UCLA
UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

"Open the hurt locker and learn": Veterans Education and the Civil-Military Gap

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/37s4q3f9

Author

McBain, Lesley

Publication Date

2015

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

"Open the hurt locker and learn": Veterans Education and the Civil-Military Gap

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Lesley McBain

2015

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

"Open the hurt locker and learn":

Veterans Education and the Civil-Military Gap

by

Lesley McBain

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Sylvia Hurtado, Chair

The passage of the 2008 Post-9/11 GI Bill created the most complex policy iteration of the GI

Bill to date. The bill's payment structure forced closer interactions between the U.S. Department

of Veterans Affairs (VA) and higher education institutions, as well as their representative

associations. These relations are examined against the larger societal backdrop of a civil-military

gap established in a robust literature of military sociology and specific research on civil-military

relations. However, higher education researchers have not studied the policy relations between

higher education associations and military- and veteran-serving agencies (e.g., the Department of

Defense [DoD] and VA). This study's purpose was to illuminate, using a case study design

including both document analysis and interviews with participants from three higher education

associations, the worlds of veterans education policy and associations representative of

institutions charged with implementation. Narratives, counternarratives, and metanarratives were

identified using a transformative research paradigm. Findings indicate that a civil-military gap exists in associations' interactions with military- and veteran-serving agencies but relationships are dynamic and complicated by organizational cultural divides. The study contributes to the literature on higher education associations, providing evidence regarding the little-researched power and behind-the-scenes influence on national higher education policy. The second contribution is a focus on documenting dimensions of the civil-military gap in veterans education policy. However, results also indicated a dynamic, symbiotic and mutually dependent, and sometimes contentious relationship rather than a single, static gap. Against this constantly changing backdrop, associations attempted to influence the enactment of orderly veterans education policies befitting intended federal goals for student veterans and commonly accepted higher education practices. Yet the civil-military gap also disrupted associations' capacity to implement veterans education policy including modes of operation among military- and veteran-serving agencies that hinder not only communication and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit payment processing, but also realistic assessment and research on student veterans' academic and social needs. The study proposes an action plan for research, policy and practice that higher education associations might use to attempt to bridge the civil-military gap in veterans education policy and enable veterans' success in higher education.

The dissertation of Lesley McBain is approved.

Mitchell J. Chang

José Luís Santos

Sylvia Hurtado, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents, LCDR Robert F. McBain, USN, and LTJG

Maureen S. McBain, USN.

It is also dedicated to all the military-affiliated students at colleges and universities throughout

the United States. It is an honor and privilege to do this work on your behalf.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To slightly reword John Donne, "No dissertation is an island." Without the help, advice, and encouragement of many people this dissertation would not have been completed. My deep thanks and appreciation to the following:

- My advisor and committee chair, Sylvia Hurtado. Thank you for engaging with a new research area and providing me with the benefit of your insight and mentoring. I appreciate it more than I can adequately express.

- My committee: Mitch Chang, Pat McDonough (noncertifying), and José Luís Santos. Thank you for your commentary, your humor, and your intellectual curiosity. Again, I appreciate it more than I can adequately express. I also want to give a special added thank-you to José Luís Santos for bringing me from the Beltway to UCLA.

- Other UCLA faculty: Kathryn M. Anderson-Levitt, Walter Allen, Michael Chwe, Michael Dukakis, Kevin Eagan, Rob Rhoads, and Mike Rose. All of you helped shape this work and how I think about research in ways you might not have realized but for which I am grateful nonetheless.

- LTC Michael S. McDermott, USA, commander of the UCLA Bruin Battalion. Thank you for agreeing to supervise my independent study in Military Science and our conversations that deeply informed my thinking about this dissertation and other military-affiliated student research. I will treasure the challenge coin forever.

- Vicki Sanelli of the UCLA Bruin Battalion, for facilitating the independent study in Military Science and being so welcoming.

1985	William Tennent High School Warminster, Pennsylvania
1989	Bachelor of Arts in English Literature Temple University Philadelphia, PA
2009	Master of Science in Higher Education Organizational Administration Drexel University Philadelphia, PA
2013	Master of Arts, Higher Education and Organizational Change University of California, Los Angeles Los Angeles, CA
2009-2010	American Association of State Colleges and Universities Senior Research and Policy Analyst Washington, DC
2010-2012	American Association of State Colleges and Universities/Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Senior Research and Policy Analyst/Special Projects Associate Washington, DC
2012-2015	Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Research Analyst University of California, Los Angeles Los Angeles, CA

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Milana, M., & McBain, L. (in press). Adult and continuing education policy in the United States of America. *In Adult Education and Learning Policy: A Worldwide Review*. London and New York: Palgrave-MacMillan.

Milana, M., & McBain, L. (2015). Adult education in the United States of America: A critical examination of national policy (1998-2013). *Encyclopaideia: Journal of Phenomenology and Education*.

McBain, L. (2015, January). The military/veteran freshman: New data from the 2013 CIRP Freshman Survey. Presentation at the Council of Civilian and Military Educators (CCME) Annual Symposium, Anaheim, CA.

Kim, Y., & McBain, L. (2014). *From Soldier to Student II*: Results from the survey. In *Helping Veterans Succeed: A Handbook for Higher Education Administrators*. Washington, DC: AACRAO.

McBain, L. (2014, November). "So did you kill anyone while you were in the military?": Higher education and Othering the student veteran. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Annual Conference, Washington, DC.

McBain, L. (2013, February). Providing seamless administrative support to servicemembers and their dependents by government agencies and academic offices. Paper presented at ASEE-NSF Summit on Transitioning Veterans to Engineering-Related Careers, Washington, DC.

McBain, L., Kim, Y., & Snead, K. (2013, February). Results of second national campus survey on servicemember and veteran services: Assessing current landscape of campus programs for veterans and servicemembers. Presentation at the Council of Civilian and Military Educators (CCME) Annual Symposium, San Diego, CA.

McBain, L, Cook, B., Kim, Y., & Snead, K. (2012). *From Soldier to Student II: Assessing campus programs for service members and veterans*. Washington, DC: ACE, AASCU, NASPA, and NAVPA.

McBain, L. (2010, November). Proposed legislative changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill: Potential implications for veterans and colleges. Washington, DC: AASCU.

McBain, L. (2009, November). Implementing the Post-9/11 GI Bill: Lessons learned and emerging issues. Washington, DC: AASCU.

McBain, L. (2008). *"When Johnny [or Janelle] Comes Marching Home": National, state and institutional efforts in support of veterans' education*. Washington, DC: AASCU.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The passage of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (commonly referred to as the Post 9/11 GI Bill) created the most complex—and potentially the most costly—version of the GI Bill in American history. Since its 2009 implementation, it has paid out nearly $30 billion dollars for nearly one million military/veteran students and eligible family members enrolling in postsecondary education. According to White House projections, total benefits are anticipated to reach $42 billion by 2014 (Wagner, Cave, & Winston, May 19, 2014). The American Council on Education (ACE) has recently projected that over five million additional Post-9/11-era servicemembers are expected to exit the military and return to civilian life by 2020 (Molina, November 10, 2014).

In the most recent previous iterations of the GI Bill, the VA paid a fixed monthly sum to veterans, who then used the funds to pay colleges. The new structure of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, where institutions now receive funds directly from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for tuition and fee payments, has forced the VA and higher education stakeholders into a much closer working relationship. These stakeholders range from individual institutions to the national membership associations charged with representing different groups' interests to the U.S. Department of Education, on Capitol Hill, and at the White House (e.g., associations of public universities or financial aid officers).

This policy shift from individual funding to institutional funding resulted in a new relationship between higher education and the VA, which is the federal agency primarily responsible for administering veterans education benefits. In addition, it resulted in a new relationship between higher education and other veteran-serving stakeholders (e.g.,

Congressional committees and subcommittees and veterans advocacy organizations such as the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America [IAVA]). These relationships are complicated by underlying core cultural, philosophical, political, and functional divisions between the military (and, by extension, military- and veteran-serving agencies) and civilian higher education as institutions in American society.

Said divisions result in a lack of understanding between the military and civilian institutions that is commonly referred to as the civil-military gap in decades' worth of sociological and political science literature examining the overall phenomenon. However, even though colleges and universities are civilian institutions that interact with the military on a number of fronts (e.g., housing Reserve Officers' Training Corps [ROTC] units on campus and performing military-related research), the issue of higher education and the civil-military gap has not been well investigated by higher education researchers. The dearth of specific research on veterans education policy also makes the evolving relationship between higher education stakeholders and military/veteran-serving agencies more complex because there is no clear policy precedent to follow.

This lack of policy precedent combined with lack of communication and understanding between the VA and higher education negatively affected student veterans when the Post-9/11 GI Bill was first implemented. Some examples include a cumbersome required certification of student veteran enrollment by class, rather than a simple enrollment certification for full- or part-time status; widespread confusion on the part of both student veterans and institutions about how much individual student veterans were eligible to receive in Post-9/11 GI Bill funding based on poor communication from VA; systemic payment delays, overpayments, and underpayments by VA; and separate maximum benefit charts for "tuition" and "fees" drawn up by VA without

consulting higher education stakeholders about standard billing practices (Campbell, October 15, 2009; Steele, Salcedo, & Coley, 2010; McBain, November 2009). Therefore, in order to avoid repeating or compounding these mistakes and thereby harming student veterans, a better understanding of how the civil-military gap plays out in veterans education policy is necessary.

This study explored the particular form the civil-military gap takes in higher education and its potential effects on one set of higher education stakeholders: higher education associations charged with representing institutions' veterans education policy interests to the VA, Congress, the White House, and state-level veteran education policymakers. These associations play a vital, but also understudied, role in American higher education policy in the absence of a central ministry of education or coordinating board across all states. As Ewing Cook (1998) explains:

> In spite of the significance of the higher education enterprise, there is no comprehensive federal policy regarding colleges and universities. Federal involvement in higher education policymaking has always been piecemeal, and the role of the national government is ambiguous....To create order in the jumbled Washington landscape, a set of major voices serve as the principal voices of higher education. Like the organizations representing many other policy domains...the major higher education associations have been the important players in the domain for several decades and are viewed as permanent fixtures (pp. 5, 10).

Thus higher education associations—in particular, the six major higher education associations commonly known as The Six or the Big Six (Ewing Cook, 1998)—collectively act on behalf of thousands of colleges and universities across the U.S. Their role is not limited to veterans education policy; it encompasses all aspects of higher education policy.

The study therefore advances research on higher education associations and their role in policymaking as well as on veterans education policy. Another aim of the study was to, as indicated by its title quoting the Iraq combat veteran and war poet Brian Turner, "Open the hurt

locker and learn" (Turner, 2005, n.p.). Given the roughly five million servicemembers slated to return from the military to civilian life in the next six years alone—a still unknown number of whom will use their education benefits at civilian colleges and universities across the country— learning more about the civil-military gap in relation to higher education policy is necessary to better serve student veterans.

Problem Statement

Civil-Military Relations, the Civil-Military Gap, and their Connections to Veterans Education Policy

Before focusing specifically on the civil-military gap and the issues it raises for civilian veterans education policy stakeholders in the context of this study, a step back to address the larger field of civil-military relations and its connections to veterans education policy is in order. This is because the civil-military gap is a subtheme of civil-military relations just as veterans education policy is a subtheme of American higher education policy. Given the American-specific orientation of this study, the following discussion of civil-military relations focuses only on the United States. Other countries' patterns of civil-military relations differ given varying governance structures and political parties, particularly in those countries that have experienced military coups. In addition, American higher education faculty and administrators are not appointed or directly controlled by a central governmental authority (funding strings and regulatory compliance notwithstanding). Thus they have the protection of institutional autonomy and academic freedom to openly discuss, or out-and-out critique, the military and its relationship to civil society.

Relevant concepts in American civil-military relations. While a comprehensive overview of American civil-military relations is beyond the scope of this study, key civil-military

relations concepts are relevant. These influence civilian higher education stakeholders and military stakeholders' interactions and thus have a broad effect on veterans education policy. It should also be noted that there is "no single overarching theory of civil–military relations" (Owens, 2011, p. 12). Thus choosing only selected concepts related to the study for introductory discussion is in keeping with the broader civil-military relations literature and its multiple foci.

   Lenses through which civil-military relations are viewed. Owens (2011) identified two general lenses through which researchers in the field view civil-military relations. One is *institutional*, "which focuses on how the actors in a polity, including the military as an organization, interact within the institutional framework of a given polity's government" (p. 13). Researchers using this lens focus on civilian control of the military, what the proper role of the military should be, how much influence the military has on society, and how the military effectively maintains its ability to protect the interests of the state in the face of different and potentially hostile societal imperatives. The key theorist using the institutional lens is Samuel Huntington in his seminal 1957 work *The Soldier and the State* (Owens, 2011). Understanding how veterans education policy stakeholders in veteran-serving agencies and higher education associations interact within an institutional framework that has changed considerably with the advent of the Post-9/11 GI Bill is crucial to improving veterans education policy and services for student veterans alike.

   The second lens identified by Owens is the *sociological* or *cultural* lens, which examines "the broad question of military culture vs. liberal society; the role of individuals and groups…the relationship between military service and citizenship…the nature of military service (occupation, profession, etc.); and the relationship of militaries and the societies from which they stem" (Owens, 2011, pp. 13-14). This perspective was first articulated by Morris Janowitz's book, *The*

Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait (1960), in reaction to Huntington (Owens, 2011). This lens' applicability to studying veterans education policy is that it allows higher education researchers to incorporate broader insights from civil-military relations researchers on military culture and the relationship of a military to its society.

   The military use and civilian control of violence. Feaver (1996) pointed out that the "civil-military challenge is to reconcile a military strong enough to do anything the civilians ask them to do with a military subordinate enough to do only what civilians authorize them to do" (p. 149). Feaver defined the civil-military *problematique* as a "paradox" where in order to protect against violence from outsiders, a violent institution (the military infrastructure) is created:

> Because the military must face enemies, it must have coercive power, the ability to force its will on others. But because the military has this coercive power, it may also have the ability to force its will on the community that created it in the first place (Feaver, 1996, pp. 150, 152).

   This *problematique* is echoed in contemporary American veterans education policy, though the exercise of force of will by military/veteran stakeholders (defined as veteran-serving agencies such as the VA, Congressional committees charged to oversee veterans benefits, and military/veterans advocacy groups) has been done through political and legislative means rather than by actual violence. For instance, the VA's original Post-9/11 GI Bill implementation strategy was to impose separate maximum benefit eligibility charts for "tuition" and "fees" without consulting higher education stakeholders (McBain, November 2009). This was done even though separate maximum benefit charts were *not* legislatively mandated. Furthermore, the VA made this unilateral decision despite its ignorance of standard higher education billing practices prior to the Post-9/11 GI Bill's enactment.

Given the most recent previous version of the GI Bill paid benefit money to the individual veteran, the VA was unfamiliar—to put it charitably—with the complexities of tuition and fee charges at thousands of public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit institutions across the country. This lack of knowledge meant its decision to coercively impose its financial will on civilian higher education rather than consulting higher education experts beforehand rendered student veterans attending public colleges in states whose legislative and billing language used "fees" to mean "tuition" (e.g., California) ineligible for their full Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit (McBain, November 2009). Fortunately, after public outcry from not only student veterans and their advocates, but higher education institutions and their lobbyists in Washington, the VA relented and discarded the payment charts as unworkable.

The "civil-military bargain." Owens characterized civil-military relations in the United States as a "_bargain_ among three parties: the American people, the government, and the military as an institution. The goal of this bargain is to allocate prerogatives and responsibilities between the civilian leadership on one hand and the military on the other hand" (Owens, 2011, p. 1). He went on to explain that five questions define the civil-military bargain: who controls the military, what level of military influence is acceptable in a liberal society such as the United States, what is the appropriate role of the military, what mode of civil-military relations best ensures the military's effectiveness, and who serves in the military (Owens, 2011, p. 1). When the terms of the civil-military bargain are rendered obsolete by political, societal, natural, or other events, the civilian leadership and the military must renegotiate the civil-military bargain to restore societal equilibrium.

However, as Langston (2003) put it:

Wars change states and nations alike….In the return to peace, it has never been easy for Americans to decide what to do with the military. To some critics of the military's way of doing things, the best solution has been to civilianize military forces, so that they pose no threat to the mores of a nation at peace. In reaction to such pressures, some military professionals have sought in peacetime to focus exclusively on preparing for future war, wanting as little to do as possible in the meantime with civilian society and its problems. The proponents of what might be termed the "Fatal Embrace" and the "Leave Us Alone" approaches to military-society relations face off against each other today (p. 6).

This tension between assimilation and separation plays out in veterans education research and policy interactions. In research and practice-oriented literature alike published since the enactment of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, many higher education researchers and practitioners focus on the need for student veterans to overcome social isolation on campus, service-related physical and mental health issues, and risky behaviors (e.g., excessive drinking), often with the help of campus-based support services, in order to become part of the larger community of students and conform to traditional student development models (Barry, Whiteman, MacDermid Wadsworth, & Hitt, 2012; Nichols-Casebolt, 2012; Whiteman, Barry, Mroczek, & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2013; DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011; Hamrick, Rumann, et al., 2013).

Other higher education researchers and some military/veteran-serving stakeholders, conversely, maintain that active-duty military and veteran students may not *wish* to completely assimilate to larger campus culture because they see being a veteran as their primary cultural identity. In addition, based on their previous military experience and responsibilities, potentially up to and including being responsible for life-and-death decisions, they "resent being treated like every other student" (Cook Francis & Kraus, 2012, p. 12). Researchers also point out that particular behaviors instilled by military culture—particularly motivation, task-oriented behavior, team consciousness, and classroom decorum (Tschudi, 2013; Steele, Salcedo, & Coley, 2010; DeSawal, 2013)—help student veterans succeed in college.

Thus the counterargument to total assimilation is that educators should make the effort to understand and treat an active-duty military or veteran cultural identity as respectfully as civilian students' various cultural identities rather than view it as a hindrance that *must* be shed in order to successfully obtain a college education. In addition, a commitment to military culture, logically, is primary for active-duty military students enrolled in college who use college to achieve military goals such as enhanced promotion eligibility. Thus, higher education should be viewed as part of a larger societal system rather than separate from the military (Wilson, Smith, Lee, & Stevenson, 2013). This is an example of viewing military/veterans education through the institutional lens of civil-military relations (Owens, 2011).

Furthermore, the civilian stereotype of the returning student veteran as the "wounded warrior" is not always accurate and often harmful to the very population it wishes to serve (Bonar & Domenici, 2011, pp. 204, 206). As Gann (2012) commented, "Veterans who sense that academia regards them as broken, willfully nonconformist, or unworkable in the college environment will react with understandable frustration, which puts them at risk for attrition" (p. 213). The presentation of these arguments indicates that portions of the civil-military bargain, specifically what level of military/veteran influence is acceptable over civilian higher education and the appropriate role of the military and veteran-serving agencies in veterans education policy, are being specifically renegotiated in the context of veterans education. With these concepts in mind, a brief introductory discussion of the civil-military gap and its relationship to this study is now in order.

The civil-military gap in general. The civil-military gap, which can be broadly characterized as a mutual lack of cultural knowledge that affects how civilians and military personnel relate to each other, has multiple nuanced definitions potentially influencing veterans

education policy. As can be seen by the above explication of civil-military relations, there are differing schools of thought. For instance, Huntington considered the concept of civil-military relations relatively narrowly as "the relation of the officer corps to the state" (Huntington, 1957, p. 3). As previously mentioned, Janowitz viewed civil-military relations through a sociological lens to accommodate cultural issues (Owens, 2011).

However, Nielsen and Snider, following in Huntington's footsteps, reworked the concept of civil-military relations to encompass five interdependent relationships: "those of civilian elites with military leaders, of military institutions with American society, of military leaders with their professions, among civilian elites, and of civilian elites with American society" (Nielsen & Snider, 2009, Kindle Location 263). They defined the civil-military "gap" as "whether military professionals view themselves, or are viewed, as so different or so separate from society that an undesirable civil-military 'gap' exists" (Nielsen & Snider, 2009, Kindle Location 271). In addition, Avant specified three indicators of a civil-military gap based on different underlying theories of civilian control of the military: the level of military influence on society, the degree to which the military represents society, and the level of day-to-day friction between civilians and the military (Avant, 1998). All these definitions potentially affect veterans education policy.

The civil-military gap as defined in this study. This study defines the civil-military gap using Nielsen and Snider's (2009) definition of civil-military gap by viewpoint. It also incorporates the multiple relationships Nielsen and Snider cited. These relationships exist between civilian elites and military leaders (i.e., civilian higher education associations in relation with veteran-serving agencies predominantly staffed by veterans), between military institutions and American society (i.e., veteran-serving agencies with the college-going public), between civilian elites (i.e., between higher education associations and other civilian stakeholders in

veterans education policy such as Congressional committees tasked with overseeing veterans'

benefits including educational ones), and between civilian elites and American society (i.e.,

between higher education associations and the public). This is done to both define the civil-

military gap with as much nuance as possible and accommodate larger civil-military relations

concepts previously referenced.

Higher education associations as civilian elites. Higher education associations are

specifically defined as civilian elites in this study because they spend much of their time as is

legally allowable under lobbying regulations working directly with the White House, cabinet

agencies, and members of Congress in what is referred to as "federal relations" or "government

relations" (Ewing Cook, 1998, p. 10). King (1975) described the role of a Washington, DC

association representative as:

> (1) serving the needs and immediate demands of his constituents; (2) acting as the
> diplomatic agent of his constituents in Washington; and (3) trying to influence policy
> formation and administration. The common endeavor that links these three functions is
> the communication of information and political intelligence....the effective Washington
> representative provides influence for his client by acquiring and translating relevant
> information....Perhaps the most direct form of policy influence by higher education
> representatives is direct participation in the drafting, revision, and amendment of
> proposed legislation (pp. 45-46, 56).

While there are federal constraints on specific lobbying activities (Ewing Cook, 1998), higher

education associations' representatives:

> routinely testified at hearings, contacted public officials directly, engaged in informal
> contacts with officials, presented research results, sent letters, attempted to shape the
> implementation of policies, consulted with government officials to plan legislative
> strategy, inspired letter-writing or telegram campaigns, shaped the government's agenda,
> and helped draft legislation, regulations, rules, and guidelines....Although the major
> associations are usually headed by former university presidents, in recent years their
> government relations staff and campus representatives in Washington have often been
> people with a master's degree in public policy and previous experience on Capitol Hill or
> in the executive branch. As one lobbyist put it, "The campuses are smart enough to hire
> Hill Rats" (Ewing Cook, 1998, pp. 145-146).

11

This is done on behalf of associations' institutional members, who receive elite political benefits in return such as "the opportunity to testify before a congressional committee on higher education policy issues, or to have private time to talk with the president of the United States when he speaks at the association's annual meeting" (Ewing Cook, 1998, p. 96). However, the associations, particularly the Big Six, are staffed by professional education policy experts whose senior federal relations staff previously held high-level Capitol Hill or Department of Education positions; the associations thus use those staffers' accrued political power and networks to achieve their goals. One college president interviewed by Ewing Cook commented, "Congress listens to higher education because of the associations" (Ewing Cook, 1998, p. 93).

In addition, the Big Six, as opposed to the smaller single-issue associations, "dominate higher education policy advocacy. They deal with every type of public policy concern, while the other associations deal with specialized policy issues" (Ewing Cook, 1991, p. 110). As experts on higher education policy and advocacy, while working with their boards of college presidents to reach consensus on association positions when at all possible, "association personnel do not always and cannot always accede to the wishes of their board members on every federal policy issue" (Ewing Cook, 1991, p. 102). When interviewing high-level association staff, Ewing Cook found:

> two comments particularly striking as an indication that they retain the final decision making authority. One said, "Sometimes we change position in response to phone calls and letters, but rarely." Another said, "Sometimes there is nothing the members can do to convince me I'm wrong about a policy position" (p. 102).

King (1975) concurred with this assessment by noting that:

> Another important indicator of higher education's political evolution has been the subtle, at times imperceptible, shift in decision making out of the hands of the college administrators and into the hands of the politically knowledgeable staffs that man the

Washington offices....The rise of a politically competent group of representatives and the rapid turnover of college executives, most of whom have severely limited understanding and experience with Washington politics, have encouraged a new generation of college presidents to entrust at least tactical decisions to their men [and women] in Washington (pp. 113-114).

The number of civilian elites involved in civil-military relations combined with the complexity of higher education policy stakeholder relationships both in and outside veterans education creates a large universe of potential study subjects. Therefore, higher education associations were singled out because of their policy advocacy role to use in examining the possible effects of the civil-military gap on veterans education policy. Higher education associations also parallel student veterans in terms of being an under-researched sector of higher education. As Marcus (2014) put it in a news article focusing on the proposed federal college rating system and the Big Six:

It [one Six member's annual meeting in DC where attending college presidents were dispatched to visit their Congressional offices and discuss their opposition to the federal rating system and its potential negative effects on institutions in their Congressional members' districts] was a rare glimpse at a lobbying operation that even its critics say has been as effective as it is little known: the one that represents the interests of American colleges and universities....The lobby "was less visible in the past than it is today because what happened stayed behind closed doors," said David Bergeron, vice president for postsecondary education at the Center for American Progress and a former acting U.S. assistant secretary for postsecondary education. Representatives of the college and university associations agree that they have had to come up from under the radar (September 29, 2014, n.p.).

In summary, the problem this study attempted to address is twofold: (1) the lack of higher education research on the civil-military gap and its effects on veterans education policy (which then affect student veterans); (2) the lack of research on the role higher education associations play in influencing veterans education policy as part of their larger policy role in higher education.

Higher Education Associations and National Veterans Education Policy

The potential effects of the civil-military gap, rooted in differing cultural paradigms, on stakeholders who influence, advocate for, and implement veterans education policy including the Post-9/11 GI Bill are important to assess in the interest of improving policy implementation. Improved policy implementation reduces both harm to student veterans and additional costs to taxpayers stemming from poorly implemented policies. This is particularly important for the Post-9/11 GI Bill given its error-plagued initial rollout (Campbell, October 2009; Steele, Salcedo, & Coley, 2010; McBain, November 2009).

Individual campuses and researchers—and, crucially, student veterans themselves—have provided and will continue to provide valuable insight into campus-level effects of Post-9/11 GI Bill policy. However, as Murray (1976) put it, "To understand the politics of higher education, the question is not *what* generates or shapes higher education policies, but *who*….it is a highly complex context of individuals and groups pursuing diverse goals of self-interest" (p. 80). The national politics of higher education, and thus the subpolitics of veterans education, are dominated by the Washington, DC higher education policy advocacy and research community.

This community consists of hundreds of higher education associations whose memberships are classified as either institutional or individual (Ewing Cook, 1998). The institutional associations are dominated by "The Six" or the "Big Six," whose memberships are presidentially-based (i.e., presidents join representing their institutions) and who prioritize federal relations, otherwise known as lobbying, on behalf of their members. They represent all nonprofit two- and four-year sectors of higher education. When it comes to veterans education policy, The Six collectively and individually advocate to Congress, the White House, and the VA as part of their larger mission of representing their constituent members on federal and state

higher education policy issues. Therefore, using selected institutional associations as units of study allowed the investigation to take a macro-level policy perspective unavailable at the campus level.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to illuminate veterans education policy by examining how the civil-military gap affects several higher education stakeholders, all higher education associations integral to the creation and implementation of veterans education policy. The study was guided by the following research questions*: 1) Does a civil-military gap exist for higher education associations working on veterans education policy issues? 2) If so, how does the civil-military gap disrupt a higher education association's capacity to implement veterans education policy? 3) What are the implications of the civil-military relationship and gaps within it for higher education associations' work in support of student veterans?*

Scope of the Study

The study employed case study methodology stemming from "the desire to understand complex social phenomena" and "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 2009, Kindle Location 344). Case study methodology was also preferable because the study examined a contemporary event—the implementation of veterans education policy in the wake of the Post-9/11 GI Bill—but could not manipulate the behavior of the study's relevant actors (Yin, 2009). In addition, this study was one where "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2009, Kindle Location 635).

Some historical elements were included by necessity in this study in order to define civil-military relations, the civil-military gap in higher education, and the history of veterans education policy for the reader. However, "the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal

with a full variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations—beyond what might be available in a conventional historical study" (Yin, 2009, Kindle Location 491). In addition, descriptive case study, also employed, provides a "rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). The term "thick description" comes from anthropology and refers to a complete, literal description (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). Since the study is based on culture—and, in the case of both higher education associations and veterans education policy stakeholders, entities whose specific cultures have not been widely researched—detailed descriptions of the organizations and their environments are necessary.

The specific form of case study used was an exploratory cross-case design using three separate higher education associations as units of analysis. These associations ("Association A, Association B, Association C") were selected based on their multiple relationships with other stakeholders in the veterans education policy community, track records of veterans education involvement, and level of influence on the larger political sphere. Multiple association personnel involved with veterans education policy issues were interviewed.

To further illustrate the civil-military gap in action as well as take advantage of the case study design's ability to incorporate document analysis, a pilot analysis was conducted of public responses to a proposed amendment to the Post-9/11 GI Bill requiring all public colleges and universities to charge in-state tuition to veterans or lose eligibility for federal Chapter 33 veterans education benefits. The amendment was known as H.R. 357 and was referred to the U.S. Senate by the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 357 bill status, U.S. Congress, July 12, 2014). While H.R. 357 was superseded while the study was being conducted by an insertion of the same in-state tuition requirement into a veterans healthcare bill that was signed into law by President Obama in August 2014 (Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014,

Title VII, §702), the public responses to H.R. 357 focused specifically on the in-state tuition requirement and thus were more easily analyzed in the higher education context.

In order to understand how the civil-military gap disrupts a higher education association's capacity to implement veterans education policy, this study used Roe's (1994) theoretical framework of narrative policy analysis. Narrative policy analysis allows a researcher to analyze the dominant stories (or narratives) that one or more stakeholders use to establish and fix assumptions for policymaking on particularly complex and contentious policy issues. These stories resist change even in the face of contradictory empirical data because they have become integral to decision-makers' assumptions (Roe, 1994). Why does this happen and why are these stories so important? Because, as Roe (1994) explains, "Many public policy issues have become so uncertain, complex, and polarized…that the only things left to examine are the different stories policymakers and their critics use to articulate and make sense of that uncertainty, complexity, and polarization" (Kindle Location 192).

The ultimate goal of the researcher employing narrative policy analysis is to identify and analyze sets of narratives derived from each of the three case studies. These are dominant policy narratives, narratives that do not conform to a narrative format (i.e., lacking a story arc or an argument's premises and conclusions), and counternarratives that contradict the dominant policy narratives. Dominant policy narratives are then compared to nonconforming narratives (which Roe calls "nonstories" [1994, Kindle Location 207]) and counternarratives in an attempt to create a single "*metanarrative* 'told' by the comparison" (1994, Kindle Location 215). This, if the attempt is successful, should lead to the analyst's determination whether or how the metanarrative successfully reconfigures the issue to make it less resistant to policymaking decisions.

In particular, the researcher determines whether the metanarrative sufficiently reconfigures the issue so that more conventional policy analysis tools such as statistics, organizational theory, and public management practices can be applied. However, she or he must understand from the outset that this process may not yield a metanarrative, a single metanarrative, or a policy-relevant metanarrative (Roe, 1994). To give a concrete example grounded in this study, the dominant narratives, nonconforming narratives, and counternarratives surrounding the implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill can be identified and analyzed based on not only interviews with civilian higher education association stakeholders, but third-party reports such as that of the U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO) and Congressional testimony of both higher education associations and the VA. One dominant narrative, as mentioned previously in this introduction, is that of an initial implementation rife with delayed payments, confusion, and errors exacerbated by poor communication by VA (GAO, May 22, 2013; GAO, May 5, 2011).

The issue of the civil-military gap is complex and polarized enough that Wrona (2006) refers to it as a "dangerous separation" between the military and civilians (p. 25). In fact, Roe's discussion of why narrative policy analysis "requires a greater tolerance of polarized groups than many along the ideological spectrum want to muster" uses the example of "It means accepting that some military analysts do have a good story to tell and deserve a hearing" (1994, Kindle Location 484-485). This reinforces both the civil-military gap's existence and the relevance of narrative policy analysis as a theoretical framework by which to analyze it. In addition, the method of comparing and contrasting narrative and counternarrative specifically examines the civil-military gap as a phenomenon, since it highlights different narratives and attempts to bridge the gap by creating a metanarrative that can better inform all stakeholders.

This analysis of underlying policy narratives and counternarratives gives those on multiple sides of a policy issue more information to make better decisions about addressing and implementing it. In particular, Roe's contention that "Stories commonly used in describing and analyzing policy issues are a force in themselves, and must be considered explicitly in assessing policy options" (Roe, 1994, Kindle Location 180) was crucial to this study. This is because, as Roe further explains, "stories in the bureaucracy can convey a great deal of information and efficiently at that….Also recognized is the fact that public managers must be sensitive to such storytelling and be adept at it themselves if they are to be good managers" (Roe, 1994, Kindle Location 317). The application of this theory to the study is that higher education associations are public managers of the higher education lobby and as such tell their constituents' stories to multiple audiences.

As noted in the literature, the civil-military gap has distinct narratives and counternarratives, shaped partly by stakeholders and partly by the media (e.g., Downs & Murtazshavili [2012]; Weigand & Paletz [2001]). Furthermore, it is "uncertain, complex, and divisive" (Roe, 1994, Kindle Location 332). Last, multiple stakeholders on all sides of the civil-military gap have produced written documents ranging from white papers and research briefs to official bill texts, Congressional testimonies, hearing transcripts, press releases, and news articles. Therefore the civil-military gap was able to be examined in a cross-case study using the theoretical framework of narrative policy analysis to determine what stories underlay and stabilized—or disrupted—higher education stakeholders' implementation of veterans education policy.

Contribution of the Study

This study focused on the civil-military gap in higher education and on veterans education policy. The bulk of the still-limited veterans education literature primarily addresses student veterans because so little is known about them as a distinct subpopulation in American higher education and researchers and practitioners are trying to research their unique needs and strengths in order to construct more effective student veteran programs and services. Thus this study contributed to a different and even more underresearched area of veterans education literature—the policy discourses that have profound implications for veterans' postsecondary achievements. In addition, it contributed to knowledge on the topic of higher education associations, which have a long history of influencing national higher education policy from their Washington, DC offices that has not often been examined by higher education researchers. Very few researchers (see King, 1975; Ewing Cook, 1988) are aware of their role and behind-the-scenes work in ensuring that policies are fair to students, institutions, and the people who work in these organizations.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was its exploration of new veterans education policy terrain in the wake of the most extensive changes to the GI Bill since its post-World War II enactment—affecting over one million veterans thus far and resulting in a 42% increase in VA veterans education program beneficiaries workload between 2009 and 2010 when the Post-9/11 GI Bill was fully implemented (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, January 2014, n.p.). This increase has continued in subsequent years; Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiary numbers have grown from 39,393 in the bill's first year of

implementation (2009) to 754,229 in 2013 (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, 2013). While the original GI Bill has been the subject of considerable scholarship that will be covered more extensively in the review of literature (e.g., Mettler, 2005; Altschuler & Blumin, 2009), the Post-9/11 GI Bill is still relatively new. Thus it has not been extensively researched despite the billions of dollars that have been invested in it from 2009 to the present. This study was also significant because it examined a subset of civilian stakeholders who operate behind the scenes in higher education policy circles but whose interactions with the military- and veteran-serving stakeholders have thus far not been studied. The combination of researching an evolving phenomenon in higher education and stakeholders upon which higher education researchers have not traditionally focused lent additional significance to the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While policy literature specific to the Post-9/11 GI Bill is still being written, pertinent literature can be found in related areas. The largest is that of the wider field of civil-military relations partly addressed in the first chapter. This has been described as including "direct and indirect dealings that ordinary people and institutions have with the military, legislative haggling over the funding, regulation, and use of the military, and complex bargaining between civilian and military elites to define and implement national security policy" (Burk, 2002, p. 7).

Given the field's breadth and interdisciplinary nature, this chapter's discussion of civil-military relations literature and its applicability to veterans education policy is limited to civil-military relations concepts raised in the first chapter. Other literature areas covered are the GI Bill's various iterations and aspects of higher education power and politics. This last area of literature focuses on higher education associations and their political role in the higher education policy world.

Civil-Military Relations and the Civil-Military Gap, Continued

The study of civil-military relations, as previously mentioned, can be broadly grouped into institutional and sociological/cultural schools of thought. They overlap in some respects but are not identical. Hence, both are key to understanding the civil-military gap as defined in this study and by extension its effect on veterans education policy.

The institutional perspective. Huntington's seminal *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (1957) attempted to develop a theoretical

framework of civil-military relations. In so doing, it was written from the institutional

perspective with a methodological assumption that civil-military relations "should be studied as

a system composed of interdependent elements" (Huntington, 1957, pp. vii-viii). Huntington

defined the "principal components" of this system as "the formal, structural position of military

institutions in the government, the informal role and influence of military groups in politics and

society at large, and the nature of the ideologies of military and nonmilitary groups" (p. viii).

The work presented an in-depth examination of topics such as the rise of the military as a

profession in Western society, Huntington's concepts of the military mind and ethics, a history

of military power in America, and American civil-military relations until 1955.

In an education-specific area, Huntington contended that as far back as the early 1920s,

the American military's attitude toward education was that "a small group of Bolsheviks and

other radicals were infiltrating American schools and colleges" (1957, p. 311). This led to many

military professionals becoming alienated from civilian higher education and viewing civilian

educators with contempt. Said contempt was returned in an antagonistic relationship between

soldiers and intellectuals: "The intellectual associated the military with war and hated them

because war was a sorry reflection on the strength of the human intellect….The world of

scholars, writers, and liberals had nothing but scorn for the professional military man"

(Huntington, 1957, pp. 311-312). He went on to trace "the heightened and persistent peacetime

tension between military imperatives and American liberal society" in the post-World War II

decade that raised the core question of "...how can a liberal society provide for its military when

this requires the maintenance of professional military forces and institutions fundamentally at

odds with liberalism?" (pp. 345-346).

Huntington (1957) proposed three theoretical responses: One, cutting military forces drastically and isolating the military from the rest of society, which would hurt national security. Two, liberalizing military institutions and insisting military leaders not regard themselves as professionals, which would reduce military effectiveness. Three, having civilian society adopt "a more sympathetic understanding and appreciation of the military viewpoint and military needs" (p. 346). Huntington considered the third the most difficult but permanent solution, though notes that post-World War II civil-military relations generally followed the first and second possibilities. He calls these "the traditional liberal approaches of the extirpation or transmutation of military values and institutions" (p. 346).

At the end of *The Soldier and the State*, Huntington poetically contrasted the village of Highland Falls, outside the United States Military Academy at West Point, with West Point itself. He found the village buildings of "motley, disconnected collection of frames coincidentally adjoining each other, lacking common unity or purpose"—and by extension civilian America—wanting (p. 465). He went on to praise the conservative ethos of West Point and the military:

> "In order is found peace; in discipline, fulfillment; in community, security….West Point embodies the military ideal at its best; Highland Falls the American spirit at its most commonplace….Yet is it possible to deny that the military values—loyalty, duty, restraint, dedication—are the ones America most needs today? That the disciplined order of West Point has more to offer than the garish individualism of Main Street?" (p. 465).

Finally, he concluded that "today America can learn more from West Point than West Point can from America" and "If the civilians permit the soldiers to adhere to the military standard, the nations themselves may eventually find redemption and security in making that standard their own" (p. 466). This argues for a separate sphere of military professionalism and expertise

described by Cohen (2001) as "Armies do best when military matters are left solely to officers, and when clear distinctions are drawn between their activities and those of politicians" (p. 434).

The military-as-separate-sphere argument advanced by Huntington can be seen in present-day veterans education policy actions by veteran-serving agencies such as the already-cited decision of VA to initially create separate charts for tuition and fees, contrary to standard higher education billing practices, in order to implement the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Such actions ignore both institutions' established rules and procedures and the fact that veteran-serving agencies' expertise does not lie in either postsecondary education policy or institutional operations. While this insistence on unilateral action is problematic, it is consistent with Huntington's overall institutional perspective.

Reactions to, expansions of, and critiques of Huntington abound. As Olmeda (2013) recounted, "The publication of Huntington's book brought an onslaught of academic trouble and criticism," including sharply worded reviews in both academic and general publications (p. 62). Huntington was denied tenure at Harvard based on the authoritarianism *The Soldier and the State* espoused. However, his work remains influential on both supporters and those who take issue with part or all of his theory.

One such scholar whose arguments against Huntington are particularly applicable to veterans education policy was Cohen (2001), who defined the "normal theory" of civil-military relations in the U.S. as having two core tenets (p. 433). The first was Huntington's conception of military professionalism being that of managing violence. The second was the Huntingtonian worldview's reinforcement by popular perspectives on the Vietnam and Gulf Wars. However, Cohen contrasted actual military history with this normal theory and concluded:

it is precisely in those cases in which the military has had the freest hand—Germany in World War I and Japan in World War II—that have produced the greatest ruin to a state....The catalogue of mistakes that emerge from military considerations untrammeled not only by political consideration, but by the sober scrutiny of mere common sense, is a large one (p. 437).

