1998), and by taking necessary disciplinary action when infractions are discovered.

## *Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities*

### 5. Equal Opportunity.

The changing social values of the American public have greatly affected the debate on the rights and responsibilities of women as citizens. Before and during World War II, women performed their citizenship roles in both civilian and military sectors as patriotic workers. They performed their civic duty, made sacrifices for the good of American soldiers, and were the caretakers of national ideals and normalcy. The idea of self-sacrifice reinforced women's traditional family responsibilities as caretaker of the family and supporter of the husband (Honey 1984). Although not ratified, the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) by Congress in the 1970s, subsequent Federal Court decisions in anticipation of the ERA ratification (including *Owens v. Brown*), and the rise of the women's movement began a change in the cultural views about appropriate roles for women. Legislation and civil suits in both the civilian and military sectors helped to promote women's equality in the workplace (Feinman 2000; Holm 1992; Kerber 1998; Williams 1992), with a concurrent increase in citizenship participation.

The connection between citizenship and military participation in America has existed since the Revolutionary War. Immigrants and blacks who fought with the colonial forces were made citizens. This was also the case for those who fought for the union during the Civil War. During World Wars I and II, naturalization requirements were waived for alien personnel who served in the military. These special benefits are still conferred to aliens who serve honorably (Burk 1995; D. Segal

1989: 10).

Military service as a responsibility of citizenship for women is part of the ongoing debate about women's evolving roles. The history of using women when the country is in need, then limiting participation once the need is diminished, is perceived as inequality and exploitation. Segal and Hansen (1992) theorize that as gender equality becomes more of a reality in the "broader society," pressure to increase non-traditional roles and equality for women in the military will follow (p. 302). This, in turn, will lead to greater roles for women in the military, though not at the expense of military effectiveness (p. 299). Some advocates of women in the military believe that equality in our culture will only come when women compete on men's terms (D'Amico 1998; Feinman 2000; Stiehm 1989). Their analysis is based on the paradigm that full military service and participation is the epitome of full citizenship.

The "right to fight" for those women who choose to enter the military can be seen as a demand for equal citizenship participation (Segal and Segal 1983; Wilcox 1992). While not all women are willing and capable of serving in combat roles, the equality debate centers on whether gender should be used as the sole criterion for inclusion or exclusion from full military roles (Devilbiss 1990; Holm 1992; Segal 1978). The proponents of the equality debate also cite several reasons why assigning military personnel on the basis of personal capabilities, by the same standards as men, rather than by the artificial barrier of gender, contributes to military effectiveness (Holm 1992).

## 6. Career Issues.

Dividing jobs between men and women creates resentment. In the Navy, women's primarily shore-based positions cause morale problems because of the perception that women are getting equal pay for lesser work. There are additional duties required when assigned to a ship regardless of a person's primary occupational role (author's personal experience). Even though most military personnel have no control over the policies, men react with resentment towards those easiest to blame: military women. Institutional policies that prevent women from pursuing the same career goals as their male peers create the impression, for both men and women, that women are second-class citizens and that their contributions are not as important to the common goal (Holm 1992). This reciprocal resentment creates, rather than alleviates, morale problems.

Women want their career opportunities to be equal to their male peers. They want to do the jobs that they are trained and qualified to do, regardless of the location of that job (Holm 1992). Women believe they will not be treated as equals until they are integrated into all aspects of the Navy for which they are qualified (Goldman 1973). Segal, Kinzer and Woelfel (1977: 474) link the role of combat soldier with the role of citizen, and assume that women have not attained full equality and citizenship solely because of their inability to serve as combatants. They argue it as a matter of principle rather than edict, further supporting the view that women should be able to volunteer for any combat duty for which they are qualified.

The lack of a warfare qualification, something a sailor can get only while on

sea duty, can also affect promotion opportunity. Warfare qualifications are given extra points that count towards advancement. In some cases they are required for consideration for advancement to pay grades E-6 and above (OPNAV 1998). Finally, some proponents feel that women will not be treated with respect, and will continue to be subject to sexual and gender harassment precisely because they are not allowed to contribute fully to the military mission (Decew 1995).

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### **Theoretical Perspectives:**

I utilized the Social Construction of Gender and Status Inequality perspectives to analyze the arguments about the roles of women in the military. These perspectives are explained within the Literature Review section of this thesis.

### **Methodology:**

I conducted both a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of articles, opinion pieces and editorial responses from readers of *Navy Times* and *Proceedings* magazine. Both publications cater to the sea-going community (Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines) and offer a venue for comment and discussion about issues that are important to the sea services. The issues regarding women at sea and expanding women's roles in submarines have been, and continue to be, the subject of debate in both periodicals. Letters and opinion pieces are written by both officer and enlisted personnel: active duty, reserve and retired. Letters are also accepted from non-military personnel, such as spouses, DoD employees or contractors, or other knowledgeable individuals. Both periodicals are widely read by Navy personnel, although *Proceedings* appears to have a more limited audience of professional sea going officers and senior enlisted personnel while the *Navy Times* caters to the general sea services audience. Both publications are read by the highest echelons of the Navy, Marine Corps and the Coast Guard in order for those officers and staffs to maintain a connection with issues of concern to their forces.

The *Navy Times* is a weekly, unofficial newspaper that reports items of interest

to its readers regarding the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard ( including original, in-depth news and analysis about career, pay and benefits and issues impacting professional advancement). It accepts opinion pieces from readers as well as from independent columnists. It also has a “Mail Call” section that publishes letters from readers regarding articles, opinion pieces and other “Mail Call” letters from readers. Its editorial policy is that it publishes letters that are well written, have something useful to say, and that are timely. It is a space devoted to allowing readers to explain their support for, or register complaints about, issues the paper printed. It does edit letters, but attempts to maintain the sense and tone of the letters as much as possible. It publishes letters that some think are extreme views, but will also publish rebuttals to those views from other readers (Kreh 1979). I have found that many of the letters are written by enlisted personnel, but it is a forum for both officers and enlisted personnel from all the sea services. *Navy Times* is part of the Military Times Media group, consisting of *Army Times*, *Navy Times*, *Air Force Times* and *Marine Corps Times*.

The Naval Institute is a private, non-profit membership society for U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard professionals and anyone interested in the sea services. It is the publisher of *Proceedings* and *Naval History* magazines and more than 800 books through the Naval Institute Press. As an independent publication for the sea services, through its books, magazines, and seminars, the Naval Institute provides a forum for discussion of issues of immediate importance to the nation's military forces and a source for historical analysis of military issues. *Proceedings* magazine is an edited, professional journal, published monthly. Each issue includes

articles from military professionals and civilian experts, historical essays, book reviews, full-color photography, and reader commentary. All of the letters received are reviewed by three editors, including the magazine's Editor-in-Chief. In general, many more letters are accepted than there is space to publish. There are no limits to accepting letters about a particular subject, and letters are often published on controversial articles for many months after the article initially ran if a view is new or elicits controversy.

The publication looks for well-written, intelligent arguments either for or against the original article, and especially those letters that continue the debate from issue to issue or add new dimensions to the debate. When deciding which of those letters make the magazine, the editors look for letters that are the most well-written and that argue on the topics that have received the most attention from readers. They also attempt to get a wide range of military writers from active duty, retired, enlisted, officer, other services and other navies. There is no time limit on a particular subject. Editing is for space and to tighten letters, which, because they are often passionate, tend not to be as well written or polished as articles (Roblyer 2002).

I collected articles, opinion pieces and letters ("Mail Call" from the *Navy Times* and "Comment and Discussion" from *Proceedings*) utilizing key dates, when policies were changed or the issues of expanding roles for women at sea were being publicly discussed. I searched from January 1978 through December 1979 when the assignment of women on non-combatant ships was debated, approved and implemented; from January 1993 through December 1994, when the issue of assigning

women to surface combatant ships was debated, approved and implemented; and from June 1999, when the issue of assigning women to submarines was re-proposed, through December 2000, a few months after Congress legislatively ended the debate. I followed the responses to a Commentary piece in *Proceedings* until the subject was no longer being commented on, through February 2001.

I analyzed all letters and commentary published on the subject during the time periods indicated, rather than a selected sample. The reason for this is there does not appear to be a peak timeframe when a large number of articles/letters appeared; they were scattered throughout the time periods analyzed.

*Key Dates.*

*1978-1979:*

Congressional Hearings on Assignment of Women on Navy Ships: February-March 1978.

Owens v. Brown decision: July 27, 1978.

Public Law 95-485 signed: October 20, 1978.

First women officers report to Navy ships: November 1978.

First enlisted women report to Navy ships: December 1978.

*1993/1994:*

Congressional Hearings on Women in Combat: May 12, 1993.

Public Law 103-160 signed on Nov 30, 1993.

First women reported to combatant ships: July 1994.

*1999/2000:*

Navy Secretary Richard Danzig's speech to Naval Submarine League: June 3, 1999.

DACOWITS Fall Conference: October 1999.

DACOWITS Spring Conference: April 2000.

Congressman Roscoe Bartlett adds amendment to the FY 2001 Defense Authorization Bill that would virtually forbid women from being assigned to submarines: May 2000.<sup>6</sup>

Public Law 106-398 signed into law: October 2000.

The documents I analyzed are listed in Appendix A. During the 1999-2000 period there were separate debates regarding women in submarines and pregnant women at sea in *Navy Times*. I felt this was an important addition to the analysis as it is a subject of ongoing debate on surface combatants. There were no articles or commentary specifically regarding pregnancy on ships in *Proceedings* during this timeframe, thus the *Proceedings* data are limited to the issues of women on submarines.

Although there were Congressional hearings and debates regarding the change in statute to allow women to go to sea in non-combatants in 1978 and to allow women to be assigned to surface combatant ships in 1993, there were no Congressional hearings or debate on the issue of women in submarines, although Congress enacted, within the FY 2001 Defense Authorization Bill, a provision that requires the

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<sup>6</sup> During the joint conference, several Senators insisted the language be changed to be consistent with the 30-day notice already in place for the Navy to make any changes to the assignment of women.

