

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:                   MILITARY SERVICE AS AN EXTREME  
CAREER PATH

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To date, a majority of research on extremism has focused on the negative aspects of extremism and little work has investigated altruistic forms of extremism. The distinction between negative and altruistic extremism is subjective and is shaped by a person's value system. As a result, two studies examined the extent to which service in the United States military is an altruistically extreme career path. The first study found little evidence that patriotic narratives increase the likelihood to join the military or support pro-military organizations. The next study, found that students in Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) have stronger views of the military as a source of significance compared to traditional students. However, there was sparse evidence that significance loss led to more extreme behaviors for both ROTC and traditional students. Theoretical and practical implications of the research on altruistic forms of extremism will be discussed.

# MILITARY SERVICE AS AN EXTREME CAREER PATH

by

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Every year approximately 100,000 people voluntarily join one of the four branches of the United States Military and currently only 0.4% of the United States population serve in the military (Defense Manpower Data Center). What then, prompts young men and women to voluntarily pursue a career in the military? A career that could potentially result in the sacrifice of their life in order to fulfill a patriotic duty. Many are attracted by the pay and benefits the military offer, but many young people are also drawn by the opportunity to defend their nation, fulfill their patriotic duty, and to be part of something bigger than themselves. One could argue that when an individual chooses a career in the military, they are opting for an extreme career path. Those who join the military accept risk that is inherent in military service. The individual relinquishes control over where they will live, who they will work with and even what job they will perform. Without their consent, service members might be sent into a combat zone at a moment's notice and find themselves in a situation where they may have to take the lives of others or sacrifice their own life in defense of their nation. Thus, why is it that young men and women willingly accept the risks associated with military service? Is it for pay and benefits or could they be motivated by a higher calling, a need for significance, or to feel as if their life has a purpose?

Through this research, I investigated if volunteering for military service in order to fill a need for significance fits the theory of extremism. Current literature on extremism primarily focuses on negative aspects of extremism, such as terrorism. However little research has investigated motivations that drive altruistic forms of

extremism. Specifically, I sought to determine if military service is a pathway to significance. I investigated the impact that a loss of significance can have on behaviors of members in altruistic extreme groups. This provides insight on how members of negative extreme groups behave in comparison to those in altruistic extreme groups. For example, how do members of altruistic extreme groups respond when there is a threat, humiliation, or loss of significance within their valued group? Do they respond with actions that will attempt to regain significance? If so, they may not be all that different from members of negative extreme groups. Finally, do members of altruistic extreme groups look to important group narratives to shape their behavior? I examined the role that narratives have in guiding individuals to join altruistic extreme groups. Through the investigation of these research questions, we will begin to understand the similarities and differences between different types of extreme groups and their members.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 What is Extremism?

To begin, we must first examine why some individuals engage in extreme acts. Extreme behaviors come in many different forms ranging from running marathons, extreme dieting, skydiving, to joining a terrorist group or conducting a terror attack. The term extreme is defined as “exceeding the ordinary, usual, or expected” (Merriam-Webster. Inc., 1986, p. 441). Research shows that people are guided by a basic set of biological and psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Fiske, 2004; Higgins, 2012; Maslow, 1943). The basic human needs usually constrain one another, and it is this constraint that keeps people from extreme behavior (Kruglanski, 2017). For example, if someone has a high need for achievement, they may be driven to work eighty-plus hours a week. However, this behavior may be moderated by the desire to have a family. This causes the individual to create a balance between time spent at work and time investing in their family relationships. The constraint of needs create moderation in the vast majority of people, creating a normal distribution in the population. It is the people on the fringe of the distribution who tend to shift towards extremism. The people on the fringe in this scenario are those that either commit nearly all of their time in pursuit of work while forsaking their family obligations or at the other end of the distribution people forsake all work obligations to fulfill their familial duties.

Thus, extremism can occur when one need becomes dominant and other needs become suppressed (Kruglanski, 2017). When a means to satisfy one need simultaneously undermines an alternative need, it may be viewed as more instrumental

to the focal need. When this occurs, one may suppress the alternative need in order to fulfill the focal need and this choice sets the stage for extreme behavior (Köpetz, Faber, Fishbach, & Kruglanski, 2011). For example, if a person is starving, they will eat nearly any type of food, regardless of taste, in order to satisfy their physiological need for nutrition. In this case, the need to eat desirable food is overcome by the need for nutrition and the individual will choose to provide themselves nutrition at the expense of eating desirable food. Extremism is defined in terms of the imbalance between needs and choice of counterfinal means (Kruglanski, 2017). For example, if violence is prohibited by society and therefore, engaging in violence would undermine one's needs to follow the norms of society, violence may be perceived as a more effective means for fulfilling a focal need. Extremism represents a matter of degree of the motivational imbalance and the extremist state of mind can vary in duration. The magnitude and type of extremism can vary from short to long in duration and negative to positive in outcome.