This led him to argue that "there is a flaw in the concept of professionalism embedded in the normal theory of civil-military relations, a flaw that makes its prescriptions unworkable or dangerous" (p. 448). He defined the flaw in multiple ways. One such that applies to veterans education policy is that "[m]ilitary professionalism is contingent, much as business management is. The brilliant entrepreneur may prove utterly unable to cope with the problems of running the corporations their creative genius brought into the world" (p. 449). Cohen finished his argument, after a detailed analysis of both the Gulf War and conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia, by stating "...the heart of sound civil-military relations remains now, as in the past, an unequal dialogue. The imperatives of politics and of military professionalism invariably, and appropriately, tug in opposite directions; inevitably too, professional judgments require scrutiny rather than unthinking acceptance" (p. 457).

Cohen's arguments regarding military professionalism and the unequal dialogue have multiple applications to veterans education policy. One is that most colleges' imperatives of serving *all* students at their institutions can conflict with the imperatives of veteran-serving agencies and student veteran advocates who *only* care about serving student veterans. This conflict is played out among civilian student subpopulations, of course, particularly with federal directives that mandate targeted services, but is reinforced in the case of student veterans by the civil-military gap and the level of funds being committed to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Another is an extension of Cohen's argument regarding the peril of giving the military a free operational hand without the balancing factor of civilian scrutiny. Veteran-serving agencies

and student veteran advocates' input are vital to veterans education policy. However, allowing veteran-serving agencies and student veteran advocates to run veterans education policy without oversight from civilian education policymakers is as detrimental in the long run as allowing civilian education policymakers to remain completely ignorant of military culture. This is because, per Cohen's argument about military professionalism's limits, military professionals' expertise in managing the tactical and logistical issues of combat and the command-and-control hierarchy of the armed forces is logically very different from those of civilian higher education management professionals whose expertise lies in managing higher education's less hierarchical framework as well as understanding myriad policy issues (e.g., state education policy, federal Title IV financial aid policy, and others) that are not the province of the military but that affect veterans education policy nonetheless.

Sociological/cultural perspective. Janowitz's classic *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Professional Portrait* (1960) was a broad study of military society covering its organizational structures, career patterns, manners and mores (including the military code of honor), and military personnel's political beliefs, behaviors, and techniques. He began by referring to military personnel as "professionals in violence" and commenting that "outdated and obscure conceptions of the military establishment persist because civilian society, including the alert political public, prefer to remain uninformed" (p. 3). Both these points, the first picking up on Huntington's theme of professionalism, reinforce the existence of the civil-military gap. The relative scarcity of research from 1960 to the present on veterans education and military/veteran students, as opposed to the plethora of research on their civilian peers, can be seen as further affirmation of Janowitz' point.

However, Janowitz's comment must be partly considered in the specific cultural context of the early 1960s. This includes his writing about what were conscripted armed forces versus today's all-volunteer service. Related to this switch, Goldich (2011) argued that the change from conscription to volunteer forces meant that while nostalgia still existed for the World War II-era image of the conscripted citizen-soldier, its reality disappeared. Furthermore, an all-volunteer force means those who enlisted freely choose to subject themselves to military culture and internalize its values. This differs from conscript servicemembers, whose accommodation to military culture is generally temporary because they have no other choice. Goldich described military culture's difference from civilian culture in a way that amplified Janowitz's comments regarding professionals in violence:

> The armed forces, both in peace and in war, are now composed mostly, if not almost entirely, of people who accept the social legitimacy of violence and the infliction of pain, suffering, death, and anguish on other human beings. In contrast, civilian society increasingly takes the attitude that physical coercion of, or exertion of influence on, human beings by other human beings is morally wrong....The military remains hierarchical and, ultimately, authoritarian (although there is much more give and take, especially in combat units and environments, than most civilians might believe). It emphasizes organizational and collective effectiveness, discipline, and commitment rather than individual rights, prerogatives, and liberties. Given that life is infinitely less harsh in the industrialized world than it was in the past, the individual who enlists in the armed forces enters a lifestyle and environment that has become far removed from the civilian world (p. 62).

A related cultural point in Janowitz's research regarding the civil-military gap is the concept of military honor, which he referred to as "both a means and an end" (p. 215). While the military code of honor specifies how an officer behaves, behaving honorably is seen as a good in and of itself. However, the concept of military honor is and was under pressure both internally due to officers' careerism and externally due to "the values of contemporary society" (pp. 215-216). According to Janowitz, the four components of military honor were "gentlemanly conduct,

personal fealty, self-regulating brotherhood, and the pursuit of glory," but the individual importance of each had been altered and their meanings modified at the time of his writing (p. 218). While not all of these components directly apply to veterans education policy and the civil-military gap, some do.

Brotherhood is one such value still operative in military culture. (In Janowitz's era, the term applied to men only.) Like the other components of military honor about which he wrote, it is an evolving concept. Its importance in relation to the civil-military gap is that "a sense of brotherhood can operate without regard to the values of civil society" and "the sense of fraternity in the military is more than instrumental, it is an end in and of itself, and for this reason it becomes suspect to the outsider" (pp. 220-221). Both this sense of fraternity and the suspicion with which outsiders can greet it can apply to the civil-military gap and veterans education policy, as will be seen later when examining student veterans' experiences in higher education.

The pursuit of glory, according to Janowitz, was an adaptation of aristocratic tradition to the American military setting (p. 222). He asserted that developing skills and competencies to rise in rank—as opposed to the "cult of manliness and toughness associated with junior officers," which he called "often a reaction against profound feelings of weakness" (p. 223)—suppresses aggressiveness on the part of senior officers. Because of this, he concluded that "military honor and the pursuit of glory are often a mixture of toughness and sentimentality" (p. 223). While Janowitz's conclusions on the suppression of aggression by senior officers are not germane to veterans education policy per se, his point regarding the mingled toughness and sentimentality in military honor can be used by civilian educators to better understand military culture. This is particularly applicable given the American viewpoint on war and glory has shifted since

Janowitz's writing about it as part of military culture. We now live in what Kaufman (2006) called a:

> post-militarist age in which the idea of celebrating the glory and honor of war now seems strangely alien and archaic….Even when we support a war…we are expected not to celebrate or glorify it, but to recognize it as at best a tragic necessity. We insist on justifying all wars on the least controversial grounds of self-defense, even when they simply do not fit that paradigm….Media coverage of wars is not expected to display acts of heroism, but to reveal the true devastation and destruction of war, the so-called "human cost" of war (p. 67).

The importance of civilian educators understanding all of military culture, including those concepts Kaufman described as seemingly strange and outmoded, is reinforced by Herspring's (2012) broader commentary on civilian control of the military that "civilians will get a lot more out of them if they understand that military personnel come from a different culture and respect it (not adopt it)" (p. 51). This comment was accentuated by his observations in a different piece on the criticality of "operationalizing respect for military culture" by "operationalizing indicators of military culture" as part of the shared responsibility of civil-military relations (pp. 520-521).

One indicator that Herspring (2011) considered a clear marker of military culture is a hierarchical command structure and "devotion to clear executive leadership" (p. 521). Since military leaders are tasked with executing often-lethal missions, precise orders are necessary to minimize confusion leading to unnecessary casualties. This is the opposite of more ambiguous directives acceptable in less lethal civilian contexts. Another indicator was civilian respect for the military's "corporate identity as experts in national security," expressed by consultation with the military prior to final civilian-controlled decisions on policy (p. 522).

Herspring's point that "General disrespect for civilian corporate identity rarely is interpreted as a personal attack on the organizational culture" can be applied outside the national

30

security context to better understand why veteran-serving agencies and student veteran advocates can view civilian educators' actions as disrespectful regardless of their intent (p. 522). However, given the qualifier of "rarely," veteran-serving agencies and student veteran advocates who do not respect civilian educators' own corporate identities also risk being seen as personally attacking education policymakers and institutional personnel.

The indicator of respect for the military's professional identity entwines with the indicator of "a drive to increase professional expertise" (Herspring, 2011, p. 522). Herspring, however, limited this indicator to military-controlled professional education and training programs, stating that civilian education and training programs' ways of increasing professional expertise are too "divergent, open, and fluid" to fit military cultural norms (p. 522). While this is more an issue for active-duty military students, it means underlying cultural disparities between military education and training and civilian colleges and universities can reinforce the civil-military gap. One such disparity is Herspring's comment that "When civilians initiate reforms in military training and education, as they have in the treatment of women, homosexuals, and minorities, or even push new procedures for boot camps, there can be a problem. The military resents such experimentation" (p. 522).

Herspring's final cultural indicator was that of "dedication to political responsibility" (p. 522), which refers to both the responsibility for civilian leaders to listen to military advice even if it contradicts their preconceptions and the responsibility of military leaders to give the best possible advice despite what civilian leaders may want to hear (e.g., pointing out that an aggressive strategy civilian leaders favor is doomed or a mission will require more troops, and potentially more casualties, than civilian leaders are willing to risk). He also made the point that according to military culture, even if senior military leaders have forcefully expressed dissenting

opinions, once the civilian leadership governing the military makes a decision on a course of action those military leaders' dissent must immediately cease. This is the opposite of civilian culture, where dissent can continue up to and including resignations in protest.

The concept of military honor as part of military culture, while changing along with society, is still a key component in understanding the civil-military gap in veterans education because it ties into bedrock principles of the profession of arms. For instance, Jennings and Hannah (2011), after stating "Ethical questions in combat rarely have clear-cut answers," went on to propose that an exemplary military ethic "must embody the moral aspirations of the military, typically understood as traditional martial virtue and honor, in order to inspire military professionals toward supererogatory conduct" (p. 551).

Mandel and Litt (2013), studying honor in the Canadian Forces, noted that the concept is a powerful way of ensuring servicemembers adhere to professional codes of conduct because it becomes part of their social identity and thus a way in which they make meaning of their lives. Hence adherence to a professional code of honor, while integral to professions such as medicine, is most crucial to the military because servicemembers are asked to die if necessary as part of the profession of arms. Furthermore, "Honor as a reputational quality is formally marked in many ways throughout the military" and "the importance of honor in the military also reflects a directly internalized sense of moral and ethical integrity" (pp. 376-377).

Mandel and Litt's study examined the predictive effect of perceived honor on troops' self-assessed willingness to risk their lives in combat operations. The more honorable their comrades in arms were perceived as being, the more willing the surveyed troops were to risk their lives for them. While Mandel and Litt noted their findings were correlational, they used them to draw a distinction between other forms of honor culture and military honor culture

related to the civil-military gap: "Whereas honor is often associated in the psychological literature with a lack of restraint in the face of reputational threats, it is almost always associated with such restraint—and, indeed, most often with self-sacrifice—in the profession of arms" (p. 386).

Janowitz's overall conclusion regarding the civil-military gap differed from Huntington and thus provoked "a classic debate" in civil-military relations and civil-military gap literature (Feaver, Kohn, & Cohn, 2001, p. 2). He asserted that the military should transition to a more "constabulary force" (defined as "continuously prepared to act, committed to the minimum use of force, and seek[ing] viable international relations"). In addition, he declared that "meaningful integration with civilian values" was part of civilian control of the military (Janowitz, 1960, pp. 418, 420).

This is, as Segal (1995) put it, a "consequential difference" (p. 189). He explained it as Janowitz arguing for both "a permeable boundary at the civilian-military interface" to allow more integration of military and civilian lives and societies and that the military "be broadly representative of the population, anticipating current conceptualization of America's army and issues of diversity" (p. 190). Taking a Janowitzian perspective, he stated that from a sociological point of view civilian control of the military is retained by means of social networks and connections. These social ties ensure that *citizen*-soldiers—rather than Huntington's ideal of *professional* soldiers—remain connected to their larger society. Public opinion is thus more of a factor in the sociological model of civilians controlling the military than in the political science model espoused by Huntington.

The contrast of the citizen-soldier with the professional soldier led Segal (1995) to briefly discuss the sociology of professions and the increased professionalization of military forces in

the modern era. He concluded that "as a larger proportion of our military personnel are not simply soldiers but also members of the profession of arms, the implications of civil-military relations with regard to interest group politics and public esteem are profound" (p. 191). The point about interest group politics is particularly applicable to veterans education given a broad swath of interest groups including the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), powerful members of Congress, the American Council on Education (ACE), and the National Education Association (NEA) were all instrumental in the passage of the original GI Bill (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009).

Civil-military *problematique* and application to veterans education policy. Feaver's (1996) well-known work on the civil-military *problematique*, referenced in the previous chapter, posited it as a paradox of controlling an authority that has been granted significant coercive power by the state, or "a special case of the general problem of political agency: how do you ensure that your agent is doing your will, especially when your agent has guns and so may enjoy more coercive power than you do?" (p. 149).

Writing during a period (1993-1996) of what he characterized as "particular acrimony" in U.S. civil-military relations influencing the problematique, Feaver noted both the lack of military service/experience by civilian elites and vitriolic public remarks directed against the Commander-in-Chief at the time, President Bill Clinton, by military officers. He continued onward to explain more nuanced issues of civil-military relations; one such related to veterans education policy is that the military now fulfills not only its dominant function as a unique tool of coercive military power but additional, auxiliary civilian missions. These include intensive state-level programs (e.g., disaster relief), redistribution of wealth regionally within the country (e.g., the awarding of defense contracts to particular cities/regions), and addressing social

34

injustice by providing economic and social mobility opportunities to disadvantaged groups (e.g., the GI Bill and its successive iterations) (Feaver, 1996).

These auxiliary missions "complicate the civil-military problematique" in a number of ways (p. 156). First, the military's primary protective and secondary assistive missions must be simultaneously and optimally executed. In addition, changing societal values such as allowing gay and lesbian servicemembers to serve openly, allowing women servicemembers into combat roles, and imposing desegregation on the armed forces become part of the problematique: "if we as a society say it is wrong to discriminate on the basis of these ascriptive features, then the military should not do so, period. But even these noninstrumental uses [i.e., reflecting larger societal values] have instrumental implications for the primary protective role of the military" (Feaver, 1996, p. 156). The implications may be positive or negative depending on the speaker, but are still inextricably woven into the problematique. However, in a sign of changing views on at least one portion of the problematique and after years of public pressure from both civilian and military fronts and official studies of the potential effect of repealing the law on unit cohesion and fighting ability, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was repealed in 2011 (Miles, 2011).

The civil-military problematique relates to veterans education policy in its exploration of auxiliary military missions related to social mobility and offering opportunities to disadvantaged groups within American society. Another important application is that the paradox Feaver described more broadly, of how civilians can control an authority granted significant coercive power by the state itself, also applies to the relationship between civilian higher education policymakers and military and veteran-serving agencies. While civilian higher education policymakers and institutions themselves ultimately control civilian postsecondary educational institutions, the VA has significant control over Chapter 33 aid (veterans educational benefits)

and thus a good deal of coercive financial power over institutions. Though it is a Department of

Defense program rather than a VA-administered program, the revision of the Department of

Defense Memorandum of Understanding (DOD-MOU) governing the active-duty Tuition

Assistance (TA) program and concerns raised by civilian higher education associations and

institutions regarding said revision (NACUBO, 2013) is a good example of the coercive power

of the military regarding its voluntary educational benefits.

This is because the DOD-MOU requires that institutions participating in the TA program

sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) obligating them to (among other provisions not

detailed here) provide specific college and financial aid counseling (including disclosing the

institution's Cohort Default Rate [CDR]) to prospective military students and their families;

designate a point of contact for military students; refrain from high-pressure recruiting (e.g.,

multiple phone calls/emails in a single day); extend degree requirements effective upon a

military student's enrollment at least one year past his or her prescribed program length so long

as she or he is enrolled continuously; provide a specific transfer credit evaluation plan to military

students 60 days after admission and receipt of transcripts; and submit to adjudication of military

student complaints via a Department of Defense centralized complaint system. Institutions that

do not sign the MOU are not permitted to receive TA payments, and institutions that violate its

provisions can be barred from receiving TA payments (DoDI1322.25, Change 3, July 14, 2014).

The civil-military bargain. As mentioned in the first chapter, Owens (2011) defined the

civil-military bargain by answering five questions: Who controls the military? What level of

military influence is acceptable in a liberal society (e.g., the United States)? What is the

military's appropriate role? What civil-military relations mode best ensures the military's

effectiveness? Who serves in the military? (p. 1) When the answers to these questions change,

civilian and military leaders must renegotiate the civil-military bargain. Depending on the

overall atmosphere, these renegotiations can be problematic. Owens (2011) observed, after

summarizing open conflicts between the military and the Bush and Obama administrations

regarding the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan:

> The fear of praetorianism aside, events during both Bush and Obama administrations
> suggest that the real civil–military danger facing the Republic is not the existence of a
> threat to civilian control of the military, but the lack of *trust* between civilians and the
> military. This has been a problem on both sides in both the Bush and Obama
> administrations (p. 62).

The civil-military bargain's renegotiation in terms of veterans education policy is ongoing.

However, it takes place against, and is influenced by, both the civil-military gap and a backdrop

of historical interactions between academia and the military that have not always been marked

by trust. For instance, after the original G.I. Bill was passed, Robert Maynard Hutchins, then

president of the University of Chicago, publicly inveighed against it on grounds that it would

"demoralize education and defraud veterans" as well as result in college being made "so

attractive that you may go there even if you should not" (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009, pp. 76-77).

Hutchins' recommendation to correct the flaws he perceived in the law was that national

examinations should be administered to identify and award GI Bill benefits *only* to those

veterans deemed capable of succeeding in college. In addition, Hutchins recommended that the

federal government only advance up to 50 percent of tuition to veterans, with colleges and

universities paying the remaining amount to ensure only the most qualified veteran applicants

attended (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009). This concept was revived decades later, much more

democratically than Hutchins envisioned, in the Post-9/11 GI Bill's Yellow Ribbon Program.

Under this program, institutions can declare the amount of money over and above in-state tuition

that they are willing to award to defray eligible veterans' tuition and fee bills; the VA matches

this amount (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Yellow Ribbon Program, n.d.).

Hutchins' contemporary at Harvard, James Bryant Conant, also expressed concerns about

veterans' qualifications to attend college, particularly elite institutions such as Harvard. His

remarks on the subject included "we may find the least capable among the war generation,

instead of the most capable, flooding the facilities for advanced education in the United States"

(Altschuler & Blumin, 2009, p. 77). His recommendation was to amend the GI Bill to only allow

access to a "carefully selected group" of veterans restricted to types of programs that would

make up "the national educational deficit caused by the war." These pronouncements laid both

college presidents open to charges of elitism from veteran supporters (Altschuler & Blumin,

2009).

While Conant later reversed course after seeing how well veterans performed in college

and referred to the GI Bill as "a heartening sign that the democratic process of social mobility is

energetically at work" (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009, p. 95), this initial expression of elitism

helped lay foundations for distrust on both civilian and military sides of veterans education. The

Vietnam War and its legacy of anti-military campus protests also played a part in fostering an

atmosphere of distrust between academia and the military that lingers to the present day (Downs

& Murtazashvili, 2012). In another discussion of distrust revolving around both the role of the

service academies in educating future military officers and the larger civil-military divide, Bruce

Fleming, a civilian professor who has taught English at the U.S. Naval Academy for over two

decades, opened his most recent work with:

> Everything conspires against civilians and the military having a clear view of each other
> in the United States of the third millennium. The military likes its secrecy and its sense of
> doing something beyond the civilian ken, and thinks itself more moral than the civilian

world it's meant to serve. Civilians either praise or blame the military based on their political position, and in any case without actually understanding what they're reacting to....Yet the military is linked to the civilian world so fundamentally that all of us pay the price if each does not have a clear view of the other—something that's only achievable if each side also has a clear view of itself (2010, p. 1).

Fleming also presented an intriguing comparison across military and academic cultures:

I should note that the military isn't the only closed-shop monopolistic institution prone to defensive responses, riddled with inefficiencies that aren't often identified as such and even more rarely dealt with. Another is academia....people in academia have the same vision of themselves as pursuing morally purer undertakings than those outside, protecting their own, and providing the same personal structure as the military: if your professor doesn't like you and you need the course to graduate, you just do it, though you may grit your teeth....The military and academia, in many ways, seem to be brothers under the skin (2010, p. 65).

As a long-term professor at the Naval Academy who has written critically in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* about its admissions policies, Fleming (2010) expressed concern about its leadership's view of academics as "nothing but information transmission, factoids that are jettisoned the day after the exam" because "Perhaps the claim is not that intelligence is irrelevant to leadership, only that 'academics' are" (p. 246). After a discussion of remediation and what colleges can and cannot do to make up for what students have not learned in primary and secondary education, he states, "...officers produced by the academies will serve in peace as well as war: the academies are supposed to prepare people for their whole lives....the inflicting violence is one thing; the leadership of people inflicting violence is another. It requires thought, and the ability to reason. And these are the things academics can develop" (p. 249). He concluded by calling for both sides to bridge the civil-military divide:

Civilians have to understand what the tendencies of this institution are, what its possibilities and weaknesses are. And they have to accept that the military is their military; they pay for it, and it exists for them. They don't worship it, and they don't denigrate it. Instead they should understand, respect, and work with it....We have to talk and accept that communication is part of what it means to get along....The military and

the civilian world are on the same team. It's time we started acting as if we knew that—
and appreciated it (p. 267).

However, outside the hermetic world of the service academies, LTC Robert L. Bateman,

U.S. Army, who has taught at West Point, George Mason University, and Georgetown

University, referred to the current campus climate for servicemembers as:

> a place where eighteen-year-old students who have decided to serve their nation
> sometimes feel the mild sting of casual disdain and episodic examples of sophomoric
> persecution.... It is not, therefore, remarkable that at this point, some forty years after
> anti-military protests first started gaining traction on campuses across the country, those
> who are occasionally the subjects of these anti-military sentiments are themselves
> somewhat put out....The generic, vaguely anti-military experience many students have in
> college is often merely a reflection of the general sentiments of large segments of the
> faculty. The result, however, is an environment in which future military officers are told
> in large ways and small that the life choice that they are making is wrong, immoral, or
> just plain dumb (2008, p. 62).

In a similar vein, Downs and Murtazashvili (2012) recounted observing campus ceremonies both

on their own university campus and elsewhere after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks that:

> emphasized such things as counseling students to resist the urge to fight back and to think
> hard about why America was responsible for bringing this action on itself. Various
> versions of pacifism were espoused on many occasions....Along with many of our
> colleagues, we understood and appreciated these remarks, but we also felt that something
> was missing. Our consternation should not be taken the wrong way. We duly respect
> those who question American policy, and we hold pacifists in high regard when their
> beliefs are genuine and when they accept the implications of their actions. Nor are we
> among those who deem America blameless for its actions in the world....But what
> troubled us at the ceremonies at Madison and elsewhere was the lack of recognition that a
> military response might be appropriate under the circumstances....Most importantly to us,
> the lack of a military dimension was not simply a *policy* problem, but a *pedagogical* one
> as well (Kindle Location 182-183).

Downs and Murtazashvili (2012) went on to address the question of "What is the appropriate

role or presence for the military and military-related studies in American higher education?"

(Kindle Location 192). Their argument, after examining not only ROTC studies on campus but

the study of military matters in academic departments, was that there is an "embattled yet

ineluctable reintegration of the military into the consciousness of the nation and the university"
based on multiple factors. They cited the return of student veterans to campus using Post-9/11 GI
Bill funds, attention newly being paid by civilian society to the civil-military gap, civilian
society's reaching out to Vietnam War veterans to welcome them back forty years after their
return from war, the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and the decisions of schools—
particularly the elites of Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and Columbia—to bring ROTC back to
campus (Kindle Location 13024-13032).

This argument chronicled portions of a renegotiation of the civil-military bargain specific
to academe. However, the renegotiation of the civil-military bargain in terms of veterans
education policy is not necessarily as positive as Downs and Murtazashvili would have it given
the coercive financial power exerted by military- and veteran-serving agencies over academia.
The passage in the U.S. House of Representatives and referral to the U.S. Senate of an
amendment to the Post-9/11 GI Bill requiring *all* public colleges and universities to charge in-
state tuition to veterans regardless of the veterans' state of residence or lose eligibility for federal
Chapter 33 veterans education benefits, is one such major coercive power (H.R. 357 bill status,
U.S. Congress, September 9, 2014). As will be discussed later in this study, H.R. 357—and its
later incorporation into law as part of a separate veterans healthcare bill—represents
unprecedented Congressional regulation of state higher education policy on behalf of a specific
student group to ensure their legal residency for tuition purposes at public institutions does *not*
derive from their state of legal residence. This is a major renegotiation of the civil-military
bargain regarding veterans education policy since it shifts education costs for out-of-state
veterans—a federal entitlement for service to the nation—to states and public institutions of
higher education.

Another major renegotiation of the civil-military bargain related to veterans education

policy serves as backdrop to this study, though its outcome will be unknown for some time.

Competing Republican and Democratic bills to reauthorize the Higher Education Act of 1965

were being drafted and negotiated as this study was written. A number of provisions in the

Democratic draft discussion bill proposed by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) imposed new

mandates on institutions of higher education that enroll military and veteran students.

Compliance with these mandates would be tied to institutions' eligibility for Title IV federal

financial aid (e.g., Pell Grants and federal student loans).

One draft provision was that not only active-duty servicemembers, but their spouses and

dependent children, must be charged in-state tuition at public universities while the

servicemember is stationed in a state. This would apply even if the servicemember is reassigned

to a different state while they, their spouse, or dependent are continuously enrolled at the

institution (U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP), HEAA

Discussion Draft Language, June 25, 2014, Sec. 135(a)(2), pp. 52-53). Another draft provision

would require institutions enrolling more than 100 student veterans in an academic year to

certify as part of their Title IV program participation agreement with the U.S. Department of

Education that they have "developed and implemented a plan to ensure the success of veterans at

that institution"; in addition, the bill language mandates that institutional plans include specific

elements (U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP), HEAA

Discussion Draft Language, June 25, 2014, Sec. 491(33), pp. 394-395).

According to the Harkin discussion draft, these elements must consist of 1) faculty or

staff being designated to serve as veteran points of contact "within campus offices, including the

admissions office" and during new student orientation; 2) a working group responsible for

addressing veteran issues; 3) descriptions of disability services available to student veterans; 4) a plan detailing "how the institution will identify students who are veterans through the application process, or through other processes, to provide better assistance in the receipt of educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Secretary of Defense"; 5) "a description of how the institution will evaluate and maximize the number of credits students can receive from military training and service" (U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP), HEAA Discussion Draft Language, June 25, 2014, Sec. 491(33), pp. 394-395).

These proposed changes to the Higher Education Act mark an unprecedented renegotiation of the civil-military bargain in veterans education by not only intruding into state tuition-setting authority, but tying compliance with highly prescriptive legislative mandates to eligibility for *all* Title IV federal financial aid funds rather than just to Chapter 33 veterans education benefits granted to veterans and eligible dependents. Using the Title IV program participation agreement as a compliance vehicle is a coercive legislative mechanism because most institutions cannot afford to decline participation in federal financial aid programs. In addition, the specific instructions to institutions delineate not only administration and faculty roles (faculty being specifically named as potential points of contact is unusual in this type of legislation) but a credit evaluation process to maximize one student group's ability to receive transfer credit from specialized training. This, again, is unprecedented in terms of academic autonomy and stems from long-standing credit transfer disconnects between traditional academe and nontraditional education providers such as the military (Ganzglass, Bird, & Prince, 2011).

Whether this draft language will remain intact throughout the prolonged negotiation process of a Higher Education Act reauthorization, particularly given the role played by national

higher education associations in the reauthorization process, remains to be seen. However, its inclusion sends a message to veterans education policy stakeholders that a new civil-military bargain on veterans education may be dictated by Congress and veterans advocates, not necessarily by institutions.

Other civil-military gap issues post-Huntington and Janowitz. While combat-related issues may not seem immediately connected to veterans education policy, they represent the different worlds veterans—in particular, combat veterans—and civilians inhabit. They also tie into the creation of the original GI Bill and its successor programs.

Moral injury and the civil-military gap. One of the effects of combat increasing the civil-military gap is "moral injury," which Jonathan Shay, a psychiatrist specializing in treating combat veterans, took credit for coining in psychological literature (Shay, 2014, p. 183). His definition was 1) "a betrayal of what's right" 2) "by someone who holds legitimate authority (e.g., in the military—a leader)" 3) "in a high stakes situation" 4) or "all three" conditions (Shay, 2014, p. 183). He also referenced "an equally devastating second form of moral injury that arises when a service member does something in war that violates their own ideals, ethics, or attachments" described by other clinician-researchers; neither form of moral injury is encompassed in a formal PTSD diagnosis (Shay, 2014, p. 184). Shay described the effects as follows:

> Both flavors of moral injury impair and sometimes destroy the capacity for trust. When social trust is destroyed, it is replaced by the settled expectancy of harm, exploitation, and humiliation from others.... First, last, and always, the question of trust is on the table, regardless of what forms of moral injury are in play. "Why should I trust *you*?" is a question asked, both verbally and behaviorally, a thousand times in the course of clinical work with every morally injured veteran (2014, p. 184, 188).

It is important to remember that Shay was speaking in a clinical context and not all veterans suffer from moral injury. However, some do. The effects of damaged social trust on veterans education policy are seen not only in the relationships between civilian and veteran groups in the policy sphere, but in some student veterans' negative experiences with civilian professors and students (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell, 2009; DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008; Cook Francis & Kraus, 2012; Osborne, 2014).

Combat trauma and the civil-military gap. Shay addressed the civil-military gap related to veterans' combat experiences in two influential works, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (1994) and *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (2002), by using Homer's classic poems as a framing device. Shay is a psychiatrist and not a policymaker. However, his work exposed—with the cooperation of Vietnam veterans in a PTSD treatment group, who speak with brutal honesty about their experiences—how combat changes veterans. Since veterans education policymakers must deal with the effects of these changes from the other side of the civil-military life, Shay's work is relevant. In particular, Shay cautioned in *Achilles in Vietnam* that "Anything in the form or substance of an account of combat trauma that offers the reader easy reassurance betrays the truth in the veterans' narratives and in the *Iliad*." He continued, in discussing whether recovery is possible from combat trauma, "Trauma survivors grant trust only as an act of courage, after time and *tests* of trust, one after another, like trials and labors in ancient myth. Blind trust in authority, position, and credentials is a dangerous luxury of the still innocent" (Shay, 1994, pp. 183, 185).

In *Odysseus in America*, Shay (2002) addressed the relationship between veterans and civilians by using the travels of Odysseus as a frame. He explored issues of veterans' return to

civilian society that illuminate the civil-military gap underlying veterans education policy issues such as "Once discharged from the military, what civilian occupations are open to a veteran that employ the skills and capacities he has developed?...[W]hat work does the combat infantry look for?" (Kindle Location 454, 501). These questions date back, at minimum, to the original GI Bill, which must now be discussed in depth in order to understand the Post-9/11 GI Bill and current veterans education policy issues traceable to it.

The GI Bill: Where the US Military Met Civilian Higher Education

  The original GI Bill (Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944). The original GI Bill's passage granted approximately 16,000,000 veterans the opportunity to take advantage of not only federally-funded education and vocational training, but unemployment stipends and low-interest home, farm, and small business loans (Ortiz, 2010). The political impetus to craft such a bill was grounded in concern about potential civil unrest on the part of those 16,000,000 returning servicemembers. This fear stemmed from the 1932 Bonus March, where thousands of conscripted World War I veterans—many of whom had not even received train fare home from the government after being demobilized on American soil—who had been denied full payment of a post-service readjustment bonus marched on Washington, DC. This was to protest what the veterans saw as their disproportionately shouldering the burden of both war and the Great Depression (Frydl, 2009). Eventually, the veterans' encampment on the National Mall was tear-gassed and set on fire by U.S. troops commanded by Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009; Ortiz, 2010). In an attempt to ameliorate these tensions, the GI Bill, formally known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, was created.

The original GI Bill's landmark effect on American society included enabling the education of "fourteen future Nobel Prize winners, three Supreme Court justices, three presidents, a dozen senators, two dozen Pulitzer Prize winners, 238,000 teachers, 91,000 scientists, 67,000 doctors, 450,000 engineers, 240,000 accountants, 17,000 journalists, 22,000 dentists—along with a million lawyers, nurses, businessmen, artists, actors, writers, pilots, and others" (Humes, 2006, Kindle Location 99). This achievement is a touchstone for present-day veterans education policy stakeholders in both academic and military cultures and professions.

In a testament to how passionate veterans can be about the GI Bill, Mettler's survey of over 2,000 World War II veterans about both the GI Bill and their post-war civic and political activity generated what she characterized as "a stunning 74-percent response rate, and more than 10 percent of all respondents had done more than send in the survey, whether by enclosing additional materials or contacting me by phone" (Mettler, 2005, Kindle Location 29-46). During her follow-up in-person interviews with veterans across the country, Mettler realized that understanding their military service was key to understanding their post-war civic activity and commitment to democracy (her primary focus) because "[T]he more I listened to the veterans, the more respect I gained for what that had meant in their lives, the high price of citizenship they had paid, and how deeply they seemed to care about America" (Mettler, 2005, Kindle Location 57).

Higher education associations played a part in negotiations surrounding the original GI Bill and its implementation, mirroring recent history with the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Tensions— replicated today—existed over how much control the federal government, specifically the VA, would have over colleges and universities as a result of the GI Bill. For example, the American Council on Education (ACE) objected to the establishment of VA "Vocational and Guidance"

centers located on college campuses as "another step toward the 'federalization' of education" (Frydl, 2009, p. 96). Frydl referred to the VA's position on these centers as "revealing the paradoxical nature of the agency and its work" because the VA simultaneously insisted it would not control institutions while maintaining that veterans were not the same as civilian students. However, in an agreement with the University of Florida, the contract language specifically required that student service programs and benefits established for student veterans *also* be made available to civilian students in order to prevent a "class consciousness" of veteran or rehabilitation status (pp. 97-98).

This contradiction of services established for veterans specifically on the basis of their veteran identity being expanded to all students so that veterans would not be singled out for a particular class identity plays out today in the issue of how—or whether—institutions should be forced to identify student veterans in order to better track outcome measures and create veteran-serving programs. The U.S. Senate Democratic discussion draft reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (June, 2014) would specifically require institutions to certify, as part of Title IV Department of Education financial aid program participation agreements, that they have created a plan to identify student veterans in order to help them receive Department of Defense *and* VA benefits.

The intent of this language seems laudable in terms of helping student veterans efficiently access overlapping and contradictory benefit programs run by multiple federal agencies. However, it raises multiple policy questions, including its appropriateness in terms of respecting student privacy and the right to self-identification. If a student veteran does not *choose* to identify as a veteran to access veteran-specific programs and services, why should the institution be *forced* to identify them even in the aggregate? The class consciousness issue raised

by the VA in the late 1940s has thus resurfaced in 2015. Today, added complications arise from student data systems that can link different aspects of a student's campus information (e.g., admissions records, financial aid records, VA certification records, bursar records, academic advising records, and student health records) and as a result expose identities a student may wish to keep private.

Identity issues aside, the original GI Bill's role in the extension and expansion of student services illustrated by the University of Florida example was reinforced by Altschuler and Blumin's explanation of the advising, counseling, testing, and other student services that colleges and universities, often funded by the VA, offered to veterans. For instance, they noted that by 1951 colleges and universities had provided VA-funded counseling support to over a million former soldiers, creating the student personnel movement described by Frydl (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009). They added, "For better and worse, thanks in no small measure to the GI Bill, generations of students—and their parents—came to expect assistance with study skills; emotional, social, sexual, and marital problems; and employment" (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009, p. 95).

The issue of states' rights related to veterans education policy, which has appeared most recently in relation to mandated in-state tuition at public institutions for veterans, was also broached as part of deliberations on the original GI Bill. For instance, Rep. Graham Barden (D-NC), complained during an executive session of the House Committee on Education on March 18, 1944 about "provisions for educating veterans without safeguarding states' rights" and opposed any provision that would allow the federal government to create new colleges as a result of the GI Bill on grounds of academic freedom (Beck Young, 2012, p. 212).

Post-World War II iterations of the GI Bill to 2008. While the original GI Bill or the Post-9/11 GI Bill may be what comes to mind most often when hearing "GI Bill," there are actually multiple versions of the GI Bill. One, the Montgomery GI Bill, still exists alongside the current Post-9/11 GI Bill but pays less in benefits and requires servicemembers to contribute to the benefit while on active duty (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefit Administration, Montgomery G.I. Bill, n.d.).

After the Korean War, a new GI Bill for that conflict's veterans was passed, modeled in part on the original GI Bill but differing markedly in terms of education/training benefits. Tuition benefits were no longer paid directly to schools; instead, veterans received a monthly allowance that varied based on how many dependents they had. It was also prorated for part-time enrollment, linked to length of service so only veterans who served two years or longer received the full allowance, and was reduced from 48 months' total benefit to 36 months' total benefit. This change meant that Korean War veterans received a GI Bill benefit that "may have covered most of the tuition and other costs of attending public universities, colleges, and community colleges but that left most private institutions out of reach. In no case did the scholarship amount to a free four-year college education" (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009, p. 208).

The Veterans' Readjustments Benefits Act of 1966, enacted during the Vietnam War, increased the military service requirement from 90 days to 180 days and slightly reduced the allowance for single veterans. While the allowance was increased after 1966, college costs were rising, and as a result the Vietnam-era GI Bill financed less education for veterans than the original GI Bill (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009). A further difference was that education benefits were retroactively awarded to veterans serving in the between-war period from Korea to Vietnam as well as extended to servicemembers still on active duty. This "pointed toward the

establishment of a continuing system of benefits to replace episodic and more politically charged legislative responses to the aftermath of specific wars" (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009, p. 209). In addition, the GI Bill education benefit expansion to active-duty servicemembers became more important as a recruitment and retention tool after the end of conscription in 1973 (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009).

In the mid-1970s, the Veterans Education Assistance Program (VEAP) was created; this required military recruits to contribute to the post-service benefit from their pay, but also had a federal contribution of $2 for every $1 paid by the individual. In 1985, the Montgomery GI Bill (named for its Congressional sponsor, G.V. Montgomery, a veteran of both World War II and Korea) raised the post-service benefit while reducing the required contribution (Altschuler & Blumin, 2009).

The Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Post-9/11 GI Bill is the largest expansion of GI Bill education benefits since the original GI Bill (Steele, Salcedo, & Coley, 2010). It was not only advocated for by veterans themselves, but by a 40-member advocacy coalition of civilian and military organizations, the Partnership for Veterans Education, which included higher education associations (The Partnership for Veterans Education, n.d.). As mentioned in the introductory chapter, it changes the GI Bill payment structure to have VA pay colleges and universities directly for tuition and fee charges incurred by eligible veterans, rather than the Montgomery GI Bill's payment of a monthly stipend to the veteran. The tuition and fee payment is either the total of in-state tuition and fees at public institutions or, at private for- and nonprofit institutions, up to a maximum of $19,198.31 in most states for 2013-14 (with variances for AZ, MI, NH, NY, PA, SC, and TX). The Post-9/11 GI Bill also provides a housing allowance to eligible education recipients that varies by state as well as a book stipend (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs,

Veterans Benefit Administration, Post-9/11 GI Bill Payment Rates for 2013 Academic Year, n.d.).

A new feature of the Post-9/11 GI Bill is that eligible recipients can elect to transfer their benefits to spouses or dependents if they are still on active duty and promise to serve for additional time. In order to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, veterans must either be honorably discharged or discharged with a medical disability after 30 days' service; active-duty servicemembers who have served a minimum of 90 days in the military after September 10, 2001 can also use Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits while still on active duty. Benefits are prorated for veterans with less than 36 months' military service who were not discharged with a medical disability after 30 days' service (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefit Administration, Post-9/11 GI Bill Transfer, n.d.).

In addition, the Post-9/11 GI Bill has a voluntary component called the Yellow Ribbon Program, which institutions can choose to participate in to assist out-of-state veterans at public institutions or veterans at private institutions whose tuition and fee charges are higher than the VA maximum payment. Yellow Ribbon institutions specify how much money they will put toward veterans' tuition and fees for a specified number of veterans; the VA matches that amount equally. Only veterans eligible for full Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits or their designated benefit transferees can receive Yellow Ribbon funds (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefit Administration, Yellow Ribbon Program, n.d.). This is yet another new component of the GI Bill. However, the effect of in-state tuition legislation mentioned previously may change the program in ways yet to be determined.

<div align="center">***</div>

As can be seen by the preceding literature, the military side of civil-military relations is sprawling and complex in terms of veterans education. The civil side is just as complex. The higher education associations who exert power and influence in education policymaking are crucial given the new civil-military bargain required by the Post-9/11 GI Bill's structure, but have been understudied in higher education policy research. Hence studying their role in veterans education policy is vital to understanding the civil-military gap and how it can be bridged on the veterans education front within higher education.

Higher Education Associations and Their Role in National Higher Education Policy

   Higher education associations in general. There are hundreds of higher education associations in the Washington, DC policy research and advocacy community, whose memberships are classified as either institutional or individual. Institutional memberships tend to be classified by sector or general type (e.g., two-year institutions or religiously affiliated institutions). Individual membership associations represent people at different institutions who fill the same higher education roles (e.g., chief business officers, professors, or members of institutional governing boards) or who are interested in a common issue (e.g., graduate or international education) (Ewing Cook, 1998). This further illustrates Ewing Cook's (1998) point that "The task of advocacy for the American higher education community is further complicated by its diversity" (p. 9). Also, the DC higher education association sector expanded notably in the mid- to late 1960s because of the amount of federal education legislation passed during those years (King, 1975).