Department of Defense to give a 30-day notification of any change to the Navy's submarine assignment policy for women.<sup>7</sup> Thus, in order to maintain continuity of design of my research project, I made the decision to analyze documents from the same two sources for the three periods indicated.

I analyzed the frequency with which certain items and themes appear in the letters and commentary in order to determine if there is a theme of gendered construction about women's military capabilities and roles. Through this analysis, I made inferences about the social construction of gender, and whether in an institution like the military, old stereotypes are used to prevent women from full participation. The basic unit of analysis was the letter or opinion piece. Within each document, there may have been statements that voiced both pro and con arguments. Thus while each document may have an overall positive or negative view towards expanding roles, individual statements within each document may have been coded either pro or con.

My coding scheme is an adaptation of the Segal and Hansen (1992) model, and is shown in Table 2. The coding scheme has three major parts. The first set of variables identifies the type of document (letter, commentary piece or article that describes opinion) and the descriptive information on the author of the

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<sup>7</sup> There were no hearings associated with this provision because it was presented and passed as an amendment in the House Armed Services Committee. The provision was modified in conference committee between representatives from the Senate and House Armed Services Committees. Neither the markup report nor the conference report gives a verbatim account of the discussions. When a provision is agreed to in conference, it generally has no debate on the floor during the vote, as was the case in this instance.

correspondence. I included letters from and about U.S Coast Guard policies and opinions about women at sea, primarily because the issues are similar and the change in policy to allow women at sea in the Coast Guard occurred during the same 1978/1979 time period as the Navy's policy change. The difference was that the Coast Guard lifted all restrictions for women at sea at that time, whereas the Navy proceeded in an "evolutionary" manner.

The second section codifies the speaker's position on women's roles at sea, in non-combatant ships, combatant ships and submarines. This section codes only the opinions for or against a certain policy, This section is a broad look at whether or not the author is for or against women at sea in general, including on non-combatant ships, women in combat on combatant ships and women in submarines. The arguments that define these opinions are listed in the next section.

The third section delineates the specific reason for the author's opinion of policy advocated. In any individual letter, article or op-ed piece, I noted the different arguments given under one of the six general headings, either pro or con. The topics were developed using a grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin 1998): as I gathered and analyzed the data, I added to or refined the topics listed, eventually separating the topics as noted below. I started with a basic premise of arguments based on the literature review, but found that I needed to separate out the pro arguments from the con arguments and include rebuttal arguments within the categories of Military Effectiveness (ME) or Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities (CRR). I broke the major arguments into six areas. Under Military Effectiveness are

those arguments that are based on the effect of the organization on the increased roles of women 1) Needs of the Navy 2) Warrior Ethic 3) Fraternization 4) Family issues 5) Equal opportunity and 6) Career concerns. Some arguments fell in more than one category, but I tried to place them within the overriding concept. I could not use key words, since many of the arguments were concepts in which the letter writer sometimes used sarcasm and emotion to make the point. Appendices B and C are matrices of the actual arguments found in the letters.

Table 2 is a complete description of all the coding categories, with examples of the types of arguments coded. I reviewed articles on women in the Navy from the *Navy Times*, but did not code them since they were informative rather than opinion pieces. If the article reported on arguments for or against the expansion of women's roles in the Navy, I noted the arguments in Appendices B or C. The coding for the commentary and letters includes information on whether the opinions expressed indicated an argument based on military effectiveness or on citizenship rights and responsibilities. In coding, I sorted the data by year and by periodical, for ease of later analysis.

As I did not cross-validate my coding using another person, there may be some question of reliability in my results. However, after reviewing the data several times, I feel I sufficiently captured the trends and trust that an outside observer would come to the same conclusions. Generalizability of results may also be questioned by my use of edited periodicals. However, both of these publications are widely read by interacting members of the Navy, and the attitudes are consistent with those I heard while on

active duty from several sectors. Additionally, the media not only informs, but can also help construct social attitudes. The opinions expressed by the few who happened to write to these periodicals may have seemed outlandish to some, but may also have influenced others. Finally, the letter writers may have expressed these opinions to others in the workplace who may have agreed and convinced the author to write. Thus I feel that the opinions expressed do adequately reflect the attitudes of the times.

**Table 2**  
**Coding Scheme**

**Part 1: General Information**

- A. Periodical
  - 1. *Navy Times*
  - 2. *Proceedings*
- B. Time Period
  - 1. Women in Ships 1978-1979
  - 2. Women in Combat 1993-94
  - 3. Women in Submarines 1999-2000
- C. Author
  - 1. Male
  - 2. Female
  - 3. Unknown
- C. Profession
  - 1. Military Active or Reserve
  - 2. Military Retiree
  - For above two categories:
    - a. Officer
    - b. Enlisted
  - 3. Military Spouse
  - 4. Other/Unknown
- D. Correspondence
  - 1. Article describing opinion
  - 2. Opinion/Commentary piece
    - a. Editor
    - b. Other
  - 3. Letter to editor/Comment & Discussion
    - a. Initial
    - b. Response to article
    - c. Response to op-ed
    - d. Response to other letter

**Part 2: Policy Advocated**

- A. Women at sea (non-combat ships only)
  - 1. Yes
  - 2. No
  - 3. No opinion expressed
- B.. Women in combatant ships
  - 1. Yes
  - 2. No
  - 3. No opinion expressed
- C. Women in submarines
  - 1. Yes
  - 2. No
  - 3. No opinion expressed
- D. Pregnancy Policy
  - 1. For
  - 2. Against

**Part 3: Arguments**

Pro Arguments

- A. Mission Effectiveness
  - 1. Needs of the Navy
    - a. Assignment policies/process
    - b. Readiness and Efficiency
    - c. Pregnancy effect on readiness
    - d. Privacy/Costs

## Table 2 (Cont)

2. Warrior Ethic
  - a. Physical Standards/Double standards/Equal Standards
  - b. POW issues/rebuttals
  - c. Women's capabilities/proficiency
  - d. Rebuttals to traditional attitudes
3. Fraternalization
  - a. Sexual attraction/Interpersonal relationships
  - b. Leadership actions
  - c. Cohesion
  - d. Fraternalization/ Morality rebuttals
4. Family issues
  - a. Family separation
  - b. Rebuttals to Spouse concerns
  - c. Family integrity
5. Equal Opportunity
  - a. Equality
  - b. Legality
  - c. Institutional Sexism
6. Career Concerns

### Con Arguments

#### A. Mission Effectiveness

1. Needs of the Navy
  - a. Assignment process/policies
  - b. Readiness and Efficiency reduction
  - c. Pregnancy Impacts
  - d. Privacy Costs
2. Warrior Ethic
  - a. Physical Standards
  - b. Double/lowered standards
  - c. POW issues
  - d. Women's lack of capabilities/proficiency
  - e. Traditional attitudes
  - f. Public Attitudes
3. Fraternalization
  - a. Sexual liaison concerns/results
  - b. Interpersonal relationships
  - c. Morality concerns
  - d. Cohesion Reduction
  - e. Sexual harassment
4. Family issues
  - a. Family separation
  - b. Marital/family integrity

**Table 2 (Cont)**

- c. Spouse concerns
- 5. Equal Opportunity
  - a. Rebuttals to Equality arguments
  - b. Feminism and Political Correctness
  - c. Military culture issues
- 6. Career Concern Rebuttals

## Results and Analysis

Data from *Navy Times* and *Proceedings* were collected by manually reviewing all of the issues within the time spans indicated earlier (they were not on a database). My criterion for using an article, letter or commentary was its relevance to my paper topic. Thus, in 1978/1979 I looked for and collected data that referred to women at sea or women in combat as it related to either the Navy or the Coast Guard.<sup>8</sup>

The data for 1993/1994 was similarly derived: I focused on issues within the Navy on women at sea and women in combatant ships. There were actually two different issues during the 1999/2000 timeframe. Not only were there discussions about women in submarines, but in *Navy Times* there also was a running dialog about the effect of pregnant women on ships, not necessarily submarines. I included these arguments within this timeframe because they are relevant to the issues of expanding seagoing roles for women.

I must provide a caveat for the analysis that follows. People who write letters to the editor or commentary pieces generally have very strong feelings about the subject matter. Thus, while the letters have been edited for clarity, some of the arguments, especially those against expanding roles, were emotional and the reasons

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<sup>8</sup> The issues surrounding women at sea are relevant for the Coast Guard, which is also a sea-going service. The Coast Guard is responsible for protecting our nation's sea borders and other waterways, and may be placed in harm's way during at-sea boarding operations. It may also be transferred to Navy control during wartime. The Coast Guard totally integrated women into all job categories in 1977. Some of the letters referred to issues and problems that would be encountered by the Navy during its integration of women in ships. I did not limit the authors to Navy, and there were some Coast Guard personnel who weighed in on the arguments about women in combat at sea.

for the views were not always explained. This sometimes made it difficult to determine what coding category to place a particular statement in. Additionally, editors generally do not publish all letters received. *Proceedings* has a policy that it will continue to publish letters about a certain topic, as long as there is a new or compelling argument. It also appeared that the editors may have tried to balance the letters, balancing pro arguments with con, so the distributions of the letters do not proportionally represent even those who wrote in to the periodicals. As a result, I feel I cannot generalize the feelings of the letter writers to the whole Navy population. I believe the arguments that are presented are arguments that were clearly topics of conversation for many people in the Navy, but only those with the strongest feelings would be compelled to write a letter to the editor. Thus, the opinions fall on the extreme sides of both arguments.

