



My Boots May Be Gone, but My Veteran Identity Marches On

By: Quinn Davidson

Overview

- Background Research
 - Social Identity Changes
 - Disability Invisibility
 - Veteran Identity Strain and Psychological Safety
- Data Analysis
- Conclusion
- Recommendations

Military Identity Change

- Social Identity Changes
- The difference in how military identity is before, during, and after service can lead to psychological problems



Disability Invisibility

unknown
lacking self-confidence
undecided
lacking assurance
suspicious in two minds not confident
not fixed distrustful incertain
in a quandary vague doubtful not settled
shy timid
unassertive dubious diffident indeterminate
ambivalent in a dilemma sceptical
uncertain irresolute unconvinced
lacking confidence
mistrustful unconfident

- More visible disabilities strengthens the relationship between those with higher veteran identity strain having less psychological safety
- Veteran identity strain is the inconsistencies between a veterans' military identity and their civilian work environments

Veteran Identity Strain and Psychological Safety

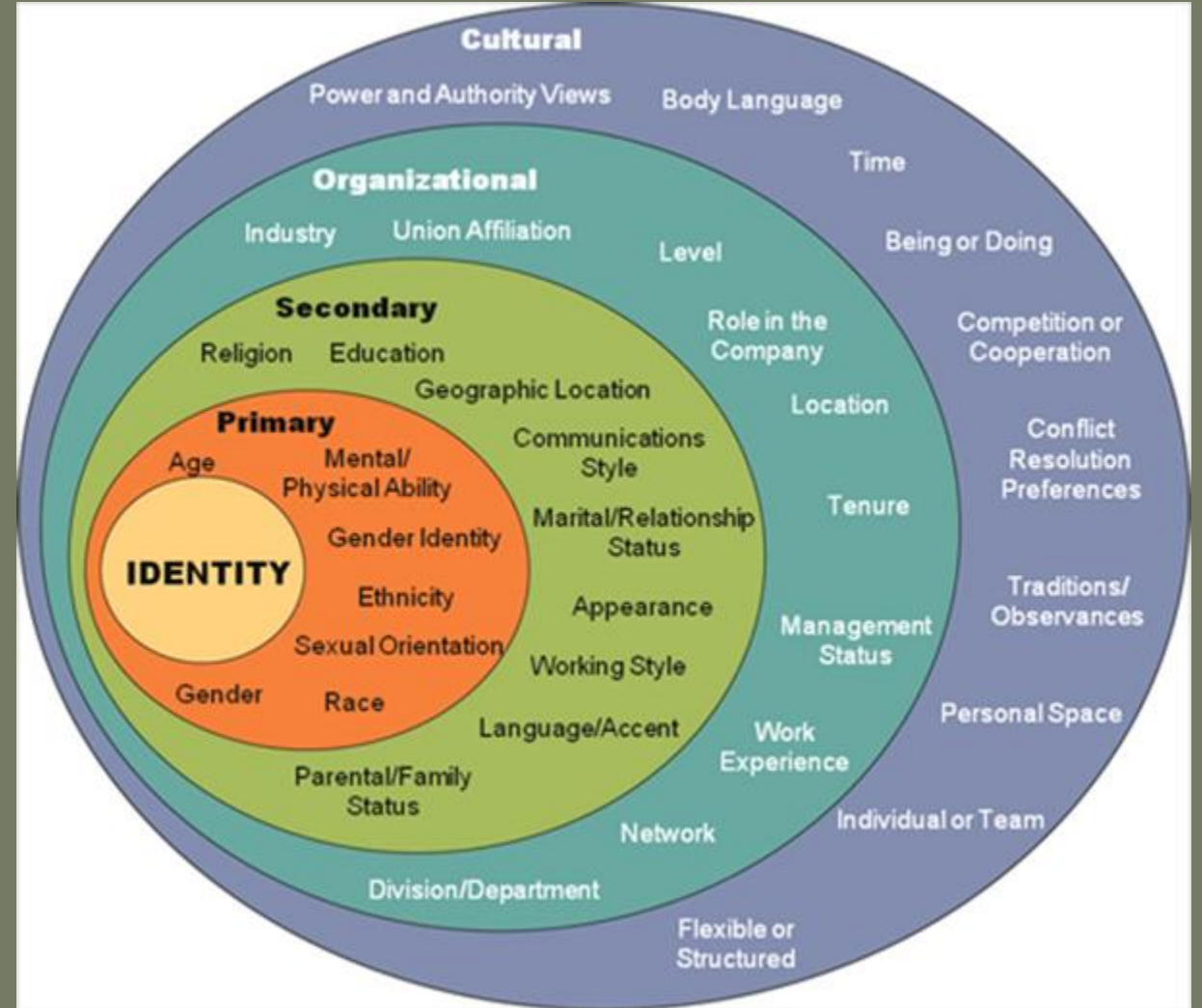
- When perceptions for inclusion are higher and stronger in an organization, veteran identity strain has a more direct relationship with psychological safety
- The higher the perceptions for inclusion in a civilian environment, the weaker the veteran identity strain,