   "The Six" and national higher education policy. Political alliances continually shift among higher education policy stakeholders. They are grounded in "a series of dynamic tensions

and conflicts that have marked the debate over the federal role in higher education…[and] established contested principles that continue to shape and guide the federal interest in higher education" (Parsons, 1997, p. xiii). However, the most powerful higher education associations within the higher education policy community form the collective of "The Six" (or "The Big Six"). This is the informal nickname for six Washington, D.C.-based higher education associations that individually and collectively represent all nonprofit sectors of higher education (Adler, 2007; Ewing Cook, 1998). As Parsons (1997) pointed out, while The Six are not household names like the NRA or AARP and are not powerful policy actors when assessed by conventional standards, they still convinced Congress to adopt their policy agenda by significantly expanding both the scope and size of student financial aid programs from the 1960s to the 1990s.

An important caveat in both veterans education policy and overall higher education policy is that The Six do *not* include the national higher education association representing for-profit institutions. This Washington, DC-based association generally acts independently. It was previously known as the Career College Association but changed its name in 2010 to the Association of Private-Sector Colleges and Universities (APSCU) in what some saw as a move to gain legitimacy by appearing more like The Six (Burd, 2010).

The Six are, in alphabetical order, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC); American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU); American Council on Education (ACE); Association of American Universities (AAU); Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU); National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU). Higher education institutions may belong to multiple members of The Six; ACE plays the role of coordinating/umbrella organization (Harcleroad & Eaton, 2005). However, each

individual member of The Six has its own policy agenda, which means each association "tends to stress what is most important to its institutional members and, at times, to take positions not covered by the consensus agreements that rule One Dupont Circle" (Parsons, 1997, p. 85). Thus The Six are an example of the interdependent relationship among civilian elites defined by Nielsen and Snider as part of civil-military relations (Nielsen & Snider, 2009).

The Six are presidential associations, meaning their members are college and university presidents who join on behalf of their institutions. As such, The Six are the core of national higher education advocacy efforts (Murray, 1976). The Six's individual members, and The Six themselves, "have always devoted considerable resources to federal relations because the government's impact on them is so substantial" (Ewing Cook, 1998, p. xi). In the specific context of veterans education policy, The Six represent nonprofit higher education on Capitol Hill and provide an informed perspective to Congress on the impact of legislation such as Post-9/11 GI Bill amendments.

Staff members from The Six also liaise with other smaller or more niche-oriented associations interested in veterans education policy (e.g., those representing financial aid officers, bursars, and VA certifying officials), consult with federal agencies on veterans education issues, produce veterans education policy research, and help produce Congressional testimony on veterans education issues. See Figure 1 for an illustration of how national associations fit into the complicated web of DC veterans education policy relationships. The national associations maintain relationships with the White House, Congress, and multiple federal agencies responsible for aspects of veterans education benefit programs while simultaneously representing their members' point of view on how veterans education policy

decisions affect larger higher education policy issues to the associations that solely advocate for
veterans' interests.

Figure 1: Veterans Education Policy Relationship Diagram
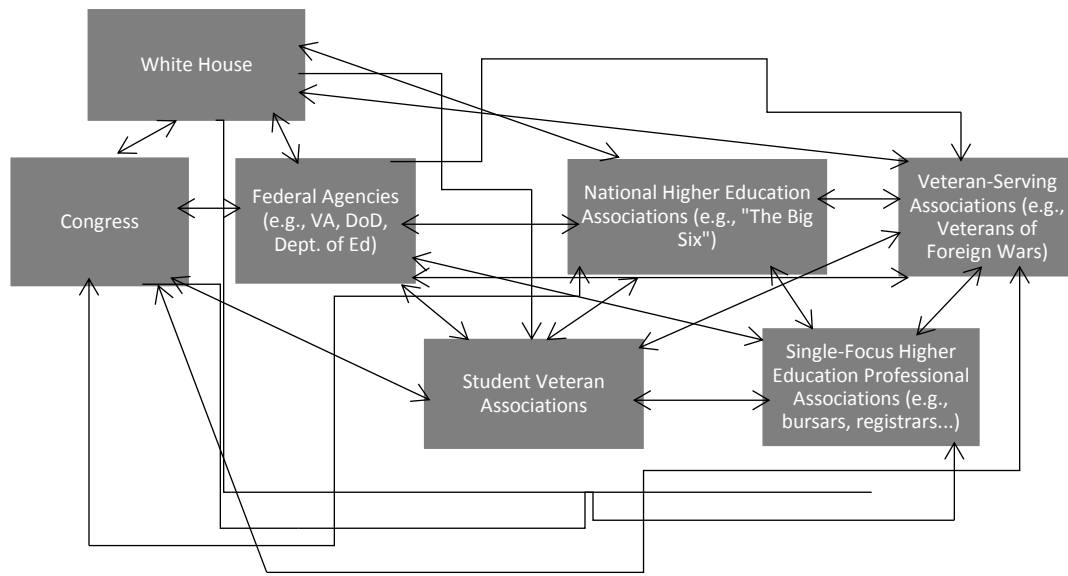
This combination of advocacy and research means that higher education associations are
a powerful civilian elite (cf. Nielsen & Snider) exerting major influence on veteran and military
education policy. For instance, The Six wrote a joint letter to the U.S. Department of Defense
(DoD) strongly recommending revisions to a newly mandated federal complaint intake form for
servicemembers and their families that, in initial draft, permitted these students to complain to
DoD about grades received in college courses and potentially have colleges and universities
penalized by DoD as a result (American Council on Education, 2013). Thus, it was important to
examine whether, and if so how, civil-military relations specifically disrupted the capacity of
national associations to effectively implement veterans education policy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is a massive federal program with billions of dollars flowing through it yearly to student veterans, their spouses and dependents, and institutions of higher education. This financial commitment aims to help a stereotyped, marginalized, and understudied student veteran subpopulation earn college degrees or certificates and ease its re-entry—to whatever degree possible—to civilian society. This, combined with the multiple levels of coercive power dynamics operating on both the civilian higher education association and military/veteran-serving government agency sides (exemplified by Feaver's civil-military *problematique*), led me to adopt a transformative scholarship approach to this study's design and analysis.

While the use of transformative scholarship as a paradigm to study veterans education policy may be considered inappropriate by those who think *all* veterans are male, White, abled, less intelligent than civilians, and politically right-wing—a stereotype I have heard expressed by civilians my entire life—its tenets are directly applicable. This is because Mertens (2014, 2009) defined the transformative paradigm as having four characteristics: 1) placing central importance on lives and experiences of diverse groups that have traditionally been marginalized; 2) analyzing how and why gender-based, race/ethnicity-based, disability-based, sexual orientation-based, and socioeconomic class-based inequities are reflected in asymmetric power relationships; 3) examining the linkages between research on social inequity and political/social action; 4) using a transformative theory to develop theory and a research approach (Mertens, 2014). This paradigm also assumes the existence of multiple realities, or perspectives, that have varying levels of legitimacy. In addition, Mertens discussed cultural competency for

transformational scholarship (specifically laid out by the American Educational Research Association) and its requiring researchers to "acknowledge the complexity of cultural identity, recognize the dynamics of power, recognize and eliminate bias in language, and employ culturally appropriate methods" (Mertens, 2014, p. 23). Military culture, as explored in this study's literature review, is a specific complex identity. Thus cultural competency in both military *and* civilian culture is necessary for a researcher focusing on the civil-military gap.

How do Mertens' four characteristics of transformative scholarship relate to veterans education policy research? As shown in the introduction and review of literature, student veterans are a diverse group whose myriad issues have been historically been marginalized by mainstream civilian higher education researchers from World War II onward with the notable exception of research on the original GI Bill. Veterans education policy and how it meshes—or clashes—with overall higher education policy is even more marginalized. Higher education associations and their power dynamics are understudied as well. Thus, even though I did not focus on the marginality of individual students but rather the policies and organizations that affect them, my approach applies transformative scholarship principles in several key ways.

The asymmetric power relationships in veterans education policy and practice have not been explored sufficiently due to said marginalization. Therefore, this study could not cover all of these relationships. However, areas examined in this study suggested by the review of literature included the coercive financial power of military- and veteran-serving agencies over higher education due to their control of institutions' eligibility to receive Post-9/11 GI Bill funds; asymmetric power relationships between different higher education associations based on their relative prestige and power in Washington, DC; multiple, overlapping, asymmetric power

relationships between military/veteran advocates, higher education associations, federal agencies, Congress, and the White House.

The linkage of research to social justice action is still nascent in veterans education research. Frankly, the subfield is still struggling to adequately define different subgroups and demographic characteristics in order to pinpoint how and where to involve veterans in the research (in addition to encouraging more veterans to *become* researchers) and where action can best be taken. This is due to the dearth of accurate national quantitative datasets and/or a large body of qualitative research to date. However, one goal of this study was to explore the civil-military gap related to veterans education policy as a foundation for future action. One potential form of action might be to, as Hurtado put it, "provide 'translation' documents that make the work accessible to practitioners or communities who do not have time to read the literature or who lack the expertise to understand the implications of research for their work or own lives" (2015, p. 303). This would help bridge the civil-military gap.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1) Does a civil-military gap exist for higher education associations working on veterans education policy issues?

2) If so, how does the civil-military gap disrupt a higher education association's capacity to implement veterans education policy?

3) What are the implications of the civil-military relationship and gaps within it for higher education associations' work in support of student veterans?

Research Method

As noted in the introduction, the study employed an exploratory cross-case design with three separate national higher education associations' veterans education divisions as units of analysis; subsidiary document analysis was embedded within the units of analysis as appropriate. Case study methodology was used because, in addition to the rationales presented in the introduction regarding its investigation of real-life phenomena in a situation where the study cannot manipulate subjects' behavior, it was "most likely to be appropriate for 'how' and 'why' questions" (Yin, 2009, Kindle Location 793). Case study methodology is also flexible enough to account for unanticipated discoveries during data collection (Yin, 2009).

Using a cross-case design provided the potential for more convincing evidence and richer description than a single-case design. It also allowed cases to be selected according to Yin's replication logic, which he characterizes as being analogous to running multiple experiments in an experimental study (Yin, 2009). The cases were selected because—while exploratory given the understudied nature of both veterans education policy and higher education associations' interactions—they were anticipated to predict "similar results (a *literal replication*)" (Yin, 2009, Kindle Location 1314). Following Yin's logic, since the three associations selected yielded similar results in the interview phase of the study, they supported the research question (Yin, 2009). While Yin's logic was used to select cases that did not wildly vary from each other, it became clear in the interview phase that the three higher education associations had different forms of power that make them more or less effective and used different, varyingly successful strategies to improve higher education for veterans.

Site Selection

  Interview site selection: Association A. Association A is a many-decades-old national membership association of several hundred members (precise number redacted for confidentiality) located in Washington, DC. It was selected for both the interview portion and document analysis portion of the study due to not only its multiple relationships with other stakeholders in the veterans education policy community, but its track record of veterans education involvement and ability to influence the larger political sphere. These led to its preparation of formal testimony before Congress that could be analyzed as secondary data.

  In addition to being part of a 40-member coalition of civilian and military organizations organized in 2009 to advocate for the original Post-9/11 GI Bill, the Partnership for Veterans Education (Association A, 2009), Association A is also part of the Washington Higher Education Secretariat (WHES). The Secretariat, created in 1962, is "composed of chief executives from approximately fifty associations, each of which serves a significant sector or function in postsecondary education" (WHES, 2014). Membership in WHES requires the association to have a "significant presence in the Washington, DC area" and that "the association monitors and/or influences national policy matters for its members" (WHES, 2014a). Association A employs multiple registered lobbyists in DC as well as research and other staff, thus fitting these requirements for Secretariat membership.

  While veterans education policy is not its sole mission, Association A considers it a significant part of its portfolio. It has participated in federal veterans education policymaking for decades, published multiple white papers on veterans education issues, presented testimony on multiple veterans education bills (not just H.R. 357), and works with the federal government on military and veteran education projects redacted in the interests of confidentiality. Its stated main

policy goal in terms of veterans education is to advocate for "simpler and more transparent" veterans education policies for both student veterans and higher education institutions alike (Association A, 2014). In addition to its advocacy, Association A employs a senior staffer with responsibility for veterans education initiatives (Association A, 2014).

Interview site selection: Association B. Association B is also a many-decades old national membership association (precise number again redacted for confidentiality) located in Washington, DC. It is a member of the Washington Higher Education Secretariat (WHES) and works extensively on veterans education issues both with Association A and separately. In addition, it was part of the Partnership for Veterans Education organized in 2009 to pass the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Association B's military and veterans education policy activities generally fall under the auspices of a larger higher education policy division. It has worked with the federal government for decades on military and veteran education projects (specifics redacted for confidentiality) and maintains two separate military- and veterans education departments that work with institutions on programmatic issues (Association B, 2014). Association B was selected due to its level of influence in Washington, DC higher education policy circles and its long history with military and veterans education, as well as its periodic collaborations with Association A on military and veterans education research and advocacy.

Interview site selection: Association C. Association C is an individual membership association in Washington, DC whose veterans education-related activities focus on financial and administrative aspects of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Association C has collaborated with both Association A and B as a technical expert on financial and administrative issues related to the Post-9/11 GI Bill and has prepared public commentary on Post-9/11 GI Bill implementation

utilizing said expertise. It was selected to provide a technical perspective on a crucial aspect of veterans education policy—getting Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits paid to students and institutions—and because it works closely with Congress and other power players in the larger higher education policy community.

Site Access

My positionality and previous work in veterans education policy meant I had multiple pre-existing contacts at all three sites selected. Those I selected for interviews were all open to being interviewed and generously facilitated my access to the sites.

Researcher Positionality

My insider-outsider positionality vis-à-vis both veterans education and the higher education association community has multiple, complicated levels I am explaining in depth both to increase my credibility (Merriam, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) and because they have deeply informed my prior work and my approach to this study. While I am not a veteran, I come from a military family (aka a "military brat"). My personal history as a military brat is particularly resonant to servicemembers, veterans, and their families. Combined with my work history it granted me access that another civilian higher education researcher generally would not be permitted. However, while I am a military brat, I am still a civilian. That means there are still lines I cannot and will not cross in military/veterans education research in terms of presuming undue familiarity with or appropriation of servicemembers' and veterans' experiences. That civilian identity also allowed me to focus on maintaining sufficient rigor as a researcher while demonstrating enough credibility and cultural insider status to gain access to the veterans education community.

Those boundaries were not as clear-cut in the DC higher education association world. My having been a senior research and policy analyst there gave me cultural insider status despite years of doctoral study distancing me from the Washington Beltway, referred to by insiders as "the Beltway" or "inside the Beltway" to denote proximity to national seats of power. In my last two years as a senior research and policy analyst before entering UCLA, I also held a dual appointment as a special projects associate for Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC). SOC is a U.S. Department of Defense-funded program connecting active-duty servicemembers and their families to colleges and universities across the country that have agreed to standardized course articulation agreements and other military-specific accommodations in order to accommodate the involuntarily transient military lifestyle and help these students earn degrees. I worked on special research and writing projects for the SOC Director. During my years in the Beltway, I presented multiple times on veterans education policy, both as a solo analyst and as part of association-based research teams, at national higher education and veterans education conferences.

This positionality and established credibility allowed me to bring considerable technical expertise to bear on disentangling policy narratives and counternarratives. However, it also meant I had to be highly conscious of both my potential biases and clearly explicating these narratives for the reader. One potential bias I examined throughout interview data collection was my previous history with veterans education policy. Before entering UCLA, I attended many meetings of veterans education stakeholders, some more contentious than others, in my capacity as a senior research and policy analyst. In that capacity, I also wrote nationally circulated policy briefs and white papers that partly addressed both the civil-military gap and the frustration many higher education stakeholders felt regarding VA's failure to work cooperatively with higher

education, exacerbating Post-9/11 GI Bill implementation issues and therefore harming student veterans.

This experience led to a better rapport with association interviewees because I was a "known quantity" in the small world of higher education associations and the even smaller world of veterans education policy specialists. However, it also presented the danger of shaping a policy narrative reflective of said past frustration versus the reality of current interview data. It also presented the danger of my shorthanding policy narratives out of habit due to my expertise in the field. I dealt with this by asking my interviewees to explain things to me as though they were talking to a researcher who knew nothing about either higher education associations or veterans education, by conscious reflection throughout the interview process, by writing detailed field notes and analytic memos, and incorporating feedback from my committee, who reminded me to step back and explain policy narratives to the reader instead of shorthanding them.

Another set of potential biases involved my cultural identities, which are both civilian *and* military. My late parents, both Naval officers, met in the Navy. My late father was, in military slang, a "mustang": an officer who enlisted to escape urban poverty and worked his way up through a 30-year military career spanning World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. His opportunity to advance to "officer country" came when he was selected for the Navy College V-12 Program. This program addressed the World War II shortage of college-educated officers by offering promising enlisted men the opportunity for a Navy-bankrolled undergraduate degree with additional post-baccalaureate officer schooling handled at Navy training facilities; hundreds of colleges and universities cooperated with the Navy to offer liberal arts degrees (Herge, 1996). My father's terminal rank at retirement was lieutenant commander. My late mother was, before being automatically discharged from the Navy due to childbirth (customary at the time), a Naval

Intelligence officer who served at the Naval War College. She entered the Navy to escape the limited civilian career paths available for even college-educated, lower-middle-class women of her generation. However, I did not go into the military myself for family reasons. Thus I was raised as a military insider/outsider.

This meant that, as a military brat who has worked in Washington, DC higher education association circles, my positionality unavoidably shifted between insider and outsider in this study. While I do not lay unwarranted claim to my parents' rank (a *serious* faux pas in military circles), I involuntarily acquired certain speech patterns, mannerisms, and physical postures from them that identify me as military-connected to a military cultural insider. The longer I talk to either active-duty servicemembers or veterans in any given conversation, the more my nonverbal cues, tonalities, and speech patterns revert to my upbringing inside military culture. Yet I am still, as a civilian woman doctoral student—particularly given the fraught history of academia and the military—an outsider.

Further, when military/veteran insiders hear that a) my father was a mustang b) *both* my parents were World War II-era officers c) my father spent 30 years in the Navy, it adds a deeper layer of positionality. Mustangs are highly unusual given the hierarchical nature of military service. Rising from enlisted to officer—as opposed to being commissioned as an officer after either attending a military service academy or going through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) in college—takes considerable work combined with luck. The nickname "mustang" was coined partly to acknowledge the rarity and partly to acknowledge these officers' independent, stubborn, survival-oriented, sometimes maverick tendencies. My late mother having been a Naval Intelligence officer is highly unusual for military families of my generation.

And my late father's 30-year military career, spanning three major military actions, is much less common today.

This unusual positionality makes me a more trustworthy researcher to often-suspicious student veterans and administrators in military institutions. It also gives me a certain unasked-for mystique given that mustangs are afforded considerable respect within military culture and that women officers like my mother were much rarer in previous military generations. Adding this to how officers' children are perceived within military culture means that once I divulge my background and my research interests, I am immediately permitted a level of baseline access many civilian researchers are not immediately—or ever—granted. In exchange, I must answer deeply personal questions about my family and why I did not enter military service that a civilian researcher would never be asked. Both the trust I am extended and the questions I am asked in return are because, as my former supervisor at Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges put it when discussing my doctoral work, "You stand *between* the two worlds. So you have a *responsibility*."

Research Design

Pilot study: Document analysis of secondary data from Association A. The subsidiary document analysis portion of this case study was piloted to serve as a backdrop and guide for the qualitative interviews. It focused on Association A's formal testimony response—requested by Congress—to the previously mentioned proposed amendment to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, H.R. 357, requiring all public colleges and universities to charge in-state tuition to eligible veterans or lose eligibility for federal Chapter 33 veterans education benefits. H.R. 357 imposes no corresponding tuition restrictions on private for- or nonprofit institutions within states; thus the

financial cost falls solely on public institutions. As mentioned in the introduction, while H.R. 357 was superseded by an in-state tuition requirement for veterans during the study's final phases, it was easier to analyze because it was an education-specific bill rather than an omnibus bill dealing with multiple issues pertaining to veterans. This meant that higher education representatives were specifically asked to testify about the bill's potential impact.

This particular formal response by Association A was selected because H.R. 357 represented unprecedented Congressional regulation of state higher education policy on behalf of a specific student group to ensure their legal residency for tuition purposes at public institutions does *not* derive from their state of legal residence. The only comparable policy to date is that of allowing—but not *requiring*—states to provide access to in-state tuition for undocumented students (Olivas, 2008). On the veterans education front, in-state tuition regulation has been driven by pressure from military/veteran advocates who see the Post-9/11 GI Bill's requiring a student veteran to pay the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition as undermining the original GI Bill entitlement for service rendered the nation.

However, prior to the bill's introduction, military/veteran advocates' lobbying efforts had already resulted in states voluntarily passing legislation to waive veterans' residency requirements for in-state tuition. By 2014, 26 states had enacted legislation granting student veterans eligibility for in-state tuition, with 9 states having an institution or state system allowing the same and similar legislation pending in 7 more states (Student Veterans of America, 2014). Thus the pressure to enact a national bill was being mounted against a backdrop of growing individual state cooperation. Further, H.R. 357 (and its successor bill now law)'s further tying of institutional eligibility for Chapter 33 federal veterans education benefits to state institutions'

charging in-state tuition to veterans, and *eliminating* benefit eligibility for institutions that do not comply, is new territory for veterans education policy.

This bill was so unprecedented both because the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reserves power over education to the states and because in-state tuition policy regulations vary by state. Some states reserve primary legal tuition-setting authority for public institutions to the state legislature; others reserve it to a state-level coordinating board for multiple state systems. Some grant state-level coordinating boards for a single system the primary authority to set tuition. Still others allow individual campuses or systems to set their own tuition. Multiple entities have consultative roles, including governors and state legislatures, and the two- and four-year public higher education sectors in a state may have different processes (Carlson, 2013, pp. 9-10). The prospect of a one-size-fits-all federal intervention in state tuition policies at the behest of military/veteran advocates is thus rife with pitfalls potentially contributing to the civil-military gap. Therefore, analyzing H.R. 357 added to the richness of the cross-case study and the investigation of the study's research question.

The theoretical framework's emphasis on policy narrative and counternarrative meant that both Association D (an association not selected for interviews) and an individual institution's response to H.R. 357 were embedded as subsidiary units of analysis to be compared to the primary associational unit of analysis and its narratives.

Pilot study limitations. One major limitation was that H.R. 357 was a single veterans education bill and Association A's response was a singular document. However, the document analysis limitation was imposed for two reasons. One was H.R. 357's unprecedented nature discussed regarding the latest policy iteration. Second, some boundaries had to be set given the thousands of pages of public documents available on the Post-9/11 GI Bill from Association A

and other veterans education stakeholders. These include testimony and position statements, white papers, third-party reports (e.g., those of the U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO]), press releases, and press interviews.

Proceeding from the above limitation, other higher education associations' and individual institutions' documents and testimonies regarding H.R. 357 were examined to determine whether Association A's policy narratives were in line with other higher education associations or were in themselves counternarratives, defined as narratives opposing the overall policy narratives. The study's theoretical framework was employed to analyze these documents and determine policy narratives and counternarratives related to the civil-military gap.

Pilot document analysis data collection and coding. Specific data collection techniques used were review and assemblage of public documents written by Association A's staff. The primary focus was on documents related to H.R. 357. These documents were retrieved from the official U.S. House of Representatives hearing site for H.R. 357 (both Association A's prepared testimony and the official hearing transcript). In addition, background documents to explain and contextualize Association A's overarching policy positions on veterans education matters were retrieved from Association A's website. Subsidiary documents of two other higher education stakeholders related to H.R. 357 were also retrieved from both the official hearing website and one other association website.

Data were hand-coded on the documents and summarized descriptively given the multiplicity and different formats of document sources making the use of coding software more difficult. Pseudonyms were used throughout. The precise coding technique combined descriptive coding to obtain "a categorized inventory, tabular account, summary, or index of the data's contents" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 89) and in vivo coding, defined as "a word or short phrase from the

actual language found in the qualitative data record" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). This combination

allowed usage of the study's theoretical framework to determine policy narratives and

counternarratives emerging from both descriptive and in vivo coding. The same combination of

descriptive and in vivo coding was used for interviews.

  Data collection: Interviews. Recruitment of interview subjects was done via my pre-

existing contacts within the higher education association community. The primary recruitment

pool was drawn from mid- to upper-level managers of the target associations who were involved

in veterans education policy work. Initial recruitment was planned to yield 15 interviewees total

with interviews running approximately one hour; due to the unexpected unavailability of some

contacts, only 10 interviews with current and former association staff were conducted. However,

the interview data were sufficiently rich to yield good exploratory results; four staff were

interviewed at Association A, three (two current and one former) at Association B, and three at

Association C. All interviews lasted approximately an hour each. The primary sampling

technique was snowball sampling of the staff of the associations under study. Snowball sampling

ensures key participants can be identified and asked for referrals to other participants (Merriam,

2009). While not all the snowballed sample of interviewees were available, the interviewees in

the study often referred each other to me unbeknownst to each other; this served as a check on

the efficacy of my snowball sampling.

  Interviews were done in person in a private office in all but one case; that interview was

conducted over Skype due to an interviewee's unexpected illness during my data collection visit.

Two Association C interviewees also asked to be interviewed together due to an unexpected

schedule conflict during my data collection visit. Interviewees were offered the opportunity to

read interview transcriptions I prepared as a member check. Those who responded confirmed

that the transcriptions were accurate. They were additionally offered the opportunity to read

portions of the completed dissertation pertaining to them to ensure proper confidentiality. The

interviews were semi-structured since that allowed them to be "guided by [a] list of questions or

issues to be explored" (Merriam, 2009, p. 89) as well as allowed flexibility in using both more

and less structured questions. (See Appendix A for draft interview questions.) Pseudonyms were

given to all interviewees.

Data Analysis

Data coding. Interview transcripts were coded and analyzed by transcribing interviews

(from both tape and handwritten notes taken during the interview). Analytic memos written after

interviews were coded as supplemental material. The single Skype interview was recorded and

handwritten verbatim notes were taken simultaneously. NVivo was used to organize the data and

make coding and retrieval of similar data easier.

The precise coding technique began with open coding of transcripts to explore what

would prove useful and took into account all possibilities in the data (Merriam, 2009). This

allowed me to build on and revise the preliminary codebook established for the pilot study.

While open coding, I used the constant comparison method in order to compare data segments

(i.e., interview transcripts) with each other and determine their similarities and differences

(Merriam, 2009). Eventually I combined descriptive coding to obtain "a categorized inventory,

tabular account, summary, or index of the data's contents" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 89) and in vivo

coding, defined as "a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data

record" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). This combination of descriptive and in vivo coding was

successful in the pilot study to determine emerging policy narratives and counternarratives.

The pilot study's transcripts were also recoded and re-analyzed in conjunction with interview coding to see whether the policy narratives and counternarratives determined using document analysis to confirm and evaluate participants' recollections and perspectives from interview transcripts. This method of triangulation helped reaffirm initial codes and introduced new ones.

Data analysis. Following Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), not only after interviews, but as I transcribed and coded interviews, I wrote analytic memos to document my reflections and initial syntheses of the data being transcribed and coded. These memos, in addition to serving as a log of what decisions were made when about data coding/synthesis, helped me pinpoint how my positionality shifted during the study. Once this process was completed, I moved toward consolidating codes and eventually created assertions and propositions that, when connected, reflected my findings and conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Once I finished exhaustively analyzing each association case I then conducted a cross-case analysis using Yin's replication strategy (2009) to determine whether the patterns in one case's data matched those of the others. Yin's strategy first develops the theoretical framework to "state the conditions under which a particular phenomenon is likely to be found (a literal replication) as well as the conditions when it is not likely to be found (a theoretical replication)" (Yin, 2009, Kindle Location 1321). Then each case is "considered as one would consider multiple experiments" (Yin, 2009, Kindle Location 1299)—that is, tested against the theoretical framework to see whether each case's findings are replicated by the other cases. Yin uses both cases that predict similar results (literal replication) or contrasting results for predictable reasons (theoretical replication) (Yin, 2009, Kindle Location 1313). In this study, Associations A and B

were cases that predicted similar, though *not* identical, results given the associations'

organizational similarity. Association C was a case that predicted contrasting results based on its

organizational difference from the other two associations and its single-issue focus as compared

to Associations A and B's broader structure. Thus the policy narratives and counternarratives

from each case were compared to each other to see if they were either similar (literal replication)

or contrasting for predictable reasons (theoretical replication). This allowed me to check for

outlier comments in interviews potentially signaling divergent realities (Mertens, 2014).

Credibility

While descriptive terminology differs among researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985;

Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009; Mertens, 2014; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), the overall

concept of credibility focuses on whether the study has been rigorously designed and conducted

(Yin, 2009) and whether the results "ring true to readers, practitioners, and other researchers"

(Merriam, 2009, p. 210). The following subconcepts within credibility were addressed

throughout the study.

Internal validity/credibility/authenticity. Since this was a case study, the primary

internal validity/credibility question was whether I drew appropriate inferences and conclusions

from the collected data (Yin, 2009) and whether the findings are congruent with reality and

credible to both participants and external readers (Merriam, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña,

2014). Part of my strategy to increase internal validity/credibility was to use the document

analysis pilot study to triangulate—or crystallize, as Richardson (2000) prefers for its

multidimensionality—the interview transcripts. Further document analysis crystallization was

done via further review of other third-party documents *not* prepared by any of the associations

studied (e.g., GAO reports). This gave me multiple evidence sources against which to check my qualitative interview data (Yin, 2009). Another form of crystallization I used was that of member checks with interviewees. They were asked to review their interview transcripts for accuracy and offered the opportunity to provide feedback on preliminary findings (Merriam, 2009).

External validity/reliability/transferability. This question addresses whether the study findings are applicable or generalizable to other situations (Merriam, 2009). One limitation from the outset was that this "small, nonrandom, purposeful sample [has been] selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many" (Merriam, 2009, p. 224). As a counter to this limitation, I purposefully sought to include enough "thick description" (Merriam, 2009, p. 227) that sufficiently described and detailed both the study setting and its participants as well as presented enough evidence—both interview and secondary documentation—to allow readers to determine whether the study can be transferred to another setting (Merriam, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Another part of external reliability is being "as explicit and as self-aware as possible about personal assumptions, values and biases, and affective states—and how they may have come into play during the study" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, Kindle Location 7445). As explained previously, I am acutely aware of my own positionality and how it potentially affected the study. While I stand in the middle of the civil-military gap, I recognized throughout the study that I had potential biases coming from both civilian *and* military culture. All I could do was to be as explicit and conscious as possible and use strategies outlined above (e.g., member checks, reflections during data collection, and so forth) to check myself.

Dependability/reliability. The credibility issue present in dependability/reliability for a qualitative study is whether it has been designed and conducted with "reasonable care" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, Kindle Location 7455) so that its results make sense. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest establishing an audit trail that the reader can follow to satisfy this criterion, describing the data collection and analysis in depth as well as what decisions were made during the study. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) also suggest paying particular attention to clear research questions combined with a congruent study design, explicitly describing the researcher's role and status, specifying analytic constructs and paradigms, collecting a full range of data (i.e., using the research question[s] to collect data from various appropriate settings and respondents at appropriate times), and having peer/colleague review procedures in place. I followed their suggestions as described previously as well as set up an audit trail by using my analytic memos to document how I conducted the study and analyzed the data.

Action plan. Part of transformational scholarship involves action (Mertens, 2014); in addition, "policy studies in particular are supposed to lead to more positive and constructive actions" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, Kindle Location 7532). The exploratory nature of this study and the use of narrative policy analysis as a theoretical framework meant a fully fledged action plan could not be immediately developed. However, given the understudied entities involved and thus the scanty information circulating on the topic, a preliminary action plan discussed in detail in the results included the possibility of working with interviewees (if they feel comfortable doing so) to further research and disseminate selected results via their own publication channels as well as writing and submitting articles for journal publication to disseminate the results to a wider higher education audience. This aligns with Hurtado's adaptation of the International Association for Public Participation spectrum of research-related

public engagement to a continuum of involvement between researchers and the communities they research, focusing on more effective empowerment of said communities (2015).

Limitations

Pilot study: Document analysis. As previously mentioned, the limitations of the pilot study's document analysis are that 1) it only takes into account secondary data sources that have been made public 2) the documents have been subjected to an editorial process that I know from my own positionality is quite extensive and often collaborative across associations. However, the interview data enriched the document analysis pilot since several Association A interviewees were engaged in preparing the testimony being analyzed; as discussed in the results, interviewees independently brought up issues regarding in-state tuition without knowing I had previously analyzed the documents regarding Association A's testimony on the subject.

Full study: Interviews. A definite potential limitation was the political environment in which associations operate, which could have affected interviewees' ability to speak on record. This is an inevitable constraint when studying organizations that work in the Washington, DC higher education policy realm. However, the interviewees were surprisingly candid in their commentary. Also, given that I only selected three higher education associations out of the hundreds in Washington DC, there was inevitably some limitation of perspective. This was due to the inability to interview every single national association involved in some way with veterans education policy. However, I selected the sites and interviewees to provide as many diverse perspectives as possible.

An important counterbalance to this limitation is that while the associations chosen work together on veterans education policy issues, they do not march in lockstep. Their responsibility

to their individual members and mission statements means that their associational priorities, perspectives, and projects differ in the veterans education portion of their higher education policy portfolios as on other policy issues. This, I know from experience, can lead to tensions and push-pull power dynamics even when there is overall agreement on a course of action. Thus, I did not expect the interviews to yield identical policy narratives and counternarratives for each association.

CHAPTER 4

"THE LEAST THAT THE 99 PERCENT CAN DO FOR VETERANS":

RESULTS FROM THE PILOT STUDY

In preparation for conducting qualitative interviews with higher education association professionals involved with veterans education policy, a pilot document analysis was conducted of a proposed amendment to the Post-9/11 GI Bill requiring all public colleges and universities to charge in-state tuition to veterans regardless of their state of residency or lose eligibility for federal Chapter 33 veterans education benefits. The amendment was known as H.R. 357 and had been referred to the U.S. Senate by the U.S. House of Representatives when the pilot study was conducted (H.R. 357 bill status, U.S. Congress, March 15, 2014). This legislation represents an unprecedented watershed in veterans education policy and led to contention between higher education associations and military/veteran advocates both in Congress and elsewhere inside the Beltway; thus higher education associations' response to it was important to analyze for context prior to interviews. Given this unprecedented policy, it is unsurprising that interviewees brought up the subject of in-state tuition for veterans (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) without any prompting on my part, and without realizing I studied the issue using documents.

After the pilot study was conducted, H.R. 357 was superseded by similar language inserted into the broader Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, Sec. 702, January 3, 2014). While this law primarily focuses on health care for veterans, it also stipulates that as of July 1, 2015 (though the VA recently pushed back its effective date to January 1, 2016 [Stratford, May 19, 2015]), not only eligible veterans, but also their spouses and dependents, be charged in-state tuition rates at public institutions for three years after the veteran's date of discharge from the Armed Forces no

matter his or her state of residence. Otherwise, the public institution will lose eligibility for federal Chapter 33 veterans education benefits (Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act, 2014, Sec. 702, January 3, 2014).

Given the unprecedented nature of this legislation, H.R. 357, as the precursor to the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, fits Yin's rationale for choosing a single case study to examine a rare event (Yin, 2009, Kindle Location 1186). The theoretical framework for this study meant that understanding both higher education associations' and an individual institution's response to H.R. 357 is critical because they are embedded as subsidiary units of analysis to be compared to the primary associational unit of analysis and its narratives. That is, higher education associations are typically involved in a dynamic relationship with many individual institutions, each of which make their views known especially regarding the potential loss of revenue.

Pilot Study Focus: Documents on a Specific Policy Case

The pilot study focused on Association A's formal response to H.R. 357. This association was selected for both the pilot study and later qualitative interviews due to its multiple relationships with other stakeholders in the veterans education policy community, its track record of veterans education involvement, and its level of influence on the larger political sphere as discussed in Chapter 2. Also analyzed were the responses of another higher education association (hereafter "Association D") and an individual institution (hereafter "Large Western Public University"). All these responses were delivered in the same public hearing before the Subcommittee on Educational Opportunity of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and thus considered a collective response on behalf of higher education stakeholders.

Data Limitation Rationale and Background Analysis of H.R. 357

The above data limitation was imposed for two reasons. First, some boundaries must be set given the thousands of pages of public documents available on the Post-9/11 GI Bill. These include testimony and position statements, white papers, third-party reports (e.g., those of the U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO]), press releases, and press interviews.

Second, H.R. 357 represents unprecedented Congressional regulation of state higher education policy on behalf of a specific student group to ensure their legal residency for tuition purposes at public institutions does *not* derive from their state of legal residence. The only comparable policy to date is that of allowing—but not *requiring*—states to provide access to in-state tuition for undocumented students. On the veterans education front, in-state tuition regulation has been driven by pressure from military/veteran advocacy groups who see the Post-9/11 GI Bill's requiring a student veteran to pay the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition as undermining the original GI Bill entitlement for service rendered the nation. It should be noted that H.R. 357 imposes no corresponding tuition restrictions on private for- or nonprofit institutions within states. The financial cost falls solely on public institutions since legislators have no power to impose tuition controls on private nonprofit institutions. In addition, since public institutions were created to serve more than just a privileged few, state legislators have a more compelling interest in seeing that veterans have every opportunity to attend public institutions.

However, pressure by military/veteran advocacy groups had already resulted in states voluntarily passing legislation to grant veterans waivers of residency requirements for in-state tuition. At the time the pilot data were analyzed, 24 states had enacted legislation allowing student veterans to be eligible for in-state tuition rates, with 9 states having an institution or state

system allowing the same and similar legislation pending in 8 more states (Student Veterans of America, 2014). Thus the pressure to enact a national bill was mounted against a backdrop of growing individual state cooperation. However, by tying institutional eligibility for Chapter 33 federal veterans education benefits to state institutions' charging in-state tuition to veterans, and *eliminating* benefit eligibility for institutions that do not charge in-state tuition to veterans, H.R.357 establishes new territory for veterans education policy.

This is so unprecedented both because the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reserves power over education to the states and because in-state tuition policy is regulated differently by individual states. Some states reserve the primary legal authority to set tuition at public institutions to the state legislature; others reserve it to a state-level coordinating board for multiple state systems. Some grant state-level coordinating boards for a single system the primary authority to set tuition. Still others allow individual campuses or systems to set their own tuition. Multiple entities have consultative roles, including governors and state legislatures, and the two- and four-year public higher education sectors in a state may have different processes (Carlson, 2013, pp. 9-10). Thus the prospect of a one-size-fits-all federal intervention in state tuition policies at the behest of military/veteran advocates is rife with pitfalls embodying the civil-military gap. H.R. 357 is thus a fitting test case policy to use in this investigation.

Proceeding from the above limitation, other higher education associations' and individual institutions' documents and testimonies regarding H.R. 357 were examined to determine whether Association A's policy narratives are in line with other higher education associations or are in themselves counternarratives. The study's theoretical framework of narrative policy analysis was employed to analyze these documents and determine policy narratives and counternarratives related to the civil-military gap.

Unique Conventions of Higher Education Associations

A unique convention related to the pilot study is the political environment in which associations operate, which may have affected the construction and wording of documents being analyzed. Having participated in collaborative meetings on testimony regarding veterans education, I know higher education associations often consult each other regarding testimony wording and topics.

This is not limited to veterans education and should not be regarded as a nefarious practice. The higher education association policy world routinely collaborates on co-signed letters to various entities and/or *amicus curiae* briefs submitted to courts to express the majority opinion of the signing associations and avail themselves of the collective wisdom of multiple associations' analysts and government relations staff. This negotiated drafting process takes into consideration both individual associations' stakeholder interests, which differ, and the overall interests of the Washington, DC higher education association community. However, the process can result in changes to construction and wording—that is, narratives and counternarratives— that affect the final testimony.

In addition, another unique convention in association testimony is that the association representative selected to deliver testimony is generally *not* an association staffer. This is partly due to ethics and lobbying rules. Regulations require employees at 501(c)(3) organizations to register as federal lobbyists if they spend more than 20% of their time on legislative contacts or specified lobbying activities (Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, 2014). Since association analysts' structural role is to be independent, objective researchers, they spend as little time as possible on activities falling under lobbying disclosure regulations. Also, selecting a representative to deliver testimony is a symbolic act; usually as well-known and/or prestigious a

figure as possible is selected in order to both show due respect to Congress and to emphasize the testifying association's credibility. The convention at Association A is to ask a college or university president or other high-profile individual with particular ties to the issue at hand to deliver Congressional testimony. Thus the testifying representative participates (or has their subject-matter expert staff participate) in drafting and revising their remarks and written testimony on behalf of Association A. This means that yet another set of narratives and counternarratives that appear and disappear during the writing and rewriting process are invisible in the final, polished testimony submitted for the public record. There is no way to determine what narratives were rejected in draft, but presumably there is much negotiation on what is finally delivered as public testimony for the historical record.