*Table 3*  
**Number of Data Items Reviewed**

Year	<i>Navy Times</i>				<i>Proceedings</i>			
	Articles	Op-Ed	Letters	Total	Articles	Op-Ed	Letters	Total
1978	21	4	14	40	1	1	14	16
1979	14	4	7	24	1	0	3	4
1993	45	6	20	71	1	1	10	12
1994	36	10	50	96	1	1	7	9
1999	8	0	9	18	0	1	4	4
2000	5	5	33	39	0	2	5	7

Table 3 shows the number of articles, op-ed/commentary or letters that were collected and reviewed. There were a total of 81 items for 1978/79, 184 items for 1993/1994 and 51 items for 1999/2000. Clearly the people who read *Navy Times* and *Proceedings* during the 1993/1994 debate had many opinions on the issue of women in combat. This was a very tumultuous time for the Navy. *Navy Times* articles and letters were filled with the fallout from the Navy's Tailhook scandal and other sexual harassment scandals, gays in the military, and the first female Navy fighter pilot who lost her life at sea while making an approach on the aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln*. The fewest letters were written in the 1999/2000 timeframe. I can only surmise that this was because the issue of women in submarines was clearly taken away from debate by Congress in the spring of 2000. The issue died down abruptly after Congress passed a law that, in essence, forbids Navy from contemplating this move without Congressional approval.

As expected, the over 20 years of discussion about expanding roles for women at sea in the Navy within the *Navy Times* and *Proceedings* fell within the confines of Mission Effectiveness and Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities. I further divided these two categories into six subcategories: Needs of the Navy, Warrior Ethic, Fraternalization, Family Issues, Equal Opportunity and Career Issues. Because of the venue in which the speakers expressed themselves, some of the rhetoric was emotional, difficult to categorize, and sometimes unfounded in fact. Appendices B and C report the actual tone and words of the authors. In attempting to make sense of the arguments, I further categorized the arguments based on what I felt was the primary issue being discussed. These additional breakdowns are shown in Table 4,

along with the number of different arguments made by an author in a letter or commentary piece.

Why I placed certain arguments under one of the six categories may not be immediately clear. For example, why are privacy and pregnancy issues found under “Needs of the Navy?” I decided that the cost of maintaining privacy is a concern of the Navy due to the need to balance scarce resources. Thus any argument regarding the *cost* of preparing ships to accommodate a mixed crew was placed in that category. Some privacy issues were actually primarily arguments about fraternization or sexual harassment, and those were placed in the appropriate category. Similarly, arguments about pregnancy revolved around the argument that it may be a readiness issue. I found that the arguments, both pro and con, were focused more on this aspect of pregnancy than a woman’s right to have a family. It clearly was not a family issue, but may have had some relevance as an “Equal Opportunity” issue. This may seem a bit subjective, but using these additional categorical breakdowns helped me to be as consistent as possible. Table 4 depicts the number of different arguments about a category, broken down by year. It gives a visual clue as to what argument was most cited, pro or con, in a given timeframe. Thus we can see that in 1978/1979, the primary con arguments fell under Needs of the Navy (readiness and efficiency) and Warrior Ethic (traditional values). The arguments had to do with concerns of readiness and efficiency of placing women on ships, coupled with men’s traditional ideas about women’s roles. The primary pro arguments also fell under Needs of the Navy (Assignment policies and readiness) plus issues of Equal Opportunity, especially equality.

<b>Table 4</b>						
<i>Matrix of Content Analysis: Number of Items Within Each Argument</i>						
<b>Argument</b>	<b>1978-1979</b>		<b>1993-1994</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>	
	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
<b>Needs of Navy</b>						
Assignment & Integration	13	1	8	9	7	8
Demographics	4	6	0	0	8	3
Ship Type	2	1	0	0	4	1
Readiness & Efficiency	18	18	18	9	16	19
Privacy	6	3	1	3	15	15
Pregnancy	0	1	3	12	14	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Warrior Ethic</b>						
Physical Standards	2	3	14	23	2	0
PRT	0	0	7	6	0	0
Double Standards	2	1	22	20	2	1
POW Issues	4	8	2	1	2	1
Proficiency	5	0	22	13	9	4
Traditional Attitudes	14	22	23	18	11	2
Social Experiment	2	2	1	4	1	1
Public Attitudes	0	2	0	1	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Fraternization</b>						
Sexual Attraction	9	9	7	10	9	4
Interpersonal Relationships	3	1	7	9	2	2

Cohesion	0	0	1	4	1	4
<b>Table 4 (continued)</b>						
	<b>1978/79</b>		<b>1993/94</b>		<b>1999/2000</b>	
	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
Sexual Harassment	2	0	13	12	2	3
Morality & Rebuttals	6	2	3	2	9	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Family Issues</b>	<b>1978-1979</b>		<b>1993-1994</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>	
Family Separation	3	4	4	4	3	1
Spouse Concerns	7	6	12	8	8	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Equal Opp</b>						
Equality	25	11	23	22	11	11
Legality	1	3	0	1	2	0
Institutional Sexism	11	3	6	7	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Career Issues</b>	10	2	4	1	1	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	155	115	201	199	146	97

In 1993/1994 both the pro and con arguments revolved around the Warrior Ethic, the opponents saying that women cannot do the job as well as men, and proponents saying “Yes they can!” Unlike the previous period, there were fewer arguments regarding traditional ideas about women’s roles. The main concern of opponents was women’s lack of physical ability and double standards that were perceived because of the physical differences. Proponents on the other hand countered with Warrior Ethic (proficiency) arguments that women have been successful at sea for a number of years, and that combatant duty was not any different. In regard to the physical standards, the proponents focused on teamwork, while the opponents focused on differences in individual ability between males and females.

The primary arguments in the 1999/2000 timeframe fell under Needs of the Navy, specifically readiness, privacy and pregnancy issues. It is interesting to note the *lack* of arguments under the Warrior Ethic category. The issue of women in submarines elicited much more emotional responses from the readers of *Proceedings* than from readers of *Navy Times*, although you cannot tell this from the numbers of letters written. There was a concurrent debate in *Navy Times* about pregnancy that had nothing to do with the argument about women in submarines, but was geared towards women at sea. There was no similar debate in *Proceedings* at that time. However, there recently has been some debate on the issue as a result of an essay written in July 2002 (McAllister 2002). This issue clearly has not been resolved to the satisfaction of many members of the Navy.

Tables 5 and 6 show, by rank and gender, the opinions expressed by readers of *Proceedings* and *Navy Times*, respectively. On these tables, I only counted the items

that specifically discussed the topics of either women in non-combatants, women in combat ships, women in submarines, or pregnancy policies, as those were the topics directly related to my investigation. There were a total of 191 responses, 122 male (64%) and 69 female (36%). In *Proceedings*, the letter writers were mostly male active and retired officers. Of 53 responses, only 8 were from women (approximately 15%), and none were from enlisted women. In *Navy Times* there was a greater gender balance in letter writers. Of the 138 letters, 77 were from men (56%) and 60 were from women (44%). Once again, few retired female officers or retired female enlisted personnel wrote. The letters were primarily from the active duty ranks, both male and female, officer and enlisted, and retired male enlisted members.

Issues were clearly divided by gender lines. There were a total of 104 letters that were positive towards expanding roles, and 88 letters that were negative towards expanding roles. Of the 88 negative letters, 79 were from men (90%), and 9 from women (10%). Of the 104 positive letters, 47 were from men (45%), and 57 were from women (55%). In *Proceedings* the number of Pro and Con letters were about equal: 29 Con and 25 Pro. Of the 8 women who wrote, 6 wrote positive letters (75%). More men wrote negative letters (60%) than positive letters (40%). In *Navy Times* most of the negative letters were from men (88%), but most of the positive letters were from women (66%). Of the 60 women who wrote in to *Navy Times*, a huge majority (87%) wrote positive letters, while the majority of the males (67%) wrote negative letters.

**Table 5**

**Issues of Concern by Sex and Rank of Author**  
**Proceedings**

	Women in non-combat ships		Women in combat ships		Women in submarines		Pregnancy policy**		Total
	Pro	Con	Pro	Con	Pro	Con	Pro	Con	
Military Officer (M)	1	3	2	5	-	2	-	-	13
Military Officer (F)	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	4
Military Enlisted (M)	1	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	4
Military Enlisted (F)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Retired Officer (M)	1	6	3	1	3	1	-	-	15
Retired Officer (F)	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
Retired Enlisted (M)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Retired Enlisted (F)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Spouse (F)	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Other/Unknown* (M or F)	M-3	M-2	M-2	M-2	M-2 F-1	M-2	-	-	M-13 F-1
Total	8	12	9	11	7	6	0	0	53

\*Includes those who used initials instead of first name, so gender not known; those whose name was withheld; or those who did not specify rate/rank

\*\*This issue was not addressed in *Proceedings* as it was in *Navy Times*.

**Table 6**  
**Issues of Concern by Sex and Rank of Author**

Navy Times

	Women in non-combat ships		Women in combat ships		Women in submarines		Pregnancy policy		Total
	Pro	Con	Pro	Con	Pro	Con	Pro	Con	
Military Officer (M)	3	-	8	4	-	4	-	4	23
Military Officer (F)	1	-	8	-	1	-	2	-	12
Military Enlisted (M)	1	1	3	8	-	4	1	2	20
Military Enlisted (F)	5	1	13	1	3	-	11	-	34
Retired Officer (M)	1	1	-	3	1	1	-	1	8
Retired Officer (F)	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Retired Enlisted (M)	1	-	-	6	-	2	1	2	12
Retired Enlisted (F)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Spouse (F)	-	1	2	2	-	-	-	1	6
Other/Unknown* (M or F)	U-1 F-2	F-1	M-4 F-3	M-7 F-1	M-2	-	-	M-1	M-14 F-7 U-1
Total	15	5	41	32	8	11	15	11	138

\*Includes unknown gender, civilians or those who did not specify rate/rank.

Rank and status did not have much bearing on the results, although in *Navy Times*, active duty male officers were almost as likely to be pro (48%) as con (52%). In all other ranks, males overwhelmingly were negative to expanding roles (active duty enlisted: 74%, retired officer: 75%, retired enlisted: 83%, other 57%). The trend is slightly altered with *Proceedings* writers, as male officers were 77% con, enlisted men were 75% con, but retired male officers were 53% con. Women of all ranks were overwhelmingly pro. In *Navy Times*, female officers were 100% pro, enlisted women were 94% pro, retired female officers were 75% pro and other females were 71% pro. Female spouses were the exception, with 66% con. , In *Proceedings*, female officers were 75% pro while retired female officers and others were 100% pro. The one spouse that wrote (with her husband) was against expanded roles.