Research Questions

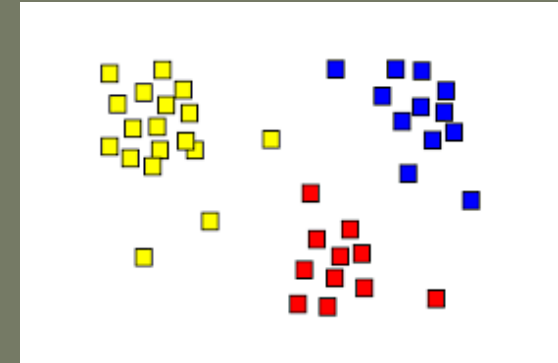
Does a veteran's military identity transcend other social identities?

What factors cause a veteran's military identity to be at its strongest?



Data Collection and Analysis

- 139 Responses from Military Personnel using Cluster Analysis
- 50 Questions regarding different identities
 - Collective, Person, Relational, Social, and Veteran
- Responses Quantified on 1 to 5 Scale
 - 5 different strengths of agreement
- Categorized by different factors
 - Level of schooling, political views, branch, length of service, birth year, race, household income, etc.



Military Identity Factors

- Level of Schooling
 - Generally veteran identity increases as level of schooling increases
- Political Views
 - For those who are political, veteran identity increases as individuals are politically more right
- Branch
 - Higher for those in the Air Force or Navy than the Army or Marine Corps
- Length of Service
 - Highest between 9 and 19 years of service

Political Views	Average Score	Count of Responses
Left	14.6	10
Lean Left	16	9
Moderate	16.45454545	33
Lean Right	19.03333333	30
Right	19.16	25
Agnostic to politics	20.44444444	9

Branch of Service	Average Score	Count of Responses
Air Force	18.52173913	23
Army	15.92207792	77
Coast Guard	19	1
Marine Corps	15.5	14
Navy	18.38461538	13

Highest Level of Schooling	Average Score	Count of Responses
High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)	16.33333333	3
Some college but no degree	16.375	24
Associate degree in college (2-year)	19.125	8
Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	17.43333333	30
Master's degree	18.31818182	44
Doctoral degree	18.5	8

Length of Service	Average Score	Count of Responses
0-4 years	15.56	25
5-8 years	13.35714286	28
9-12 years	18.61111111	18
13-19 years	19.08695652	23
20 or more years	17.35294118	34

Conclusion

- Social Identity Theory with Veteran Identity for Military Personnel
- Veteran Identity is strongest for those who are
 - Agnostic to politics
 - In the Air Force
 - Serving 13-19 years
 - Associate's Degree
- Most veterans who have a strong military identity are highly educated and have extensive military experience





Recommendations

Organizations should focus more on veteran identity within diversity and inclusion programs.

Organizations should make the work environment suit the previous experience of veterans better in order to decrease veteran identity strain.

Organizations need to translate veteran's extensive military experience into the civilian work environment by learning about the skills and experiences that veterans have obtained



Most Importantly

Listen to Their Stories

Thank You For
Listening