Emerging Policy Narratives in Higher Education Association Testimony

Policy narratives and counternarratives emerging from the pilot document analysis both foreshadowed some of the emerging policy narratives and counternarratives drawn from the interview data and intertwined with them. For instance, as will be more fully discussed, one policy narrative emerging from the pilot analysis was higher education associations' asserting superior technical expertise regarding H.R. 357's negative consequences for public higher education. This narrative, and its counternarrative of negative reaction from military/veteran stakeholders, foreshadowed a later policy narrative emerging from interviewee data. The later narrative was that higher education's voices of expertise on how to effectively implement veterans education legislation in the higher education operational environment are not heard by military- and veteran-serving agencies to the detriment of veterans. Thus the foreshadowing in

the pilot narrative added context and depth to the later policy narrative derived from candid interviews.

Higher education associations' superior technical expertise regarding the consequences for public higher education. Association A, Association D, and Large Western Public University all began—as is customary in Congressional testimony—by establishing the expertise of both the testifying entity and its representative. The Association A representative has been the president of a Mid-Atlantic public university serving active-duty military and veteran students as well as vice chancellor at a Southern public university also serving active-duty military and veteran students (Association A witness testimony, p. 1, April 2013).

First, Association A provided membership statistics to establish its broad expertise. Then it stated that Association A "supports the underlying premise of treating veterans as in-state residents and strongly supports the educational endeavors of our veterans." After so doing, Association A contended that passage of H.R. 357 would "potentially result in unintended consequences" (Association A witness testimony, p. 1, April 2013). The phrase "unintended consequences" appeared five times between Association A and Association D's testimony and will be discussed as a separate policy narrative later. In this instance, it signaled superior technical expertise on the part of the testifying higher education community representatives, allowing them to explain to the committee and military- and veteran-serving associations pressing for the bill's passage why H.R. 357 as written would potentially harm not only student veterans, but *all* students at state institutions.

Association A's testimony then launched into two pages of technical explanation of state postsecondary tuition policy and its variability across states, highlighting that 40 states set public colleges and universities' tuition policies by means of either state legislatures or a state

coordinating board rather than at the individual institutional level. It further documented this by referencing a report stating "In many states, the process is a multi-step process involving many entities" (Bell, Carnahan, & L'Orange, 2011, p. 7, as cited in Association A testimony, April 2013). This was explained in detail because "Given the complexity of relying on forty state entities to change policies, it is quite likely that institutions will not have the ability to charge in-state rates even if they so desired….Veterans would be forced to either move to a state that offered in-state tuition, go to a more expensive private institution, or attend a for-profit college" (Association A witness testimony, p. 3, April 2013).

In addition, Association A stated, "It is also instructive for the Committee to understand the nature of in-state versus out-of-state rates. One way of looking at an established out-of-state rate is to consider it as the full cost to the institution of educating a student….[T]he in-state rate reflects the cost to the institution after factoring in the state subsidy" (Association A witness testimony, p. 4, April 2013). The point is that Congress and the military- and veteran-serving institutions supporting H.R. 357 are *not* technical experts on state higher education tuition policy and thus do not sufficiently grasp what consequences will be "forced" on student veterans and public institutions as a result of H.R. 357. In fact, Association A used "forced" four times within its five-page testimony to refer to multiple negative consequences.

This narrative of superior technical expertise on the part of higher education associations was reinforced by Association D's testimony, delivered by a retired senior military officer heading a military programs office at a Midwestern public university (Association D testimony, p. 1, April 2013). In its testimony, after establishing its bona fides, Association D also explained that "state governments determine how best to use their tax revenues" (Association D testimony, p. 5, April 2013). This referred to the subsidies that states provide public higher education

institutions for resident students to help fill the gap between in-state tuition and the actual cost of educating a student. (For selected research on state subsidies and public higher education both on the individual level and across states, see Heller [2005] and Long [2003].)

Association D then mirrored Association A's testimony and provided more technical detail on "practical and operational challenges" (Association D testimony, p. 7, April 2013). These included not only potential "unintended consequences for the Yellow Ribbon Program" (another federal veterans education benefit program), but the issue of timing given the bill's proposed 2014 effective date versus state legislative calendars. Association A, Association D, and Large Western Public University all pointed out that state legislative entities needed more time to consider changing state laws and potentially state constitutions to comply with H.R. 357 (Association A witness testimony, p. 4, April 2013; Association D, p. 9, April 2013; Large Western Public University witness testimony, p. 7, April 2013). This is something Congressional committee members would reasonably be expected to know. The reminder can thus be interpreted as another part of superior technical expertise claimed by the higher education association community.

Large Western Public University also brought forward a retired senior military officer, in this case serving in a senior student affairs position at a Western university, to present its testimony (Large Western Public University witness testimony, p. 1, April 2013). The choice of retired senior military officers working in higher education to testify is an attempt to bridge the civil-military gap. Almost three pages of its testimony were devoted to the institution's military- and veteran-serving programs, down to explaining specific duties of its veteran services office (Large Western Public University witness testimony, p. 2, April 2013). This detailed presentation of institution-level construction and function of military and veteran student

services demonstrates both sincere interest in veterans' welfare and superior technical expertise on higher education operations.

A policy narrative of superior technical expertise about higher education seems reasonable for higher education associations to claim. After all, the associations *were* asked to testify as technical experts. However, the policy counternarrative, discussed later, shows that this superior technical expertise is actually contested by H.R. 357's sponsor. This contestation is evidence of the civil-military gap's effect on higher education associations' work in federal veterans education policy.

Defense of states' rights and opposition to "federal intrusion." One of the most sharply worded arguments in Association A's prepared written testimony was that "Finally, this bill screams of government overreach….This bill…dictates tuition policies for public institutions around the country. While it is appropriate for the federal government to be a partner in higher education, it should not be an overreaching manager" (Association A witness testimony, p. 5, April 2013). This concurred with Association D's policy narrative, which also expressed the states' rights argument against H.R. 357 at length:

> We are troubled that the bill would, in effect, impose a federal definition of a "resident" on all states…State governments are the best equipped for setting and determining their own policies with respect to state residency and allocating their tax dollars….We believe the federal imposition of residency on states violates, at a minimum, the spirit of the historical relationship between the federal government and the states and would be a very bad precedent (Association D witness testimony, p. 6, April 2013).

Large Western Public University took a slightly different approach to the states' rights argument, explaining at length their state's generous tuition and fees exemption provisions for veterans and their family members attending public institutions. They did this to show why their state did not need a federal bill to mandate student veteran support. To further explain the real cost of such

programs to a state, Large Western Public University detailed how these provisions' use "has exploded in the past several years"; in 2012, according to Large Western Public University's testimony, the state spent over $37 million dollars in tuition and fee benefits for 8,444 qualifying students. Large Western Public University itself spent over $9 million in 2012 (Large Western Public University witness testimony, p. 5, April 2013).

Large Western Public University's representative noted that it "wholeheartedly supports these exemptions and the students who use them. However, I would be remiss if I did not mention the growing financial consequences of this program to our University" in a climate of state funding cuts including its own institution's 14% cut in general revenue funding for fiscal years 2012 and 2013 (Large Western Public University witness testimony, p. 5, April 2013). Large Western Public University's state legislature was considering ways state institutions could continue to afford to offer the benefits. As a warning, Large Western Public University pointed out that if the bill's proposed 2014 implementation date took effect and the institution were stripped of eligibility for veterans education benefits due to its state legislature not being given adequate time to make legal changes, "100% of the veterans would be negatively impacted when only 3.3% are currently not receiving in-state tuition rates" (Large Western Public University witness testimony, p. 7, April 2013).

The states' rights argument has a Constitutional basis, as previously indicated, in the Tenth Amendment. In addition, the cost of H.R. 357 compliance to states and public institutions has not been fully projected due to the complexity of different states' tuition and fee policy structures. The Congressional Budget Office cost estimate prepared for H.R. 357 only states "Any costs those institutions might incur to comply would be incurred voluntarily as conditions of participating in a voluntary federal program" (Congressional Budget Office, May 16, 2013, p.

8). Interestingly, VA's testimony regarding H.R. 357 was that "it is difficult to endorse the proposed legislation until we know more about the impact. We would be happy to work with the Committee and our educational partners to better understand how this might affect or limit veterans in their course or school offerings" (VA witness testimony, p. 8, April 2013).

Thus all the higher education stakeholders testifying against H.R. 357 argued along lines which, in other non-education-related issues (e.g., health care), have been strongly supported in some Congressional quarters. And the VA itself acknowledged the possibility of the bill's negative impact. However, as will be seen in the counternarrative, the bill's sponsor flatly rejected the philosophical argument of states' rights when it comes to serving veterans.

Tension between the privilege of serving student veterans and all students' best interests. Association A closed its testimony, after discussing how its members serve student veterans, by stating, "As a grateful Nation, we are committed to providing our veterans with the maximum benefits they rightly deserve. Let's make sure we also are providing the flexibility our veterans need to use them" (Association A witness testimony, p. 5, April 2013).

Association D's testimony also included "Public universities around the country are redoubling their efforts to address the needs of veterans and service members to whom we all owe an enormous amount of gratitude" (Association D witness testimony, p. 2, April 2013). It should be noted that philosopher Stephen Kershnar provocatively rejects this concept, contending that gratitude should only apply when a second person reasonably attempts to benefit a first person and is primarily motivated by concern for the first person's well-being; his argument is that veterans typically do not meet this condition and therefore Americans should not be grateful to veterans for their service to the country (Kershnar, 2014). However, Association D warned that if H.R. 357 were passed, "universities will be forced to make up the

loss of out-of-state tuition, which could have a real impact on all students as campuses may be forced to cut services and programs to cover the lack of additional resources or even raise tuition rates across the board" (Association D witness testimony, p. 3, April 2013).

These statements demonstrate the tension in the higher education associations' shared policy narrative between expressing customary gratitude for veterans' service to the country via veterans education benefits and their responsibility to consider the effects of H.R. 357 on *all* students at public institutions. This responsibility was unequivocally dismissed by the veterans-related subcommittee hearing the testimony.

Unintended consequences of legislation. The phrase "unintended consequences" occurred both in Association A and in Association D's testimony. Association A forecast the passage of H.R. 357 would lead to "a scenario of confusion" about benefit eligibility that "could potentially discourage the veteran from pursuing post-secondary education altogether" and "a hodge-podge map of eligible and ineligible states" (Association A witness testimony, p. 3, April 2013). Association D focused on the prospect of public institutions being required to absorb unbudgeted costs of lost out-of-state tuition revenues, which "could lead to increases in tuition for all students, including veterans. This is a very likely unintended consequence of the proposed legislation" (Association D witness testimony, p. 8, April 2013). Whether this is a real threat, rhetorical posturing, or a combination thereof is unclear. Association D also noted that the Yellow Ribbon Program was designed to defray the cost of out-of-state tuition for veterans and might suffer unintended consequences as a result of H.R. 357 (Association D witness testimony, p. 9, April 2013).

The higher education association stakeholders' joint policy narrative of unintended consequences begins to provide dimensions of the civil-military gap as described by Nielsen and

Snider (2009) both regarding the ways in which the military sees itself as separate from the rest of society and in the relationships between civilian elites (i.e., the associations testifying and the Congressional committee). It also illustrates Avant's (1998) description of day-to-day friction (e.g., the friction seen in the policy narratives) between civilians and the military. Congress and military- and veteran-serving associations are, at least according to the testimony presented, ignoring H.R. 357's potentially serious negative impact on civilian students attending public institutions. This disrupts Association A and Association D's ability to adequately represent *all* students enrolled at their member institutions.

   Unfunded mandates and cost-shifting of veterans benefits programs to states. The phrase "unfunded mandate" was only one of the ways in which Association A and Association D jointly presented a policy narrative emphasizing the negative financial impact of H.R. 357 on their institutions and students because of its imposition of an unfunded mandate. Association A asserted, "Passage of this bill would shift paying for the promise established under the GI Bill of supporting the education of a veteran from the federal government to the states specifically and only for veterans attending public institutions" (Association A witness testimony, p. 4, April 2013). Association D stated unequivocally that "H.R. 357 as drafted removes the financial responsibility from the VA and shoulders it squarely on individual states" (Association D witness testimony, p. 9, April 2013). Large Western Public University chimed in by characterizing H.R. 357 as "another unfunded mandate that either shifts the costs of higher education onto other students, or drives up the overall cost for everyone in order to recover lost revenue" (Large Western Public University witness testimony, p. 8, April 2013).

   This narrative is supported by the CBO's prepared cost estimate for the in-state tuition portion of H.R. 357. According to the CBO estimate, "on net, the bill would decrease direct

[federal] spending by $139 million over the 2014-2023 period" (CBO, p. 1, May 16, 2013). It should be noted that CBO was using information from VA rather than from higher education stakeholders to estimate the number of nonresident veterans who would not be charged nonresident tuition and fees if H.R. 357 were enacted. Given Large Western Public University's testimony that eligible veteran and dependent enrollments in its state benefit program increased from 4,549 in 2007 to 8,444 in 2012, the CBO's estimate may be a conservative estimate (Large Western Public University witness testimony, p. 5, April 2013). This means that VA would not be responsible for the full cost of veterans education benefits. As Association D comments, "If this additional out-of-state tuition is not paid, the money would need to come from somewhere" (Association D witness testimony, p. 6, April 2013). However, once again, the counternarrative presented by the bill's sponsor rejects this argument, contesting Association A's expertise in particular and considering the cost negligible in comparison to what civilians owe veterans (H.R. 357 hearing transcript, p. 5, April 2013).

Higher Education Association Counternarratives

       Aggressive language in Association A testimony. Association A's testimony is the most aggressively worded narrative of the higher education stakeholders testifying. My positionality as a researcher in the subfield of veterans education policy includes having drafted Congressional testimony on veterans education issues; every draft was edited to emphasize diplomatic language even when discussing egregious VA implementation failures. Thus Association A's use of "this bill screams of government overreach" (Association A witness testimony, p. 5, April 2013) is surprisingly inflammatory. Given the open displeasure expressed by Congressional committee members in the printed record of the hearing at which the testimony

was delivered, this language may have actually worked against Association A and widened the civil-military gap. This leads to the multifaceted counternarrative presented not by Association A or its higher education counterparts, but by Congress and military- and veteran-serving associations.

Committee and Military- and Veteran-Serving Associations' Counternarrative

  Recasting and inverting higher education testimony. This counternarrative is demonstrated by the response of H.R. 357's legislative sponsor as well as military- and veteran-serving associations to the testimony presented by higher education association stakeholders. The legislative sponsor opened with "…the intent of my bill is to expand education opportunities for veterans by making all public schools more affordable and…[Association A witness]'s testimony in my opinion is factually wrong" (H.R. 357 hearing transcript, p. 5, April 2013). The sponsor continued with "…while it may be difficult to change residency requirements, it is an opportunity for the appropriate governing bodies and those bodies that determine tuition rates to recognize the contribution of the one percent who defend the 99 percent. And in my view, it is the least that the 99 percent can do for veterans" (H.R. 357 hearing transcript, p. 5, April 2013).

  This combines rejection of all policy narratives presented by the higher education stakeholders with a calculated reference to the civil-military gap's embodiment in the less than 1 percent of Americans with actual connections to the military (Pew Research Trends, November 2013). The narrative inversion could be read as a Congressional representative—part of the 1% in a different popular meaning—potentially increasing financial burdens on the 99% of state taxpayers and civilian students instead of advocating to increase federal funds for the VA to pay for veterans education. It is also an example of Mertens' (2009) notions of multiple realities that

are clearly hierarchical, with an attempt to delegitimize higher education. Ironically, higher education has been thought of as a legitimizing institution for society's privileged, as opposed to those who join the military immediately after completing high school. (An additional historical layer of Vietnam-era draft deferments for college enrollment can be seen as underlying this narrative, referring to the privileged young men who remained in college while their less fortunate, poorer brothers were conscripted.) Here, the military worldview and its advocates dominate the Congressional power structure.

The sponsor went on to use statistics and research from other higher education organizations to attack Association A's testimony. One such use is the sponsor's comment that "Regarding how tuition is determined, [Association A witness] is suggesting that veterans be treated less favorably than many nonresident nonveterans," going on to reference regional tuition compacts that discount tuition for students attending member compact schools (H.R. 357 hearing transcript, pp. 5-6). This is a gross oversimplification of such compacts. For one, the sponsor ignores the fact that veterans could very well be eligible for these regional rates. But the rhetorical effect is one of challenging Association A's superior technical expertise on its own ground.

Another pointed comment by the sponsor was that "Also of note, some states have adopted legislation to allow children of undocumented immigrants to attend at in-state rates….So despite [Association A witness]'s concerns about overreaching and the states' rights, I would remind [them] that Federal dollars usually come with requirements" (H.R. 357 hearing transcript, pp. 5-6). The reference to undocumented immigrants reinforces and widens the gulf between higher education and the military in its overt implication that higher education privileges non-citizens who entered the U.S. illegally over American citizens and legal

permanent residents who sacrificed for the country by serving in the U.S. military. The further counternarrative implication is that higher education stakeholders' objections are anti-veteran and anti-American. As an anonymously authored post-hearing briefing document from Association D found on the Web put it, "The Committee's staff made it clear that they view any opposition to the bill anti-veteran….There is no evidence that our concerns are being heard in the House and this legislation has the potential of being swept along with big bipartisan majorities" (Association D, n.p., n.d.).

A subsidiary document reinforced the rejection of the states' rights argument by H.R. 357's sponsor and hence Congress. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) was specifically asked to render an opinion on the Tenth Amendment issue and stated that based on previous litigation, "the requirements of H.R. 357 would appear to be constitutional" (House Report 113-94, n.p., June 3, 2013). While this does not prevent further litigation, the counternarrative is given more force because Congress anticipated the objection.

The military- and veteran-serving associations added to this multifaceted counternarrative by emphasizing that servicemembers' (and later veterans') physical residency is dictated by the military and thus renders them involuntarily stateless within the U.S. Hence from their point of view, nonresident tuition is a hardship penalty veterans pay that should be absorbed by higher education as a compensation for veterans' service to the nation. Further, in the words of one veteran-serving association, "In states that offer in-state tuition, both Republican and Democrat state leaders all agree that the financial benefits for the state far outweigh the illusory financial burdens that some in higher education believe would be detrimental to institutional budgets" (H.R. 357 hearing transcript, p. 43, April 2013). This privileging of state leaders—*not* higher education experts—and the dismissive language of "illusory financial burdens" and

statements like "some in higher education believe" further rejects higher education stakeholders' technical expertise.

The Policy Metanarrative

Given the very different policy narratives and multifaceted counternarrative regarding H.R. 357, what is the resulting policy metanarrative? Based on the testimony and subsidiary documentation, it is one of dynamic tension between higher education associations' appropriate expression of gratitude for veterans' service by fulfilling their educational needs and their larger responsibility to advocate for equity on behalf of all college students. This intertwines with a narrative of cost-shifting from federal government to states and public higher education institutions and a counternarrative that any objection to H.R. 357 by higher education stakeholders is anti-veteran and by implication anti-American. Thus the pilot policy metanarrative illustrated the civil-military gap as well as potential effects on higher education associations' attempt to implement veterans education policy in ways that both make sense for higher education operational realities *and* the well-being of student veterans.

The policy narratives, counternarratives, and metanarrative revealed by the analysis are embedded in a larger context than simply that of veterans education, of course. The context is one partly of strained relations between academia and legislators wishing to exert more control over public colleges and universities. Examples of this include the February 2015 attempt by Governor Scott Walker to change the mission statement of the University of Wisconsin from language about education and the human condition to language about its mission to "meet the state's workforce needs" and his June 2015 proposal to give a governor-picked board more control over tenure and curriculum in the University of Wisconsin system (Strauss, February 5,

2015, n.p.; Davey & Lewin, June 4, 2015, n.p.). It is also one of constant tension over federal

budgets and political hyperpartisanship exemplified by the October 2013 government shutdown.

This shutdown, according to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), had multiple

negative impacts on the economy including costing the government over $2.5 billion in lost

productivity from federal workers, delaying almost $4 billion in tax refunds, stalling progress in

reducing backlogged disability claims by veterans, and bringing federal research to a complete

halt (Office of Management and Budget, November 2013, pp. 3-5). Given the demonstrated

willingness of political leaders to shut down the federal government and significantly disrupt the

lives of millions of ordinary Americans in the process, the threat of denying Chapter 33

eligibility to institutions that do not offer eligible veterans and family members in-state tuition is

a real one for institutions and the associations representing them.

Conclusion

The pilot study focused on a specific issue in veterans education policy, that of

mandatory in-state tuition for eligible veterans being imposed on public institutions, and the

response of Association A (as well as others not part of the larger study) to what it saw as an

encroachment both on the expertise of higher education and the independence of states from the

federal government. As will be seen in the following chapters, the issue was one on the minds of

a number of interviewees and served to illustrate the dynamic tensions between higher education

associations and military- and veteran-serving agencies as well as other organizations serving the

interest of active-duty servicemembers and veterans.

CHAPTER 5

RASHOMON OF THE ASSOCIATIONS: POLICY NARRATIVES AND POWER

The *Rashomon* effect in social sciences is named for, and inspired by, the 1950 Kurosawa film depicting four very different accounts of one incident by four different participants and/or observers (Heider, 1988; Kusa, 2003). This leads to the concept of contradictory truths (Kusa, 2003), which fits into the narrative policy analysis framework employed by this study. Interviewing members of three different higher education associations who at times reflected on common events or mentioned what other interviewees had told them (unknown to each other) yielded both striking narrative convergences and moments of the *Rashomon* effect.

This chapter lays out the overarching policy narratives and counternarratives of higher education associations emerging from interview data in order to provide context for the next chapter's specific discussion of emerging veterans education policy narratives and counternarratives. I then construct an emerging metanarrative for higher education association work in general to close the chapter.

Higher Education Associations' Overarching Policy Narratives

Unsurprisingly, multiple overarching policy narratives form the backdrop for associations' work in Washington. Explaining these narratives in detail is necessary to understand how associations' overarching policy narratives shape the work they do. While the following narratives may not be the only ones driving associations' actions given the exploratory nature of this study, they were shared across cases.

Member representation in higher education policy circles is associations' raison d'être. When asked to describe Washington, DC associations to someone unfamiliar with them,

seasoned association staff from all three cases first requested to differentiate higher education

associations from other associations given the multiplicity of what one referred to as "trade

associations" (Sam Bahman, Association A). They then used variants on "represent" or

"representation" to describe higher education associations, usually in combination with

"members" or "membership-based." The only one who did not do so was new to his association

role. Claire Rigby commented that "[T]here's an association for virtually every position on

campus" as part of describing the concept of representation (Claire Rigby, Association C).

The mention of representation led organically into interviewees' volunteering, across cases, to

parse differences between types of Washington higher education associations in order to explain

exactly which subsectors of higher education their associations represented to those outside the

Beltway. As Dr. Andrew Trajan from Association A (a national association) put it:

> [I]t's a blended mix of two types of associations: one set of six [The Six] represent
> presidents, primarily presidents, of colleges and universities, who choose to belong to one
> of the six type of associations representing private, public, and one group that represents
> both of them, so there's overlapping memberships. The second set of associations are
> what we call professional associations representing special interests like financial aid,
> admissions, business....So generally there's two types of representational associations in
> Washington that one can belong to either as an individual or an institution. (Dr. Andrew
> Trajan, Association A).

Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A) offered a slightly different take that nonetheless

echoed her colleague: "My description of the associations is that they are membership-based and

by and large based on the needs of their constituents...their membership dictates their legislative

affairs, their outreach, their policies, programs, and their advocacy for their populations that they

serve" (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

In contrast to the present and former national association representatives, Michael

Gordon from Association C (a professional association) immediately broadened his focus

beyond higher education to fully describe the association world to outsiders:

> It's basically just a group of people who pay dues to have representation in
> Washington....[Association C] and all the other associations I've been employed at are
> the same concept. Instead of individuals, it's schools....[P]eople may not realize it, but
> when they're joining AAA, they're joining an association. If they join AAUP or AAUW,
> they've joined an association. The concept is the same. The only difference about what
> we do is that instead of focusing on individuals, we focus on campus-wide type issues
> (Michael Gordon, Association C).

This was contradicted slightly by Sam Bahman from Association A. He amplified his definition

to comment that while higher education associations operate as "trade associations" like other

industries' trade associations, "higher ed, unlike so many other fields, does partake of a certain

level of idealism and public interest as well. So it's not quite as parochial as the petroleum

institute or the exports whatever" (Sam Bahman, Association A). The distinction separates

higher education associations from business-oriented associations into a public interest category

of associations. Since Association C—unlike Association A—is a professional association that

works with college and university administrators, the contradictory viewpoints of Michael

Gordon (Association C) and Sam Bahman (Association A) are understandable.

Angela Kay (Association B) added nuance to the issue of representation by commenting:

> Higher education associations are advocates for both the student and the association,
> depending on which association. So at [Association B] we are a member institution, and
> we provide support for our members from a political perspective, we do advocacy on the
> Hill....You have other associations, such as Student Veterans of America, who focus
> primarily on the student....The similarity between both of us is that we really have a
> desire to help, to provide support for our students as they look to navigate and complete
> their academic journeys (Angela Kay, Association B).

Angela Kay was the only person to mention students in her initial definition of associations; the

others all focused on higher education personnel. Given the associations in this study are all

institutional associations rather than student associations, the others' emphasis on the institution over the student makes sense. Whether institutional associations truly represent student interests versus institutional interests, since the two can diverge sharply, is outside the scope of this study.

The majority of interviewees then explained their particular association's membership restrictions. These are crucial to determining association policy narratives/counternarratives because they partly define the federal and state higher education policies and actors with which the associations engage. In other words, a national association representing a group of public institutions will generally spend less time engaging with lawmakers, policymakers, or other associations on an issue largely affecting private for- or nonprofit institutions *unless* the issue has sufficient broader strategic importance to warrant it. For instance, as Dr. Lynn Truman pointed out, "What we see, or I sometimes see, is the public institutions working together to try and convince the presidential private associations to move in their direction" on various policy issues affecting both public and private institutions (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

Associations A and C are national associations whose memberships overlap, though Association A focuses solely on public institutions. Association B, as a professional association representing both members who work in one particular area of administration and third parties with shared interests in that area, represents approximately 2,500 institutions across the United States and Canada (Angela Kay, Association B, 2/13/15). Collectively, the three associations represent approximately 3,500 institutional members (estimated from membership listings online).

The definition of representation volunteered by interviewees across all three cases encompassed advocacy, a concept referred to multiple times across interviews. Their descriptions of how their associations operationalized representation—including advocacy—

took multiple forms. These varied somewhat by both association and interviewees' individual job functions within the association in question.

For instance, Derek Coleridge explained, "I'm the primary liaison to Capitol Hill, the Administration, and the White House....I try to explain to our presidents what's going on on the Hill and at the same time I'm trying to explain to the Hill what our presidents are thinking....So it's almost like a traffic cop in a way, trying to process the information that's out there" (Derek Coleridge, Association A). Meanwhile, Dr. Andrew Trajan, the most senior member of Association A interviewed, partly described associations' representational role as having "the ability to collect from a diverse set of member institutions a common theme that can be put forward and used to try and represent the sector before the Administration or before Congress in terms of their policy-making and lawmaking responsibilities" (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A). This takes the "traffic cop" role described by Derek Coleridge to a higher and more strategic level.

Sam Bahman, who works under Dr. Trajan but has a more senior role than Derek Coleridge, described himself as being "involved in federal policy, both legislative and regulatory, and [I] do policy development. Not so much policy advocacy as policy development, policy analysis" (Sam Bahman, Association A). Dr. Lynn Truman, a vice president with military/veterans education issues as part of her portfolio, works directly with the Department of Defense, the Department of Education, and the Department of Veteran Affairs as well as state-level groups working on military and veteran education issues. Her comments on advocacy included "a strength of associations is that they know their constituents, they work closely with their constituents to identify the high needs or priorities that association has. So their charge or their directive is really coming from their stakeholders" (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

In Association B, two of the three interviewees (Angela Kay and Dr. Robert Cabrera) were managers working on veterans education issues whose association experience was limited to Association B. Thus their discussions of representation and advocacy largely focused on veterans education issues that will be covered in the next chapter. The third, Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, a former employee now working at a different professional association, described the role he played for many years at Association B as "essentially [serving] in a role that would be the campus equivalent to the director of an IR office. So all research and data that was utilized by [Association B], that was published by [Association B], either came out of my office or my office had a hand in producing it" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, formerly Association B). His current position involves working with accrediting bodies and faculty development related to a specific discipline of study (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, formerly Association B). Both his previous and present positions show how associations use research and data to drive advocacy.

All three interviewees at Association C worked in areas related to research, policy analysis, and government relations, though their roles were quite different. Michael Gordon is a research head; Claire Rigby is a vice president overseeing an area of government relations; David Stanislaus is a policy analyst. Claire Rigby described their collective area of representation/advocacy as "we have policy and kind of all the subject areas. We think of ourselves—well, the rest of the organization thinks of us as the faculty" (2/11/15).

Associations voice the concerns of their members. The concept of associations' actively *speaking* for their members and being *heard* regarding higher education policy was used by multiple interviewees across cases, often in phrases like "have our point of view heard" (Michael Gordon, Association C) or "being a voice for our presidents" (Derek Coleridge, Association A) or "have a voice in the policy world" (Claire Rigby, Association C). David

Stanislaus put it as "[W]e're invited to the table for neg reg [negotiated rulemaking] and other conversations so I guess that speaks to the quality of our work, that others want to hear from us" (David Stanislaus, Association C).

This ties into associations' ability to exert power and influence. Without actively *voicing* their members' positions and concerns and being *heard*, they cannot bring power and influence to bear on other Washington education policy stakeholders. However, the process of voicing members' positions and concerns is not as simple as it might seem, as Angela Kay (Association B) pointed out:

> One of the challenges that associations might find is making sure that all the voices are heard. You have very large entities that are making their voices loud and clear and you even have some smaller entities that are making their voices loud and clear but they may not always be representing the larger sum of institutions....[I]t's a challenge to make sure that when we're speaking with our member organizations that we're able to represent accurately all the voices, or the majority voices, out there and make sure that we're not ignoring some of the smaller things that might eventually become a big deal down the line (Angela Kay, Association B).

The power is in the collective. While individual associations' strengths and weaknesses vary, interviewees' consensus was that their collective strengths were in convening policy stakeholders and providing a national perspective on higher education for both research and advocacy purposes. As Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B) put it, "It's rare that you will find an association and a federal agency on the exact same page as it relates to policy. And so the question becomes 'How do we get to the same place in a way that we'll both be happy?' That's essentially the work of associations" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B). Michael Gordon (Association C) expanded on this theme as well:

> …[T]here are so many issues in higher ed that I don't think any one of us, to be honest with you, any one of us has a monopoly on convincing Congress to take a different course of action. I think it's the collective....[G]iven our size, given what we can and can't do sometimes, I think the DC associations are pretty effective....And even though there

are things that are bad—like there's not enough funding for Pell Grants, things like that— it'd be a whole lot worse if there weren't people out there at [Association X], [Association Y], [Professional Association Z], and other places going up to Capitol Hill and pretty much demanding that lawmakers pay attention to those issues. And collectively, I think we've done a pretty good job of that (Michael Gordon, Association C).

Building on this mention of collectivism, Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A) discussed the issue

of collective action and coalition building in detail from the perspective of a national association:

> There are a number of formats. I guess they're both formal and informal. The formal framework for working, developing those coalitions, is, in Washington, the Higher Education Secretariat. So you have the Secretariat and then you have another organization that spans more associations that meets monthly. So those monthly meetings are where the different associations work together to try to identify solutions. As well there are a lot of informal relationships where—whether it's because of proximity in the same building or because there are issues that are shared by public institutions—that two or three associations work together, identify a strategy that they want to propose, then at the Secretariat or at one of the all-Washington association meetings [propose it]. And depending on their efforts, they may be successful at creating a coalition or an effort across all of the higher education associations. In other cases you see what I would call "splintering," so you'll have three associations announce an initiative, or they go their own way rather than it being an effort across all of the six [presidential] associations (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

When asked to clarify the process of coalition-building by and among associations, Dr. Truman

continued:

> Well, the Six meet, and then all of the Secretariat meets. So again the difference would be then if the Six have identified a particular perspective or a viewpoint or an initiative that they want to go forward, then they would work together to be able to communicate and advocate [to the rest of the Secretariat] for their position. You see that certainly in the legislative, government relations area where they are trying to build as strong a coalition with as many signatures for letters of support that may go to Congress. But in the end if they can't get, say, twenty associations to sign on they identify as many as they can or want to go through....
>
> [S]tudent financial aid, international students, college and business officers or the registrars' office...are probably examples of associations based on function and role. And while they may have subject-matter expertise at a very, very broad level, I think it is the presidential associations who probably can get their membership more activated, if you would, on a particular issue (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

In discussing associations' national perspective, Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B) commented:

> I would say one of the biggest benefits is sort of the macro-level perspective and sort of the ability to be out front on issues that may be coming down the pike that could affect, in this case, higher education. [W]hether it's proposals being kicked around on the Hill that would create significant burden to colleges and universities that we're able to head off or make our membership aware of so that they can put pressure on their members of Congress to sort of, to kill it, or to simply have a birds-eye view of the direction in which higher education is heading....You know, here in DC at the association level we were well aware of the presence of MOOCs well before they caught on in terms of national attention....[I]t was certainly a benefit to the [Association B] membership to have an organization that was able to say "Hey, you need to keep an eye on this. This is something you need to be aware of. It's a significant movement" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B).

Angela Kay also emphasized the national perspective as an association strength that allowed it to bring members together in collaborative ways:

> So a lot of times you have localized perspectives of where they [individual members] feel their institution is the only one doing [something], like "We're the only ones working on an issue and we're by ourselves and we feel very lonely. How do we accomplish these goals?" And we can say "No, actually, your partner schools over here and over there are also facing similar issues or also doing similar things and really, we would love to enhance the collaboration amongst you so that you can improve your programs and services, share what you're doing with your colleagues and learn from your colleagues." I think that's a very large benefit of an association (Angela Kay, Association B).

The theme of collaboration was expressed slightly differently by Claire Rigby (Association C), who pointed out that "our members are very collegial and we don't have some of the antitrust competition kind of issues that the for-profit world does when they try to associate in various members" (Claire Rigby, Association C). She continued with "I think at least half or more of the colleges and universities, at least the public and nonprofit, belong to various associations so the penetration into the higher education world is deep" (Claire Rigby, Association C).

The high rate of belonging to associations mentioned here also suggests collegiality combined with leveraging resources for common goals. Institutions do not only hire their own

staff to work on representing their individual needs to Washington, though many institutions

have government relations staff who work at the state and federal levels on specific institutional

concerns. Instead, they invest in joining an association made up of similar institutions working

toward shared goals; the association has more access to data, research, and leverage than a single

institution, and members benefit from the collegiality of belonging to an association.

Multiple interviewees also stated associations are nonpartisan in nature and conduct their

analyses accordingly. Michael Gordon (Association C) discussed the issue at length:

> So most of the associations that I know of, we are nonpartisan. Our research is—as much as it *can* be done—is balanced, I think....[O]bviously the research that we do is pro-higher ed, but that's like saying I'm pro-motherhood or something like that. I don't know anybody who's against higher education. But we don't have an Obama agenda or a Boehner agenda or anything like that....

> [W]e try, at least from the research side, we try to give as full a picture as possible of the impact of proposed changes to education law and policy. But if we disagree with the President of the United States on a certain policy, we say "We disagree." Or if we disagree with the House or the Senate, we'll say that....And just the opposite, too; if there are things in a House education bill that was written by a member of the Republican party that we think are great, we say "Hey, this is great. Regardless of party, it's a great idea." We've done that as well. If there's something from the Democrats that we don't like, we say "Hey, that's not a great idea." We've done that too.

> So we're nonpartisan....We do some analysis of the facts, but we don't have a partisan slant in what we say. We say "This is what's good for education, this is what's not so good for education," and we leave the rest to our lobbying friends to fight out. But our research tends to be pretty neutral, dry facts (Michael Gordon, Association C).

Power and influence unseen outside the Beltway. The interviewees were surprisingly

candid and detailed when asked to describe associations' ways of exerting power and influence

in Washington as well as power dynamics between associations. This, frankly, I attribute in good

measure to my insider/outsider positionality. All interviewees knew that as a former association

senior research and policy analyst I was already familiar with the power dynamics

simultaneously operating between associations and external actors (e.g., the White House,

Capitol Hill, or federal agencies) and between individual associations. In fact, I participated in

them by providing research and data for senior management to use in their work with both

external actors and other associations. Thus it was pointless to feign ignorance of the topic on

either side of the interview table.

However, I purposely asked interviewees to explain their answers to questions as if I

were an outsider who knew nothing about associations or veterans education policy. This, while

provoking some good-natured joking of "So I have to answer questions I *know* you know the

answer to?", also may have influenced their level of candor and willingness to provide specific

and highly varied examples. These led to a number of power and influence subnarratives,

discussed next, that tie together to show how higher education associations exert power and

influence—often invisible to others in higher education.

The power is in the network. Multiple interviewees repeatedly emphasized the value of

social networks with lobbyists, elected officials, influential college presidents, and other

associations. For instance, Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B) explained:

> The first [way to exert power and influence] is through financial resources and PACs, political action committees, which higher education doesn't really have....
>
> But the other is through networks and the ability to convene a powerful group. So in the case of [Association B] and the other five presidential associations of influence in DC, the fact that their membership consists of college presidents who—while a small group relatively speaking—wield a certain amount of power....You know, members of Congress don't like to get calls from influential constituents. And so, you know, when the president of the flagship institution in a particular state calls their particular representative, that representative's going to listen. And the ability of associations to create that kind of movement is really where their leverage lies....[Y]ou see that in terms of organizations that have influence and those who don't. Those who don't, don't have money and don't have an influential membership. So those organizations will typically rely on partnering with larger associations....

[W]hen [Association B] does a sign-on letter, they have all those associations sign on. So it's not just presidents...basically the entire community of higher education signs on (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B).

Derek Coleridge (Association A), approached the subject from a slightly different angle:

[N]ot to reinforce the stereotype, but a lot of the work we do in government relations at least is not so much the policy development. It's about who is in a position to influence the process. It's knowing the process, it is knowing who the players are there and the internal dynamics. For example, we're working on a Congressional breakfast right now for our presidents...where we're trying to get Senator [redacted, Democrat], we're trying to get Senator [redacted, Republican] and half of my job is "Okay, who do we call in [Republican]'s office? What's the relationship those two members have? Who is the best staffer to reach out to? And what policy positions are they [the senators] interested in that would make us an attractive place for them to come and speak to?" So the policy's part of it, but a lot of it's just understanding individual dynamics too, as well. And that is challenging, especially now in a hyper-partisan environment (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

Michael Gordon (Association C), discussed his association's lobbying efforts by using a specific

example:

We...have our lobby day, where we'll get members of our association...to meet with members of Congress and their staff on issues....There was an effort, a relatively short-lived effort in Congress, to limit the deduction on charitable giving, which would obviously have a huge impact on institutions. So in one of our lobby day activities, we had people go up to the tax-writing committees in the House and Senate. Oftentimes they're constituents of that member. And [they] would talk about what reducing or eliminating the charitable deduction would do to the colleges and universities in—not just for us at [Association C], but "These are your constituents. In this district you have three colleges and every one of them has benefited from this deduction and this is what the impact will do to all three of them. So you have to pay attention, Mr. Congressman or Ms. Congressman or Mr. Senator or Ms. Senator."

[pause] Do those have an impact? I think they do. I hope they do. It's an easier way to put a face to—we could write a report and say "This would be the impact and this would be the impact," and we often do. But for a member of Congress, stories and faces, more often than not, rule the day. Much more than written reports (Michael Gordon, Association C).

Taking a more macro-level perspective, Sam Bahman (Association A), without

prompting or my telling him who else was being interviewed, discussed what Dr. Andrew Trajan

(also at Association A) had taught him over the years about exerting power and influence in the

higher education policy world:

> …[H]e can be clairvoyant sometimes—and *years* ago he gave me this little lecture that
> there are three ways to lobby. One, show up with money. [laughter] That's one way.
> We're not very good at that. As you well know, a few two-hundred-dollar fundraisers is
> the most my budget can sustain. So it's not like I can go, or any of us [in higher education
> associations] can go to the thousand-dollars, twenty-five hundred-dollars, five-thousand-
> dollars a person fundraisers where you really, despite what anyone says, you really do
> gain some traction or some influence. We can't do that.
>
> The second way to lobby, he said, was with numbers. Like environmental [groups] or
> unions or whatever else, where you have hundreds of thousands of individuals who can
> act on your behalf. You know what? That's not higher ed either....So that way is another
> closed door.
>
> The third and the meekest, he said, least effective, and most doubtful of success,
> probably, was to show up with just enough knowledge that they need you in the room to
> do whatever it is that they want to do. So in terms of the area of weakness of higher ed
> groups generally, not just [Association A], is that we don't have financial or grass-roots
> muscle. To the extent that we can muster enough knowhow a) aided by linkages to
> campuses who know what they're talking about and b) by the work of staff here who
> have expertise, we do that so that when someone wants to change or overhaul something
> [in higher education] they need us in the room as functionaries to get them where they
> want to go. That gives us an entry to influence decisions (Sam Bahman, Association A).

He added that in his own opinion, the basis for higher education associations' power and

influence was:

> Primarily the fact that they do, in a sociological way, legitimately represent
> institutions....People think it's always representing your members to Washington, but that
> is only half the game in my opinion. The other half is representing Washington to your
> members. You go back and forth so that you end up with a well-considered position for
> your membership—and when I say membership not one hundred percent but a
> comfortable number—so that you can really believe you're representing a consensus
> position. And that's the main strength. When you do that right, you can be very effective
> (Sam Bahman, Association A).