Given that men wrote more letters and were more likely to write con arguments, one would expect that in general the opinions about expanding roles for women would be negative. This was the case in *Proceedings* in both the 1978-1979 (40% pro, 60% con) and 1993-1994 (45% pro, 55% con) timeframes, but not in 1999/2000. Surprisingly, the women in submarines issue was 53.8% pro and 46.2% con. The pro trend continues in *Navy Times*, with 75% for and 25% against women going to non-combatants, 77% for and 23% against women in combatants and 60% for and 40% against the current Navy pregnancy policy. The women in submarine issue was reversed, however, with 42% for and 58% against. Most of the negative letters came from active and retired male officers and enlisted personnel who were or are stationed on submarines.

It is also important to note that the *Navy Times* editors wrote editorials supporting women and expanded women's roles in 1978, 1993, 1994 and 2000. There were no such editorials written by editors of *Proceedings*, as the journal relies on its readers to provide articles and commentary. However, most of *Proceedings* commentary pieces were positive towards expanded roles for women. Of the 10 opinion articles and commentary, 7 (70%) were for expanding roles and 3 (30%) were against. Of the 3 that were written about women in submarines, however, 2 (67%) were against and 1 (33%) was for expanded roles. It is interesting that the letter responses were almost always negative towards the piece rather than supportive, as evidenced by the above paragraph. Few of the opinion pieces in *Navy Times* elicited letter responses. However, for comparison purposes, of the 29 opinion pieces written, 69% were positive towards women and 31% were negative. Most of the negative editorials were written in 1994 and dealt with physical and dual standards.

*Women in Non-Combatant Ships, 1978/1979.*

For both publications, the majority of letter writers were active duty military. Note that for *Proceedings* most of the letter writers were male officers, while in *Navy Times* gender was not a factor, and the majority of writers were enlisted personnel. The articles in *Navy Times* were all written by professional journalists, while the articles in *Proceedings*, as in most professional journals, are provided by constituent members.

Few of the readers of *Navy Times* responded directly to any of the articles. Many responded to what other letter or op-ed writers had to say, however. Opinions begot more opinions. However, all of the letters in *Proceedings* were in direct

response to those writings, because the standard for articles and commentary is for thoughtfully and factually stated prose.

One of the negative opinion pieces was from an article that was reporting on an informal survey taken by *Soundings* (an unofficial newspaper from Norfolk Naval Base).<sup>9</sup> The survey asked 83 Navy women in the Norfolk area if they wanted to go to sea. Twenty-five of the women said yes, while 58 said they definitely did not want to go to sea, resulting in a two-to-one ratio *against* sea duty by the women surveyed. Some of the comments reported included sentiments that it was “immoral,” “unbiblical” and that having women aboard would create a “USS Peyton Place.” It is interesting to note that in this article, none of the women who wanted to go to sea were quoted.

One Navy spouse wrote a scathing letter to *The Times Magazine* (an insert to the *Navy Times*) that called women on board ships whores.<sup>10</sup> She wrote that the Navy should “Ban the broads – for they are not ladies who aspire to masculine company to this degree. They will serve as the great ‘destroyers’ in our Navy.” Several other letters that were overall positive in their opinion about women going to ships also indicated that it would probably be the wives who would be the most adamant against the policy, and that retention could be affected because of it. Spouses were a very small number in my data, only 7 of 191 letters. However, only two (29%) of those seven were positive about women going to sea.

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<sup>9</sup> *Navy Times* March 6, 1978

<sup>10</sup> *Navy Times*, April 2, 1979

In another letter, a Coast Guard enlisted woman commented, “there are still a lot of us that are *not* for women’s lib.” She indicated that she agreed with comments that “women take men’s minds off their work”, and she felt that women cannot do the labor or take on the responsibility of being on board a cutter.<sup>11</sup> Per the data results, her opinion was in the minority.

Most of the positive opinions revolved around the idea that women *can* do the job, it will be good for the Navy to be able to utilize all its personnel and that it really is an equality issue. The negative letters, especially from *Proceedings*, argued against expanding roles primarily for reasons that had to do with the stereotypical ideas about proper roles for women. There were several letters that discussed POW issues, again along the lines that women should not have to endure the rigors of combat and the possibility of being captured and thus raped by the enemy. The rebuttals to the equality issue were along the lines that Equal Opportunity should not take precedence over combat effectiveness.

Two separate letters provided rebuttal arguments for those who would prefer not to allow women to go to sea. One was co-authored by Admiral Zumwalt<sup>12</sup> who gave three reasons for the opposition to women aboard warships: 1) Male Chauvinism, 2) Technical problems involved in adapting ships and aircraft to women and 3) The realities of sexual attraction. To counter the male chauvinist claim that women cannot fight as well as men, Zumwalt used Viet Cong women as examples of what women

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<sup>11</sup> *Navy Times* May 15, 1978

<sup>12</sup> Former Chief of Naval Personnel from the early 1970s who was a strong believer in equal opportunity for women. *Navy Times* Oct. 2, 1978

can do. He says “Male chauvinists believe that the performance of women in combat operations will be less skillful or, at best, more erratic than that of men. We have had to learn the hard way that the theory is wrong. We fought against Viet Cong women. We found them to be every bit as tough, cunning, skilled and ruthless in combat as Viet Cong men. And they were able to bear incredible physical hardships. More pertinently, tests in the U.S. Navy show that women held their own with men in air and sea operations.” He acknowledged that during the time of the all-male crew, the need for privacy in berthing areas was not an issue, but “these technical accommodations are not difficult to make.” Finally, he counters the sexual attraction argument, not by denying that it exists, but that it is something that can and must be dealt with. He acknowledges the spouses concerns, but indicated that on the test platform USS Sanctuary this issue “evaporated almost as soon as it was raised.”

In a retort to this commentary, a retired male Coast Guard officer indicated that “Women on ships will break up families, lower respect for all women” and that sexual attraction will “destroy the efficiency of the ship”. His contention is that “the integrity of the home ought to be protected” by not putting women on ships.<sup>13</sup>

Overall, the vast majority of the letters and opinions expressed in *Navy Times* during this period were positive towards the expansion of women’s roles in the Navy to sea duty. The fact that the Navy, and Congress, limited women’s participation to non-combatant ships was not raised as an issue in this forum.

However, the opinions and comments from *Proceedings* were completely different. The articles themselves were expressing a positive posture towards

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<sup>13</sup> *Navy Times* Nov 6, 1978

expanding roles for women at sea. Both Captain Kelly 1978 and Commander Coye 1979<sup>14</sup> called for the complete rescission of Section 6015 of Title 10 stating that “Women will not long be content with noncombatant roles” because the non-combatants will “not provide them with career patterns and experience levels equal in quality to those of their male contemporaries” (Kelly 1978:45). Coye (1979: 46) stated “To have equality by law is the first step toward reducing institutional sexism. If the Navy were truly serious about changing women’s roles, it would recommend repeal of section 6015 immediately... Support of a modified 6015 perpetuates status ambiguity for a growing segment of the Navy and nourishes the underlying roots of sexism.” Coye believed the Navy could continue its measured approach to introducing women to sea duty without the legislative restrictions inherent in the modified law.

The responsive letters were almost all *against* that policy. Of the 17 letters that responded to the two articles and one commentary piece, five (29%) agreed with the articles and twelve (71%) disagreed. Five of the six retirees who wrote against the policy were senior officers (O-5 or above).

Captain Kelly, who was assigned to the staff of the Pacific Surface Fleet in San Diego when he wrote this article, had been involved in the planning for women at sea. His article outlined the Navy’s plans and policies in regard to the change in the law, but his contention was that this is only the first step and full equality for women in the Navy would require full access to all shipboard assignments. He discussed both the

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<sup>14</sup> Kelly, Jr., James F. 1978. “Women in Warships: A Right to Serve.” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, October: 44-53. Coye, Beth F. 1979. “We’ve Come a Long Way, But...” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, July: 41-49.

reasons for and the problems that could be faced with the addition of women to the fleet, not the least of which is sexual fraternization<sup>15</sup> (a term not widely used at this point in time for consensual opposite sex relationships). However, he noted that “Americans have, after all, survived revolutions in sexual attitudes without social destruction and, many would agree, without moral chaos” (p. 47). He also noted that the Navy has to utilize women, who made up 40% of the civilian work force and are competing “side by side without restrictions” in nearly every other occupation and profession, in spite of “male notions of a woman’s proper place” (p.47). He also stated that women cannot be kept ashore or in tenders because “that would cause desirable duty opportunities for men to shrink even more than they already have” (p. 47).

He attacked the argument that “involves the morale...of the wives and sweethearts of the crewmen serving in sexually desegregated ships” (p.47). He believed the wives’ argument is that their men will be “exposed to irresistible temptation” as a result of women crewmembers. He countered that the opportunity for unfaithfulness exists in foreign ports, offices, factories, or other places of business in at least a great a measure as on a warship, perhaps more so due to the virtual absence of privacy on a ship. Additionally, he stated that the wives “cannot seek to protect their husbands against temptation at the expense of other women’s rights” (p. 47). He continued to address, and debunk, most of the arguments against the integration in addition to discussing issues that must be addressed as a result of the change in

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<sup>15</sup> Fraternization is a concept that is used to describe any close or intimate relationships between senior and junior members of the military, and it is banned. In popular press, such as those I have analyzed, the term fraternization is mostly used to describe consensual relationships between men and women, regardless of rank.

policy...issues such as whether or not to require the women who volunteered for the Navy during a period when there was no chance of going to sea, to go to sea or “grandmother” the women who do not want to go. He concluded by saying that the “time has clearly arrived when we in the Navy must accept the change and quit fighting the inevitable” (p. 51).

The reaction to this article (and an adjacent commentary piece, that women not only have a right to go to sea, but the responsibility to do so) was predominantly negative. It is interesting to note that no military women responded either positively or negatively to either of these documents.