Because needs are basic, all people have them to some extent and most people are capable of maintaining a balance in their needs. The term extremism applies to individuals who willfully deviate from the descriptive norms of conduct in a given context or situation (i.e. how most people behave in the situation) (Kruglanski, 2017). Extremism is often thought of as pejorative; however, it can be viewed as negative, neutral, or positive. For example, most people associate extremism with individuals who join a terrorist group or conduct terror attacks. However, people who engage in extreme dieting or extreme sports such as skydiving, bungee jumping, or running ultra-marathons exhibit extreme behaviors but they are of no consequence to others. These



individuals are engaging in neutral forms of extreme behaviors. Finally, extremism can be viewed as altruistic or positive when individuals participate in humanitarian work or conduct patriotic service. In this case, the people engaging in altruistic extremism are suppressing their own needs in order to serve the needs of others. Finally, it is important to note that whether extremism is viewed as positive or negative depends on an individual's value system. This notion is summed up by the old saying, "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." For example, most American's view members of the Taliban as terrorists who engage in extreme violence which constitutes negative extremism. However, for supporters of the Taliban, a person who engages in extreme violence on the Taliban's behalf is fighting to uphold their beliefs and value systems.

## **2.2 Significance Quest Theory**

The quest for significance is a basic human desire to matter, or to be someone, especially in the eyes of others (Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009; Kruglanski et. al., 2013; Kruglanski et al., 2014). Extreme behaviors can be triggered when there is an imbalance in basic needs or in this case, a need for significance. A significance loss can be aroused through the deprivation of a need, which may lead to extremism. This can occur at many different levels. For example, Palestinian women who experienced stigma in their personal lives such as infertility, divorce, or extramarital affairs later volunteered for suicide missions (Pedahzur, 2005). This type of significance loss can be categorized as an individual humiliation. Intergroup conflict can also be a source of significance loss. This occurred to Chechen "black widows" as they were marginalized when Russian forces killed their loved ones.

As a result, the women eventually became suicide bombers (Speckhard & Paz, 2012). Quite often an affront to social identity can trigger a significance loss. There are many cases of this happening, such as when Muslim immigrants face Islamophobia as immigrants in Europe (Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post, & Victoroff, 2008; Sageman, 2004). Finally, group discrimination can also lead to significance loss (Atran et al., 2007). This has occurred when Muslims feel as if their sacred values have been trampled by western culture.

Research has demonstrated that violence is often the means of choice used to restore a loss of significance (Post, 2006), but there are other means available to restore an imbalance. An individual can pursue moderate means compatible with other concerns, such as the pursuit of excellence in science, art, or business. Next, an individual can resort to extreme means that are compatible with social norms such as, extreme dieting or sports. In this context, the person involves self-denial in fulfilling their needs, but they do not violate any societal injunctions. Finally, an individual can choose extreme means to fulfill a need that serves a major moral imperative (Kruglanski 2017). Examples of this include, missionary and humanitarian work, or joining the military as a patriotic duty. Often when a motivational imbalance occurs due to a loss of significance, or an opportunity for a considerable significance gain presents itself, an individual will look towards important networks and their narratives to guide their quest to regain significance.

### **2.3 The 3 N's: Needs, Networks, and Narratives**

Individuals can experience a significance loss on behalf of an important group they identify with. For example, Muslims, in general, have felt discriminated against

or humiliated around the world and as a result experienced a personal loss of significance (Adib-Moghaddam, 2005; Della Porta & Rucht, 1995; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2011; Zartman & Khan, 2011). When a person experiences a reduction in the fundamental desire for significance they are motivated to regain or restore it. This is when an individual may look to an ideological narrative to determine the appropriate means to pursue a cause that will restore their significance. In times of peace, narratives often promote peaceful contributions to society through acts of service or the accomplishments of groups objectives. Narratives encouraging these goals may promote the efforts of hard work, the pursuit of a career, or acts of service towards others (Kruglanski, Jasko, Webber, Chernikova & Molinario, 2018). In the framework of Significance Quest Theory, the network component refers to the group of people who subscribe to the narrative (Kruglanski, Jasko, Webber, Chernikova & Molinario, 2018).

The network importantly validates the narrative, serving as the epistemic authority, concerning the means that would serve the goal of significance (Hardin & Higgins, 1996; Kruglanski et al., 2005). An individual's social network may contribute to the initiation and maintenance of extreme behavior through two relevant functions. The first is via an informational influence that serves as the epistemic authority whose consensual support validates a given narrative. In this sense, the group validates the narrative concerning a given means to the dominant goal. Second, normative influence is the power to reward an individual for subscribing to the network-espoused goal-means schema and the implementing activities it suggests (Kruglanski, 2017).