For his own part, when asked how he would describe associations' power and influence in DC,

Dr. Andrew Trajan gave the following example unrelated to veterans education policy:

Okay, let's take an example of a proposed set of regulations that the Department of Education wishes to impose on all institutions that provide teacher education programs. We collect from our members issues that they feel strongly about as to why these regulations would either be costly or burdensome in the way faculty spend their time. They provide comments to us; we collect comments and represent [them] to the Department in communicating issues that we provide—either in the way of a letter or personal comment—[as] our objection to that set of regulations.

At the same time, we find that if we've been unsuccessful in blocking or having a regulation withdrawn that's offensive to us, we use the influence we have in Congress to either set in place a new law that replaces the law that requires the regulation to be put forward or we ask the Administration at a higher level than the agency, such as the White House—or the Office of Management and Budget—to reconsider the regulation in terms of its cost to the taxpayer and ask that it be withdrawn or changed (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

This is an extraordinarily explicit delineation of how an association deploys its network of contacts on multiple levels from Cabinet agency to Congress to White House to forestall regulation it considers "costly or burdensome" (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A) to not only the constituency it represents, but the taxpayer. It also shows associations' engagement in both formal and informal networking to negotiate Washington power dynamics. For instance, "a letter or personal comment" above refers to both a formal letter expressing issues of concern collected from members and sent by the association and personal expressions of concern by an association staffer (such as Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A) to contacts in the executive and legislative branches of government. The ability of an association to go, as described, over the head of a federal agency to the White House or the Office of Management and Budget to request that a regulation be changed or stricken is an exercise of power that largely goes unseen outside the Beltway.

Dr. Trajan also used more forceful phrases than the other interviewees, such as "blocking" and "having a regulation withdrawn that's offensive to us." His language may be explained by the fact that he is the most senior association representative interviewed and has

113

been at Association A for 27 years. In addition, Dr. Trajan held senior academic and

administrative positions at a public university prior to serving as a high-level political appointee

in a presidential administration; he then worked in the business/political sector before coming to

Association A. Thus he has not only a deep network of contacts inside and outside the Beltway,

but considerable experience with the power dynamics in Washington and has arguably earned

the stature to be more forceful than the other interviewees.

The importance of association staff's networks in understanding how associations exert

power and influence was underscored by Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A):

> I think one of the other factors that's important to know is that there are also individuals
> within associations who have also worked governmental—Department of Education
> programs, Department of Defense. So a lot of times their perspective is not just at the
> college or university, [or] the higher education perspective. But it's also either
> government or political. Having seen first-hand how Congressional offices work,
> [knowing] how policy [development] works, they're going to have a different perspective
> as well. So, for many of the associations, it is important to know the relationships and
> interrelationships, where someone has worked before, how they're interconnected
> because quite often there would be connections made where they have access, whether it
> be to Veteran Affairs or to someone else, that would impact policy and strategic plans
> (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

Power and politics prevail over policy. A key policy subnarrative was clearly stated by

Dr. Andrew Trajan: "So you've got power, politics, and policy all wrapped into one. And power

and politics always prevail over policy." He said this immediately after describing the shelving

of a policy proposal put together by Association A. That proposal called for:

> a sharing of funding between the federal government and states on the basis of a
> voluntary block grant concept that was similar to social welfare that was once a federal
> responsibility but was dropped on the states....That's a proactive proposal which was
> picked up politically by the Democrats and supported strongly by the retiring senator who
> chaired the Health, Education, and Welfare committee, and now has because of a change
> in leadership in Congress sort of been set aside (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

This blunt admission that policy—no matter how beneficial its potential effects—can be derailed by power and politics was echoed by Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B) when describing his experiences in the association world:

> ...one of the things that I learned rather quickly was the distinction between good policy and good politics. And that's something that people outside DC often don't understand, that things that are good policy don't always make good politics, and things that make good politics don't always make good policy....And people outside DC don't understand that because they have the luxury of being able to say "Why don't you just support increasing [grant program]?" Because we *can't* if we want to have any leverage in Congress. So I would just say that the balance of good policy versus good politics is something that anyone who is going to work in associations needs to understand (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B).

Again, this is a surprisingly candid discussion of where power and politics trump policy. The interviewees did not *agree* with good policies being shelved due to politics; however, they clearly *recognized* the Realpolitik world in which associations operate. As Dr. Anthony Hendricksen put it, "[A]s an association, you might feel that yes, there needs to be more funding for the [grant] program. But the reality is that's not going to happen. So as an organization, if you go out and say that, members of Congress are going to tune you out because it's never going to happen" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B).

Politics prevailing over policy does not just take place on the federal level, as Dr. Andrew Trajan (Association A), acknowledged while discussing the limitations of associations in working on the state level: "First of all, we don't vote in that state. And second of all, the policies are so politically driven by politics that all the good policy arguments and data integrity that we can put together to offer may not pass muster" (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A). Since state-level politics are crucial to public institutions of higher education and increasingly important to private institutions of higher education (e.g., the Payments in Lieu of Taxes [PILOTs] that states and municipalities often levy on nonprofit private institutions and that can

be highly contentious), this is important to consider when examining the power structure in which associations operate.

Power dynamics and politics within and between associations are as important as power dynamics and politics between associations and other Beltway stakeholders. Dr. Lynn Truman commented "Well, there are certainly power dynamics within the Six and clearly that dynamic is fluid, based on the policy issue that's at hand" (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A). Meanwhile, her colleague Sam Bahman discussed the politics of dealing with association members:

> I think the hardest aspect for someone who hasn't worked at an association, who hasn't been an active participant in the association world to understand—and I don't use this pejoratively, I just use it descriptively—is the importance of petty politics of associations, of association politics. Because that, at the end of the day, addresses the vitality of the association.
>
> It is very tempting to think that because of sheer expertise [an association] can cast a long shadow. That's true. But...if that's all you do, you're a think tank....Associations are qualitatively different precisely because...you represent operational expertise as well as abstract expertise in articulating goals and ends. In a well-functioning association you have enough of both of those attributes, and that latter attribute is really a function of how well you handle association politics—which is to say how well you really know your members, how carefully you listen to them, how often you make sure they know what you need to know *before* you seek it, so that they can provide you with the information you can really act on (Sam Bahman, Association A).

The concept of associations being hybrid think tanks/lobbyists was also brought up by Derek Coleridge from Association A, though his discussion focused on external association power dynamics:

> [Associations'] role has been to try to be the primary voice on higher education issues in Congress and to be part think tank, part advocate for our schools. That's easier said than done. Our role has had to evolve in the past couple of years. Sometimes it's a more straight lobbying role and fighting for our institutions, if you're talking issues where you have to be more proactive. But in some ways we've almost had to be like a think tank and try to develop ideas in house....I think the trend we've seen in the past five to six years is that most Congressional offices and legislators are outsourcing the policy development to

associations, think tanks, and are taking their ideas and making them law....A lot of the real work is actually happening in the association world, and then we're taking the ideas to Capitol Hill and trying to sell them, get them [Congress] to make it into law (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

Claire Rigby (Association C) also mentioned "the politics of the associations" but defined it as politics *between* associations. She amplified this good-humoredly with "...there's a pecking order that mimics the pecking order of who their members are on campus. [laughter] The presidential associations, you know, certainly seem to think that they are at the top of the heap because their members are presidents. [laughter] It's not that they're not willing to work with us, but there are a number of things they want to take the lead on, and that's just the way it is" (2/11/15). This aspect of association politics, unsurprisingly, was not mentioned by either Association A or Association B interviewees.

Finally, the importance of understanding and negotiating power dynamics was underscored by Sam Bahman (Association A) when discussing the perils of hubris among association staff:

> When you *don't* do that [negotiating with members] right...it's a lot easier to short-circuit [effectiveness] because you think you're so much better and more well-informed about the nuances. "I know better, boom, here is the right position." And you know, most of the time, that is so. But I've been around long enough to see how absolutely stunned one can be if you assume something that makes axiomatic sense and you haven't kept up with what's going on out in the background in the field and you take strong positions and when a conflict happens you look behind you and there's nobody there. You're on your own. You walked into a battle without troops because you didn't care to reach out and talk (Sam Bahman, Association A).

Negotiated rulemaking is a specific form of power and influence. Michael Gordon (Association C), described in detail one common way that associations exert power and influence not just in veterans education policy, but in all of higher education policy:

> [T]he easiest way to describe [how associations exert power and influence] is describing a little bit of negotiated rulemaking, or neg reg, as it's called...[A] bill passes, becomes

law, and part of the lawmaking process is that you have to have new regulations. Like if there's a change in the Pell Grant Program, for instance, it's regulated. There's statute, and then there's regulatory. How do you put the statute into place so it operates the most efficient way? That's the design of regulations. Those regulations have to be negotiated between the Department [of Education] and the community that's being regulated. In our case, which is higher ed...the Department gets to choose its negotiating team, quote-unquote, and the industry has its negotiating team. Through this neg reg, or negotiated rulemaking process, there's a back and forth. Associations are asked, often—I know we are, [Association C]—to appoint negotiators to represent our side. [Big Six member X], [Big Six member Y]'s the same way; these places all get a chance to add one or two people to a negotiating team.

We will pick one of our volunteers, either from a board or an interested member, who we know is going to put forth our best interests....Collectively, it's one or two people from [Association C, Big Six member, Big Six member]. Collectively we represent our students and our faculty at these negotiated rulemaking panels. Individually, we make our own little points....[E]ven if the law is poorly written, which often it is, it comes out a whole lot better once the regulations come out because our negotiators have worked with the Department to come up with something that is a lot better than it would have [been] if things were not negotiated (Michael Gordon, Association C).

Again, the candor with which this was explained was surprising. But the point that associations negotiate on behalf of their members to improve poorly written laws via the process of crafting regulations to implement said laws is largely invisible outside the Beltway. Yet, association participation in neg reg turns out to be critical for compliance and the welfare of institutions.

Associations have the power of technical expertise on higher education policy and implementation. As the discussion of negotiated rulemaking shows, associations are asked, both individually and collectively, to provide not only their points of view but technical expertise on how regulations should be written to implement laws. Associations are also commonly asked to provide testimony to Congress about higher education policy issues (e.g., the testimony analyzed in the preceding chapter on H.R. 357, though that technical expertise was rejected during the hearing). In support of their members and the larger higher education association community,

associations produce a considerable volume of research and data on multiple issues whose

breadth and focus depend on their association's membership and interests.

I can attest to this from personal experience as a former Big Six senior research and

policy analyst. As the lead researcher for my association, I routinely analyzed members' IPEDS

data for internal projects and published white papers on issues ranging from the H1N1 flu virus'

potential impact on college campuses (where I was sent to a joint federal agency briefing and

asked to write an article for the association's magazine to brief the presidential membership) to

mental health, campus safety, and student privacy issues post-Virginia Tech to various technical

aspects of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. I also routinely analyzed draft bill language on multiple

technical topics within my purview and how it might potentially affect members. My

counterparts across the Six did the same; we also collaborated on large projects (e.g., collective

analyses of issues that cut across sectors). However, as Michael Gordon (Association C)

commented, research at associations tends to be less traditionally academic. "A lot of the stuff I

do I can do on a hand calculator. And that's by design; our members are *not* statisticians.

They're *practitioners*. They don't have time to look at a lit review or anything like that"

(Michael Gordon, Association C).

Derek Coleridge (Association A) reinforced this policy narrative of technical expertise

(also referred to earlier by his supervisor Sam Bahman when discussing associations being

invited into the room to influence decisions based on a need for their technical expertise):

> I think the one thing the associations do well is technical knowledge on given issues. If I
> have a Congressional office that has a highly technical question about Title IV funding or
> what our schools are doing, nine times out of ten we can answer it, or at least give them
> an idea of what's going on. So I think we get the technical part down. We get the
> academic think tank part down as far as being able to pump out ideas; they may not
> always be *good* ideas, but we can *do* that. I think we do that well (Derek Coleridge,
> Association A).

His earlier commentary on the outsourcing of policy development from Congressional staff to associations ties in here as well. Associations have the technical expertise to develop policy proposals and bring them to Congressional staff for consideration based on collective expertise drawn from their own staff and members.

Organizational cultures vary by individual association. In order to set the scene for exploring the possibility of military-civilian cultural gaps playing out in veterans education policy narratives, interviewees were specifically asked how they would characterize the organizational culture of their association. When asked for clarification, I gave them options to describe it as academic, business, or whatever other type of culture they felt appropriate. I had access to organizational structures posted publicly on association websites prior to the interviews so I was already familiar with all three associations' general organizational structures.

Association A: "Academic," "bureaucratic," "hybrid." Dr. Lynn Truman (who spent "at least 20 years on college and university campuses" before coming to Association A) began her answer with what proved to be a shared opinion among different interviewees across cases: "...[L]ike anything else, depending on what part of the organization you touch or feel, it may have a different approach." She went on:

> But by and large, it's an academic culture where most—in fact the requirement for most of the vice presidents, or the senior leadership, is that they have X number of years' experience on college or university campuses. So that background, that culture, permeates the entire organization in terms of how individuals work and operate....[T]he only one that really follows much more what I would call a business model would be either be my own organization, which is a federal contract, so obviously we have business and government regulations. And also the business operations, the chief financial area [operates under a business model] (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

Dr. Andrew Trajan, the most senior association representative interviewed (who spent roughly

17 years working in academic and administrative campus roles and had 27 years' service at

Association A when interviewed), characterized it differently:

> It's actually a hybrid of what you might find on a university campus but it's very different from that in that, unlike a university, we're Washington-based. We're an association, not an institution of higher education, and we represent the interests of our members through the association taking into account the diversity of our institutions: small, large, special interests like Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Minority Serving Institutions, and others. So we have a broad range of representational responsibilities (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

Sam Bahman had worked at Association A for approximately ten and a half years over two time

periods separated by other association employment, though "I have campus experience, but it

was another lifetime in a different field. It was [humanities field]. It was more of an academic

role, not an administrative role" (Sam Bahman, Association A). In discussing Association A's

culture, he contrasted it to business culture:

> I tend to think the association operates within the standard accepted parameters of an academic bureaucracy in good and bad ways. It's a much softer environment in my opinion than business operations tend to be. Some would say it's bureaucratic as well because of the sort of academic nature of the enterprise. But I would characterize it as mostly academic culture. You know, businesses tend to be fairly sharply focused on outcomes. In some cases they're pretty cutthroat in terms of job security. Compensation tends to be based on quotas and quarterly sales figures and things like that. Higher ed has more abstract aims and less easily quantifiable ends that it strives for and the association is like that....That's what I mean by a softer environment. It's a little more diffused, a little vaguer and a lot more qualitative and abstract in terms of what winning and losing look like for us (Sam Bahman, Association A).

Derek Coleridge was the most junior employee interviewed at Association A with only six years'

experience there and no campus work experience. His description of Association A's

organizational culture contrasted it with his previous work experience:

> I would characterize it as very academic, very bureaucratic. Which was a huge transition for me coming from the Hill and campaign world where decisions are usually made very quickly, very nimble, and they're very, very flexible. There's no committees for hiring,

there's no long discussion, you have a small team of usually four or five people, the decision's made, and you move on and you live with it....I was used to seeing decisions made within minutes and hours instead of days and weeks (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

Association B: "Hierarchical," "hybrid," "business." While Association B interviewees characterized their association as academic in some respects, the word "hybrid" came up as it did for Association A. Its culture was also referenced by Dr. Anthony Hendricksen as "certainly much more hierarchical than a campus. There's a reporting structure, and things usually have to be cleared through multiple channels as opposed to a faculty setting where outside the dean, you pretty much have autonomy to do what you want to do" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen).

Dr. Robert Cabrera used the word "hybrid" partly to discuss his perception of the business culture surrounding research funding:

> Those centers in my organization that happen to bring in more funding…they've obviously got more opportunities to...do more exploratory research….Everyone's always looking for money for projects. So it's interesting, but it also has an academic flavor…but you also want to operate with a business mind. You need to bring in some funding to make projects work (Dr. Robert Cabrera, Association B).

Angela Kay concurred with the other two interviewees regarding the business culture and hybrid aspects, stating, "It's run like a business…the model for the most part, I believe, is a combination of a business, like for-profit, but also a nonprofit, since our goal—we are a nonprofit organization and we exist for the purpose of supporting our institutions in their visions and missions" (Angela Kay, Association B).

Association C: "Informal," "decentralized," "business." Since Association C is a professional association that deals with administrative areas of higher education, the mention of business culture by Association C interviewees was unsurprising. In contrast to the other

associations' interviewees, Michael Gordon offered thoughts not only on his association, but

others in terms of operational freedom:

> We tend to be fairly decentralized. There's a lot of freedom for growth and ability to take advantage of opportunities when they arise without having to feel like I've got to run and check with my boss. So I think that a lot of associations are run the same way. You really couldn't micromanage very easily the work that we do….I don't have time to run to my boss and say 'Oh, there's an issue.' I have to resolve it. And so there's a lot of room for creativity to do that without—within reason, obviously, but without feeling the need to be managed, quote-unquote, to do that. So we tend to be pretty informal, like a lot of associations; it's pretty flat in terms of hierarchy….We don't have a dress code or anything like that. If I were going to a meeting at the Department [of Education] or on the Hill, I'd wear a tie, but most of the time I just come in with pants and shirt on (Michael Gordon, Association C).

This lack of a formal dress code is *not* the same across associations. My former association

employer had a formal business dress code codified in its HR manual. Michael Gordon's

statement that the most "businesslike" association in the study has the least "businesslike" dress

code is thus an interesting contrast.

Michael Gordon also pointed out that his own association was "not an academic

organization…we don't do a lot of modeling or anything like that" in terms of research,

extending the concept of formality versus informality into research areas:

> So that also lends itself to more of an informal structure. I mean, we have people on staff who have Ph.D. degrees and law degrees, but…our executive vice president has a doctorate. But I don't call him 'Dr. [last name].' I call him '[first name].' He introduces himself as '[first name].' So you don't have the same academic culture as other people or other organizations would have. And again, that's by design. That's just the nature of the work we do (Michael Gordon, Association C).

The most "businesslike" association in the study in terms of who it represents was here

characterized as the least formal because its higher education research is more practitioner-

focused than strictly academic. This can be interpreted as a reference to academic institutions'

more stringent norms of systematic inquiry and acceptable standards.

123

Association work is a profession without a clearly defined career path. Claire Rigby (Association C) summed up the answers from interviewees across cases when asked how they thought people came to work within associations as a distinct profession within higher education: "By accident" (Claire Rigby, Association C). David Stanislaus concurred with "I certainly did" (David Stanislaus, Association C). After mutual laughter, Claire Rigby commented further:

> I suppose there are some people that set out to do it, but I don't think that most students, college students, have any notion that this whole morass of associations exist....I think a lot of people experience working at an association of some type and then this whole world opens up to them and they realize how many other opportunities there are to make a difference or to find a niche for yourself in that world (Claire Rigby, Association C).

Other interviewees expressed similar sentiments. Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B), though a trained researcher, reflected in detail on both research and advocacy career paths within associations:

> I know my experience was serendipitous....I haven't met many who have entered—whether it was a Ph.D. program or even a master's program—saying "I want to do policy research for an association." They know they want to do *research*, but they don't necessarily know where they want to do it. And I think most people, particularly in Ph.D. programs, would envision doing it in the academic setting and at some point get exposed to the association world and realize there's another opportunity to actually pursue a research career that's not academic.
>
> Outside of the research realm, I think it's people who have a passion for a particular area and along with the passion for whatever that particular area is also have a passion for politics, which is what generally draws people to DC. And then once you're in DC, most of the work generally centers around either working on the Hill for members of Congress or working for associations that represent the political interests of groups. Those are the two big careers for anyone who lives in DC.
>
> So while I think people outside of the research realm may have a greater awareness of this world and may even be considering this in their academic pursuits, I haven't come across anyone in the research arena who has sort of had this vision of wanting to work in a DC association. It's usually they wanted to do something else and stumbled across this and thought "Oh, this would be interesting" (Dr. Anthony Hendrickson, Association B).

In discussing the question—which, based on the number of surprised reactions, most had not

thought about—many interviewees described different career pathways depending on job

functions. These were discussed both in terms of their own job function and other job functions

they saw as common to all associations. For instance, David Stanislaus (Association C) brought

up meeting planners as an example of jobs that could be found in almost any association (David

Stanislaus, Association C). Dr. Andrew Trajan (Association A) was more explicit in discussing

career paths by common and specific functions:

> [I]t depends on what area of the association they're interested in coming to. If it's the
> division that represents [academic areas of Association A], chances are they will have
> had direct experience at the provost level or affiliated levels....If it's in the area of
> government relations, they've had responsibilities perhaps on Capitol Hill working for a
> member of Congress or a state legislator or another association in terms of having
> brought specific association-level expertise to this association (Dr. Andrew Trajan,
> Association A).

When asked to clarify "association-level expertise," he went on:

> In other words, what level did they function at, were they doing advocacy work for
> another association or were they doing back-office work? In this particular division the
> recruiting would be for someone who's had front-line advocacy work. In the
> administrative aspects of this association you'd look for someone who's had accounting,
> business development, or other types of relationships with functions that are servicing the
> rest of the association. The [academic] and [federal relations] divisions are the
> programmatic areas of the association....There are other areas that serve membership:
> membership retention, recruitment, membership services, leadership, orientation,
> training, board relations, things like that (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

Sam Bahman commented dryly on the topic of job functions generalized across associations,

"The NRA has HR and accounting and I don't know that the NRA's HR and accounting look a

whole lot different from ours" (Sam Bahman, Association A). He went on to discuss his own job

function, which he saw as less homogenous, as follows:

> [T]here are positions like government relations and policy analysis that partake of the two
> sides. On one hand [there is] a generic scale that could be executed at any association, but
> on the other hand there are very specific substances, knowledge areas, where you have to

have contact with the campus and campus officials....Different people come to this world, whether it's a consultant category or function in a specific area, from different places. Some come from campuses; some come from other associations. So you can learn about lobbying coming from the campus or you can learn about the campuses after having learned about lobbying elsewhere (Sam Bahman, Association A).

In another example of commentary on an interviewee's own job function, Derek Coleridge had previously worked on Capitol Hill for a senator representing a Mid-Atlantic state and then for the same political party's congressional campaign committee where he "worked on the political side so I did numerous Senate and House campaigns around the country" (Derek Coleridge, Association A). The term "political side" referred to his position as a political employee rather than a career federal employee "not subject to confirmation; they're not subject to whoever the President is at the time" (Derek Coleridge, Association A). He described a typical career path for someone focusing on advocacy/policy work within an association as follows:

> [I]t usually starts off [that] you've worked on the Hill in a policy-making capacity either for a member of Congress or on the committees, and you want to move more to the private sector; you want to be off the federal payroll. But you have to have that public sector experience in some way to be able to move to associations and do that private-sector policy work on K Street. A lot of it's word of mouth, a lot of it's making contacts (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

He then added a cautionary observation regarding the profession:

> This is not for everyone....I think if you're going to work in a higher ed association, or any education association space, you have to really be invested in this work and like this work. The pay is not as good as you would see in the corporate world, it can be very frustrating because it's very bureaucratic at times, and it's a changing time in education in general. Not just in higher ed, but in K through 12 as well....I think before you go into this, you need to think long and hard about "Is this the kind of work I want to do even for a short period of time?" Because it's not for everyone. I've already seen, just in the short time I've been in this, a lot of people get frustrated and flame out (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

The point regarding informal relationships leading to jobs within the association world was reinforced by Michael Gordon (Association C) when speaking about his own higher education

research career path. Said path thus far spans not only a state higher education agency, but five

national and professional higher education associations:

> To tell you the truth, every job I've had in the association world has been one where—I can only speak for myself, I can't speak for others—for the most part, not one that I've applied for necessarily so much as I've been recruited to....[I]n the research part of associations, it's specialized enough that we tend to recruit more than we tend to do hiring off a cold call or hiring off regular sorts of applications or things like that. ...[T]he reason I've been at [so many] associations [is] not because I've intentionally bounced around, job-hopped. But it's been [that] I give a presentation at a conference, someone hears it, they like what I've done, they call me up and ask me if I'd like to work for them. So I guess if you'd say "How does one break into this field?" I'm going to be honest and say I honestly don't *know* (Michael Gordon, Association C).

He went on to discuss research career paths within associations:

> [I]f you have designs on directing a research operation, you *do* have to move because most of the time people in those types of positions...tend to stay for a while. So the disadvantage for junior staff, for people moving in, is that you feel like that once you have a job you're fortunate to have a job as research assistant, research analyst, something like that. You feel great about that. But then if you feel after two to three years that you'd like to be a director, well, your director's not going anywhere. So you have to start looking at outside [positions] (Michael Gordon, Association C).

Interestingly, only the men interviewed discussed the importance of networking and informal

relationships in the context of career paths. Some of the women interviewed mentioned them, but

in the context of understanding how associations operate and their basis of power and influence

in Washington. This would need further study to see whether it held true across a larger

interview sample and what the effects might be on association careers for men and women.

Moving from the power of networking and informal relationships to more overt displays

of power, the possibility of exerting national power and influence drawing people to association

careers was raised by Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A):

> By and large, I think [people come to work at associations with] the desire to make change or impact the national landscape of higher education. Based on their prior experiences with colleges and universities, they see the association world as that opportunity to shape federal policy and also shape educational initiatives and priorities

across the country. Certainly within [Association A], they're looking at having that interchange both at the federal and at the state level to be able to make impacts for future generations of public students—students attending public colleges and universities (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

This was also discussed, partly touching on an aspect none of the other interviewees mentioned, by Angela Kay (Association B):

> I'm going to give a broad general overview because you do have different associations that operate slightly differently. But for, you know, the association of community colleges or [Association B] or some of these other associations, you have people who have worked in higher ed prior. They enjoy the work of higher education, they are passionate at providing and enhancing education opportunities for anyone who is pursuing that route. But they perhaps are a little burned out by working at an actual college or institution or they feel that they would love to have a say on a larger perspective or a national perspective. Associations have typically been a national overview of what's going on rather than a more localized level. So the people who come are interested in the larger national perspective and in influencing education as a whole (Angela Kay, Association B).

No one else mentioned the possibility of people moving to association careers because of burning out at the campus level, though multiple interviewees had worked for years on campuses prior to coming to associations. Given the intensity of association work as described by interviewees (the "traffic cop" role of Derek Coleridge at Association A for example) and my own lived experience of it (I routinely logged 10-hour days in the office for weeks on end, plus hours spent on email traffic and reading reports at home before and after working hours and on weekends), the idea of burning out on the campus level and coming to the association level to recharge is novel. This would require a different study to explore fully.

Given the complexity of the major association policy narratives discussed above, they inevitably have counternarratives that can be seen as contradictory truths. Sometimes the policy narratives and counternarratives entwine. As with the discussion of power and influence,

128

interviewees were surprisingly candid in their thoughts regarding associations' weaknesses that

led to counternarratives.

Higher Education Associations' Policy Counternarratives

An essential tension exists between representing the interests of their dues-paying

members and representing the interests of all of higher education. This was described at

length by Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A):

> Their charge or their directive is really coming from their stakeholders—for [Association A] the public institutions, and while we talk about public institutions for [Association A], it is really the *presidents* of public institutions. So it's not a matter of some of the other roles or positions within a public institution. It is, at state colleges and universities, the *presidential* perspective that drives both our agenda, our goals, and our strategic plan. And the same [is true] with the other associations....
>
> [The positive side] is that they have direct relationships, direct contact, and they're working for their constituents. The disadvantage, or disincentive, is they are *representing* that viewpoint....Sometimes those individual perspectives get in the way [of] creating a national solution or national policy, if you will. And I think that's where a lot of time and effort between associations is really involved, in convincing some of the other associations that their viewpoint, their strategy, is really the one that should take precedence over the others (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B) confirmed and amplified this:

> If you're a member association, you essentially answer to your membership, which makes complicated your positioning and advocacy work around certain issues. Your first role is to represent your membership. And so if there is something that from a general public perception makes sense that your membership is opposed to, guess what position you have to take?...[Y]ou may try to work internally to move your membership in a direction that's more aligned with public perception, especially if it's one that is in the good of that industry. But ultimately, publicly, your role is to sort of represent the membership. So that's where I think some associations may tend to get a bad rap—I know [Association B] was one of these....And I don't think that was unique to [Association B]; I think that happens with a lot of associations regardless of what industry they represent (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B).

Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A) independently confirmed the point regarding Association B by

commenting that "some of their policy guidance gets watered down because they're covering so

much of the landscape [in terms of multiple sectors of higher education]....[there's] a lot of back and forth, and I think each of those presidential associations are seeing issues through the lens of their constituents" (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A). She expanded on this by pointing out that members "trust that their interests are being cared for or looked out for [by] the association. So, again, [in terms of] a presidential association, [the members] have confidence that, if it's a legislative or policy issue, that it will not harm their institution individually, singularly, *or* harm their sector" (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

Associations' bureaucratic cultures and/or lack of resources can impede their policy and advocacy effectiveness. Sam Bahman (Association A) observed that "[Y]our average ICBM [intercontinental ballistic missile] launch takes fewer people to execute than the simplest decision because everything's done by committee" in terms of perceived association weaknesses, characterizing it as due to "academic culture." He then added a side comment that associations have "[i]ssues with regard to salaries and the caliber of people you wind up getting; we certainly don't compete with those organizations that animate the body politic in terms of the caliber of staff or frankly the resources that are available to us" (Sam Bahman, Association A).

Derek Coleridge (Association A) also referred to the same interconnected problem of low salaries, bureaucratic culture, and the length of time decisions take to be made, then addressed a larger weakness he saw with associations:

> They're not flexible enough. And I've felt this very strongly for a long time. They're too willing to say no to things. That's a serious problem, especially considering there's a lot of pressure among members of Congress for higher ed to change among the new economic times and a lot of the challenges that has brought. I think that we have been too slow as an industry, as associations, to recognize how serious the anger is out there about high tuition and we have been too slow to be flexible in our thinking as to what to do about it. And I think that's why you're seeing proposals such as the college ratings system. Even though it's misguided, the reason for that makes perfect sense, because there's a lot of frustration out there about cost and value to students. I think if we don't

become more willing to accept some of these new ideas, or to be a little more nimble, a little more flexible, I think Congress might do it for us through the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B) also discussed what he referred to as the

"bureaucratic" nature of associations from the research point of view, touching on both resources

and organizational culture:

> If you have a good idea...whether it's a research study or a program or something...there are a number of hurdles you have to jump through first. You know, what impact does it have on the membership? Is it beneficial to the membership? Is it going to create angst among the membership? Second, do we have the financial and personnel resources to do it? You know, if it's a massive three-year study, how do we pay for it? Do we get foundation support? Is it something that a foundation would support?...[D]o you have a leadership that even entertains ideas that come from staff, or is it a top-down organization where your role is simply to do what they tell you to do? (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B)

Personnel turnover leads to operational inefficiencies and loss of institutional memory.

This subnarrative of association culture was raised by different interviewees. Michael Gordon

(Association C) alluded to the problem of junior association researchers in particular not having

room to move upward in flat organizations where head researchers remain in their positions for

many years, and therefore being forced to job-hop (Michael Gordon, Association C). Dr. Robert

Cabrera (Association B), new to the association sphere and thus seeing it from the outside in,

also brought this up as a weakness of associations: "I feel like the turnover in employees can be a

challenge....[O]nce folks leave they take their networks and they take their experience with them,

and to build that up takes time....I'm sure along the way these associations are losing money

somehow" (Dr. Robert Cabrera, Association B).

Associations fail to communicate their role to the public outside the Beltway. Dr.

Andrew Trajan reflected on this point:

In terms of the general public, I don't think [it] has a real understanding much beyond their local community of what happens beyond the community or even beyond the state in terms of having a national bipartisan, or nonpartisan, entity available to them to advocate on their behalf. And I think they fail to understand the role of the association in terms of what it can do to advance the state, the taxpayer, the voter, and my sense is that we don't do a very good job in dealing with that issue. We're so concerned inside the Beltway with the issues that are on our plate that we don't think beyond that (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

He also mentioned the related problem of associations' limited ability to work on state levels:

The thing we can't get at...is helping our members, our institutions located in states to advance their arguments and their abilities to get funding from the state because each state, fifty states, are very political, very different sets of conditions or circumstances. And the result of that is that we can provide all the analysis in the world to the states and to our members to help them; we can't just go to the state and be an advocate for them (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association C).

This complicates associations' task of getting the word out, so to speak, about their ability to advocate for higher education goals at the state level. While they can and do provide broader analyses across states or for an individual state based on their national perspective (e.g., a hypothetical analysis of how the in-state tuition for veterans requirement will affect each state based on its state tuition-setting policy for public institutions), their position in Washington inevitably means they are less embedded in individual state-level politics and power dynamics. This means they do not have the deep web of state/county-level contacts and information sources to successfully navigate the different conditions in each state, let alone each county or municipality housing a public institution. That is left to institutions themselves.

Associations lack financial muscle to do the kind of lobbying that other industry associations and organizations do (e.g., unions, PACs, or very large NGOs). This point, emphasized by multiple interviewees across cases, is partly driven by the decentralized nature of American higher education and thus the myriad interests involved versus a single-issue union, PAC, or NGO (e.g., Greenpeace or MADD) that can focus its membership toward a single goal.

It is also a structural issue based on the nonprofit tax status of higher education associations, as

Michael Gordon hastened to make clear:

> [W]e lobby, but we're obviously restricted by law. We don't give campaign contributions and we don't write checks to any PACs or we don't donate to the Obama campaign or the Romney campaign or anybody else. We can't do that....[S]o in a lot of ways we are at a disadvantage because obviously business PACs can do that. They do that all the time, but they're for-profit. We cannot. Even if we could, we don't have that resource, we wouldn't have the money. But even if we did have the money, we're restricted by law from doing so (Michael Gordon, Association C).

Association siloing and inter-association politics impedes collaboration and

collective action. This was the most *Rashomon*-like counternarrative of contradictory truths in

the group of interviews pertaining to general association life, particularly between Association A

and Association B. Association C maintained an onlooker stance, pointing out the association

"pecking order" (Claire Rigby, Association C) as part of association politics and in particular the

attitudes of the Six about their perceived higher rank in higher education association circles than

professional associations.

Association B interviewees predominantly characterized their association as having

extremely strong convening skills and collaborative skills. Angela Kay (Association B) strongly

implied that other associations were not as sharing or collaborative as they:

> What you do see in certain associations is [pause] People tend to get siloed. So whether it's an association, whether it's a school or whoever, I think this is across the board, you tend to get siloed in your mission, your vision, whatever your focus is and you don't realize there are other groups out there who are doing similar types of things. And so you as an organization have to make sure that you're staying in constant communication with other organizations and you're not trying to—one of my biggest things is people are trying to get a piece of whatever the pie is at that moment. And instead of trying to *take* that pie, why don't you give *back*, like put into the ingredients, so that it's more of a collaborative effort. So that it's not just you being highlighted over here and forgetting all the rest of the groups and not trying to take your fifteen minutes of fame or that moment of glory but more than remembering what your mission and vision is and realizing that there are others who have the same mission and vision and that they're working together, and finding ways to work together to accomplish the goals (Angela Kay, Association B).

While this sounds eminently reasonable, Ms. Kay undercut her position somewhat in her next answer. When asked what agencies or associations Association B worked with on veterans education issues, she rattled off a list only including one higher education association that has *not* historically been a vocal participant in veterans education policy. Other higher education associations with well-known ties to aspects of veterans education policy, including both Association A and Association C, were not named. Since Associations A and B in particular have worked together on more than one collaborative project in veterans education policy over the past five years, the omission was striking and surprising. One speculation that can be made here is that association politics between Association A and Association B played a role in the omission.

This cognitive dissonance was underscored by Dr. Lynn Truman, who has been part of Association A for much longer than Angela Kay has been part of Association B. She commented, "[W]hile there's one association, Association B, who feels that they represent all of higher education, therefore theirs is a more inclusive approach—that isn't always shared by the other five" (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A). Dr. Andrew Trajan made a more general remark about how "[T]hey're [associations] very ineffective, as far as I'm concerned, in trying to put together a concerted effort" (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

The *Rashomon* effect being what it is, more interviews of past and present staff of both associations would be necessary to fully explore this counternarrative. However, the willingness of interviewees to air frustration with other associations—partly, again, I suspect due to my positionality and their knowledge that I saw associations jostling for position and power as part of my daily work inside the Beltway—is striking enough to become a counternarrative. The

problem of association siloing is somewhat unavoidable since most associations deliberately represent a single type of member, whether it be a sector (e.g., public two-year, public four-year, private nonprofit, or private for-profit) or a profession (e.g., financial aid officers, student services professionals, or registrars). This allows them to develop considerable expertise on an individual sector or profession's issues. However, association siloing can also, as Angela Kay (Association B) aptly noted, impede realizing that other associations are also working on common issues.

"[T]he balance of good policy versus good politics": Higher Education Associations' Policy Metanarrative

The emerging policy metanarrative from interview data is one where power, policy, and politics inevitably intertwine. Associations, as Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B) put it, "have to situate themselves in the middle of those [political and policy] discussions" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B) and work simultaneously in multiple directions to advance their members' missions and goals in American higher education. These directions, as explained by interviewees, include working with Congressional contacts to draft and shape policy, working with other associations to reach common goals, working with federal agencies on legislative implementation issues or areas of contention, and working with the White House to provide the higher education point of view in policy discussions.

Since associations' memberships, missions, and goals differ for legitimate structural reasons (e.g., the mission of an association representing public institutions will never be 100% identical to that of an association representing private nonprofit institutions), some disagreements on political and policy decisions are expected. This means that coalition-building

135

is necessarily limited to areas in policy Venn diagrams where associations' memberships agree. Since many issues cut across sectors, these Venns overlap to a greater or lesser degree depending on the topic. Student financial aid issues, burdensome regulations, and federal regulatory implementation are three areas mentioned by interviewees as ones of broad concern to multiple sectors.

However, associations all work—whether in coalitions or separately—to voice the concerns of their members and influence higher education policy based on their members' missions and concerns. While they may, as Dr. Anthony Hendricksen remarked, "balance our public advocacy of what our members wanted with internal conversations of sort of changing the mind of the membership" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B), their reason for existence is to advance the goals of their membership vis-à-vis higher education. This balancing act leads to conflicts between associations—whether between national associations, between national associations and professional associations, or a combination of both.

These conflicts are complicated by the lack of understanding in higher education circles outside the Beltway of what higher education associations do or how/why people come to work for them. In addition, they are made more complex by the Byzantine maze of associations within the Beltway that not even those within the association world completely understand. For instance, Michael Gordon (Association C), an experienced association employee, asked "How many associations are there in Washington that represent higher ed?...I've never looked into that. It just occurred to me" and was surprised to hear my rough estimate of several hundred minimum based on a compilation I had half-finished during my association employment (Michael Gordon, Association C).

This adds to the siloing mentioned in interviews that hinders coalition-building and collective action. It also leads to a policy metanarrative based on contradictory truths: associations represent their institutional members *and* they represent students, whose end goals may come into conflict; associations compete with each other when their interests diverge *and* they work collectively to achieve shared goals; associations move to "block" regulations they find "offensive" *and* they provide research and technical expertise to Congressional offices to support data-driven policy decisions; associations advocate for higher education ideals *and* recognize they operate within a Realpolitik universe where they must "work within the realm of reality, which is what makes good politics" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B). Therefore, it leads to an overarching policy metanarrative that can be termed the *Rashomon* of the associations.

CHAPTER 6

"TALKING TO PEOPLE ALTERS YOU": A SHIFTING CIVIL-MILITARY GAP IN

VETERANS EDUCATION POLICY

Continuing the theme of contradictory truths and the *Rashomon* effect, the emerging

policy narratives and counternarratives in the interview material regarding veterans education

policy and higher education associations point out a civil-military gap, acknowledge its nuances,

and attempt to bridge it. Again, some common narrative threads prevailed across cases.

However, examining the specific topic of veterans education policy yielded differences between

individual associations that were not as readily apparent when analyzing their overarching policy

narratives and counternarratives.

Association representatives interviewed emphasized that they simultaneously dealt with

both the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs regarding

higher education policy related to active-duty servicemembers enrolled in college and discharged

veterans (or their dependents/spouses using transferred benefits) using GI Bill benefits for

postsecondary education. One prime example cited was the Principles of Excellence, also known

as Executive Order 13607, signed by President Obama in April 2012. This, as Claire Rigby

(Association C) put it, "layered on top and then brought together DoD and VA and Department

of Education in an attempt to bring things together" (Claire Rigby, Association C). Dr. Lynn

Truman (Association A) gave a fuller explanation of the Principles of Excellence:

> ...the Department of Education, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department
> of Defense have been charged to work together collaboratively on issues that protect
> military and veteran students in the educational realm. So they are charged to work
> together; there is an interservice, or rather interagency, working group with the three of
> them. Most recently, they've created the Postsecondary Education Compliance System
> and have also worked together on a number of resources to help servicemembers and

veterans make sound judgments about what institutions they choose and also about what degree programs they choose (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

Dr. Truman later corrected the program name and gave more details:

[I]t's actually the Postsecondary Education Complaint System and the Department of Education, Department of Defense, and VA, and also consumer protection services, all have public access points that servicemembers, veterans, and family members can submit complaints against an institution that they attend. And on that complaint form they have it broken down in terms of the issues, whether it's a financial issue, whether it's an accreditation issue, I believe there are about ten different categories where you can file a complaint on.