The primary arguments against women at sea used by the retired and active duty male officers who wrote to *Proceedings* were of the “male chauvinist/warrior” type. Combat readiness and women’s performance, various rebuttals to the equality argument, spousal concerns, sexual liaison possibilities, and more, are all included in these letters. One author’s arguments included such comments as “really experienced and thoughtful people could hardly be brought to believe that this could produce a better ship or increased combat readiness. But as for wartime, and in battle, may heaven help us!” “In the name of equality, would it have been preferable if many of [the young men who died horrible deaths on burning ships in World War II] been young women?” He was also concerned about the “dangerous possibility” of “the protective male instinct towards the female” causing a captain of a ship to “hesitate to fight his ship with that extra zeal necessary to win the battle.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> [Hensel, Karl G. 1979. “Women in Warships: A Right to Serve.” \*U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings\*, January.](#)

Coye's article was almost a sociological paper in that it used, and explained, sociological terminology such as "institutional sexism," "status ambiguity," and "role ambiguity." She makes reference to what is now known as gender discrimination, general prejudices manifested in such things as how women are addressed (e.g., "broads," "fillies," "dollies," or "girls"), job assignment, uniform availability, and negotiations for orders. Additionally she tackles the equality argument from the point of constitutional discrimination.

There were only three responses to this article.<sup>17</sup> One was from a woman officer who claimed she never personally felt discriminated against; one was from a retired Marine Colonel who wrote to cancel his subscription to *Proceedings* because of its "feminist polemics." The third was from a male second-class petty officer who derided the Colonel for his views, but acknowledged that he was entitled to make them as his Constitutional right. He pointed out that the Colonel's contention that "the business of the Navy is to win the war at sea and not conduct social experiments" was wrong. He states, "First, the business of the Navy, as anyone who remembers and believes in his or her enlistment oath knows, is to defend the Constitution. Recently the Congress and Supreme Court have decided that to exclude women from certain rates, jobs, etc., on the basis of sex is unconstitutional. Therefore, the Navy, as a prime defender of the Constitution, must take the lead in functioning in a constitutional manner- so much for 'social experiments'." He goes on to state,

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<sup>17</sup> Ward, Gail M. 1979. "We've Come a Long Way, But..." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, October. Verdi, John M. 1979. "We've Come a Long Way, But..." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, October. Rockefeller, James W. 1979. "We've Come a Long Way, But..." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, December.

“Attitudes such as Colonel Verdi’s are a large part of what is ‘wrong’ with the services today and contribute greatly to the problems of morale and retention.”

*Women on combatants, 1993-1994.*

In a review of the 81 articles that ran on the women in combat issue in the *Navy Times* during 1993-1994, only a few, 13, were specifically about women aviators. The issue of the ground combat exclusion was widely reported, but readers did not respond to this aspect, since the Navy has few ground combat positions. There was one exception, an editorial written by the wife of a Navy SEAL.<sup>18</sup> The author indicated that military women would never be as good as men at certain things. She stated, “Just do your jobs with integrity and pride and stop the landslide of *always wanting more.*” The responses of 10 readers of *Navy Times* were published on August 15, 1994, most not supporting the editorial by a ratio of 3 to 1.

Other articles indicated that one of the impetuses for removing the combatant ship restrictions for women was because the Navy was downsizing and decommissioning most of the older and reserve ships on which most sea-going women were assigned. To counter the loss of shipboard billets, the Navy made an internal change to its definition of combat, opening 15 more ships. The change defined a combatant as a ship or aircraft whose *primary* mission is to seek out, reconnoiter and engage an enemy.

Even though submarines were not on the initial list of ships to which women would be assigned, both the Secretary of the Navy, John H. Dalton, and the Chief of

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<sup>18</sup>Bukowski, Lynnette. “Only men are ‘special’ enough for these forces.” *Navy Times* July 25, 1994

Naval Operations, Admiral Jeremy Boorda, indicated that they fully expected that women would eventually be assigned in submarines. Several articles indicated that the expectation was of a gender-neutral Navy in five years. It could be assumed that this included integration into submarines.<sup>19</sup> One article put the question of women in submarines to nine Chiefs of the Boat. All of them indicated that women should be allowed to serve in submarines. Only one letter-writer responded to this article,<sup>20</sup> with the experienced view that, after having served a tour of duty “in the heart of the submarine community,” these men said “yes” only because it was in their best interest to do so. She stated that even though she, as a senior enlisted woman, had served with Seabees, SEALs, Marines, and at sea, she only learned firsthand about sexual harassment and discrimination while working in the submarine community. She surmised that only 10 to 20 percent of the crew would be open to having women serve on board.

One issue (August 22, 1994) ran a cover story and several shorter articles about the subject of pregnancy at sea. One letter to the editor on that subject ran on September 26, saying, “Not once was it ever mentioned about the responsibility that men should take in preventing pregnancy.” In that same issue, the editor wrote a generally positive article about the Navy’s policy. He eschewed the idea of discharging pregnant servicewomen, stating, “Threatening women with a swift end to their career if they become pregnant is discriminatory in the extreme. In effect, the

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<sup>19</sup> Considering the eventual results of the submarine issue, it is clear that Navy policy is driven by the ideologies of a few, high-ranking Admirals.

<sup>20</sup>*Navy Times* Sept. 13, 1993

Navy would be advocating aborting any ‘accidents’—an untenable position.”

Surprisingly, there were no rebuttal letters that followed.

Other editorials and subsequent responses dealt with physical and double standards. These elicited many responses, and were equally as “hot” a topic in *Proceedings*. There were four *Proceedings* commentary/articles on the subject of the integration of women into combatants. All of them discussed the issue of a single job standard for the person to be accepted into the role. One male aviator indicated his displeasure at the prospect of women flying combatant aircraft, and seemed to think the only way women would be able to do so was to give them “quotas” and not require them to achieve the same physical and flying standards as their male counterparts. This generated two response letters, both in disagreement with his conclusion, but in agreement that women must meet the same job standards as men. While this has always been the Navy’s goal, these letters indicate a perception that, in practice, this is not the case.

A second article also discussed equal standards,<sup>21</sup> but called it “competitive opportunity” and explained that this would ensure “the best person for the job gets the job.” He indicated that it would also ensure equal opportunity based on skill rather than gender. This generated eight response letters, all but one arguing against the new combat policy for reasons that women degrade effectiveness due to pregnancy, fraternization, sexual harassment and double standards in physical capabilities. “Physical strength is crucial in saving a damaged ship at sea” one female officer

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<sup>21</sup> [Baldwin, Sherman. 1993. “Creating the Ultimate Meritocracy.” \*U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings\*, June: 33-36.](#)

argued.<sup>22</sup> She indicated that even though she felt herself to be in excellent physical condition, when she was assigned to a ship she couldn't "lift a wet mattress and stuff it into a hole in the side of a ship," apparently her standard for damage control readiness. The lone writer who supported the piece commended the author's objective viewpoint, and indicated, "With more men like him, the U.S. Navy will overcome its past sexism."<sup>23</sup>

The third article, while obviously in support of the combatant ship policy, urged Navy leadership to be "true believers" and warned, "It will work because it must work. How well it works is directly correlated to the quality of our leadership."<sup>24</sup> The author further states that the Navy culture, which has historically been a "stereotypical male, warrior culture that prizes traditional male characteristics: aggressiveness, physical strength, dominance, and tenacity," cannot be changed by decree. Leaders need to work the issues of concern out with the troops by listening to the criticism with patience, not punishment. The two letters in response supported his view. A retired Marine Corps major<sup>25</sup> stated, "I'm betting our military will adapt to women in combat and homosexuals in its ranks. I'm also betting that once again, within a very few years, everyone will look back and wonder what all the fuss was

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<sup>22</sup>[Wolfe, Jill D. 1993. "Creating the Ultimate Meritocracy." \*U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings\*, July.](#)

<sup>23</sup>[Davies, Donna C. 1993. "Creating the Ultimate Meritocracy." \*U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings\*, September.](#)

<sup>24</sup>[Kelly, James F. 1994. "Less Punishment & More Patience." \*U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings\*, January: 27-30.](#)

<sup>25</sup>[Palm, Edward. 1994. "Less Punishment & More Patience." \*U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings\*, April.](#)

about...I have every confidence that free and open debate will expose the irrational prejudices of the moment for what they are.”

In contrast to the “male chauvinist” arguments that permeated opinion in the previous timeframe, the primary argument against women in combatant ships and fighter aircraft was against double standards and the fact that women have less strength than men and therefore cannot perform combat tasks as effectively as men. The double standards issue was especially a concern to *Proceedings* readers, with three of the four opinion pieces addressing it. A male lieutenant<sup>26</sup> writes, “I was a student in jet training at Naval Air Station (NAS) Kingsville in 1985-86 and saw women being retained in the pipeline with less-than-average performance, while men with the same or even better performance ratings were dropped. Less-capable people were being retained on the basis of sex.” The author goes on to state that greater combat and cost effectiveness would be gained by enhancing the survivability and warfighting capability of the aging airframes rather than introducing women into Tactical Air (fighter) Squadrons.

A growing concern was fraternization and issues of sexual harassment. The men expressed fears of false accusations of harassment or discrimination if they corrected a woman or held her to the same standards as men. The last op-ed piece, written by a female aviator,<sup>27</sup> indicated that yes, there are serious problems with double standards, but it is not the fault of the Navy, nor is it the fault of the women.

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<sup>26</sup> Olliges, John L. 1993. “Nobody asked me, but...No Double Standards.” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, January: 94-95.

<sup>27</sup> Hamblet, Ellen B. 1994. “Nobody asked me either, but...Who’s to Blame When Women Don’t Measure Up?” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, April: 101-102.

She places blame for the problem on Navy leaders. She states, “Invariably this argument [that women should be banned from combat] is supported by many colorful true-life stories about women aviators who have made colossal blunders but are still flying. I hate this argument, because it acknowledges a serious problem but places the blame entirely on the wrong group. The fault is not with women, but with Navy leaders who allow subordinates to continue doing jobs for which they are not qualified.” She continues to explain the reasons why she perceives this to be happening. First, she says, some leaders do it for their own personal benefit. Perhaps they are fraternizing with the woman in question. Second, men do not want to take disciplinary action against women for fear of a sexual harassment suit. Third, they may be directed to do so by their chain of command. Finally, some men do not hold women to rigorous standards because they neither want to challenge women nor correct those who cannot do the job. This elicited four responses, all of which agreed that double standards were bad and leadership should ensure they hold women accountable.