Networks utilize ideological narratives as tools that can sustain motivational imbalance that lead to extreme behaviors. In addition to invoking a significance promoting goal, an ideological narrative provides a means with which to pursue a goal. Network or group membership contributes to an important part of the self-concept and in turn increases the likelihood that an individual will participate in pro-group behavior (Swann, Gómez, Dovidio, Hart, & Jetten, 2010; Swann et al., 2009). Group membership can increase an individual's willingness to accept sacrifices for a collective cause because the group is a source of significance and acceptance. Studies have shown that when a violent act is validated socially, the person who commits the act experiences less guilt and distress (Webber, Schimel, Martens, Hayes, & Faucher, 2013).

## **2.4 Military Service as an Extreme Career Path**

A Gallup poll (2016) revealed that Americans' satisfaction with the nation's security from terrorism has significantly eroded for the second year in a row, with a majority now saying they are dissatisfied. More than two-thirds, 69%, said in 2014 that they were satisfied with the nation's security from terrorism, but that figure dropped to 59% a year ago and now has fallen to 43%. The lack of faith in America's security from terrorism may lead to a significance loss in Americans that drives the motivation to join the military.

One can argue that joining the military voluntarily is an extreme behavior, albeit an altruistic one. The decision to join the military comes at the cost of personal control over many aspects of one's life. The individual is completely at the mercy of the military to determine what job they will hold, where they will live, and for how long

they will live there. Additionally, in order to join the military, a service member must undergo an intense training and indoctrination period during boot camp in order to develop the skills necessary for a career in the military. Ultimately, the pursuit of employment in the military could result in multiple overseas deployments where an individual may find themselves engaging in combat on behalf of their nation. As a result, they may be forced to take the lives of others or they may lose their lives in defense of their nation. The life of deployments, training, and risk to one's safety becomes the norm in military life compared to the stability and comfort of life as a civilian.

## **2.5 What Motivates Military Service?**

A fair amount of research has investigated the motivations that drive military service. Findings suggest that there are a diverse set of motivators that lead to military service and they are often categorized via the framework of Moskos' Institutional-Organizational Model (Moskos, 1977). According to Moskos' model, motivations for patriotic service fall on a continuum ranging from occupational to institutional ideal types and include the following: money for education, job training, gainful employment, and a desire to serve one's country. Woodruff, Kelty, and Segal (2008) found that transformational motivators like patriotism or a desire to serve are centrally important to determining enlistment propensity in high school seniors. Furthermore, in an analysis of Department of Defense Youth Polls, Eighmey (2008) found that the concepts of fidelity and dignity were two of the leading concepts that led young people to join the military.

Upon reviewing notable research on the motives that drive military service, it appears that the concept of significance plays a key role. A study of military recruiting advertisements revealed that messages used in commercials for Active Duty recruiting used transformational messaging that employs an emotional approach to gain new recruits (Park, Shoieb, & Taylor, 2017). Slogans used in military advertising campaigns for each military branch all carry the message of significance: “Be All That You Can Be” – Army, The Few. The Proud. The Marines.”, Aim High – Air Force, and A Global Force for Good – Navy. Each of these messages employs messages that a certain amount of significance or greatness comes with serving in one of the four military branches.

## **2.6 Military Service as a Source of Significance**

Numerous surveys have indicated that military service is a great source of pride and significance among Americans. In 2011, a Pew survey found that 90% of military veterans listed serving their country as an important reason for joining the military, 95% of veterans are proud of their military service, and 82% of veterans would advise a young person close to them to join the military. Additionally, a Gallup poll (2008) found that nearly two-thirds of Americans (62%) say serving in the U.S. military reveals "a great deal" about one's patriotism, ranking it second in all patriotic measures only to voting in elections. The survey also found that 76% of Americans would recommend at least one of the branches to a child or grandchild. More than nine-in-ten Americans express pride in the troops and three-quarters say they thanked someone in the military for their service. Finally, in Gallup's annual Confidence in Institutions poll (2017), the military has topped the list every year since 1998. Thus, for a young

American, military service is highly regarded in American society and may potentially be a great source to gain significance.

## Chapter 3: Present Research

The present research aimed to explore motivations that influence the pursuit of membership in altruistically extreme groups, specifically the United States military. There is a large body of research that has examined the deviant aspects of extreme behaviors (e.g. suicide bombers, joining extremist groups, etc.), but little research has investigated the motives associated with positive or altruistic extremism. The current research had three main goals: First, expand upon the current theories of extremism by investigating the motives for joining extreme groups that are altruistic in nature. Second, examine the extent that a loss of significance impacts extreme behaviors in prospective members of altruistic extreme groups. Third, apply the current models of extremism in a laboratory setting in order to provide support to theories on the universal motivations of extreme behavior.