And then, within that complaint system, each of the agencies has a process for looking at that complaint and resolving it. Some cases it's a matter of doing the background research, finding that an institution made an error on a student record or a student financial record, didn't realize for example that a student was a veteran or active duty [servicemember] and they were mobilized and they fit within the Department of Education readmission policy. So the complaint system is both to document the nature of the complaints and the issue, but it is also to get resolution and to protect the servicemember and veteran....When you are going to the extreme and are looking at resolution of those issues, if it is deemed that there was fraudulent behavior and attempt to deceive...the three agencies can file a formal complaint with the judicial system and it can result in the loss of Department of Education or VA or Department of Defense funding and support. And that also goes on the consumer watchlist and also on the FCC so that broad government agencies are aware of the practice and also of the institution that had the egregious behavior (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

While this study focuses on the Post-9/11 GI Bill and veterans education policy, the

Principles of Excellence emphasize the interviewees' point that military and veterans education

policy exists on a continuum from active-duty servicemember to veteran and spouse/dependent

of veteran. Thus higher education policy narratives regarding active-duty servicemembers and

DoD were interwoven with higher education policy narratives related to veterans and the VA.

The Principles of Excellence also speak to a White House-propelled attempt to bridge

both a perceived civil-military gap and siloing in the federal government by bringing together

military/veteran- *and* civilian-serving federal agencies to handle cross-agency issues related to

the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Executive Order 13607 was issued by President Obama in response to

news reports of student veterans being taken advantage of in the postsecondary education arena

and well-documented problems with the VA's implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Sam

Bahman (Association A) commented at length to explain some of the background:

> ...we are very alarmed by the disproportionate participation of what I tend to label as fraud factories in GI Bill educational programs. Now, I have a lot of empathy for the VA because I understand the VA is not in the business of determining what is and what is not a legitimate university and you could argue very cogently that that's the job of the Department of Ed, and the Department of Ed is the one that's failed to do its due diligence and that's a dysfunction that spills over. But you know we have approving agencies that are *not* a creature of the Department of Ed and are under the control of and authorized by the VA and that the VA could do a whole lot more to protect servicemembers....
>
> I think there's something profoundly disturbing about allowing vets to be ripped off. It says something very bad about the kind of country you are, when you send people into these terrible places and ask them—people keep talking about the fewer than one percent. The defense of the United States of America rests on the shoulders of fewer than one percent of our population. And these are not just people who put on a uniform; these people leave their families, their children, behind and are exposed to all kinds of horrors. And when they come back, our failure—our *collective* failure—to protect them is just— it's a moral outrage to me. And I just believe the VA is not doing a good job....And I can't fathom why we *allow* this to *happen*. How does a Marine [sic]vet with a brain injury [wind up allegedly mistreated by an institution]—how do we *tolerate* that?...I think there is something really *rotten* in the state of Denmark when that is *allowed* to happen (Sam Bahman, Association A).

The reference to "a Marine vet with a brain injury" is shorthand for a well-known example of

alleged mistreatment of a student veteran within veterans education policy circles, though Mr.

Bahman misremembered the veteran's branch of service. "Educating Sergeant Pantzke" was the

title of a 2011 investigative report by CBS *Frontline* on proprietary institutions and student

veterans. Chris Pantzke, a disabled Army veteran with service-incurred Traumatic Brain Injury

(TBI) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), attempted to enroll in a proprietary college's

online photography program. However, according to the official *Frontline* transcript:

CHRIS PANTZKE: One of the very first things, I told them that I had PTSD. And she said, "Oh, you'll do fine. We'll take care of you. You— not a problem." You know, "You're good. Don't worry about it. We'll take care of you."
I looked at what they had. They had a really good on-line photography course. It was a bachelor of science. So I said, "Degree, photography, OK." And about a day later, I get a phone call, "You're approved. You're in school." It's, like, "OK."

MARTIN SMITH: The school would collect over $70,000 of Pantzke's GI Bill money and other federal funds, but he was struggling to keep up with his coursework.

RENE PANTZKE, Wife: After getting into the class, there wasn't a whole lot of help. Even though he would e-mail them, it would take them, you know, days, maybe even a week before they got back to him.

MARTIN SMITH: Then the school flunked him....

MARTIN SMITH: The Art Institutes say they offered Pantzke extensive tutoring services at no charge. But they declined our request for an interview....Shortly before this broadcast, the Art Institutes wrote to FRONTLINE to say they've readmitted Sgt Pantzke. But he's already run through more than half of his GI Bill benefits and has had to borrow another $15,000 to make ends meet. He says he worries it won't be enough to finish the $82,000 program and get his degree (CBS *Frontline*, June 28, 2011).

This is one high-profile example of why the Principles of Excellence were signed by President Obama and why Dr. Truman went into such detail about the policies being implemented to comply with the Executive Order. It also, unfortunately, creates some mistrust of higher education institutions among servicemembers and veterans who have not only heard Sergeant Pantzke's story, but Congressional testimony of other student veterans alleging that certain higher education institutions have taken their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and not provided the education they promised.

This testimony led to the creation of the mechanism for servicemembers, veterans, and family members to file complaints against institutions explained by Dr. Truman. Between the January 30 2014 launch of the Postsecondary Education Complaint System (which VA calls the GI Bill Feedback System) and November 4 2014, VA alone received 2,254 complaints. Of those,

1,434 were complaints about 975 institutions and campuses related to the Principles of

Excellence; VA closed 312 complaints, conducted 42 risk-based program reviews based on the

most serious complaints, withdrew two institutions' eligibility to participate in the Post-9/11 GI

Bill program, and referred two programs to the VA's Office of Inspector General for criminal

prosecution (Veterans Benefit Administration, GI Bill Feedback System, January 2015).

Before discussing the specific policy narratives and counternarratives of veterans

education policy at the higher education associations studied, a little more background is

necessary to understand the fluid and complicated environment in which higher education

associations operate regarding military-affiliated students and policies related thereto. This

environment informed all the interviewees' remarks. One of my standard questions to

interviewees was "What agencies does your association work with on veterans' issues in higher

education?" They answered this question differently and often expanded its scope, as Sam

Bahman (Association A) did:

> Well, it's kind of hard to say because it's evolved over time...I'm assuming broad
> organizations, not just federal agencies. Obviously the House and Senate are major
> actors. The federal government, clearly the VA is a major player here who we need to
> interact with. With regard to some of the unfortunate dysfunctions of the GI educational
> benefit system, we interact with CFPB, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau,
> [which] has its own servicemember/veteran service within the organization as one of its
> mandates. As you're well aware, there is an entire sort of parallel universe of veterans'
> and servicemembers' organizations we interact with. Within Association A itself, you are
> quite familiar with [federal contract redacted for confidentiality] that occupies a very
> unique place with regard to the complicated relationship between the military and vets on
> one hand and higher ed on the other, with [agency redacted] direct funding and
> involvement and training in some of these relationships (Sam Bahman, Association A).

Dr. Andrew Trajan also mentioned the same federal contract, but then added that "We work with

the committees on the Hill that oversee the agencies: Armed Services, Veterans Administration

and others" (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A). This is a specific example of political

networking paralleling more general comments made by interviewees in the previous chapter about how associations operate.

When asked the same question about what agencies Association B worked with on veterans education policy, Angela Kay paused, then said "All of them?" before laughing. She went on:

> ...I have worked very hard, as have my predecessors, to enhance our relationships with Student Veterans of America, American Legion, VFW, IAVA, AACC, CAEL....We also work very closely with DoD, with VA—these are not associations—but with Department of Labor, Department of Ed, CFPB. We also work with our institutions. And then one of the components that I'm pulling in is employers, people who look to employ veterans once they've accomplished their academic goals (Angela Kay, Association B).

The acronyms used in the above statement are a familiar shorthand for those in veterans education, but translate as follows: Veterans of Foreign Wars, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, American Association of Community Colleges, and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. VFW and IAVA are veteran-serving organizations with education as one part of their portfolio; AACC is a member of the Big Six representing community colleges; CAEL is a nonprofit organization focusing on adult learning and workforce issues. This reinforces the "parallel universe" remark of Sam Bahman, (Association A) since the veterans' organizations do not interact with higher education policymakers *except* in matters related to veterans education. Also reinforcing the parallel universe concept noted in the previous chapter, the list of organizations rattled off by Ms. Kay did *not* include other higher education associations, either national or professional, with whom Association B has worked in the past on veterans education policy issues. Dr. Robert Cabrera, while demurring that being new to Association B meant "I'm still exploring how we can work more with other federal agencies," mentioned the Department of Education as a primary collaborator (Dr. Robert Cabrera, Association B).

The Association C interviewees who worked directly on veterans education policy

mentioned an overlapping but not identical list of organizations and agencies due to their focus

on particular implementation aspects of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. As Claire Rigby explained: "[W]e

pulled off into an operational group of representatives, from [Association C] primarily members

from the bursars, student accounts people, because they're primarily the ones on the ground,

from the student aid folks, and the veterans programs folks....DoD has crept in there. Department

of Education has been involved at a few points....[Big Six association] has been part of our group

too" (Claire Rigby, Association C). David Stanislaus added "NAVPA, the veterans personnel,

have been involved" (David Stanislaus, Association C). NAVPA is short for the National

Association of Veteran Program Administrators, and was not mentioned by the other

interviewees.

This sketches—though does not completely capture—the world in which higher

education associations operate regarding veterans education policy. With this as backdrop, I turn

to the emerging veterans education policy narratives drawn from the interviews.

Associations' Veterans Education Policy Narratives

Associations experience the civil-military gap on multiple levels. Multiple

interviewees used the words "cultural divide," "cultural difference," and "gap" when discussing

how their associations worked with military- and veteran-serving agencies and advocates for

military-affiliated students. They cited different ways in which the gap manifested in their day-

to-day work on veterans education policy.

Structural civil-military gap issues. More than one interviewee began by attempting to

explain their experience of the civil-military gap from a structural perspective based on federal

agencies' different interactions with higher education institutions and their representative

associations. As Claire Rigby put it:

> I think people look at how the Department of Education runs vis-à-vis schools and think
> "Oh, why can't the VA be more like that and why can't they all be the same?" The
> problem being that the VA's whole system and whole way of thinking starts at a different
> place than the Department of Education and that they don't mesh very well together
> (Claire Rigby, Association C).

Sam Bahman (Association A) addressed this point as well while discussing the shortcomings he

saw with the VA's administration of the Post-9/11 GI Bill: "The job of the agency [the VA] is

not to pander to schools. The job of the agency is to protect vets" (Sam Bahman, Association A).

This references the one-sentence VA mission statement: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise

'To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan' by serving

and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans" (U.S. Department of Veterans

Affairs Mission Statement, n.d.).

VA's mission to serve veterans includes not only providing education benefits earned by

military service, but other service-related benefits such as health care and rehabilitation, home

ownership assistance, and burial benefits. Thus VA's interest in postsecondary education is only

related to what is good, from the VA perspective, for student veterans; potential ripple effects of

veterans education policies on civilian students are not of interest to VA (e.g., mandatory in-state

tuition for veterans at public institutions).

This creates a structural civil-military gap between the VA and the Department of

Education, which is tasked to administer K-12 and postsecondary education policies and federal

funds benefiting both military-affiliated and civilian students. In other words, the Department of

Education *must* care about both civilian *and* military-affiliated students; the VA (as well as DoD)

does not *have* to care about civilian students because the agency's structural focus excludes

them. Claire Rigby (Association C) specifically touched on the differences between the two

agencies' structures:

> ...VA thinks differently from the Department of Education. The Department of Education, pretty much, I mean, more so than VA, views the schools as their partners in providing assistance to students. VA doesn't feel like that at all because VA traditionally gives money to the veteran (Claire Rigby, Association C).

> ***Cultural civil-military gap issues***. More than one interviewee referred to cultural gaps

between military/veteran-serving agencies and higher education association stakeholders. Sam

Bahman (Association A) also noted that the military/veteran-serving agencies, in his opinion,

were partly shaped by the culture of those they served:

> [I]n my experience, both with DoD and VA, you can very clearly see the impact of military culture on the agencies....[Y]ou can see the sort of impact of the discipline that you gain in the military with regards to both personal conduct and professional conduct....My own reaction and my own take on it is that it has been generally very positive....I actually like the fact that there is a certain level of formality and literalism with regard to their behavior. It makes life easier in my opinion, not harder. Those are things that higher ed—higher ed and lobbyists generally—could learn a lot from. Generally when they tell you something they deliver on the thing they told you. Now sometimes it may strike you as sort of mechanistic because they deliver exactly what they promised, no more and no less. They're not as free-form as some other groups are but that makes them more predictable and more reliable. That's okay with me (Sam Bahman, Association A).

This assessment of cultural difference is largely positive because Mr. Bahman believes that

civilian higher education culture can *learn* from military culture. A specific example he gave

was military- and veteran-serving agencies' punctuality, which is not as culturally ingrained in

the higher education association world as in military- and veteran-serving agencies. He

characterized the habit of a standing civilian higher education association meeting beginning at

10:10 AM rather than its scheduled 10 AM as "extremely annoying...Ten AM is ten AM. You

know, look at your watch or your cell phone or whatever and show up [on time] because it's

disrespectful to everybody else in my opinion [to be late]" (Sam Bahman, Association A). This

led into his comment about military culture's higher level of formality and literalism being

something from which higher education could learn.

However, he went on to discuss both his perception of the civil-military gap and past

issues he thought had bearing on it:

> I certainly see a significant gap—which may be diminishing—but I can tell you for example that when I first went to [previous professional association] the issue of recruiters' access to campuses and to student recruitment data was very much an area of friction and disagreement between my association and the military back then. That kind of took me by surprise because I didn't *expect* that. I didn't *expect* to see the kind of negativity I encountered within the membership. And as I kind of dug into it, quite frankly...typically the friction was from the older [specific administrative job represented by the association] who was more a Vietnam-era person, that there was a conceptual antipathy toward the military back then.
>
> Now, I have to say that generation transitioned [out of the profession into retirement] by the time I left [previous professional association]. With this younger generation, there is at least a greater sense of appreciation and of gratitude toward veterans from civilian society. Now, I don't know how much of it is just situational and how much of it is really sort of a real embrace of the people who have sacrificed for this country....I'm one of those people who believes that a country *at* war should *be* at war....I find it problematic and very surrealistic, frankly, that we were a country at war for over a decade and the civilian population went along as if nothing was wrong. The war was compartmentalized....[Y]ou know caskets were coming back of American dead. So I think that people sort-of acknowledged that and there was a greater sense of societal acknowledgment and support for the vets. How much of that was genuine and understood emotionally, I don't know (Sam Bahman, Association A).

This is a layered description of the civil-military gap perceived by one long-time higher

education association insider with no connection to the military both in his daily work and more

broadly within the U.S. It touches on both structural gaps (e.g., the disagreement between a

professional higher education association and the military) and cultural gaps. Mr. Bahman

reinforces part of the literature related to the civil-military gap and academia by using the phrase

"conceptual antipathy toward the military" to describe the viewpoint of civilian higher education

association members whose attitudes were shaped by Vietnam.

He goes on to describe a change in civilians' attitude toward veterans but also a simultaneous reinforcement of the civil-military gap. There was no call for shared sacrifice during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom as there was during World War II. This meant civilians were able to proceed "as if nothing was wrong" and maintain the civil-military gap (Sam Bahman, Association A). The war and its cost to servicemembers, veterans, and families—less than 1% of the American population—remained on the military side of the gap.

Taking yet another different but related perspective on the cultural aspects of the civil-military gap, Derek Coleridge (Association A) said firmly, "There's definitely a cultural difference. No question about that." When asked to explain, he said:

> They tend to be much more focused, very military, top-down command structure of "You need to do this and it's going to be done by tomorrow." They tend to not like the bureaucracy of higher ed. They tend to not like the committees being formed. For example, [with] the in-state tuition, we had to struggle with some of those cultural issues, explaining to them that no, we have to deal with state legislatures. It's not as simple as us going to tell our schools "You're going to do in-state tuition." We can't just tell them [institutions] what to do; they have to deal with their legislatures, they have their own process. We can *strongly suggest* [laughter] and say "You probably need to be doing this," but we can't just force things down their throat. We can't, just, say, give an order and [have] it be done. And I don't think they've [military- and veteran-serving agencies] always completely understood that (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

The reference to "in-state tuition" is, as discussed in Chapter 4, the passage of a federal requirement that public institutions charge in-state tuition effective July 1, 2015 to *all* eligible student veterans and dependents who enroll three years after the veteran's discharge from active duty regardless of their state residency. If schools do not comply, they will be sanctioned by the VA and become ineligible to receive payment under Chapter 33 veterans benefits (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Section 702 of the Choice Act Fact Sheet, n.d.).

Interviewees were unaware of the pilot study since it was done by means of document

analysis. Derek Coleridge (Association A)'s comment regarding "cultural issues" affecting the

particular subject of compliance with the new in-state tuition law helps reinforce the civil-

military gap policy narratives present evident in documents on the in-state tuition issue.

Sam Bahman (Association A) also independently brought up the in-state tuition issue

when asked whether Association A's experiences working with specific military/veteran-serving

agencies had any effect on their veterans education policy objectives:

> ...I certainly believe that interacting with the agencies and with other players has
> informed us and has certainly altered our perceptions and maybe our positions.
>
> ...[W]e specifically had a funny, just to illustrate that, and complicated relationship with
> the issue of in-state tuition for vets. On the one hand, given the extreme sort of nature of
> my opinion on the importance of making sure vets don't get ripped off, this is a good
> thing that I've pushed for for a long time: ensuring that vets understand that going to a
> public institution is their ace up the sleeve because they would be eligible for in-state
> tuition anywhere. So do I support that goal. Absolutely I have supported that goal.
> On the other hand, did Congress do it the right way? Absolutely not. They did it the sort
> of political way, by mandating [it] as a condition of participation [in veterans education
> programs] not acknowledging that obviously institutions don't print money in the
> basement and if the state doesn't pay and the vet gets a discount, other people [i.e., state
> residents] whose taxes justify that discount [to them] and institutions somehow have to
> come up with that funding.
>
> So that's an example of something that may be on the surface a black and white "We're
> for it no matter what," which is the position that many of the veteran-serving
> organizations took, or "We're against it no matter what because state taxpayers should
> receive that discount." We ended up in much more of a hybrid position after interacting
> with the others, finding out what some of their problems, their concerns were (Sam
> Bahman, Association A).

This lengthy commentary, delivered approximately two years after Association A's aggressively

worded testimony against in-state tuition, specifically references Association A's *interacting*

with military- and veteran-serving agencies and reassessing its policy position to a degree based

on what Association A has learned over the past two years. Interacting, then, becomes an attempt to make better veterans education policy by trying to bridge the civil-military gap.

Derek Coleridge reinforced the financial problems of the in-state tuition bill raised by his colleague: "We have a requirement now for public institutions to provide in-state tuition for veterans that is going to be difficult, going to put additional financial strain on a lot of our schools" (Derek Coleridge, Association A). This was addressed in Association A's testimony but openly contested by the Congressional representatives and veteran-serving organizations hearing the testimony. However, according to Derek Coleridge, Association A has moved past the testimony to work on "getting our schools ready for those changes as best we can and trying to be a sounding board, going back and forth with VA" (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

"It is a cultural divide, if you would, but it's also just the language". Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A) pointed out a cultural divide when discussing "a lot of disconnects" in veterans education policy between higher education associations and also different federal agencies:

> One of the examples that I would go back to is with the Post-9/11 GI Bill policy in terms of...the table that they [VA] created for the maximum amount of tuition and fees by state. And it was because the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Education, or higher education associations, really have separate definitions and separate approaches to [calculating] that. And so that was one of those occasions where as the individual from VA is talking about how they're going to implement this policy, associations from— representatives from the Six were sitting around the table going "*What*? Where did you come up with these numbers?" So it is a cultural divide, if you would, but it's also just the [agency-centric] language [or perspective not universally shared at the outset of policy development]. And I think one of the lessons I've learned is that before we get too far down into the weeds for a policy is to come up with some common definitions or standard definitions so that everyone is on that same page (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

As a reminder, the tuition and fee table was *not* legislatively mandated by the Post-9/11 GI Bill. It combined the highest tuition and highest required fees that VA had researched by state

regardless of institution and did not take into account that some states' public institutions used

"fees" to denote "tuition" charges (McBain, November 2009). Claire Rigby (Association C)

commented to reinforce Dr. Lynn Truman's point:

> We had real problems with the way that the VA wanted to set up that tuition and fees
> thing and it felt like we were beating our heads against the wall to tell them that *nobody*
> in higher education ever separates tuition and fees because there is *no* standard definition
> of which is which. Or standard way of doing it. Then they came up with that *crazy*
> schedule...that was a frustrating thing (Claire Rigby, Association C).

The problem of linguistic divisions illustrated by this example is not restricted to veterans

education policy and U.S. federal agencies, of course; George Bernard Shaw's comment

"England and America are two countries separated by a common language" (Shaw, n.d.) comes

to mind. Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A) reiterated the point when discussing a national

committee on veterans education issues upon which she serves:

> "...So many of the recommendations [the committee makes]—whether it be language or
> phraseology or new public law—are to make sure the language is understood both in the
> field by those who are actually *implementing* the policy as well as [by] those
> administrators, Congressmen, legislators who are actually *writing* the policy. And they
> [those writing] think they have one idea of what the language means, whereas the reality
> in higher education is that it may have a completely different impact. So I think that is the
> real advantage of having...frequent conversations—"Do you realize [what the language
> means to implementation], or is this your intent for this piece of legislation, and if not,
> let's look at some other strategies or some other ways [to achieve the intent]..." (Dr. Lynn
> Truman, Association A)

When asked to elaborate on their preceding cultural divide comment, Dr. Truman went on:

> Again, I'm not sure whether it was just the Department of Veteran Affairs had their
> definition and their view, and the Department of Defense and the Department of
> Education had their different definitions and their approach, and it was—it's just that it
> never occurred, I guess, to the Department of Defense or, I keep saying Defense but it's
> Veteran Affairs, that there was any other viewpoint. So it was a very myopic "Here's
> how *we* do it, here's how *we* measure it, here's how *we'll* approach it." And there was an
> assumption that everyone else does it the same way (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

She then remarked that these cultural and linguistic gaps also exist elsewhere:

I think we find the same thing sometimes with other legislation or proposed legislation, in that legislators or their teams or staff assume that because that's how it's done in the state of North Carolina or the state of Virginia that's how it's done nationally. So they use language that is much more state-based than from a national perspective. And again, we all do that from time to time, but that's an example where just your personal culture, or background, impacts the language and potential policy that could be in play (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

The issue of cultural gaps existing between legislators and staff from different states as well as individuals' personal cultural gaps is beyond the scope of this study, but raises the intriguing question of how experiences with different states' legislative policies and cultures affect both civilians and veterans within veterans education policy circles.

"We're not part of that club." The interview sample consisted of two veterans from different generations and branches of service, one long-term military spouse, two military brats who did not go into service, and five civilians with either no connection to the military beyond their veterans education policy work or what might be considered tangential connections (e.g., a spouse's grandparent having served). This provided the opportunity to hear veterans, family members, and civilians offer their perspective on working with military- and veteran-serving agencies. Military- and veteran-serving agencies react differently to veterans than to civilians in veterans education policy circles, and by so doing emphasize the cultural civil-military gap.

The different reaction to veterans and civilians by military- and veteran-serving agencies was highlighted by Claire Rigby (Association C), who has no connection to the military:

[W]e have veterans and people more tied into it who are on our small group and we rely on them a lot. In particular, the bursar at [public Mid-Atlantic institution] is quite involved and he's a vet. His school has more than a thousand veterans. So we trot him into a lot of meetings [laughter] because I feel like the people from the VA or the student veterans association react differently to him than they react to us. He's part of the club that we're not part of. So we're aware of that, so we just try to use other people, since we're not part of that club....

I notice it more when dealing with DoD. DoD is a *huge* difference. They are quite arrogant to deal with....[laughter] It's just, you know, it's very frustrating to deal with the DoD. They are a force in and of themselves....So that's a totally different culture that I can't say we have effectively dealt with very much. It has been a real challenge. The VA is easier to deal with than that....And it [the VA] *is* a little bit of a clubby feel, not hostile in any way, I don't think—I haven't sensed that [hostility] in the way I do with DoD (Claire Rigby, Association C).

The comment about DoD culture versus VA culture did not come up in other interviews and would need further research to investigate fully. However, the issue of veterans reacting differently to other veterans working on veterans education policy issues compared with civilians was also brought up by Dr. Robert Cabrera, Association B, who is a veteran:

It's great working with the Department of Education because...it's an instant bond because so many of them are also veterans themselves and so it makes it a lot easier to come to an agreement about what gets studied and how to go about it. So working with them, it makes it a lot easier when you have a veteran on one side [education association] and a veteran on the federal agency side coming together....[I]t's the first thing I think about when it comes to facilitating that relationship or...it's just a lot easier (Dr. Robert Cabrera, Association B).

When asked to elaborate, he went on:

I think the reason we have a good relationship with them [the Department of Education] is that they're part of the new generation of veterans and so am I, so that just makes it a lot easier. Because, you know, we talk in codes. If you were former enlisted Marine or Army, you know, it's just easier to open up to each other. Because you both understand more or less what each other has been through. So that just makes it a lot easier to work together outside the enlisted space....maybe if I were to meet other new-generation veterans in these other agencies that would help to broker these relationships and have them succeed....[I]t's just my suspicion that if I found another OIF vet in Department of Labor, or in the VA, we'd get it (Dr. Robert Cabrera, Association B).

The natural follow-up question was where Dr. Cabrera felt civilians fit into veterans education policy:

[T]here's so few veterans that are trained and skilled to lead a higher ed association research agenda...I mean, civilians can definitely be a part of that [research], and they should....[I]t's been my experience that there are some civilians who are wonderful to work with. They're great at what they do, they know the policy implications, they know the policy angles to the research and so that's sort of where I see civilians filling in the

> gaps and being part of the research and the policy....Because you can be missing a lot if this is just a veteran-led initiative or a veteran-led study. You also have to consider how the rest of society, you know, will digest this information. And so, at least for me, I think they bring a very important perspective and flavor into...whatever initiative or study you're conducting (Dr. Robert Cabrera, Association B).

This passage holds contradictory truths in its assumptions that a) civilian researchers and policymakers should only serve as gap-fillers where veterans are not trained to conduct specific policy research, and b) civilians' perspective as both education policy experts *and* part of broader society is important to veterans education policy research. Dr. Cabrera involves civilians in all his projects, commenting "[I]t's great because they add so much more into the discussion" (Dr. Robert Cabrera, Association B), so this is not a negative per se. It is, however, an example of contradictory truths that need further study in order to explore their nuances. This is especially true since the other veteran in the sample, Dr. Andrew Trajan (Association A) did not refer to a particular bond between himself and other veterans in veterans education policy but noted "I am a veteran, and I had a sensitivity to the issues when I came here [to Association A]" (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A). This different perspective could be because the two veteran higher education association staffers are from different age cohorts (and thus served in different conflicts) and different branches of service; again, this would need more research to disentangle.

In addition, Dr. Cabrera's comments do not address where military brats and military spouses fit into veterans education policy and research, particularly given the possibility that military brats and spouses move into military and veterans education *because* of their connection to the military. Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A) provided her own story as an example:

> ...I am a spouse of an active-duty military officer [since retired], so we moved from place to place....[My career] track for probably the past 25-30 years has been working with military students in higher education. I worked as [student services position redacted for confidentiality] at a public institution and a private institution located near a military base. So the majority of our students were military students and veterans and military

family members....[W]e were right outside [a large military installation], and when 60-75% of your student enrollment are military students, you can't help but identify their issues and their challenges and their problems. For me, it then became a matter of when I moved to the Washington, DC area there was an opportunity to work with an organization that focused there [i.e., on military/veteran students]. I have been with [Association A] for nearly 20 years. Part of it was good timing, being at the right place and the right time for this opportunity. And obviously it was something I was passionate about so it has continued to be in the forefront of my career (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

It is not the job of veterans to speak for military spouses and brats (their sons and daughters), of course. Nor is the reverse true. However, the question of who *should* speak, whose voices *should* be heard, and who *should* primarily research veterans education topics in a venue of contradictory truths is one that veterans education research has yet to fully address. This is especially true when, as in the next policy narrative, higher education association experts' voices are drowned out on the very topic of higher education.

"No matter how much we...beg, they refuse to consult before they do things". Higher education associations' voices are not always heard by military/veteran-serving agencies. As a corollary, military/veteran advocates' voices are sometimes loud enough to overrule the expertise of higher education associations on higher education operations, which can wind up harming the military/veteran students the advocates are trying to help. This point was made by multiple interviewees from different associations. For instance, Angela Kay (Association B) stated:

> [W]ith [Association B], we have a pretty solid understanding of those issues related to higher education. With some of the VSOs [veteran-serving organizations] that are outside higher ed, who are actively involved in some of the higher ed components, they don't fully understand—you know, they don't fully get the nuances of higher education. And so some of the policies that they might be fighting for, some of the things that they might advocate for on the Hill to help servicemembers and vets might sound ideal in their perspective, but from someone in higher ed, it's just "Yeah, that is *not* going to work." [laughter] "*Not* gonna happen."

155

The challenge comes when—sometimes their voices are more loudly heard than some of our voices are....And what's unfortunately going to happen is that it's going to hurt our servicemembers and vets when they're looking to go to school....[I]t's not even that they don't *want* to serve these students, but they don't have the sources of support available to offer support services for their servicemembers and veterans based on what's been pushed into place....And that ultimately hurts our servicemembers and veterans. For me, I think it's finding this balance of trying to educate the VSOs on the nuances of higher ed and how certain types of things they're going to try to pass might sound good on paper, but in implementation it's actually going to be more damaging than helpful (Angela Kay, Association B).

This was also a narrative of the document analysis, where veteran-serving organizations and Congressional representatives contested higher education associations' testimony and expertise on what effects an in-state tuition mandate would have on institutions. But the problem of higher education associations' voices of expertise not being heard by veteran- and military-serving agencies/organizations is larger than that, as Claire Rigby explained in the context of Post-9/11 GI Bill operational issues:

No matter how much we—how much we *beg* [laughter], they [VA, in this instance] refuse to consult before they do things. They put out letters that the schools don't understand, you know, they decree policies that don't make sense in our world. Where we really think—we keep *trying* to tell them—that we would be happy to just give them a little feedback on things before they go out with them....We think it would be useful, but their culture doesn't seem to address that or allow that [participatory feedback]. And obviously I don't know what their inside culture is. They can be frustrating to deal with (Claire Rigby, Association C).

David Stanislaus concurred, adding:

And even when the school certifying official handbook [governing the Post-9/11 GI Bill certification process for institutions] goes out, we only hear about it through our members. And we would *like* to know so that we could, through communications with our members, inform them what's going on. Explain it to them, perhaps, in clear language. But every time when something goes out [from VA] we have to hope that one of our members will report back to us (David Stanislaus, Association C).

This cultural gap leading to a communication gap between higher education associations and veteran-serving agencies is problematic because it means not only that VA is completely

disregarding the collective power of higher education associations, but the colleges and

universities represented by higher education associations do not understand the policies enacted

by the VA with respect to veterans education benefits. These policies do not conform to how

higher education operates and therefore are difficult for higher education institutions to

understand or implement. As Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B) observed, "[VA] is a

very different beast than Education [as a federal agency]....I think the other challenge with

Veterans Affairs and on some level with DoD was a lack of—certainly a lack of understanding

and on some level a lack of appreciation for the complexities around educational issues" (Dr.

Anthony Hendricksen, Association B). When asked to elaborate, he went on:

> So, an example of what I mean by that was at the time the head of Veterans Affairs,
> Shinseki, had stated that he thought a realistic goal for a graduation rate of veterans was
> somewhere north of 80 percent. Now, you talk to anyone in Education and they'll tell
> you...[the general population of students is] not above 70 percent right now. And a
> demographic population like veterans, it's not going to be anywhere close to where the
> general population is. So this notion that anything under this 80 percent graduation rate
> goal for veterans was a failure showed, certainly, a lack of understanding of the reality of
> some of the educational issues that we were dealing with....
>
> The average veterans tend to be lower income, do not come from households where both
> parents are college-educated, are often first-generation college students, were not high
> academic achievers in high school. So in general, that's sort of the academic profile of a
> lot of veterans. And so if you were to remove the veteran aspect and look at just those
> other factors and say of that population that you expect an 80 percent graduation rate,
> most of higher education would simply say to you that's probably not realistic. But
> [because of] the fact that they were veterans, there were those in the Veterans Affairs
> department who felt they *should* be able to achieve 80 percent, and that's just not an
> educational reality (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B).

This is a prime example of VA expectations for high institutional performance but a lack of

awareness regarding research and issues in education related to students with the same profile.

Dr. Andrew Trajan (Association A) also raised what may be a related point about emotion

overriding analysis when it comes to veterans education policy:

There is a strong Congressional wave of support for anything Congress does to help veterans even if in fact we analyze it and it does not help veterans the way they think they do. I don't think there's a great deal of underlying analysis that goes on for the kind of— the kind of bills that come from an emotional willingness to want to be sympathetic to and supportive of veterans. Which makes it difficult for the agency that has to implement that, the Veterans Administration, to try to apply it fairly and honestly across the board. And we've had some difficulties trying to get them to understand the level of implementation that it would take to do what they think can be done (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

David Stanislaus (Association C) commented in reinforcement of the Congressional support mentioned by Dr. Trajan that "[I]t does seem like anything with 'veteran' on it makes its way quickly through committee" (David Stanislaus, Association C).

The point that emotional appeals by veteran supporters in Congress are heard more loudly than logical analysis by higher education associations—who also want to help veterans, but who are trying to provide analytically supported ways to do so—is another cultural facet of the civil-military gap experienced by higher education associations. For instance, emotional arguments for helping veterans (e.g., service to those who have served and patriotism) were employed by Congressional members during the hearing analyzed in the pilot study; H.R. 357's sponsor specifically stated that mandating in-state tuition for all veterans was "the least the 99 percent can do for veterans" (H.R. 357 hearing transcript, p. 5, April 2013).

Dr. Trajan's comment regarding the difficulty involved in implementing emotionally written bills because VA does not understand how higher education works illustrates yet another nuance of the civil-military gap in veterans education policy. Claire Rigby (Association C) reinforced this when discussing the prospective implementation of the in-state tuition bill, remarking "[A]s what always happens, what seems to be straightforward statute, when you try to implement, you say '*What*? Does this part apply to the dependents, or this, and what do you

mean?' and there's been trouble getting the advice and guidance needed to know exactly what

they need to do" (Claire Rigby, Association C).

Sam Bahman (Association A) raised another issue with higher education's voices not

being heard on behalf of student veterans when asked to describe his perspective on the

professional relationship between his association and the military/veteran-serving agencies:

> They're collegial, but that is not to say that they are not fraught....[I]n general we have
> disagreements, and complaints, significant pending issues with issues as to how these
> benefits are administered. And obviously—I'll be very candid with you—obviously there
> is a significant element of institutional concern. In other words, perhaps you could label it
> raw self-interest: obviously we want our institutional cash flows to operate seamlessly,
> obviously we want our compliance burdens to be somewhat reasonable and efficient, etc.,
> etc.

> But honestly I can say at the policy level here—and I believe this is true certainly with
> regard to vets with campus officials, front-line campus officials who administer veteran
> benefits—a lot of our disagreements with the VA boil down to what I would call less
> than ideal treatment of the vets by the VA itself. I am very vociferous in some of my
> objections that the VA has made. This is not to say that I don't respect them, that I don't
> view them as colleagues, because I do....But there are significant disagreements in terms
> of the choices that VA has sometimes made in terms of implementing these benefits
> (Sam Bahman, Association A).

When asked to provide an example of disagreements about VA implementation choices, he gave

the one of a "Treasury offset" also used by Association C interviewees:

> We have a system in this country where the Department of Treasury collects on debts
> owed to the United States government. And the way they collect on these debts is to
> basically track any federal benefit to which a debtor may be entitled, and as part of the
> cash management process they identify the benefit and intercept it to offset the money
> owed to the federal government....[T]he VA went ahead and sort of blindly implemented
> this Treasury offset program for the GI Bill benefit programs.

> So a vet who may owe money for some reason—and I'm not privy to the reason for
> owing the money to the federal government—ends up choosing to use their educational
> benefits at UCLA or elsewhere. They sign up and everything's fine, the VA *says* they're
> eligible, the VA *says* they're eligible for $X. And then when the money arrives, you
> realize that the total amount of money you've received for all the vets [at UCLA or
> elsewhere] is less than what the VA certified. Now the institution first of all is on a wild
> goose chase trying to find out *whose* payment was offset and why.

And not only is that, frankly, a wrinkle we don't need in terms of just operating institutions and providing services. But *beyond* that, how is that *helpful* to that vet? This is not discretionary income; it's not being spent at a liquor store buying beer; this is a vet using benefits they have *earned*. Which, guess what, they are all or nothing. You either *pay* the tuition or you *don't*. You don't pay the tuition, the vet could be disenrolled. This is a fairly bureaucratic, sort of inside-baseball—it may even strike some people as nitpicky kind of detail—but when I hear about this my first thought is that you could negate the entire premise of the GI educational benefit program by engaging in these kind of bean-counting get-tough policies. Because the assumption is that these are vets who are transitioning to civilian life who have *earned* the right to obtain more education or training to better themselves and their families. And how does a disagreement over oftentimes, by the way, a fairly meager amount—how does that sort of disagreement and get-tough attitude at that point help them if it winds up derailing their education? (Sam Bahman, Association A).

This presents the higher education community as advocates for student veterans against the VA's problematic Post-9/11 GI Bill implementation choices. While Mr. Bahman is not arguing that debts owed the federal government should not be paid, he is suggesting that VA's rigid implementation of a Treasury offset does not help student veterans succeed. The reason the offset is so problematic in the case of GI Bill funds is because, as explained by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) and to which Mr. Bahman referred, higher education institutions and state systems experience challenges matching a debt owed to a Treasury offset of funds to the institution/system. Below are procedures that are part of this Treasury Offset Program attempting to collect federal debts, as explained by a NACUBO website document for interested parties (January 11, 2013, n.p.):

> **First come, first offset**. Once a debt is referred to a federal agency to Treasury for collection, the next payment from the federal government to the debtor organization will be offset. TOP [Treasury Offset Program] makes no attempt to match sources or purposes of funds, except to identify some types of payments, such as Title IV student aid and VA benefits [*not* including Post-9/11 GI Bill tuition payments], which are exempt from offset....
>
> **TIN [Tax Identification Number] is key**. Some college and university systems share the same TIN across all campuses, and, in a few states, all state entities use the same TIN. An

offset will occur when the TIN of an entity receiving a payment is the same as the TIN of another entity owing the debt. That means that if two or more entities are using the same TIN when interacting with the federal government, TOP will offset *any* eligible payment to *any* of those entities to pay any eligible debt owed by another of those entities to the federal government.

Notice? What notice? When an offset occurs, TOP mails a letter notifying the entity of the offset. These letters may take a week or more to arrive....If no payment address is available (not uncommon with ACH [Automated Clearing House] payments), it will be sent to the entity owing the debt. This means that sometimes a department expecting a payment will not know who to contact when a payment has been offset for a debt that is owed by another department, office, or campus....

And repeat. A number of colleges and universities have reported to NACUBO that the same debt was offset two, or even three, times from different payments....The problem is because not all federal payments are made by the Treasury Department....Each of these organizations checks the debtor list before making a payment, so if multiple payments are being processed around the same time by different agencies, one debt may get offset more than once....(NACUBO, January 11, 2013, n.p.)

While this is a fairly technical discussion of institutional money management vis-à-vis federal

funds, it—and what can be read as a somewhat frustrated tone in the writing—highlights some of

the problems that VA's implementing the Treasury offset has brought to student veterans *and*

institutions. NACUBO's 2012 informational piece gives more insight into the matter and its

implications for institutions, dating back to the early days of the Post-9/11 GI Bill

implementation:

...The offset payment is often not from the agency to which the debt is owed. For example, a grant payment from the National Institutes of Health might be reduced to recover a debt that resulted from Chapter 33 VA benefits....

There was a great deal of confusion during the first years of the new GI Bill (known as Chapter 33) about when overpayments to the institution should have been returned either to the VA or to the veteran. VA guidance evolved over time and protocols are now more established. However, there are now millions of dollars in debts outstanding from 2009 to 2011. For many of these, institutions maintain that they issued refund payments to student veterans per VA guidance at the time. VA is now claiming that those refund payments should have been made to VA, not the student. In other cases, institutions have already paid the debts to VA but the agency has failed to give them credit for the

payment. The agency is now beginning to submit those debts to TOP (NACUBO, December 14, 2012, n.p.).

This lack of communication and clarity for two years regarding millions of dollars of overpayments made by VA and the larger problem of unrelated institutional grant payments being reduced because of debts VA claims institutions owe (many of which, as NACUBO points out, are contested by institutions) reflects multiple interviewees' contention that higher education's voices of expertise are not being heard by VA. Not being heard, in this case, has real costs to both student veterans and higher education institutions.