The issues of wives’ concerns about women going on combatant ships, using the military as a laboratory for social experiments and the opinion that pregnancy was a detriment to combat readiness were also prevalent. A retired enlisted man wrote, “I am deeply concerned that turning men-of-war into loveboats, man-of-warsmen into wet nurses and harboring same-gender lovers is catastrophe in the making.”<sup>28</sup> One enlisted woman countered these types of arguments with, “I did not join the Navy to advance a “social program,” file “subjective” harassment suits, “get pregnant,” and

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<sup>28</sup> *Navy Times* Feb. 21, 1994.

accidentally carry out my assigned military mission in the process. I joined to serve my country.”<sup>29</sup>

The Tailhook scandal provided fodder for those who were against placing women on combatants. An anonymous author wrote, “If women can’t even take care of themselves at an aviator’s convention in Las Vegas, how well will they fare facing the enemy in a combat zone?”<sup>30</sup> A Navy wife wrote, in response to the idea that women were being placed on combat ships in atonement for Tailhook, “What I ‘look forward to’ is not more opportunities for women, but domestic problems beyond belief resulting in out-of-wedlock pregnancies, fabricated rape accusations, prostitution rings, broken marriages, illegitimate babies, sexual misconduct—all problems that will sap command resources and contribute further to the sinking morale in the military.”<sup>31</sup> (A similar argument had been made by a Navy wife in 1979.)

On April 11, 1994, *Navy Times* published nine letters in rebuttal. One retired warrant officer wrote, “[that letter] finally compelled me to respond to what can only be termed ‘cultural stereotyped’ doomsayers who predict the demise of the U.S. Navy as a result of putting women on combatants. Why these people think that these problems are more likely to occur aboard ship, where privacy is nearly nonexistent, than at shore commands, where privacy is nearly unlimited, escapes logic.” A Navy wife wrote, “What worries me most is her claim she will make her husband leave the

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<sup>29</sup> *Navy Times* May 23, 1994

<sup>30</sup> *Navy Times* May 3, 1994.

<sup>31</sup> *Navy Times* March 21, 1994

Navy because she does not want him on a combat ship with women. He will most likely work with women in his new job. Will she make him quit that one too?"

Most of the rebuttal letters emphasized the professionalism of most Navy women, and used the equal opportunity arguments to indicate that ability is what counts, not gender. They argued equal opportunity as a primary reason for opening the combatant ships to women, rather than fallout from Tailhook. They also argued that women have proven that they can do the job on non-combatant ships without any detriment to combat effectiveness. They countered the issues of fraternization and sexual harassment with the argument that leadership is a key in the satisfactory integration of women into new units and those leaders who do not believe in the program needed to find new jobs.

One retired Coast Guard Admiral countered that putting women in all billets is a "politically correct" social program and that in reality ships are less combat ready.<sup>32</sup> Others argued that equal opportunity, or moral rightness, is not as important as combat effectiveness, but no one in the Navy, especially the leadership, wanted to risk his career by telling the civilian leadership the truth.

*Women in Submarines, Pregnancy Policy 1999-2000.*

In the 1999/2000 period, there were only 13 articles in *Navy Times* that dealt with issues about women on ships. Nine of the articles were about women in submarines, two were about expanding roles of women in combatants, one was about the paucity of female fighter pilots in the Navy, and the last was about the two women who died as a result of the *USS Cole* bombing in October 2000. Three of the articles

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<sup>32</sup> *Navy Times* April 25, 1994

were about Navy Secretary Richard Danzig's statement that the Navy must bring more women and minorities into the submarine force. One article noted that the Swedish Navy has women on its submarines and it should serve as a model for the U.S. Fleet. The remainder of the articles about submarines dealt with the Navy's policy not to pursue submarine duty for women, and Congress' action to ensure it does not happen.

The focus of debate over the assignment of women into submarines revolved around issues of privacy and ship's readiness. Critics argued that to modify the existing submarines to accommodate women would be cost prohibitive. Additionally, they indicated that even if ships were built from the keel up to accommodate women, space would still be at a premium and combat effectiveness would be reduced due to loss of maneuverability. They also argued that none of our close allies planned to allow women on submarines, and that those European countries that assigned women to submarines do not stay underway for months at a time like the United States does,<sup>33</sup> and that their ideas about sexuality and privacy between genders are much more liberal than ours.

One of the solutions for the privacy concerns was to "establish all-male and all-female crews."<sup>34</sup> This argument is a repeat from 1978/1979. Proponents barely acknowledged this solution, but in the past indicated that this solution was problematic given that there were no women with the appropriate experience who could crew it. This argument is still valid in regard to women in submarines. Interestingly, a number

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<sup>33</sup>[Boyle, Richard. 1999. "Nobody Asked Me But...Women Should Not Serve in Submarines." \*U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings\*, December: 96.](#)

<sup>34</sup> *Navy Times* Dec 6, 1999; June 26, 2000. [Mercogliano, Salvatore R. 2000. "Women Should Not Serve in Submarines." \*U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings\*, January.](#)

of critics of women on submarines acknowledged that there was no doubt that women could do the job, and that they probably should be allowed to do the job, but that the extenuating circumstance of lack of privacy and wives' concerns were overwhelmingly in support of keeping women off.

Both *Proceedings* and *Navy Times* writers discussed this issue of spousal concerns. As indicated in the previous time periods, spousal concerns were also discussed, but the Navy went ahead with its plans to integrate women in ships. In an editorial in *Navy Times*, a former enlisted man wrote, "The Navy should pay attention to the concerns of family, but allowing wives veto power over an important manning issue is downright silly."<sup>35</sup>

Proponents argued that they understood that current classes of submarines could not be modified without prohibitive costs, but that submarines could be built from the keel up without loss of combat effectiveness. Additionally, the ballistic submarines could currently accommodate women, and that women officers should be assigned to them. Arguments about combat effectiveness were countered by the stellar performance of women on mixed gender combat ships. One *Proceedings* letter writer wrote that Commanding Officers on other ships must deal with the unusual responsibilities and distractions of a mixed-gender crew and that it has not detracted from morale, combat effectiveness or retention.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Forsberg, Steven J. 2000 "The Sky Won't Fall if Women are Assigned to Submarines." *Navy Times*, Oct. 16.

<sup>36</sup> Smedberg, W.R. 2000. "Women Should Not Serve In Submarines." *U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, January.

Of the three commentary pieces written for *Proceedings*, one advocated assigning women to submarines, and two did not. One commentary piece was written by retired Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost, a submariner who was Chief of Naval Operations from 1986 to 1990. He wrote (and this is repeated in other letters on this subject) that “too much has been written about women in the military—or, in this case, women in submarines—by too many people who know too little about the subject.”<sup>37</sup> He went on to say that the issue of women in submarines is not “whether women can serve capably and productively...whether women are smart enough... (or) whether submarine leaders can handle the leadership challenge...the only real issue is: What is the impact on military (combat) readiness of assigning women to certain positions, including placing them in units where they can be directly exposed to the horrors of combat or POW status—or in current so-called “all-male bastions” such as submarines.” He stated that in order to accommodate women, operational equipment must be removed at a cost of combat readiness. He indicated that the opinions of submariner wives do matter. He finished by saying that the Navy needs to “focus on combat readiness—not on the attainment of fantasy-driven social-engineering goals or political expediency.”

One of the letter responses against women on submarines nonetheless took the Admiral to task for some of his arguments, most notably the issue of women as POWs. He stated, “I would say that in the very specific case of a submariner, if being

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<sup>37</sup> Trost, Carlisle A. H. 2000. Commentary. “Not in Our Submarines.” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, September: 2.

a POW is an issue there's a bigger problem there than sex.”<sup>38</sup> He continued to say that he was on a combatant when women were integrated and although some wives did not like the situation it did not stop the process. He advocated that if there really is an issue of having to remove equipment to accommodate women, or if the costs are prohibitive, then it needs to be documented. He stated, “If we have the hard, solid evidence for why we cannot do it, then let's get it on the table...If we can prove women cannot do something, then we need to show the hard evidence...and be willing to take the heat for it.” Otherwise, he says, be prepared to have women on submarines eventually.

A retired female officer rebutted Trost's argument by indicating that none of the proponents of women in submarines advocates removing operational equipment to accommodate women. She indicated that DACOWITS acknowledges that it would be difficult to assign women to current classes of attack submarines or enlisted women to the larger TRIDENT ballistic submarines. DACOWITS recommended that future classes of submarines be designed so that they could accommodate a mixed- gender crew without forfeiting operational capability or crew privacy. She concluded, “The Navy has declined to do so. This, I believe, represents a foolhardy loss of focus on future combat requirements.”<sup>39</sup> The most succinct rebuttal is by a woman (unknown if military) who writes, “Women are superior to men for submerged operations. They're physically smaller, take up less space, breathe less air, and eat less food. They have

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<sup>38</sup> Nugent, James. 2000. “Not in Our Submarines.” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, December.

<sup>39</sup> Manning, Lory. 2000. “Not in Our Submarines.” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, December.

better social skills and tolerate close quarters better, and they are physiologically tougher and have better endurance for the environment. All submariners should be female.”<sup>40</sup> This makes a clear case for women in submarines while rebutting most of the arguments used to exclude women for physical and stamina reasons.

Pregnancy as a topic was more of an interest than women on submarines in *Navy Times* during this period. Opinions were divided among gender lines, with most males stating that pregnancy was detrimental to combat effectiveness and ship’s readiness to go to sea and women saying that pregnancy is a natural condition and that pregnancies could be timed to shore duty rotations.