Lack of interaction between and within federal agencies affects effective administration of military/veteran education benefit programs. Contributing to "a lot of disconnects" was a lack of interaction and coordination. This point was emphasized repeatedly by interviewees, as Dr. Lynn Truman explained:

> ...the left hand and the right hand not being in synch [is typical among federal agencies]. And a lot of times, you have different agencies being assigned a task or charge to take the lead and within that organization there may be two or three divisions working on a project and they have no idea that someone else within their agency is working on that issue. So even though that's been around for as long as there've been organizations, it constantly surprises me as we work on a project that "Oh, So-and-So at this agency is also working on this." And I think that if they work in tandem rather than working in isolation, they could probably find much better solutions (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

The comment about siloing within agencies, specifically the VA, was also made by Claire Rigby when talking about Association C's semi-regular meetings on Post-9/11 GI Bill operational issues:

> Part of the issue with the VA is they're very siloed. So when we would have these meetings we would be meeting with Education Services, from their debt management group, and they're not only siloed, but they're in the Midwest somewhere [not located in DC]. They were always on the phone. And...the financial services people, who *don't* report up the same chain as the Education Services people. So sometimes those meetings seemed to be very helpful in bringing different parts of the VA together who weren't

necessarily on the same page or understanding where each other was coming from, and some of whom weren't necessarily understanding schools' issues (Claire Rigby, Association C).

Adding to the picture, Dr. Robert Cabrera (Association B) brought up the problem of

siloing *between* agencies versus siloing *within* agencies from the vantage point of a new

association employee:

> [I]t's like everybody's on their own turf and they don't really play well together, unfortunately, and it's sort of a challenge. It's difficult when the federal agencies are working in silos and not really talking to each other....I really don't understand why they don't like to work together. In the military, you know, everything is teamwork, so [slight laughter] it kind of surprises me that at the federal agency level that just isn't the case. I wonder what's going on, are there egos or...who are the ones behind these federal agencies that are not working together? Why is that the case? (Dr. Robert Cabrera, Association B).

Dr. Andrew Trajan (Association A), with decades of experience in the association world, also

addressed this issue in detail:

> I would have to say that what's most surprising to me is the failure of there to be interagency collaboration or coordination in terms of representing our nation's veterans. That absence of collaboration causes a great deal more pain than even lack of funding in some cases because the lack of collaboration results in bad policy or misplaced funding or an inability to check on waste, fraud, and abuse that comes about from the policies that they put online. And the failure, or lack of there being an underlying analysis of policies and funding, without involving either the associations or institutions in helping them understand the impact of their policies or consequences....
>
> There isn't a lot of crossover discussion between the Department of Education and Veterans Administration, but there should be. The two both deal directly with students on campuses; they have different levels and kinds of funding, but essentially the Department of Education assures that the institution is eligible to receive funds through institutional eligibility procedures, and the Veterans Administration is certainly guided by that in terms of not providing funding to an institution that is not qualified to receive federal funds. At the same time, they [the VA] don't spend a lot of time looking at the data the Department of Education has available that would sort out and make clearer to the Veterans Administration what some of the do's and don'ts are with regard to implementing their own—what they think are good policies for students (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

This comment illustrates an identity issue that veterans education policymakers wrestle with: In the policy sphere, are student veterans primarily to be identified as students or as veterans? Or both? The VA treats postsecondary education benefits as one of an array of benefits veterans receive as entitlement for national service. Thus the identity of veteran supersedes the identity of student and—as commented upon by the interviewees—VA makes veterans education policies accordingly, even when broader data and expertise from the Department of Education are available to help inform VA policy decisions.

Meanwhile, the Department of Education is focused on postsecondary education issues for *all* students, *including* the subset of student veterans, and makes education policy accordingly. While the Department works with VA to a degree on particular issues regarding VA benefits and eligibility, it still treats military-affiliated students as a subpopulation of all postsecondary education students. The two agencies' different definitions of military-affiliated students' primary identity thus sets up an identity-based policy conflict that may be impossible to resolve. But the specific mention of data usage—or lack thereof—leads into another policy narrative expressed by multiple interviewees.

Specific data collection and information technology issues create divisions both among federal agencies and between agencies and higher education institutions, which negatively affects both Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries and veterans education policy and research. Interviewees did not hesitate to offer information on the subjects of data collection, technology, and policy research. The background is that VA's original implementation of computer processing of Post-9/11 GI Bill payments to students and institutions was, to put it charitably, fraught with difficulty due to outdated computer systems and a Congressionally mandated deadline of 18 months from start to finish that led major defense contractors to refuse

to bid on building a new system and forced VA to attempt to patch together a system from in-house materials (McBain, 2009). The ripple effects are still being felt in 2015, as Claire Rigby discussed in depth:

> The VA, as you hear in the papers all the time when they're talking about other things, their IT systems are [pause] *challenging*. They spent a lot of money to update their systems, but they updated them on the back end, not the front end, not the customer-facing [side]. And that is our biggest complaint now, which seems to fall on deaf ears. The people we're talking to seem to get it, but it doesn't seem to go further in the agency or they don't feel they can do anything about it. All the data for veterans, every time they add a class or change a class, has to be typed into a web screen. By hand. By a person....
> ...VA views the school as just this interloper in the system. So that's why, I think, their systems require individually typing things into screens. Because they're completely on VA-to-veteran basis. It's a one-on-one thing, so they have trouble sometimes—they've gotten a little better, but—aggregating information [reporting collected data] back to the school (Claire Rigby, Association C).

David Stanislaus interrupted with a dry comment of "*Successfully* aggregating?" This led Ms.

Rigby to continue:

> Well, no, they don't [laughter] but...their systems are antiquated enough they have trouble setting up secure ways to communicate electronically with the schools....[W]e've gotten them to do things like send a letter of outstanding debts monthly to the schools who ask for it. But they send it in *paper*. Because they don't have what they feel is a secure means to send that Excel spreadsheet electronically. Now the Department of Education has portals set up and mailboxes set up so that you go in and download with sufficient security to do that because you are sharing private information. But that's [VA procedure] really hard for schools to deal with, in the same way schools cannot do a dump from their student system and send it over electronically—"

Mr. Stanislaus clarified the comment about dumping data from student systems with "Yeah, certify a hundred students [for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits] at once" and Ms. Rigby went on:

> Communication that in this century you'd think could happen much more easily without the errors that the human intervention [creates] and the amount of time the human intervention takes. The VA has gotten *their* systems to talk to each other so that they don't have to do so much human intervention on their side, which has greatly smoothed the processing, but they haven't taken the step of making it easier for the VA to communicate with the schools or the schools to communicate with VA....It's very antiquated (Claire Rigby, Association C).

165

David Stanislaus picked up the conversational thread, which became an overlapping duet:

> And even their paper processes—I was blown away when we were instructed to tell our members that if you receive a debt letter, there's a remittance slip at the bottom and you have to send the original. Because if you photocopy it, it will be just a little off and the machine won't be able to read it and it will kick out for manual processing. And it's just—you [find it hard to] think it's 2012, 2014—
>
> Claire Rigby: We're tearing off *slips of paper*—
>
> David Stanislaus: And just *that* process, there are still many opportunities for the process to slow down and to kick out to manual. And that's where things start to slow down and go back and forth between veterans and schools.
>
> Claire Rigby: It's not that any of the people we're dealing with don't *realize* that this isn't the best way to go about things [laughter]. It's that they're stymied as well. They don't know how to fix it or get the agency to fix it. We think there's probably some easy fixes, but they have trouble negotiating the permission—
>
> David Stanislaus: It goes back to your point, too, the Post-9/11 GI Bill and all that goes along with it are just this tiny, tiny fraction of what VA does. They have higher priorities (Claire Rigby and David Stanislaus, Association C).

While this is a fairly technical discussion, IT and data collection are crucial technical areas of the Post-9/11 GI Bill because VA's job is to get the correct benefit amounts to the correct Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries in a timely manner. The choke points and outdated processes described by the Association C interviewees interfere with Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries receiving the funds to which they are entitled to further their postsecondary education. Dr. Andrew Trajan, (Association A) observed along these lines, "It's clearly true that if the Veterans Administration had worked with the Department of Ed to develop a common IT system, or database system, using the strength of data collected by both agencies, they would be a lot further down the road in terms of being able to implement their benefits distribution" (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

Further, Congressional and other stakeholders are pressing VA to provide easily accessible and comparable baseline data on Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries including not only basic demographic data, but retention and graduation rates. Since the Department of Education has a plethora of data on students and institutions and higher education stakeholders are used to relying on its data sources, VA as another federal agency dealing with student veterans is expected to be able to provide similar data for review. While the comparison of VA to the Department of Education may be unfair because of the agencies' different missions and the relative youth of the Post-9/11 GI Bill versus the mature data collection processes in the Department of Education, it is common. For instance, Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B) compared his experience working with VA to working with the Department of Education on data issues:

> [T]here were some things I found surprising [working with VA]. And the surprising nature of it was relative to what I had experienced working with the Department of Education, the agency that I'm most familiar with. And that was while the VA collects a lot of data, the way in which they collect it, the way in which they utilize it was less than ideal. And the fact that they collect a fair amount of educational data that does not link to Department of Ed data. So you have these sort of isolated datasets that are rich with information that if you could merge them would be a treasure trove. But the reality is that they can't.

> And for all the flaws with some of the data collection that exists in the Department of Education, compared to VA, VA is...yeah. And part of that is because that's not part of what they *do* at VA. It's not education....I remember it being described to me this way: They collect educational data for transactional purposes because they have to dispense the various VA benefits. Whereas the Department of Ed collects educational data for analysis. That's not why VA collects most of their data.

> And so when you start moving into the realm of working with VA in an effort to address educational issues among veterans and you want to access their data, one, it's hard to get access to. And even when you do, it doesn't tell you much (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B).

His description of VA collecting data for *transactional* purposes rather than for *analytic*

purposes is key. This makes a certain amount of sense when stepping back to view VA's culture

as an agency whose purpose is to administer a wide range of benefits to veterans. However,

given the billions of dollars being spent on the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the broader postsecondary

educational environment where *all* federal and state expenditures are being scrutinized, VA is

being asked to supply data for analysis on the educational attainment of veterans, not just

transactional data on benefit expenditures. This, as Dr. Andrew Trajan discussed, leads to a

combination of data issues and cultural gaps:

> [T]he Veterans Administration has some serious problems in dealing with its IT and it
> also, I think, has some problems in that it doesn't relate directly with institutions in a very
> positive way. The association can become, and has become, a conduit for the institutions
> in trying to interface with them [VA] and trying to explain some of the issues that are
> imposed on institutions that they don't understand the impact of or consequences of
> moving forward (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

When asked to explain the comment "it doesn't relate directly with institutions in a very positive

way, he went on:

> No, they send out letters to, for example, all presidents saying "You must comply with a
> certain set of rules by date certain," and follow[ing] that, say "We've looked at your state
> and none of your states are in compliance with this particular law." And that shows an
> ignorance of the meaning of what they're trying to do. As an understatement, I can say
> that the states—in terms of responding to that letter—are all, the majority think they *are*
> in compliance. That is just a good example of the disconnect between VA and
> understanding what their regulations are intended to do inside the states (Dr. Andrew
> Trajan, Association A).

Dr. Trajan deliberately did not specify the particular law being discussed (and made it clear

nonverbally that pressing for more information was unwise) in order to make the point about

VA's negative relationship with higher education institutions. Based on the allusions to letters to

college presidents and state-level compliance, it is reasonable to assume the in-state tuition law

is the example he had in mind.

However, the point is not so much which law is under discussion as the cultural gap between VA and civilian institutions of higher education exposed by the example. Ordering college presidents around via letter as if they were subordinates illustrates the command-and-control, military-influenced culture of VA already spoken of by interviewees. This collides with higher education's culture of organized anarchy and leads to relational gaps between two stakeholders with a common goal: to serve Post-9/11 GI Bill recipients.

The preceding is a formidable collection of policy narratives demonstrating a civil-military gap between higher education associations and the institutions they represent and military- and veteran-serving agencies. However, even as interviewees emphasized the areas in which they saw gaps and friction between the civilian higher association world and military- and veteran serving agencies, they simultaneously provided counternarrative material about the ways in which individuals and associations sought to bridge the gap.

Associations' Veterans Education Policy Counternarratives: Bridging the Gap

Associations and individuals within associations experience civil-military relations differently—so "a" civil-military gap may not be precisely correct. Despite the litany of frustrations shared by the interviewees regarding Post-9/11 GI Bill implementation and military culture's influence on military- and veteran-serving agencies, most were quick to characterize their relationships with military- and veteran-serving agencies as good. For instance, Dr. Lynn Truman, when asked to describe Association A's relationships with military- and veteran-serving agencies, said:

> [O]urs is a positive relationship, we're all working toward the same goal, to try and help [military and veteran students], so we communicate openly, we share information, and lots of different activities are going on. And I think that while the interagency task forces are the formal relationships, what we see happening more often are a lot of the informal

169

relationships—we identify a problem, we work on an issue outside of the formal structure and then we go back to that formal structure to enact changes or propose activities (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

Derek Coleridge concurred for the most part, though expanded on the relationship from his particular job perspective:

> I think it's solid. They're not afraid to call us, I'm not afraid to call them. I think you have the normal tensions that you would have—tensions, you know, they've been handed a law sometimes or a regulation that they don't always agree with or think they can implement. That sometimes creates some friction because they have frustration and we have frustration. But I would say it's generally good, at least with the administration. I think with the career staff that is there, they're very dedicated, they're very hard-working, and those conversations have always been pretty good. You know, it has its ups and downs, but for the most part it's been working (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

When asked to explain the reference to "career staff," he amplified:

> [T]here's two types of federal employees. The career staff are full-time salaried employees who are not political employees in that they are not appointed by the President; they do not have a political background. They tend to be there irregardless of the administration, so when a new administration comes in they stay. They're not subject to confirmation [by Congress], they're not subject to whoever the President is at the time (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

This led to the follow-up question of whether there was a difference in how associations dealt with political staff versus career staff regarding veterans education policy. Mr. Coleridge answered with surprising candor:

> You know what, to be honest with you, in my experience, it's different only in the sense that they're not always looking at the best *policy*. They are looking out, ultimately, for the interests of party and their ultimate boss the President. That's not to say they don't *care* about the policy. But there's a strong political element there of "This is what we're trying to do to sell a policy—the President's policy." The career staff tend to be more technically focused in my experience. They're strictly about the work. They tend not to get sucked into the back-and-forths or the debates you might see with political staff; they just want to say "Here's the policy I have been given, I'm implementing it, and that's that." [slight laughter] They don't *want* to have that conversation. The political staff *do* (Derek Coleridge, Association A).

This opens up an area of inquiry beyond the scope of this study regarding how political staff

affect veterans education policy. However, Mr. Coleridge also characterizes relationships with

career staff as "solid" and "pretty good," going on to comment:

> [T]hey have a lot of talented staff at the VSOs. More so than some other industries, I
> would say. And it's a testament to the military, to be very honest, that they—a lot of them
> have advanced degrees, and they come into the room and they have clearly done their
> homework. And that's always impressed me about the VSOs. And that—you know, it
> might be a *testy* discussion, but it's a *knowledgeable* testy discussion. [laughter]
>
> ...I've always found them to be knowledgeable, in having their heart in the right place.
> These are not people who are trying to take advantage of their position or to get rich.
> They're trying to help other veterans. And I have always admired that a great deal. The
> commitment, the sense of purpose—and they got this in the military, that's not a shock—
> the sense of purpose and the willingness to set a goal and say "We're going to do this
> come hell or high water." Sometimes for good and sometimes for bad (Derek Coleridge,
> Association A).

This sentiment was echoed by Dr. Anthony Hendricksen (Association B):

> Even though it's very easy to be critical of some of the policies that get implemented [in
> veterans education], the somewhat naïve goals of an 80 percent graduation rate among
> veterans, it all comes from—at least in my opinion—a genuine desire to really advocate
> for and help veterans. So, you know, I never got the sense that any of it was for politics
> or political gain or anything like that. I always got the sense that the things that were
> being done or pursued were genuinely what they believed to be in the best interest of
> veterans. Now, those things didn't always align with what we thought in the association
> world, but I would never question the genuine desire to help veterans in their actions.
> Even if I didn't agree with them (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B).

Angela Kay spoke highly in general of Association B's relationship with military- and veteran-

serving agencies:

> We work really well together. I would say that we work so closely together from a
> professional perspective that there's been a lot of good friendships developed out of the
> whole thing. So when there's something going on—I'll give VA [as] an example. So VA
> has a policy that they're coming out with and they contact us and say "We know that you
> have close contact with all the institutions and we need to get this information out there,
> would you be willing to get this information out there for us?" I then go and send out an
> email to all my institutions on [veteran listserv redacted for confidentiality] to help them
> further their mission. I would say that I speak on a weekly basis with a good majority of
> these associations and organizations that I work with (Angela Kay, Association B).

However, the Association C interviewees who dealt with military- and veteran-serving agencies were less positive about their relationship, though quick to mitigate their criticism with explanations:

> Claire Rigby: With VA, it's been challenging....So, interestingly, the second group, the financial services group [within VA], they've been more open in a way even though they're not the Education Services people, they're in charge of moving the money. [laughter] And it's not that we've had *bad* relations. It's just that they're overstressed, they're busy, they're difficult to get hold of—
>
> David Stanislaus: In most cases they're not making decisions. They're so low on the totem pole that we can provide feedback, but in most cases all they can do is say they'll take it back [to their superiors]. That's what they say....
>
> Claire Rigby: Part of the problem is that VA's communications with colleges all go through the school certifying official. And that person, is, typically, on most campuses, part of the registrar's office, and before the new GI Bill didn't have a lot to do with flows of money....So there's communications issues on campuses that we've tried to resolve: a lot of problems that we think are finally resolved with the flows of money going back and forth, payments going back to the VA and not being credited appropriately, notes that the VA's sending. And I forgot to mention, we have also worked with Treasury when the VA sent a whole clump of debt offsets to Treasury that then gets taken out of other money going to the institutions. Again, without much in the way of communication. And so— communications issues are big all around. Partly on campus, but also within the agencies....[I]t's been frustrating not being able to build stronger relationships, but [it's an issue] with their distracted nature and with what they have on their plates (Claire Rigby and David Stanislaus, Association C).

The tone of Ms. Rigby's comments in particular was sympathetic toward the agency staff's workload and stress level. This is interesting given the lack of communication from VA and its refusal to consult associations before making decisions having, at least according to comments in the interview, not only negatively affected student veterans but created a heavier workload for the association's member institutions as well as association staff.

Furthermore, both civilian and veteran association staff interviewed saw a special connection among veterans in veterans education policy spheres as well as significant

172

disconnects between civilian and military- and veteran-serving stakeholders. However, the role

of civilians in veterans education policy is not simply that of outsiders on one side of the civil-

military gap. Some of the most passionate advocates for military-affiliated students interviewed

were civilians. Sam Bahman (Association A) was one such, concluding his interview as follows:

> ...I want to emphasize that from my point of view, a conscious and explicit and intentional engagement with student veterans on campuses has to be an essential function of admitting them and enrolling them and educating them. That simply admitting a vet—taking a vet's money—and putting them in a calculus class and simply providing to them what everyone else has is only the price of entry. In order to do the job right and do the job right by the vets—and to do what they [higher education institutions] say they want to do, which is where students are exposed to a lot of different experiences and vicariously learn from those experiences by the fact that they're sitting by someone who they might not otherwise know or get to know—I think we need much more intentionality and much more affirmative engagement with student veterans on campuses (Sam Bahman, Association A).

The advocacy expressed here is unambiguous, as were his earlier comments about the "moral

outrage" of failing to protect veterans from potential exploitation (Sam Bahman, Association A).

Another such civilian advocate, Angela Kay, explained that her interest in military and veterans

education grew from working with adult students:

> [H]ow I got into the military side of things was when I started in higher ed I worked in the registrar's office and I worked with our adult learners and they—they were a group that I really grew passionate about. These were people who were coming back to school, who had never thought that they would ever be in school, and were many times coming back to school with many odds to overcome....

> And so in the process of working with these adult students and in the degree completion program, I had a lot of servicemembers that would go through this process. And even more so, you had a lot of servicemembers who are first-generation and they're coming to school and they're so excited at the goals and what they're overcoming to get there....

> And then I was there during 9/11. So then once 9/11 happened, I had a whole group, about five of my guys—which at the time was quite a few military students, I would say, for a private college, small private college—who came in and were telling me "[Angela], I have to withdraw from my classes. I don't know what I'm going to do." And like many institutions around the country we had no policy in place....So there were a lot of policy issues that we had to figure out and overcome in order to make sure that they were not

going to be penalized for serving our country. And so that kind of started to open my eyes to the military side of it....I had no military background other than that, but the more I learned about it the more passionate I got about it (Angela Kay, Association B).

Ms. Kay went on to make a broader advocacy point:

And not providing certain services and support systems for our servicemembers and veterans who have literally given—put their *lives* on the line to serve our country—you know, they're not our traditional students. And people will say "Why serve them, why help them?" and you say it's the right thing to do and they don't always understand what it means, "It's the right thing to do." What it means is that they've sacrificed their lives. They might be a small student population on your campus, but they are most definitely different from the other student populations on your campus because they have sacrificed something that none of the other rest of the students have (Angela Kay, Association B).

Again, this declaration of advocacy is coming from a civilian with no connection to the military except having worked with active-duty students and student veterans for many years and by so doing developing both a "passion for adult learners and... passion to serve" (Angela Kay, Association B). This may have some effect on her comments that "I've always had really good experiences with [military- and veteran-serving organizations]....I really enjoy working with them. I think that they're great" (Angela Kay, Association B).

Higher education associations also contribute to the civil-military gap in veterans education policy. Angela Kay summed up this counternarrative:

This is a knock on higher ed. In higher ed, we think that we have all the answers. We think that we know it all. And we don't. And we almost minimize other people's inputs and comments because they're not part of higher ed. It's the good old boys' club but in higher ed. And in working with our VSOs and hearing what they've had to say and hearing what their perspective is, is just a good reminder that we don't always have all the answers. And that perhaps there's an answer somewhere in the middle (Angela Kay, Association B).

The candid admission reflects a contradictory truth: Ms. Kay, along with other interviewees, discussed ways in which military- and veteran-serving organizations' voices drowned out higher education associations' voices of expertise on higher education to the detriment of the military-

affiliated students being served. However, this comment simultaneously admits that higher education can be part of the problem when it comes to the civil-military gap, not just part of the solution.

Associations fight on the same side as military/veteran-serving agencies. When asked about Association A's professional relationships with military- and veteran-serving agencies, Sam Bahman commented that "We engage with them, we interact with them, sometimes we're their harshest critics, but we're also their defenders on behalf of the programs for the veterans" (Sam Bahman, Association A). This can be compared to the old Arab proverb "Me against my brother; my brother and I against our cousins; my brothers, cousins, and I against the world." In this case, associations are "brothers" who relate as "cousins" to military- and veteran-serving agencies in order to defend veterans education programs for student veterans' ultimate benefit. This is the same type of civil-military coalition-building that made the original GI Bill and its successive iterations possible.

Bureaucracy is a common—and commonly frustrating—denominator for both higher education associations and military- and veteran-serving agencies. As Sam Bahman said:

> What has been most surprising to me, and I'm coming from the bureaucratic nature of academic life, has been how bureaucratic [military- and veteran-serving agencies] are. Now, that shouldn't be surprising because I've read Max Weber and I understand the military's success is a function of bureaucratization, but they are—you know, people who think the Department of Ed is bureaucratic have not dealt with the Pentagon, and people who think the Pentagon is bureaucratic have not dealt with the VA (Sam Bahman, Association A).

This points to both a common frustration and a common denominator. In the previous chapter, Derek Coleridge referenced frustration with associations' inflexible bureaucratic culture and noted that his contacts in military- and veteran-serving agencies "tend to not like the bureaucracy

of higher ed" (Derek Coleridge, Association A). Dr. Anthony Hendricksen also commented, "I know I referenced the bureaucracy of working in an association, but that was nothing compared to the bureaucracy of working for a federal agency....[T]here was no sense of familiarity in the sense of 'Oh, I could go work over there'; it was quite the opposite of 'I could *not* work there'" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B). Other interviewees characterized higher education association culture as bureaucratic. Thus the shared narrative of bureaucracy binds the civil and military sides of the civil-military gap in more than one sense of the word.

Veterans Education Policy Metanarrative: "[I]t's not all black and white; there are certainly a lot of gray areas, nuances."

The emerging veterans education policy narrative based on the interviews, at least from the higher education association side, shows a civil-military gap in veterans education policy. However, the gap constantly widens or shortens depending on the association and its networking ties with military- and veteran-serving associations, individual stakeholders' personal connection to the military (or lack thereof), and individual stakeholders' ability to perceive the gap and try to mitigate it. One example of such an attempt is Association C's strategy of inviting a veteran working at a higher education institution to meetings with military- and veteran-serving agencies because they know he can communicate with them based on shared military service. Another is Dr. Robert Cabrera's involving civilians in all his research projects for Association B even though he is keenly focused on finding other veterans to connect with in the veterans education arena, particularly at federal agencies. And in general, even as interviewees detailed areas of conflict, they also spoke of compromise and evolving positions.

Staff from all the associations interviewed characterized their main veterans education policy goals—backed by their members—as helping students. Claire Rigby summed Association C's goals up as follows:

> [O]ur objectives in terms of education policy [are that] we would like to see veterans get all the help possible. Schools like to have veterans and in general will bend over backward to help veterans. Nobody doesn't want to be seen and perceived as veteran-friendly. And [Association C] strongly supports that goal and has been very supportive of this legislation [the Post-9/11 GI Bill] (Claire Rigby, Association C).

This language was echoed by Association B interviewees. Dr. Anthony Hendricksen described their "key policy objective" during his ten-year term at Association B as being "to increase access and success for veterans to higher education....I would probably emphasize the access more than the success because most of the programming [Association B] did on a consistent basis was geared toward access" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B).

Angela Kay, with a different job description, pointed out that "if you ask some of the people who work on the Hill for advocacy, they're going to say our primary goal is to represent our institutions and the issues they're facing....And I would agree with that." However, she continued, "My job is to find ways to enhance and support our institutions as they're looking to better serve their military and veteran student population. But we also have our military student populations that we're representing" (Angela Kay, Association B).

Sam Bahman described Association A's key objectives related to veterans education policy as follows:

> First and foremost, like a broken record, I'm going to say that vets are not victimized and that when they do tap their hard-earned educational benefits that every penny of those benefits is going to legitimate education and training. It doesn't have to be at [Association A] schools and I recognize that. Not everybody wants to become a Ph.D. in English literature....[P]eople make different choices and all those choices are legitimate as long as they're value-added, as long as they conform with what was promised to the vet, and as long as they leave the vet better off than he or she would have been without

that experience, we're supportive of it....Our second priority, which I candidly admit is as much of a broad cultural issue in our society as it is an academic challenge, is to respect the most basic sort of ethical principle of admissions. Which, in my book, is to offer adequate and appropriate services to special populations (Sam Bahman, Association A).

The comment that not all veterans necessarily want to attend four-year institutions represented by Association A, and that Association A supports that so long as veterans get what they need from the institutions they attend, comes down squarely on the side of access and success for student veterans versus the narrower interests of the association's stakeholders.

The interviewees' emphasis on access and success for student veterans (and other military-affiliated students) not only attempts to bridge the broader civil-military gap in higher education (since, as previously mentioned, less than 1% of Americans have served in the military) but attempts to bridge the civil-military gap in veterans education policy. The simultaneous emphasis on educating associations' members about issues unique to student veterans also tries to bridge the civil-military gap by giving civilian institutions of higher education more information on a student subpopulation that has not been studied in depth by higher education researchers.

Dr. Lynn Truman concluded her interview with words that summarize the emerging metanarrative of veterans education policy and the civil-military gap drawn from these interviews: "I guess I would say that it's not all black and white; there are certainly a lot of gray areas, nuances, oftentimes in those relationships. And it's really in the best interest of the higher education community to work together to make sure we understand all the nuances and the potential impact on our students" (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A).

CHAPTER 7

"OPEN THE HURT LOCKER AND LEARN": NEXT STEPS

As noted in this study's introduction, the Post-9/11 GI Bill's passage created the most complex iteration of the GI Bill to date. This bill's payment structure forced closer interactions than previously between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and higher education institutions, as well as their representative associations. These interactions are and have been set against the larger societal backdrop of a civil-military gap established in a robust literature of military sociology and specific research on civil-military relations as far back as Samuel Huntington (1957) and Morris Janowitz (1960). This study uses the definition of a civil-military gap reworked by Nielsen and Snider (2009), who follow Huntington's lead to define it as whether military personnel either view themselves *or* are viewed by others as so isolated from civilian society that a gap is created between the two groups. However, civil-military issues in higher education are not well-researched; the advent of the Post-9/11 GI Bill has brought them to the forefront for a new generation of veterans.

The literature on higher education associations, whose interactions with the VA and other agencies and advocates for military-affiliated students are complex and interwoven with their larger educational policy role in Washington, is also scanty. Ewing Cook (1998) and King (1975) produced major works on the subject focusing particularly on the Big Six, the six presidential associations headquartered in Washington DC who represent the interests of all sectors of public and private nonprofit higher education to political and federal agency circles. Otherwise, the role of higher education associations—most especially how they use power and influence to achieve policy goals—has not been a subject of in-depth study.

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the world of both veterans education policy and higher education associations and examine whether a civil-military gap exists in associations' interactions with military- and veteran-serving agencies on veterans education policy issues. Using narrative policy analysis (Roe, 1994) as the theoretical framework allowed the development of policy narratives, counternarratives, and eventually metanarratives from the interview data. The metanarratives involved both how associations broadly influence higher education policy and how they engage with military- and veteran-serving agencies specific to veterans education policy.

The study's significant contributions are twofold. The first is its contribution to the field of research on higher education associations. As noted above, there is little research on associations despite their level of influence on national higher education policy. Further, because the major research is decades old it does not take into account associations' new operational realities after decades of state funding cuts for public education, the rise of new learning technologies that disrupt traditional forms of education delivery, the role of associations and other think tanks in conducting research to shape public policy, a highly partisan political environment in Washington where education is often seen as a private good rather than a public good, and populist anger over high tuition costs. This study examines how associations operate in the very different environment of 2015 as opposed to 1998 and 1975 when prior fundamental research was conducted on their role and function in American higher education. This study, therefore, makes a significant contribution to current-day research on the roles of higher education associations.

The second significant contribution of the study is its focus on documenting the civil-military gap in veterans education policy. Although military sociology has addressed the civil-

military gap since the 1950s, veterans education is a tiny aspect of that field. In higher education research, not only is veterans education an emerging subfield in general, but veterans education policy research is even more lacking. This study is the first to examine the civil-military gap related to a specific set of veterans education policy actors rather than focus on student veterans' academic, social, and psychological issues as they move from military service to campus. Thus it makes a significant contribution to understanding the major policy players that affect student veterans as a higher education research area whose surface has barely been scratched.

In this chapter, I address the study's research questions in light of the results chapters. I then use both the research questions and the policy metanarratives drawn from the results to discuss implications and outline a preliminary action plan for research, policy, and practice according to the transformational scholarship approach used for the study.

The Civil-Military Gap and Higher Education Associations

While the study was limited by size and exploratory nature, interviewees from three separate higher education associations openly spoke about a civil-military gap in their work in veterans education and with other military-affiliated populations (e.g., active-duty servicemembers and their dependents) whose educational policy issues intertwine with those of student veterans. Thus the answer to the first research question, whether a civil-military gap exists for higher education associations, is at least initially affirmative.

However, as detailed by the interviewees in Chapter 6, the distance between civilian higher education associations and military-serving agencies and associations constantly changes depending on multiple factors. Some of these include individual association staffers' military affiliations or lack thereof, their various networks within the Washington, DC association world

181

including ties to veterans working at higher education associations and at federal military- and

veteran-serving agencies, and their associations' policy agendas concerning veterans education

issues. As was demonstrated by the passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the original GI Bill long

before, civilian higher education associations also ally with associations focusing on military and

veteran issues (e.g., the Partnership for Veterans' Education mentioned previously that was

formed to help pass the Post-9/11 GI Bill and included both higher education association and

military- and veteran-serving association stakeholders) in order to better serve military-affiliated

students. These alliances can focus on national or state issues and involve parties from both

civilian and military sectors. Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A) cited a state-level example:

> In the higher education community, many of the states have created an Association for
> College and Military Education [ACME]. So it's a state ACME where colleges and
> universities and educational service officers from the military bases meet annually,
> quarterly, and discuss issues within that state….[T]hat's another group that we work
> closely with. An example most recently is that we've conducted webinars or
> videoconferences with many of those associations on topics or issues that are of interest
> to them and [on which] we have subject-matter expertise….And some of it, when you get
> to a policy such as in-state tuition for veterans, it really does—it may be a federal policy,
> but it impacts states differently and so we have to be aware of what that impact would be.

The collaboration between Association A and the state ACMEs blurs national and state lines as

well as the distance between civilians and military personnel working on military-affiliated

student policy issues, as can be seen by the reference to "educational service officers from the

military bases" by Dr. Truman. Further, associations work closely, as described by interviewees,

with federal military- and veteran-serving agencies in order to achieve shared goals for educating

both active-duty and veteran students. Thus while baseline structural and cultural gaps exist

between civilian and military/veteran stakeholders, there is not a single, static civil-military gap

in veterans education policy. The relationship between higher education associations,

institutions, and federal agencies is dynamic and symbiotic as well as contentious at times.

Higher education associations working on veterans education policy issues operate in an environment that can be metaphorically described as "civil-military Tetris®" after the popular video game where the player attempts to create order out of constantly falling, variously shaped blocks moving at increasing speeds (*About Tetris*, n.d.). In this case, the blocks are veterans education policy, advocacy, and procedural issues raised by student veterans and their advocacy organizations, by Congress, by military- and veteran-serving agencies, and by higher education associations themselves as the Post-9/11 GI Bill matures and as more veterans return from war to higher education. All of these issues and players operate in the high-speed, high-stakes environment of the Washington Beltway.

The environment is further complicated by simultaneously shifting power dynamics both between associations and external actors (e.g., Congress, the White House, and multiple federal agencies) and between different associations (e.g., The Six versus other associations or between individual members of The Six) and the *Realpolitik* of association work described by interviewees. It is also complicated by an atmosphere of *Rashomon* (i.e., the same sequence of events told from different perspectives) and contradictory truths, as described in Chapter 5. In addition, because higher education associations are largely behind-the-scenes players participating in highly technical policy processes such as negotiated rulemaking (which interviewees called "neg reg"—or post-law passage implementation that clarifies procedures for institutions to follow), other stakeholders inside and outside higher education circles do not fully understand or appreciate their role in influencing education policy. For their part, associations are, as Dr. Andrew Trajan (Association A) commented, too busy with their inside-the-Beltway work to sufficiently educate the larger public about their role as national nonpartisan entities and

how they actually help state taxpayers and governmental officials advance higher education goals.

Against this constantly changing backdrop, associations attempt to influence the enactment of orderly veterans education policies that fit both with each other and with commonly accepted higher education practices (e.g., tuition and fee billing and payment procedures) while taking into account other stakeholders' issues and policies that *also* have to fit together in at least some semblance of order. Further, associations' raison d'être, as described in Chapter 5, is not only their ability to lobby Congress and the White House on behalf of higher education institutions, but their ability to represent both their members' concerns to Washington, DC circles *and* federal concerns to their members in order to effectively influence policy. In the context of veterans education policy, this means bridging the separation between the civilian higher education institutions that associations represent and military- and veteran-serving agencies. This is, as detailed in Chapter 6 interview results, not always easy or successful.

The second research question, how the civil-military gap disrupts a higher education association's capacity to implement veterans education policy, was also answered in detail by interviewees in Chapter 6. According to them, disruption took various forms; one major one was structural gaps between military- and veteran-serving agencies and associations that hinder not only communication and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit processing, but understanding and researching student veterans' academic and social needs. Lack of communication on the part of VA (e.g., Association C interviewees noting that when the official VA school certifying handbook is distributed to institutions, Association C only hears about it from institutions), inflexible rules, and benefit processing delays are overt manifestations of the structural gap disrupting higher education associations' capacity to successfully implement veterans education policy.

However, the inability to obtain data from military- and veteran-serving agencies for higher education analysis and research purposes rather than transactional purposes is a more subtle disruption of higher education associations' capacity to implement veterans education policy. This is because associations, as seen in Chapters 4 through 6, serve as subject-matter experts within the Washington, DC higher education policy community and provide research and testimony on higher education policy issues to their members, Congressional staff, and federal agencies. The inability to obtain adequate research data on student veterans from military- and veteran-serving agencies and analyze said data in conjunction with existing larger datasets on all college students thus hampers associations' ability to act as subject-matter experts to inform veterans education policy decisions. The lack of data can negatively affect veterans education policy, as noted by one interviewee in comments regarding what he saw as an emphasis on emotion rather than data-driven analysis in veterans education legislation proposed by lawmakers who are not higher education experts. Legislation written emotionally without taking higher education data and operational realities into account can harm student veterans even if lawmakers' intent is wholly good (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A).

Association interviewees also described tensions created by different organizational cultures and mindsets in civilian higher education associations and military- and veteran-serving agencies. Because military- and veteran-serving agencies are highly influenced by command-and-control military culture, they find it reasonable from their cultural perspective to expect higher education associations to do their bidding on matters related to military-affiliated students because the matters pertain to the military. This creates friction because higher education associations, as the representatives of institutions, are considered civilian subject-matter experts on *all* students *including* military-affiliated students in their larger policy role inside the

Washington Beltway and expect to be respected as such by military- and veteran-serving agencies. Also, as civilians, they are not required to take orders from military- and veteran-serving agency personnel. The associations described themselves as a hybrid of academic and business culture, with the norms of academic culture often predominating, which operates in a manner far different than military culture.

The friction is also fundamentally driven by an unresolved identity conflict in veterans education policy of whether a student veteran is primarily a *student*, a *veteran*, or some shifting combination of the two when it comes to policy. (This also plays out with active-duty servicemembers enrolled in college on their off-hours.) As a result, both sides—civilian and military—simultaneously attempt to dominate education policy based on separate areas of expertise regarding students and veterans and separate ideas of which identity should prevail. Since VA ultimately controls the regulation of Chapter 33 veterans education benefits but civilian higher education institutions are not ultimately controlled by VA and have other sources of revenue than Chapter 33 benefits, neither side has total leverage. While both sides have the best interest of student veterans in mind as they see it (another manifestation of both *Rashomon* and contradictory truths), they are also engaged in a power struggle regarding veterans education policy.

This identity conflict simultaneously plays out in the emerging research area of post-9/11 era student veterans on campus. As seen in Chapter 2, there is an unresolved tension between whether student veterans should be expected to subsume their veteran identity in order to assimilate to the campus as a whole and conform to traditional student development models or retain their veteran identity as primary if they choose and have traditional student development models adapted to their unique characteristics (Barry, Whiteman, MacDermid Wadsworth, &

Hitt, 2012; Nichols-Casebolt, 2012; Whiteman, Barry, Mroczek, & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2013; DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011; Hamrick, Rumann, et al., 2013; Cook Francis & Kraus, 2012; Tschudi, 2013; Steele, Salcedo, & Coley, 2010; DeSawal, 2013; Bonar & Domenici, 2011; Gann, 2012). These campus-level issues add depth to the identity conflict—and resulting power struggles between associations and military- and veteran-serving agencies as both try to assert dominance over their respective areas of expertise—in veterans education policy.

Military- and veteran-serving agencies also unrealistically expect higher education associations to be able to order institutions to do their bidding without taking into account the representative nature of associations and the fact that members *voluntarily* pay dues to associations. If institutional members feel an association is not delivering the representative and research services for which they pay or that association staff are disrespectfully attempting to order them around—especially since the Big Six association members are college and university presidents used to commanding the respect due that office—they can have the association's president intervene or even cancel their membership in the association.

These options are not present in the military world, so it is understandable that military- and veteran-serving agencies do not consider them. However, higher education associations *must* consider them because they rely on member dues and their ability to convene a critical mass of members in order to exist. As Dr. Anthony Hendricksen pointed out, membership associations "answer to their membership" (Association B); Derek Coleridge commented that "we can't just force things down their throat" in reference to dealing with institutional members on in-state tuition (Association A). Thus their member relations are oriented toward discussion and "trying to be a sounding board" (Derek Coleridge, Association A) rather than ordering members to take specific actions.

A related problem is military- and veteran-serving agencies' failure to take into account the core concept of shared governance in academic culture. This means they fail to understand the structural role of multiple external stakeholders *not* subject to association control in their collective enactment of institutional policies and procedures (e.g., state legislatures for public institutions, boards of trustees for both public and private nonprofit institutions, and faculty senates at both public and private nonprofit institutions—and combinations across these levels for approval of policy and implementation). Associations cannot change state legislatures' autonomously scheduled biennial legislative calendars in order to force institutions to comply with in-state tuition mandates more quickly, for example. And consulting these stakeholders is not optional. Since higher education associations' academic cultures, as demonstrated in the interviews, rely on consensus-building and negotiation with their own members as well as with these other stakeholders, this fundamental tension can lead to bad feelings and bad policy.