In a letter that addressed both the submarine issue and pregnancy, one male officer writes, “My experience tells me every man must know his job, the job of those close to the various stations that he may be assigned to, and at least be familiar with every job on the submarine. I understand a submarine can’t afford to lose one person, let alone 30 percent of the crew...to pregnancy.”<sup>41</sup> Some men advocated discharging women if they get pregnant. A female officer writes, “To discharge a female service member upon becoming pregnant is ludicrously discriminatory. This would allow men to serve a full and satisfying military career, marry, have a family and retire after a 20-year minimum. Women would be forced to choose between continuing their career or having children. Why shouldn’t we have the best of both worlds also?”<sup>42</sup> This is the crux of the argument and the biggest reason why this issue is so divided

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<sup>40</sup> Tyson, Melissa. 2000. “Women Should Not Serve in Submarines.” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, July

<sup>41</sup> *Navy Times* Nov. 20, 2000.

<sup>42</sup> *Navy Times* Mar. 27, 2000.

along gender lines. As discussed in the literature, the issue of pregnancy at sea, whether on surface ships or submarines, was the requirement for everyone on board to be capable of going to sea on short notice. Not being able to do so is perceived as degrading the combat ability of the ship.

*Comparative Analysis Across the Time Periods.*

Tables 7 and 8 show similarities in the arguments about expanding women's roles at sea, both pro and con, expressed by the authors of data collected. As can be seen, there are similarities in all of the categories throughout the time periods. Under Needs of the Navy, both the proponents and opponents address the impact of women on combat readiness, with proponents saying women would enhance readiness, or at least not make it any worse, and critics saying women would reduce readiness. Both groups also address the need for integration, with proponents saying that the Navy needs the additional "manpower" provided and not using women is wasting valuable talent. The opponents counter that women are not needed on ships and that some women do not want to serve in the expanded roles. They also address the privacy issue, with proponents arguing that maintaining a modicum of privacy for both sexes "not insurmountable", and opponents saying that using valuable resources to modify ships is wasteful. Opponents also advocate having "all female ships" so that privacy won't be an issue.

This argument is interesting, because on the one hand the opponents are saying that women cannot handle the jobs at sea, while on the other hand they are saying that having all female ships would be ok. In the 1978/1979 period, as noted in Appendix B, this suggestion was countered by the prediction that such an experiment would fail

because women cannot perform shipboard tasks. Proponents countered that an all-female ship would not be possible due to the required experience and technical skills that women had not yet mastered. Although the Navy rejected the idea of an all-female ship, there have been several cases of both the Commanding Officer and the Executive Officer<sup>43</sup> (the two highest positions on a ship) being women.

In the Warrior Ethic category, issues of physical strength, double standards, the proficiency and capabilities of women and traditional values all had similar arguments within each group. Proponents argue that physical strength is not required, that they do not support lowering standards for women either, that women can do the job and have shown they can do the job at sea, and that traditional values are sexist.

Opponents cite differences in physical standards as proof that women cannot handle the expanding roles, and that double standards for women and men are wrong and unsafe. Traditional values were also expressed, especially the idea that the Navy should not be used for “social experiments.” Note that during the Women in Submarines debate, the issues of physical standards and double standards were not addressed. However, the issue of fear of POW status of women appeared in all three time periods, even though this issue is not salient for most women on ships. The exception is aviators who may be taken prisoner when their aircraft is shot down.

Similarly, all of the other categories have arguments that consistently run through the time periods, as indicated in Tables 7 and 8. Unlike the later two periods, in 1978-1979 pregnancy and its effect on combat readiness was not an issue. Neither was there any argument about cohesion or double standards. There was some concern

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<sup>43</sup> The first ship to have women at the top two positions was USS Recovery (ARS-43), a Diving, Salvage and Rescue ship, in 1992.

about improper sexual relationships and the morality of placing men and women together on ships. Wives were key element in the debate in all three periods, but no one thought their concerns would change Navy policy, except in the debate on women in submarines.

As in 1978/1979, in 1993-1994, the male chauvinist attitudes were still an issue, but the rhetoric was less about protecting women and traditional values and more about women not making it in a man's world. The main issues in 1993/1994 were concerns over physical standards, double standards and women's proficiency and how they adversely affect combat readiness. In the Equal Opportunity (rebuttals) category, there were a number of concerns expressed by sailors over their ability to voice their opinions without adversely affecting their careers due to the "political correctness" and concerns about the political agendas of civilian leadership. Fears about false sexual harassment charges were also evident. This was also a concern during the Women in Submarines debate, but not during the initial women at sea debates in 1978/1979.

Another consistent argument was the issue of using the military for social change, as was the concern of wives over integration of ships. Equal Opportunity was the primary rallying call for proponents, and opponents were almost as equally vociferous against it as a political tool or agenda. Concern about consensual sexual relationships also was consistent at this time, with proponents indicating that women and men can work together professionally, and opponents stating that women were a distraction to men and that consensual relationships would occur, to the detriment of unit cohesion and morale.

Table 7-Pro Argument Comparisons

TOPIC	Women on Non-Combatants (1978/1979)	Women on Combatants (1993/1994)	Women on Submarines (1999/2000)
<b>Needs of Navy</b> Integration Policies  Readiness  Privacy  Pregnancy	Measured approach; Pool of talent unused; Maturing effect;  Women improve readiness  Privacy not insurmountable NOT ADDRESSED	Gradual integration; Women have civilizing effect;  Improved readiness  Privacy not insurmountable  Family planning required	Use surface force example; Losing pool of talent Fewer disciplinary problems;  Women enhance readiness  Redesign new attack boat  Have children ashore
<b>Warrior Ethic</b> Physical strength  Double Standards  POW Issues  Proficiency  Traditional Values	Physical strength is asset, not required  NOT ADDRESSED  POW status no worse for women  Women are proficient and can do the job at sea  Women are here to stay-get over it Old attitudes are sexist and prejudiced Not an experiment	No shipboard strength requirements  Do not support lowering standards for women  Non-combat doesn't prevent Women POWs (Gulf War)  Women are doing the job at sea  We are past the days of wooden ships and iron men Narrow minded perspectives rob Navy of talented Women Not social experiment	Women best for subs due to smaller stature  NOT ADDRESSED  POW is part of possible outcome of war  Women have proven capable at sea and in the air  Women are here to stay-get over it Opposition coming from "Old Navy" Not social engineering
<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>Women on Non-</b>	<b>Women on</b>	<b>Women on</b>

**Table 7-Pro Argument Comparisons**

	<b>Combatants (1978/1979)</b>	<b>Combatants (1993/1994)</b>	<b>Submarines (1999/2000)</b>
<b>Fraternization</b> Sexual Attraction	Lack of privacy discourages sex Women not on ships for men's pleasure	Privacy on ships is limited Men should pay attention to job instead of Women	Sex on subs non-issue: no privacy Women there to do job, not "mess around"
<b>Family Issues</b> Separation	No one likes to be separated from family-male or female	Women have been leaving their families since 1978	Women aren't the only ones who miss their families
Spouse Issues	Wives cannot protect husbands at expense of other women's rights	Wives asking to restrict women from ships is discrimination	Wives concerns should not affect Navy policy
<b>Equal Rights</b> Rights	Women have right to defend country	Women have right to defend country	Women should serve in subs due to equal rights
Institutional Culture	Need to ban institutional discrimination	Culture transformation is necessary	Submariners last bastion of male military dominance
<b>Career Issues</b>	Restrictions deny professional opportunities	Restrictions limit career opportunities	Sub duty would be great career opportunity

**Table 8 -Con Argument Comparisons**

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>Women on Non-Combatants (1978/1979)</b>	<b>Women on Combatants (1993/1994)</b>	<b>Women on Submarines (1999/2000)</b>
<b>Needs of Navy</b>			
Integration Policies	Women should not be on combatants	Enlisted & non-aviators do not want to serve in combat	Women do not belong on ships, period
Readiness	No evidence women will enhance readiness	Will women on combatants enhance readiness?	Women undermine operational effectiveness
Privacy	Give women their own ship Costs to reconfigure too high	Have an all female ship Women take resources away from readiness	Have an all female sub Congress will not spend millions to reconfigure
Pregnancy	Affects ship's manning and readiness	Losses degrade performance	Subs cannot afford to lose one member [to pregnancy]
<b>Warrior Ethic</b>			
Physical strength	Women cannot perform same physical tasks	Women are physically inferior to men	NOT ADDRESSED
Double Standards	Male standards must be met	Double standards are wrong	NOT ADDRESSED
POW Issues	Women will be raped	Fem POWs have been sexually assaulted	Women will be exposed to horrors of combat & POW NOT ADDRESSED
Proficiency	Women not as aggressive	Women less aggressive	
Traditional Values	No man wants Women to fight his battles Navy should not conduct social experiments	What kind of man would allow their women in combat? Navy not social change agent	If you want women in combat, watch "XENA warrior princess" No social engineering

Table 8-Con Argument Comparisons

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>Women on Non-Combatants (1978/1979)</b>	<b>Women on Combatants (1993/1994)</b>	<b>Women on Submarines (1999/2000)</b>
<b>Fraternization</b> Sexual Attraction  Cohesion and Morale  Fear of False Sexual Harassment Charges	Women distract men fm work Can't prevent sexual relations Cohesion will be impaired  Men will need to watch what they say and do	Consensual activity happens  Women destroy camaraderie  Women need to get a grip & not whine about misperceived behavior	Women on subs is disruptive Tax \$\$ support fooling around on ships  Women degrade morale & readiness  Can't tell dirty jokes for fear of sexual harassment charges
<b>Family Issues</b> Separation  Spouse Issues  Family Integrity	Deployment bad for marriage  Wives won't like it  Women on ships will break up families	Added strain on marriage Wives don't like husbands working with women No one who cares about family will pursue policy	Crew gone for long periods of time Sailors & wives overwhelmingly against  NOT ADDRESSED
<b>Equal Rights</b> Rights  Institutional Culture	Don't crucify nation's defense on cross of women's equal opportunity  Are hatred and prejudice fostered by Navy?	Not worth losing ships & crew at sea  Political correctness forcing Navy to change	NOT ADDRESSED  Navy too politically correct
<b>Career Issues</b>	Women are career threat to men	Being in combat does not guarantee promotion	Aviators and Surface Officers have unlimited opportunity

In 1978 the primary impetus for expanding roles for women was demographics and ships' manning. In 1993 this was not an issue, it was more about the Navy's desire and/or need to expand the roles for women at sea. However, in both periods the Navy's argument for the change was in order to be more flexible in the assignment process. In 1999-2000, submarine manning came under some scrutiny, and there was some feeling that the manning troubles would result in using women in submarines eventually.