Further, one interviewee referred to a "conceptual antipathy" toward the military he had seen during his previous association work, mainly expressed by members old enough to have experienced the Vietnam War (Sam Bahman, Association A). While he thought that particular mindset had subsided somewhat with the passage of decades, he still saw it as an issue. Other interviewees used the phrases "cultural difference" (Derek Coleridge, Association A) and "cultural divide" (Dr. Lynn Truman, Association A) to describe their interactions with military- and veteran-serving agencies. While interviewees considered themselves and their associations as having reasonably good relationships—if sometimes fraught—with military- and veteran-serving agencies, they also were well aware of a cultural gap between higher education associations and military- and veteran-serving agencies.

188

This multifaceted cultural gap makes it more difficult on two levels for higher education associations working on veterans education policy. The first is simply understanding the mindset of military- and veteran-serving agencies and the military culture influencing it. While some of the interviewees were veterans or otherwise connected to the military (military spouses or children), others had no connection with the military whatsoever. This reflects the larger civil-military divide in American society given that less than 1% of Americans are connected to the military (Pew Research Trends, November 2013). The civilian association staff interviewed were all open to better understanding their military- and veteran-serving agency counterparts' culture in order to achieve the shared goal of enabling military and veteran students' academic retention and success. However, they also acknowledged that as civilians, they were outsiders and treated as such by the military- and veteran-serving agencies.

Without interviewing military- and veteran-serving agency personnel, it is difficult to definitively surmise whether the same openness to understanding civilian higher education culture and its effect on policy is present on their side of the relationship. The descriptions association interviewees gave of their interactions with military- and veteran-serving agencies were mixed enough that there seems to be some resistance from military- and veteran-serving agencies to doing so. This creates more difficulty for higher education associations working on veterans education policy because in order to create policies that do not adversely affect either military-affiliated students *or* the civilian students and institutions whose best interests associations must simultaneously keep in mind, higher education *cannot* always surrender. There has to be mutual give-and-take and respect for *both* sides' cultures rather than a command-and-control relationship where military- and veteran-serving agencies always have the upper hand.

The second cultural-gap-related difficulty higher education associations face in veterans education policy is in helping guide lawmakers and other stakeholders to craft data-driven policies that, while assisting student veterans to succeed, take into account how higher education operates. This means trying to convince military and veteran advocates not to rely on emotion to impose regulations or policies that *seem* reasonable from their perspective but conflict with long-standing higher education business management principles or research and data on student development and success. Interviewees gave examples of imposed policies ranging from VA's blanket implementation of Treasury offsets for Post-9/11 GI Bill debts (meaning institutions' other federal grants, including those awarded to unrelated research, reduced or withheld to pay for Post-9/11 GI Bill debts that are disputed because of conflicting VA guidance over the first years of the Post-9/11 GI Bill) to the original implementation chart drawn up by VA that separated tuition and fees contrary to higher education business practices, as well as expectations that veterans would complete college more quickly than civilian undergraduates with similar backgrounds.

The lack of understanding of higher education culture by military and veteran advocates, including legislators who are also supposed to represent the interests of colleges and universities in their home districts, has potential unintended consequences that ultimately harm military-affiliated students. At minimum, they involve linguistic confusion in writing and implementing legislation that creates confusion about what legislation is actually supposed to do and how those charged with implementing it are supposed to proceed, as spoken of by Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A). Worse, some institutions may—when faced with mandates enacted because they sounded appealing to military and veteran advocates but are onerous in practice (because

higher education associations' expert voices were not heeded)—pose limits to students' use of

military and veterans education benefits to pay for attending their institutions.

This is *not* because institutions are not patriotic or do not want to serve military and

veteran students. It is, as Angela Kay (Association B) explained, a matter of institutions being

compelled to balance the fiscal interests of an entire campus against those of one small

subpopulation of students whose particular benefits come with overly restrictive mandates on the

institution accepting them:

> [Y]ou have the institutions that will say "You know what? We cannot justify [serving
> military and veteran students]"…[because] here they are, they have a hundred things they
> have to follow on the new MOU [DOD Memorandum of Understanding governing
> receipt of military Tuition Assistance benefits, which some stakeholders have suggested
> be expanded to apply to VA benefits]. Well, when you have five servicemembers using
> TA [Tuition Assistance] on the campus, it's not fiscally responsible for them to do that.
> And so they're no longer going to take that type of a benefit. And that ultimately hurts
> our servicemembers and veterans.

The ability to reject these federal benefits is within institutions' power, as can be seen with some

religious institutions that do not accept Title IV federal financial aid. However, the possibility of

institutions with very small military-affiliated student populations choosing to reject military and

veteran education benefits as too costly to their institution as a whole is an unexpected,

counterproductive potential consequence of fiats imposed by military- and veteran-serving

agencies as a result of cultural divides between civilian and military stakeholders. While no

institution has yet chosen to reject these benefits, the fact that an association representative

would even bring up the possibility gives it added credence.

This brings me to the third research question, what the implications are of the civil-

military relationship and gaps within it for higher education associations' work in support of

student veterans. The implications can be categorized according to their potential effect on

associations' policy and practice since associations straddle the worlds of policy and practice by dint of representing institutions responsible for the practice of serving student veterans. Implications for academic research—since, as interviewees made clear, association research is by nature practitioner-oriented rather than academic—will be addressed separately.

Implications for Association Policy Work

As introduced above, structural and cultural gaps impede associations' veterans education policy work in multiple ways. The structural gaps between military- and veteran-serving agencies and other federal agencies with which associations engage as part of their postsecondary education policy work—most notably the U.S. Department of Education, to which more than one interviewee compared the VA in their discussions of Post-9/11 GI Bill implementation problems—exacerbate problems for associations. If the federal agencies whose job it is to collectively serve student veterans fail to implement structural bridges between their agencies necessitated by the new structure of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and fail to communicate with each other, associations are caught in the gaps between the agencies. However, as interviewees discussed, associations can also become bridges between either multiple agencies or subunits within agencies because they deal with so many stakeholders as part of their policy agendas. For example, routinely scheduled Association C meetings with VA personnel on technical aspects of Post-9/11 GI Bill implementation "seemed to be very helpful in bringing different parts of the VA together who weren't necessarily on the same page or understanding where each other was coming from" (Claire Rigby, Association C).

Thus a major implication of the study for associations' work in veterans education policy is the necessity to continue to extend their bridge-building ability and work with multiple

military- and veteran-serving stakeholders to better understand military culture's impact—both rational and emotional—on the legislation, policies, and procedures proposed by those stakeholders. While efforts on this front were described by interviewees, they are far from complete. This should not be interpreted as the fault of associations *or* of military- and veteran-serving agencies because the Post-9/11 GI Bill represents a structural watershed in terms of their required interactions. Both sides have not had to work this closely together until now because previous iterations of the GI Bill paid tuition and fee monies directly to the veteran and let the veteran handle payment to his or her higher education institution. Thus they have not had to intimately understand each other's cultures until now.

However, more attention must be paid to bridging cultural divides partly by advocating for and crafting veterans education policy that takes both military *and* civilian culture—and the tensions between them—into account. Though associations share a bureaucratic culture and its frustrations with military- and veteran-serving agencies, the larger academic culture in which they are embedded is more flexible than the command-and-control culture of military- and veteran-serving agencies. Thus the burden of working across cultural divides to explain and when necessary adapt higher education policy to best serve student veterans falls more on higher education associations and the institutions they represent than on military- and veteran-serving agencies. It should *not* fall solely on associations—as stated previously, if military- and veteran-serving agencies autocratically expect continual surrender from higher education, it will only result in bad policy that hurts student veterans—but associations have more autonomy to do the work required on this front. Indeed, they have already started doing so, as illustrated by Dr. Lynn Truman's (Association A) work on "a committee for the Department of Veteran Affairs on how to improve education".

Given the breadth of veterans education policy, this is a major task that calls for a sustained research agenda on veterans education. To illustrate this point, a brief sampling of veterans education issues higher education associations tackle that are *beyond* the scope of this study includes the awarding of credit for military experience and training, the enforcement of federal law regarding the readmission of servicemembers called to active duty while in school, the VA complaint system about schools referenced by Dr. Lynn Truman (Association A), the use and redesign of federal datasets to collect more specific information on student veteran graduation rates, and the intersection of Title IV financial aid and Chapter 33 veterans benefits.

Culture plays a role in all these policy issues, even though it is not generally discussed when crafting policy language. One of the implications of this study is that culture needs to be openly brought into veterans education policy discussions instead of remaining beneath the surface or only voiced in individual commentary. While the two sides of higher education's organized anarchy and military- and veteran-serving agencies' command-and-control culture will never fit together in perfect harmony, and the pace of the Washington Beltway does not lend itself to years-long ethnographic studies of veterans education stakeholders by association researchers, at least some conscious rather than sporadic engagement with each other's cultures is required to make better policy decisions.

Another implication of the study for higher education associations' work in veterans education policy is the need to address civilian-military power struggles going on beneath the surface. As discussed in Chapter 5, associations wield power and influence in many ways, most of them little understood outside the Beltway. Military- and veteran-serving agencies control the flow of federal benefits specific to military and veteran students and have been overt about using this financial power as a means of exerting control over civilian higher education. The example

194

in this study is that of imposing the mandate on public institutions to charge eligible veterans and dependents in-state tuition regardless of their state of residence or lose eligibility for all Chapter 33 veterans education benefits. As seen in Chapter 4, associations objected to a federal mandate partly on grounds of federal overreach into both state and institutional autonomy as well as the adverse financial impact on public institutions. Their objections were rejected by military and veteran advocates in Congress and the mandate was signed into law.

This sets up a scenario similar to the one raised by Angela Kay regarding active-duty military Tuition Assistance benefits and the DOD-MOU requirements where public institutions might be forced to opt out of accepting Chapter 33 veterans education benefits if the financial costs are too great to their institutions and systems. While it would inflict more harm on student veterans than institutions are likely willing to accept, a related precedent exists in certain religious institutions' refusal to accept Title IV financial aid. Private nonprofit institutions that find the DOD-MOU requirements too onerous (especially if they have very few active-duty students using Tuition Assistance benefits) could also opt out. Institutions could instead attempt to fundraise on their own to provide institutional support to student veterans and/or suggest they exercise their right to apply for Title IV federal financial aid unrelated to their military status in order to pay tuition and fees at institutions opting out.

Of course, institutions opting out of Chapter 33 benefits is a nuclear option. It is unlikely that public institutions would wholesale refuse to accept Chapter 33 benefits because institutions who focus on serving student veterans *are* concerned for their student veterans' well-being. It would also create a public backlash against public institutions that spend a good deal of time and money, as detailed in testimony presented in Chapter 4, on student veterans and other military-affiliated students. This is, presumably, part of what the military and veteran advocates for

federally mandating in-state tuition rather than leaving it to the states (which, as discussed in Chapter 4, were already passing their own laws on in-state tuition for veterans) relied upon to pass the law. However, it is almost inevitable that at some point, even the most military-friendly civilian higher education institutions will rebel if too many mandates detrimental to their overall operations are ordered on behalf of military-affiliated students by military- and veteran-serving agencies and legislative advocates. They will then expect the higher education associations to which they belong to use their power and influence to push back against the imposition of costly and onerous policies on the many for the sake of a very small few.

Thus the need for associations to dispassionately discuss both internally and externally how the civil-military gap affects the struggle for power and control in veterans education policy—and how attitudes dating back to Vietnam War-era campus protests may be influencing both sides, as noted in Chapter 2—is a major implication of this study. As Derek Coleridge mentioned regarding association work as a whole, "[T]he policy's part of it, but a lot of it's just understanding individual dynamics too, as well" (Derek Coleridge, Association A). The power dynamics of veterans education policy are complex and evolving. More open discussion of them would benefit both associations' ultimate policy goals vis-à-vis veterans education and student veterans potentially caught in the civil-military power struggle between higher education associations and military- and veteran-serving agencies.

Implications for Association Practice

The implications of the study for association practice are in some ways identical to the ones for association policy, since the *Realpolitik* of higher education policy circles mingles

policy and practice. However, there are also more specific implications for practice drawn from the interviews' policy narratives, discussed below.

Data access. More than one interviewee mentioned problems with getting access to VA data on student veterans as well as DOD data on military students. In some cases DOD data serves as precursor data for the students engaged in postsecondary education activities both during active military service and after they become veterans; thus better access to DOD data for both association researchers and academic researchers can help construct longitudinal data on the arc of some students' academic careers from servicemember to veteran. The problem of getting access to either DOD or VA's data (by contrast, Department of Education data is routinely accessed by association researchers) is widely known in veterans education policy and practice. But given the emphasis on retention and graduation metrics in higher education as well as other uses of metrics within veterans education such as VA's new complaint system to track metrics on institutions serving veterans, the implication of the lack of data access for association practice becomes increasingly urgent. Without the access to datasets from military- and veteran-serving agencies, associations do not have the capacity to analyze them in combination with other federal and third-party datasets to provide a clearer picture of military and veteran student populations including National Guard, Reserve, and military dependents differentiated from active-duty and veteran students.

Data quality and crosswalking. Since VA did not build the capacity to collect research data (or even baseline demographic data) into its computer systems when constructing the Post-9/11 GI Bill payment system used by VA, the issue of data quality goes hand in hand with data access. As discussed in the interviews, VA collects transactional data on student veterans. It also has partnered with Student Veterans of America (SVA) and the National Student Clearinghouse

to allow SVA to use Clearinghouse records to compile some preliminary completion statistics for veterans, though limitations exist in the data (Cate, 2014). However, practical issues of data quality and the inability to crosswalk data between different agencies' federal datasets were brought up by interviewees and remain a major implication for association practice.

Communication problems between VA and associations. As interviewees stated, there are multiple problems in VA's communication with institutions that have yet to be resolved satisfactorily. A major one is sheer lack of communication (Claire Rigby, Association C). Another is tonal, as addressed by the comment that VA "has some problems in that it doesn't relate directly with institutions in a very positive way" (Dr. Andrew Trajan, Association A) and the observation that "We can't just, say, give an order and [have] it be done. And I don't think they've always completely understood that" (Derek Coleridge, Association A). However, one interviewee (Angela Kay, Association B) stated that their association's communications with VA were very good, bringing up the question of how VA communicates with individual associations and how it understands the way in which associations communicate among themselves. This goes back to cultural differences; since associations operate autonomously, have different and only sometimes overlapping memberships, and are not in a command-and-control culture, VA telling one association something does *not* mean that all associations will then hear about it in a top-down manner. The implication for practice is that associations must, as interviewees indicated they have been, keep trying to open communications between VA and associations regardless of the difficulty in dealing with VA.

The need for continuing engagement with evolving veterans education policy issues. Association A and Association B have been involved with military-affiliated student issues for many decades and Association C has begun working on technical issues related to specific

198

aspects of the Post-9/11 GI Bill since its 2009 implementation. Thus there is probably little

danger of any of the three specific associations studied losing their focus on the issues. However,

an implication for association practice is that veterans education policy will continue to evolve as

more veterans pursue postsecondary education and that engagement with the issues they face

needs to remain on associations' larger higher education policy agendas. As one interviewee put

it:

> The issues that student veterans are facing today versus the issues that they were facing
> back in World War II, going back into higher education, are completely different. The
> issues that they were facing in Vietnam versus today were completely different. And not
> forgetting that as we move forward is huge, it's really important (Angela Kay,
> Association B).

Implications for Future Research

This section discusses implication for future academic research as opposed to

association-based research, which is structurally more limited (as discussed in Chapter 5). As

can be seen both in the review of literature, very little research has been done either on higher

education associations or on veterans education policy. Since this is an exploratory study and

limited in size, it raises multiple implications for future research. The implications listed here are

merely the tip of the iceberg given how understudied veterans education policy is as a subfield of

education policy research.

One such implication discussed previously in this chapter is the identity conflict in

veterans education policy between *student* identity and *veteran* identity. This study's exploratory

results indicate an emerging tension between when student veterans should be treated in policy

as part of the set of all students and when they should be treated in policy as part of the set of

veterans—since both populations have different federal agencies controlling benefits and

policies related thereto—is a core problem in veterans education policy. The lack of even the most basic research on student veterans (e.g., retention and graduation rates) in order to make policy decisions has overshadowed this area of policy research in veterans education, but this area is ripe for future research. Since institutions track all of their students to completion or departure, it is possible to do so in a more coordinated way so long as veterans can be identified in the data.

Another research implication raised by the study is how veterans and civilians interact within the confines of veterans education policymaking and how their different cultures (both veteran/civilian and different regional cultures, as alluded to by Dr. Lynn Truman [Association A]) influence those interactions. This combines with the issue of who should be the primary researchers and policymakers in veterans education—veterans and military-affiliated researchers, civilians, or both. While in general veterans education research is a collegial and collaborative field because so few people work in it, there is an underlying philosophical tension regarding who should research and develop education policy pertaining to student veterans. The tension mirrors larger civil-military conflicts described in the review of literature and higher education association/military- and veteran-serving agency conflicts emerging from the study results. It also relates to similar tensions regarding research and policy related to other underrepresented populations (e.g., students with disabilities who advocate for self-determination in research and policy rather than having researchers without disabilities speak for them).

Still another implication is the issue of the academic expectations VA has of student veterans regardless of their demographic and academic profiles independent of veteran status, which are often ones consistently demonstrated by academic research to hold risk factors for

lower collegiate achievement. This was described by Dr. Anthony Hendricksen as "on some level a lack of appreciation for the complexities around educational issues" by VA and "But [because of] the fact they were veterans, there were those in the Education Affairs department who felt [student veterans] should be able to achieve 80 percent [graduation rates], and that's just not an educational reality" (Dr. Anthony Hendricksen, Association B). The idea that veteran status should confer a greater capacity to achieve academically than civilian status—rightly or wrongly—and that it may affect VA policy regarding both student veterans and institutions serving them is novel and bears further study.

Finally, an implication for future research raised by the study is how higher education associations adapt their strategies to maintain their power and influence in arenas such as veterans education policy where their baseline expertise is contested. In a rapidly changing environment where "there's a lot of pressure among members of Congress for higher ed to change among the new economic times and a lot of the challenges that has brought" (Derek Coleridge, Association A), and most particularly in veterans education where some military and veteran advocates reject their expertise on higher education operations and order them to conform to the dictates of said advocates, associations will be pressured to evolve in ways that are both novel to them and unstudied by academic researchers.

Proposed Action Plan

Since this study takes a transformational scholarship approach (Mertens, 2014), I close with a proposed action plan drawn from its results. Constructing a detailed plan requires future work with interviewees and their associations to determine their interest in and ability to commit personnel and financial resources given the exploratory nature of the study. The specifics of the

plan would also be shaped by their input given the collaborative nature of association work. However, the following main elements would benefit associations' work in veterans education policy and thus align with Hurtado's (2015) adaptation of the International Association for Public Participation spectrum of research-related public engagement to a continuum of involvement between researchers and the communities they research in order to more effectively empower said communities.

Publications. Associations have their own publication venues outside academic journals; for instance, as a former senior research and policy analyst for a Big Six association, I routinely wrote white papers for one series the association published as well as contributed articles to the association's membership magazine for college presidents. Information drawn from the study could thus be adapted to publication in association venues in order to inform members about the results of this study, and educate both their memberships and the general Washington education policy audience that often uses white papers more frequently than academic journal articles.

This does not, of course, preclude mining material from the study for academic publication, which I would also do in parallel. Some of the implications for future research are more theoretical than concrete at this point in time in terms of grappling with underlying philosophical and policy concepts rather than datasets. However, the reality of higher education policy inside the Beltway is that academic research is valuable in its own right but not always useful for policymakers' needs. As Michael Gordon (Association C) put it, "our members are *not* statisticians. They're *practitioners.*" Thus academic publication would have to be done in conjunction with the more applied publications that association staff manage to meet their members' needs.

Dataset policy work. The results clearly indicated a need for better datasets and better policies (ranging from data access to common data variable definitions allowing researchers to merge data accurately) related to veterans education data. Work in this sphere is ongoing; thus I would not reinvent the wheel by proposing a new project, but instead work with associations to see how the study results could be leveraged to aid existing data and policy workgroups.

Cross-cultural education. As demonstrated by the results, higher education associations and military- and veteran-serving agencies do not entirely understand each other's cultures and mindsets, which has a negative effect on policy. While I am not an anthropologist or intergroup dialogue facilitator, as a military brat who did not go into service I "stand between the two worlds," as my former supervisor at Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges put it when discussing my doctoral research. This, as discussed in Chapter 3, gives me a positionality that has a certain amount of credibility in the veterans education policy community. Thus working with them to find appropriate facilitators (whether within their campuses or from outside organizations), as well as providing research material on military and academic culture translated to a practitioner audience, would be a more appropriate role for me to fill within this portion of the action plan.

In conclusion, the elements of the action plan described above fulfill the purpose of this study: "Open the hurt locker and learn," as written by Iraq combat veteran and poet Brian Turner (Turner, 2005). More prosaically, the study's purpose was to illuminate a little understood, shadowy world of higher education associations and examine whether a civil-military gap exists in their relationships regarding veterans education policy work. Its theoretical framework of narrative policy analysis yields a metanarrative of associations intertwining power, policy, and politics with constantly shifting dynamics influenced by current events; the contradictory truths

in the individual policy narratives and counternarratives drawn from the interviews lead to a *Rashomon* of the associations, where the same events are told from different perspectives. The metanarrative of veterans education policy, the other main metanarrative of the study, is also one of contradictory truths as well as a shifting civil-military divide that can be described metaphorically as a game of civil-military Tetris® in which associations attempt to fit veterans education policies together as neatly as possible while juggling them with other higher education policies affecting students and institutions. While much research remains to be done, this study has broken ground for work that will empower associations and veterans education stakeholders to be more successful in policy development and implementation for the educational and ultimate economic benefit of those who serve our country today and in the future.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL QUESTIONS

1. What is your role in this association?

    Probes:

    a. How long have you been in the higher education association world?

    b. How many higher education associations have you worked for? What types of associations were they? (probe if necessary)

    c.   How would you describe the role of higher education associations in Washington to someone unfamiliar with them? (probe for power dynamics here)

2. How long have you worked specifically on veterans education policy issues?

    a. Do you have a personal connection to the military? (probe if appropriate)

3. What agencies do you work with on veterans' issues in higher education? (Get specific organization names to probe later).

4. How would you characterize or describe the relationship between your association and these agencies?

    a. Why do you characterize it that way?

    b. What experiences stand out to you in working with military/veteran-serving agencies on veterans' education issues?

    c. Can you give specific stories or examples that illustrate this relationship? (probe for both positive and negative examples)

5. Based on your previous experience, how easy (comfortable?) is it to work with these organizations?

a. What strikes you as most familiar about working specifically with military/veteran-serving agencies?

b. What strikes you as least familiar or surprising? (probe for specific cultural issues here)

6. What are your association's key objectives when it comes to veterans education? From your perspective, what effect—if any—have these experiences (working with specific agencies) had on your association's veteran education policy objectives? (probe for details as necessary)

7. (*optional, following up on both "least familiar" answers from #6 and any answers regarding negative effects on policy objectives in #8*) What do you think might help to bridge the differences you've mentioned between associations and military/veteran-serving agencies? Are there any game-changing ideas or scenarios on the horizon?

References

113th U.S. Congress. (September 9, 2014). *H.R. 357: Bill summary and status*. Retrieved from

http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-

bin/bdquery/D?d113:1:./temp/~bd7GT7:@@@R|/home/LegislativeData.php|

About Tetris® (n.d.). Retrieved from http://tetris.com/about-tetris/.

Ackerman, R., DiRamio, D., Garza Mitchell, R. L. (2009). Transitions: Combat veterans as

college students. *New Directions for Student Services 126*, 5-14. DOI: 10.1002/ss.311.

Adler, B. (June 2007). The higher ed lobby: A glossary. *Washington Monthly*. Retrieved from

http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/college_guide/feature/the_higher_ed_lobby_a_glossary.

php.

American Council on Education (ACE). (2013). *Comments to the Defense Department on*

student complaint intake form. Retrieved from http://www.acenet.edu/news-

room/Pages/Comments-to-the-Defense-Department-on-Student-Complaint-Intake-Form-

.aspx.

Altschuler, G. C., & Blumin, S. M. (2009). *The GI Bill: A New Deal for veterans*. Oxford and

New York: Oxford University Press.

Association A (2014). About us. (redacted for confidentiality, retrieved from association

website).

Association A (April 2013). *Witness testimony of [redacted for confidentiality]. Legislative*

hearing on H.R. 357, H.R. 562, H.R. 844, H.R. 1305, H.R. 1316, H.R. 1402, H.R. 1412,

and a draft bill. Retrieved from veterans.house.gov.

Association B (2014). About us. (redacted for confidentiality, retrieved from association

website).

Association B. (April 2013). *Witness testimony of [redacted for confidentiality]. Legislative hearing on H.R. 357, H.R. 562, H.R. 844, H.R. 1305, H.R. 1316, H.R. 1402, H.R. 1412, and a draft bill*. Retrieved from veterans.house.gov.

Association D. (April 2013). *Witness testimony of [redacted for confidentiality]. Legislative hearing on H.R. 357, H.R. 562, H.R. 844, H.R. 1305, H.R. 1316, H.R. 1402, H.R. 1412, and a draft bill*. Retrieved from veterans.house.gov.

Association D. (n.d.) *In-state tuition for veterans*. Retrieved from Association D website, redacted for confidentiality.

Avant, D. (1998). Conflicting indicators of "crisis" in American civil-military relations. *Armed Forces & Society 24*(3), 375-387. Retrieved from http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=a68b9180-ddbb-4724-8c7c-426648ab45b1%40sessionmgr115&vid=8&hid=118.

Barry, A. E., Whiteman, S. D., MacDermid Wadsworth, S., & Hitt, S. (2012). The alcohol use and associated mental health problems of student service members/veterans in higher education. *Drugs: Education, prevention, and policy 19*(5), 415-425.

Bateman, R. L. (2008). The Army and academic culture. *Academic Questions 21*, 62-78. DOI 10.1007/s12129-008-9041-2.

Beck Young, N. (2012). "Do something for the soldier boys": Congress, the G.I. Bill of Rights, and the contours of liberalism. In *Veterans' Policies, Veterans' Politics: New Perspectives on Veterans in the Modern United States* (Ed. Stephen R. Ortiz), pp. 199-221. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.

Bonar, T. C., & Domenici, P. (2011). Counseling and connecting with the military

undergraduate: The intersection of military service and university life. *Journal of College*

Student Psychotherapy 25(3), 204-219.

Burd, S. (September 23, 2010). A name change that George Orwell could have dreamed up.

Higher Ed Watch, New America Foundation. Retrieved from

http://higheredwatch.newamerica.net/node/37304 .

Burk, J. (2002). Theories of democratic civil-military relations. *Armed Forces & Society 29*(1),

7-29. DOI: 10.1177/0095327X0202900102.

Campbell, P. (2009, October 15). *Written testimony on the status of implementing the Post-9/11*

GI Bill: Hearing before the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic

Opportunity, House of Representatives. Retrieved from

http://democrats.veterans.house.gov/hearings/Testimony_Print.aspx?newsid=485&Name

=_Patrick_Campbell

Carlson, A. (2013). *State tuition, fees, and financial assistance policies for public colleges and*

universities 2012-13. Boulder, CO: State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)

Association.

Cate, C. A. (2014). *Million records project: Research from Student Veterans of America*. Student

Veterans of America, Washington, DC.

Cohen, E. A. (2001). The unequal dialogue: The theory and reality of civil-military relations and

the use of force. In *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American*

National Security (P. D. Feaver & R. H. Kohn, eds.), pp. 430-458. Cambridge, MA &

London: MIT Press.

Cook Francis, L., & Kraus, A. (2012). Developing a student veterans center: The confluence of academic and military cultures. *About Campus* 17(4), 11-14. DOI: 10.1002/abc.21087.

Davey, M., & Lewin, T. (2015, June 4). Unions subdued, Scott Walker turns to tenure at Wisconsin colleges. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/05/us/politics/unions-subdued-scott-walker-turns-to-tenure-at-wisconsin-colleges.html.

DeSawal, D. M. (2013). Contemporary student veterans and service members: Enrollment patterns and student engagement. *In Called to Serve: A Handbook on Student Veterans in Higher Education* (F. A. Hamrick & C. B. Rumann, eds.), pp. 71-86. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

DiRamio, D., Ackerman, R., & Mitchell, R. L. (2008). From combat to campus: Voices of student-veterans. *NASPA Journal 45*(1), 73-102.

DiRamio, D., & Jarvis, K. (2011). Veterans in higher education: When Johnny and Jane come marching to campus. *ASHE Higher Education Report 37*(3).

Downs, D. A., & Murtazashvili, I. (2012). *Arms and the university: Military presence and the civic education of non-military students*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ewing Cook, C. (1998). *Lobbying for higher education: How colleges and universities influence federal policy*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Feaver, P. D. (1996). The civil-military *problematique*: Huntington, Janowitz, and the question of civilian control. *Armed Forces & Society 23*(2), 149-178.

Feaver, P. D., Kohn, R. H., & Cohn, L. P. (2001). The gap between military and civilian in the United States in perspective. In *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and*

American National Security (P. D. Feaver & R. H. Kohn, eds.), pp. 1-11. Cambridge, MA
& London: MIT Press.

Fleming, B. (2010). *Bridging the military-civilian divide: What each side must know about the other—and about itself*. Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc.

Frydl, K. J. (2009). *The GI Bill*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gann, S. M. (2012). "There is a lot of self-reliance": Modern military veterans and the challenge of effective transition from soldier to student. *The Journal of Military Experience 2*(1), 211-228.

Ganzglass, E., Bird, K., & Prince, H. (2011). *Giving credit where credit is due: Creating a competency-based qualifications network for postsecondary education and training*. Washington, DC: CLASP. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED538037.pdf.

Goldich, R. L. (2011). American military culture from colony to empire. *Daedalus 140*(3), 58-74.

Hamrick, F. A., Rumann, C. B., & Associates. (2013). *Called to serve: A handbook on student veterans and higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Harcleroad, F. F., & Eaton, J. S. (2005). The hidden hand: External constituencies and their impact. In P. G. Altbach, P. J. Gumport, & R. O. Berdahl (Eds.),*American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political, and economic challenges* (253-283). Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Heider, K. G. (1988). The *Rashomon* effect: When ethnographers disagree. *American Anthropologist 90*(1), 73-81.

Herspring, D. R. (2012). Searching for a more viable form of civil-military relations: The Canadian and American experiences. In *Civil-Military Relations in Perspective: Strategy,*

Structure, and Policy (S. J. Cimbala, ed.), pp. 31-51. Burlington, VT & Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing.

Herspring, D. R. (2011). Creating shared responsibility through respect for military culture: The Russian and American cases. *Public Administration Review 71*(4), 519-529.

House Report 113-94 (June 3, 2013). *GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO).

Humes, E. (2006). *Over here: How the G.I. Bill transformed the American Dream*. New York: Diversion Books.

Huntington, S. P. (1957). *The soldier and the state: The theory and politics of civil-military relations*. Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Hurtado, S. (2015). The transformative paradigm: Principles and challenges. In Martínez-Alemán, A., Pusser, B. & Bensimon, E. M. (Eds). *Critical approaches to the study of higher education* (pp. 285-307). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Janowitz, M. (1960). *The professional soldier: A social and political portrait*. London: The Free Press of Glencoe, Collier-Macmillan Limited.

Jennings, P. L., & Hannah, S. T. (2011). The moralities of obligation and aspiration: Towards a concept of exemplary military ethics and leadership. *Military Psychology 23*:5, 550-571. DOI: 10.1080/08995605.2011.600158.

Kaufman, W. R. P. (2006). James Hillman's *A Terrible Love of War*, Chris Hedges' *War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning* and Barbara Ehrenreich's *Blood Rites*. *Journal of Military Ethics 5*(1), 67-73. DOI: 10.1080/15027570500415251.

Kershnar, S. (2014). *Gratitude toward veterans: Why Americans should not be very grateful to veterans*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books (Rowman & Littlefield).

King, L. R. (1975). *The Washington lobbyists for higher education.* Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company.

Kusa, Z. (2003). *Rashomon* in the case study research. *Sociologia*, *35*(1), 37-60.

Langston, T. S. (2003). *Uneasy balance: Civil-military relations in peacetime America since 1783*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Large Western University. (April 2013). *Witness testimony of [redacted for confidentiality]. Legislative hearing on H.R. 357, H.R. 562, H.R. 844, H.R. 1305, H.R. 1316, H.R. 1402, H.R. 1412, and a draft bill*. Retrieved from veterans.house.gov.

Legislative Hearing on H.R. 357, H.R. 562, H.R. 631, H.R. 844, H.R. 1305, H.R. 1316, H.R. 1402, a Draft Bill Entitled ''Improving Job Opportunities For Veterans Act of 2013,'' and a Draft Bill Entitled ''To Amend Title 39, United States Code, To Extend The Authority To Provide Work–Study Allowance For Certain Activities By Individuals Receiving Educational Assistance By The Secretary Of Veterans Affairs''. (April 2013). Hearing transcript of H.R. 357 portion of hearing. Retrieved from veterans.house.gov.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.

Marcus, J. (September 29, 2014). Rating proposal shines spotlight on powerful higher ed lobby: Groups galvanized by Obama plan to rate colleges, universities. *Community College Week 27*(4), 37.

Mandel, D. R., & Litt, A. (2013). The ultimate sacrifice: Perceived peer honor predicts troops' willingness to risk their lives. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations 16*(3), 375-388. DOI: 10.1177/1368430212461961.

McBain, L. (November 2009). *Implementing the Post-9/11 GI Bill: Lessons learned and emerging issues*. Retrieved from

http://www.aascu.org/policy/publications/policymatters/2009/gibill.pdf .

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (2ⁿᵈ ed).* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Mertens, D. M. (2004). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology (4ᵗʰ ed).* Los Angeles & London: SAGE.

Mertens, D. M. (2009). *Transformative research and evaluation*. New York: Guilford Press.

Mettler, S. (2005). *Soldiers to citizens: The G.I. Bill and the making of the greatest generation*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Miles, D. (September 20, 2011). Officials expect smooth 'Don't ask, don't tell' repeal. *DoD News*. Retrieved September 2, 2014 from

http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=65379.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3ʳᵈ ed).* Los Angeles & London: SAGE.

Molina, D. (November 10, 2014). *Student veterans: Who are they and how are they doing?* American Council on Education (ACE) Infographic. Retrieved from

www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Higher-ed-spotlight-undergraduate-student-veterans.pdf.

Murray, M. (1976). Defining the higher education lobby. *The Journal of Higher Education 47*(1), 79-82.

National Association of Campus and University Business Officers (NACUBO). (January 11, 2013). *More institutions affected by Treasury Offset Program*. Retrieved from

http://www.nacubo.org/Business_and_Policy_Areas/Accounting/Accounting_News/Mor e_Institutions_Affected_by_Treasury_Offset_Program.html

National Association of Campus and University Business Officers (NACUBO). (September 30, 2013). *DOD-MOU comment letter*. Retrieved from

http://www.nacubo.org/Business_and_Policy_Areas/Student_Financial_Services/Student _Financial_Services_News/Higher_Education_Associations_Comment_on_Proposed_Ch anges_to_DOD_MOU.html.

Nichols-Casebolt, A. (2012). In practice: The Green Zone: A program to support military students on campus. *About Campus 17*(1), 26-29.

Nielsen, S. C., & Snider, D. M. (2009). *American civil-military relations: The soldier and the state in a new era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Office of the Court Clerk, U. S. House of Representatives. (2014). *Lobbying disclosure act guidance*. Retrieved from

http://lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov/amended_lda_guide.html#section6.

Olivas, M. A. (September 2008). Colleges and undocumented students. *Change* 505, 31-32.

Olmeda, J. A. (2013). Escape from Huntington's labyrinth: Civil-military relations and comparative politics. In *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations* (Eds. T. C. Bruneau & F. C. Matei), pp. 61-76. New York: Routledge.

Ortiz, S. R. (2010). *Beyond the Bonus March and the GI Bill: How veteran politics shaped the New Deal era*. New York and London: New York University Press.

Osborne, N. J. (2014). Veteran ally: Practical strategies for closing the military-civilian gap on campus. *Innovative Higher Education 39*, 247-260. DOI 10.1007/s10755-013-9274-z.

Owens, M. T. (2011). *U. S. civil-military relations after 9/11: Renegotiating the civil-military bargain*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group.

Parsons, M. D. (1997). *Power and politics: Federal higher education policymaking in the 1990s*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In The *Sage handbook of qualitative research, 3rd ed*. (Eds. N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln), pp. 959-978. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Roe, E. (1994). *Narrative policy analysis: Theory and practice*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Segal, D. R. (1995). U.S. civil-military relations in the twenty-first century: A sociologist's view. In *U.S. Civil-Military Relations: In Crisis or Transition?* (D. M. Snider & M. A. Carlton-Carew, eds.). Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Shay, J. (2014). Moral injury. *Psychoanalytic Psychology 31*(2), 182-191. DOI: 10.1037/a0036090.

Shay, J. (1995). *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat trauma and the undoing of character*. New York and London: Scribner.

Shay, J. (2002). *Odysseus in America: Combat trauma and the trials of homecoming*. New York and London: Scribner.

Steele, J. L., Salcedo, N., & Coley, J. (2010). *Service members in school: military veterans' experiences using the Post-9/11 GI Bill and pursuing postsecondary education*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Strauss, V. (2013, February 5). How Gov. Walker quietly tried to change the mission of the

University of Wisconsin. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2015/02/05/how-gov-walker-

tried-to-quietly-change-the-mission-of-the-university-of-wisconsin/.

Student Veterans of America (SVA). (2014). *In-state tuition*. Retrieved from

http://www.studentveterans.org/what-we-do/in-state-tuition.html

Tschudi, P. F. (2013). Vignette. In F. A. Hamrick & C. B. Rumann (Eds.), *Called to serve: A*

handbook on student veterans and higher education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Turner, B. (2005). *The hurt locker*. Retrieved November 2, 2014 from

http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/240652.

U.S. Congressional Budget Office (CBO). (May 16, 2013). *Cost estimate. H.R. 357: GI Bill*

Tuition Fairness Act of 2013. As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans'

Affairs on May 8, 2013. Retrieved from

http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/hr357.pdf .

U.S. Department of Defense. (July 7, 2014). *Department of Defense Instruction 1322.25:*

Voluntary Education programs. Retrieved from

http://www.dodmou.com/Documents/DODI132225%20July%207,%202014.pdf.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

(January 2014). *Education Program beneficiaries, FY 2000 to FY 2012*. Retrieved from

www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/quickfacts/Education_Beneficiaries.pdf.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

(2013). *Department of Veterans Affairs Education Program beneficiaries: FY2000 to*

FY2013. Retrieved from www.va.gov/vetdata/Utilization.asp.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration (n.d.). *Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty (MGIB-AD)*. Retrieved September 13, 2014 from http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/mgib_ad.asp.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefit Administration (n.d.). *Post-9/11 GI Bill payment rates for 2013 academic year*. Retrieved September 14, 2014 from http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/benefits_resources/rates/CH33/Ch33rates080113.asp.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration (n.d.). *Transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill to spouse and dependents*. Retrieved September 13, 2014 from http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_transfer.asp.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration (n.d.). *Yellow Ribbon Program*. Retrieved September 14, 2014 from http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow_ribbon.asp.

U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO). (May 22, 2013). *VA education benefits: VA needs to improve program management and provide more timely information to students*. Retrieved from http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/654790.pdf.

U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO). (May 5, 2011). *Veterans' education benefits: Enhanced guidance and collaboration could improve administration of the Post-9/11 GI Bill program*. Retrieved from http://www.gao.gov/assets/100/97478.pdf.

U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). (November 2013). *Impacts and costs of the October 2013 federal government shutdown*. Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/reports/impacts-and-costs-of-october-2013-federal-government-shutdown-report.pdf.

U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP). (June 25, 2014).

    HEAA discussion draft June 25, 2014. Retrieved September 7, 2014 from

    http://www.help.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/?id=5d38939d-4dc5-4ca8-9924-

    5762c9bb30e7.

Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (August 2, 2014). Retrieved from

    https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr3230/text.

Wagner, M., Cave, A., & Winston, H. (May 19, 2014). GI Bill covered tuition for nearly a

    million post-9/11 veterans without tracking their progress. Washington, DC: The Center

    for Public Integrity. Retrieved from www.publicintegrity.org/2013/09/03/13297/gi-bill-

    covered-tuition-nearly-million-post-911-veterans-without-tracking-their.

Washington Higher Education Secretariat (WHES). (2014). *About WHES*. Retrieved from

    http://whes.org/index.html .

Washington Higher Education Secretariat (WHES). (2014a). *Criteria for membership*. Retrieved

    from http://whes.org/criteria.html.

Whiteman, S. D., Barry, A. E., Mroczek, D. K., & MacDermid Wadsworth, S. (2013). The

    development and implications of peer emotional support for student service

    members/veterans and civilian college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology 60*(2),

    265-278.

Weigand, K. E., & Paletz, D. L. (2001). The elite media and the civilian-military culture gap.

    Armed Forces & Society 27(2), 183-204.

Wilson, K. B., Smith, N. L., Lee, A. L., & Stevenson, M. A. (2013). When the Army post is the

    campus: Understanding the social and academic integration of soldiers attending college.

    Journal of College Student Development 54(6), 628-642. DOI: 10.1353/csd.2013.0087.

Wrona, R. M., Jr. (2006, Summer). A dangerous separation: The schism between the American

society and its military. *World Affairs 169*(1), 25-37.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research design and methods* (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

Publications, Inc.