Privacy, pregnancy and fraternization issues were the main arguments against expanding women's role onto submarines (1999/2000). The close quarters of a submarine was perceived to be a detriment to a successful integration of women. Fears of false sexual harassment charges, unbridled sexual energy and loss of the ship's stealth and ability to accomplish its mission if the ship had to surface to medically evacuate a pregnant woman were paramount. Surprisingly, cohesion was not much of an issue in any of the time periods, although the literature points to this as a common reason for excluding groups such as minorities and gays as well as women.

Traditional male attitudes definitely changed over the timeframe, with critics in 1978 saying that women needed to be helped and protected by men. By 1999, critics were acknowledging that women could do the job, but that other circumstances prevented such a move. Pregnancy became an issue in 1993, and came to a head in 2000. The pregnancy at sea issue is still one of the most hotly debated issues in the Navy.

## Conclusion

There is nothing inherently Navy about the arguments both for and against expanding roles for women at sea. These same arguments are used in the ongoing debate about women in ground combat. Some issues are not as salient, such as the POW issue for Navy or berthing modifications for the other services. While the Navy is an inherently conservative institution whose core values are Honor, Courage and Commitment, (The value of Tradition was dropped in the mid-1990s, but it is still evident in its embrace of pomp and circumstance through retirement, promotion and change of command ceremonies.) the institution itself has evolved and has succeeded, to a great extent, to change its institutional culture of exclusion. Navy men are realizing that women can and are doing the job at sea equally as well as they.

This evolution notwithstanding, the hypothesis

*Over time, during Congressional and public debate over expanded roles of women in the Navy, the underlying assumptions regarding women's roles have remained the same. That is, even though there have been institutional changes with regard to women's roles in the Navy, attitudes regarding the impact on the institution because of those changed roles are based on gendered social constructs rather than empirical reality.*

is supported by my data. The arguments against expanding roles for women are emotionally rather than empirically based, and are results of social construction. My reasoning follows.

The Navy has come a long way in expanding roles for women since 1978. It has gone from allowing women only in non-combat ships to being at the forefront of combat at sea and in the air. The issue of women in submarines is thus anachronistic. The arguments against assignment of women to submarines are based on socially

constructed ideas about acceptable behavior for men and women. The exclusionary policy regarding women in submarines is also partly based on professional closure, that is, the limiting of service for ascriptively defined groups in order to enhance the status of the profession (Segal and Kestnbaum 2002: 441). In both instances, the exclusionary policies have little to do with military effectiveness. In fact, the policy deprives the submarine force of “the best and the brightest” personnel which they seek in order to maintain their elite status.

The arguments against expanding women’s roles have evolved, but the underlying assumptions remain the same. As it became clear that women can do the jobs previously thought not possible, new arguments appear in order to maintain the Warrior Ethic and status inequality. There is still an emotional element, or some would say a “gut reaction” to the idea of women in combat roles that is derived from socially acceptable roles for both men and women. This is evident in the continued protests against women at sea and women in submarines even though it is recognized that women will not degrade combat readiness.

This study has shown that there are obvious differences between the “rank and file” who read *Navy Times* and the upper echelon of the Navy and its civilian leadership who read *Proceedings*. It is notable that male retirees in both publications appear to object to the changing face of the Navy, but that the less senior active duty element who read *Navy Times* appear to support it. The attitudes of the senior and retired officers of the Navy are important, as they are the people who affect policy decisions. As indicated earlier, it appears that whoever is at the top of the Navy hierarchy can and does change policy as a matter of course. The fact that Congress has seen fit to validate

this exclusionary policy via legislation has been described by Segal and Kestnbaum (2002) as legitimizing closure. Many of the arguments against women in submarines became moot when women were integrated into surface combatants. The exclusion is also a matter of institutional sexism. As one *Proceedings* commentary stated, “The fundamental issue is less about managing privacy in the head and more about keeping everyone at the top male.”<sup>44</sup>

It is important to understand, however, that the views expressed by the readers of *Navy Times* and *Proceedings* are not made in isolation. The media as an institution is a powerful force in our society, and can influence opinion and policy. This is proven regularly when the media “break” a story that results in governmental reaction, such as the Tailhook or other sex scandals that plagued the military in the 1990s and beyond. Thus the opinions expressed in commentary and letters to the editor may influence popular opinion about an issue, and may even help construct them. This suggests that the attitudes expressed within this thesis may well be attitudes that were prevalent Navy-wide.

As expected, all of the arguments regarding expanding roles fall under the two categories of “Military Effectiveness” and “Citizen Rights and Responsibilities” and were addressed in the literature. It is clear that the most consistent argument over time was the equal opportunity argument made by proponents of expanding roles for women at sea: Women can do the job, it does not affect military readiness and women should be allowed to do the job based on our principles of democracy and equal opportunity.

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<sup>44</sup> Brower, Michael J. 2000. Commentary. “The Enemy (Below)...The Brass Above.” *U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, June: 33.

These central Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities arguments were supported by the literature and by my data analysis.

What is not as clear is that the opponent's arguments have also remained the same and are supported by the literature. The argument that the integration of women will reduce military effectiveness, whatever the specific reason, is based on socially constructed ideas about women and their relationship to men. This was especially evident in the evolutionary arguments against expanding roles for women. As men realized that women can do the job, they altered their perceptions slightly, but seem to have to convince themselves that the only way this can happen is if women are held to lower standards. This reiterates Ridgeway's thesis on status inequality (1991), that it is better to be male rather than female. The result is that while women are successfully changing the socially constructed idea of gender, it is almost impossible to change the underlying construction of man's status superiority.

What the literature failed to address was the changing social constructs of women's work, and thus the change in the specifics of opponent arguments given these changing values. In 1978 traditional values were very evident. Men thought that women could not possibly do the job, and questioned why they would want to. The gains in equal opportunity for women in the 1970s had not quite made it to the military. By 1994 men realized that women could do the job at sea, but still needed something to grasp to ensure their continued superior position in their world. Thus the issues of double standards and physical capability were debated.

In 1999, it was acknowledged that women could do the job in combat, both at sea and in the air. What then came into play was the biological difference and how it

impacted readiness in the form of pregnancy. Related to this biological argument were biological needs, manifest in the arguments about fraternization, sexuality, sexual harassment and fear of sexual harassment. Submariners used these fears and arguments to promote the idea that submarines are unique units in which these personal situations, which are inherent in the integration process, cannot be tolerated on submarines. All of these arguments are variations on how women adversely affect military readiness. Thus, the underlying arguments are based on socially constructed ideas and are not based on factually obtained evidence. In fact, the evidence points to the contrary, that women can successfully participate in military actions, both in combat and non-combat situations, without adversely affecting military readiness.

*Sociological Importance.*

How is this study sociologically important? This study adds to the growing literature on how socially constructed values are difficult to overcome, and how status inequality is reproduced even though values may change. The role of women in both society and the Navy has changed dramatically, but underlying assumptions about women have changed very little. Women are still the primary caregivers, women are still sex objects, and women are still perceived as the problem in integration processes rather than the problem being outmoded attitudes. This study has shown that there are still gender differences in perceptions about what women can and cannot do, and how they do it. This also reiterates Ridgeway's thesis on status inequality (1991), that it is better to be male rather than female.

This study looked at a microcosm of Navy attitudes as seen through two national periodicals. The data did not come from a random sample and the number of data were

relatively few. Compared to the data from the 1993-1994 period, the data from the other two time periods were relatively deficient. More studies might be done on changing attitudes over time, perhaps by reviewing old surveys to see if there are any relevant questions. Studies on the effects of the negative attitudes of Navy men on Navy women are also lacking.

There is some literature on “environmental” or “gender” harassment, but this is not extensive. How does this type of harassment affect the morale of the troops and the attrition and/or retention of women? There is a widespread perception that shipboard pregnancies are a problem and the Navy’s policies are not working. There have been several studies on pregnancy in the Navy, but one has not been completed in a number of years. An updated study should be performed, trying to quantify the effects of pregnancy on shipboard readiness and analyze the reasons. Is it as much of a problem as it is perceived to be? If so, is it a leadership issue? An education issue? How can leaders approach this issue and not appear to be condemning women in the Navy who also want a family life as their male peers do?

There have been many studies that have tried to quantify women’s effect on military readiness, but most have been in non-combat unit. More and more women are becoming involved in combat, and studies need to be conducted to validate the theories. Until more studies are conducted that try to determine the reasons behind the statistics, little will be known about how to facilitate change so that women will be seen as equals on an institutional level. The Navy is a unique institution and has a proud heritage. Many women would like to be seen as part of that heritage.

## Appendix A: Documents for Content Analysis<sup>44</sup>

1978/1979: Assignment of Women to Non-Combatant Ships.

Coye, Beth F. 1979. "We've Come a Long Way, But..." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, July: 41-49.

Ward, Gail M. 1979. "We've Come a Long Way, But..." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, October.

Verdi, John M. 1979. "We've Come a Long Way, But..." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, October.

Rockefeller, James W. 1979. "We've Come a Long Way, But..." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, December.

Kelly, Jr., James F. 1978. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, October: 44-53.

Quigley, Robin L. 1978. "A Requirement to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, October: 53-54.

Hensel, Karl G. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, January.

Lane, Richard. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, January.

Byron, John L. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." "A Requirement to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, February.

Cook, Jr., Charles O. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." "A Requirement to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, February.

Hamlett, Frank R. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, February.

Simpson, Jeffrey P. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, March.

Marvel, R. and Mrs. Marvel. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, April.

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<sup>44</sup> Items shown indented are comments that address the article under which they are indented.

McMonagle, J. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, April.

Bradley, James. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, June.

Peniston, Robert C. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, June.

Foster, Harold Edward. 1979. "Women in Warships: A Right to Serve." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, July.

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