Three questions drove this research effort. The first, to what extent are individuals who experience significance loss influenced by narratives. Can they be influenced to regain significance through the effective use of narratives? Might individuals be influenced to support the military after being exposed to narratives that promote the military as a pathway to significance gain? I anticipated that individuals who experience a significance loss would be influenced more by pro-military narratives and would be more likely to engage in pro-group behavior that supports the military.

The second question examined the degree to which service in the military is a pathway to individual significance. The second study was designed to examine whether college students who are pursuing a career in the military via the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) are doing so in order to fulfill a need for significance. The



literature on enlistment motivations provides support for various motives for joining the military to include: duty, service, patriotism, self-discipline, job skills, pay, benefits, etc (Moskos, 1977; Woodruff, Kelty, & Segal, 2008). However, there have not been any research that has examined the role of the need for significance and its role on influencing the decision to join the military. Duty, service, and patriotism are means with which individuals can fulfill their need for significance and are often stated as significant factors that motivate individuals to serve in the military. This research sought to provide new insights into enlistment motivations by investigating how the significance quest framework motivates people to choose an altruistically extreme career path. I anticipated that the data would reveal that the military is an effective pathway in which individuals can gain significance.

The final research question examined the extent that a loss of significance motivates extreme behaviors for members of altruistic extreme groups. There is a considerable gap in research on extremism as it relates to altruistic forms of extremism. Yet, if the Significance Quest Theory of extremism is universal, then we can expect similar motivational and behavioral outcomes regardless of the form of extremism (negative, neutral, positive). Therefore, in the final phase of the second study, I anticipated that when ROTC students experience a significance loss they would look to regain significance by protecting the norms and values of the military. For example, if someone unlawfully discloses classified information, I predicted that individuals who had experienced a loss of significance would support harsher punishments in order to regain significance. I also expected the same outcome to occur for traditional students

who would attempt to regain significance by supporting harsher punishments when general societal norms are violated.

The present research sought to answer the three main research questions via two experimental studies. The results were hoped to provide clarity concerning the extent to which military service constitutes a pathway for significance. Additionally, the results should provide insights into the behaviors of altruistic extreme group members about which there is at present only sparse evidence (Molinario et al., 2017).

## **Chapter 4: Study 1**

### **4.1 Overview**

A Completely Randomized Factorial Design (Kirk, 2013) was used to examine the impact of significance loss and narratives on the willingness to support networks. In the first step of the experiment, participants were assigned to either an experimental (significance loss) or a control (no significance loss) group. Then, participants were further split into three groups (pro-military, pro-environmental, or control) where they were exposed to a supraliminal priming technique to prime their identification with one of the three narratives via a Scrambled Sentence Test (Srull & Wyer, 1979). Finally, the willingness to contribute to pro-military, pro-environmental, or control groups was measured. I anticipated that the willingness to contribute to pro-military groups will be highest for the group that was exposed to significance loss and pro-military narratives.

### **4.2 Participants**

216 students from the University of Maryland participated in the study. Of the 216 participants, 146 were female, 68 were male, and 2 preferred not to disclose their gender identification. The average age of participants was 19.31 years ( $SD = 1.72$ ). Participants were granted extra credit in their undergraduate psychology courses in return for their time. All participants signed an online consent form and were treated according to APA standards.

### **4.3 Procedure**

Study 1 was designed to measure the extent that networks and narratives can shape an individual's behavior following significance loss. This study contained two

independent variables. The first was significance loss exposure and it was manipulated via a writing task. As a result of the manipulation, participants were assigned into either an experimental condition or the control condition. In the experimental condition, participants were exposed to a significance loss and in the control condition, they were not exposed to such loss. The second, independent variable was narrative type, pro-military, pro-environmental or control, which was manipulated via the Scrambled Sentence Test (Srull & Wyer, 1979). Participants were exposed to only one of the three narrative types. The dependent variable in this study was the willingness to contribute or support a charitable cause. Participants indicated their willingness to donate to a pro-military group, a pro-environmental group, or a control charity group such as the American Red Cross.

#### *Manipulating the Independent Variables*

A writing task was presented in order to manipulate the quest for significance, via significance loss (Appendix B). Participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental (significance loss) or control condition (no significance loss). In the significance loss condition, participants were asked to “think back to a situation in which you felt humiliated or ashamed because you felt like people were laughing at you”. Participants were then asked to describe the situation by answering the following questions: 1) “What happened?”; 2) “Who was involved?”; 3) “How did it make you feel?”. In the control condition, participants were asked to “think back to the last time you watched TV” and then describe the situation by answering the following questions: 1) “What happened?”; 2) “Who was involved?”; 3) “How did it make you feel?”.

After completion of the writing task, participants were presented with a manipulation check of eight items, four of which were used as a manipulation check. Participants were asked to rate how they felt while recalling an event during the writing task and how much they agree or disagree with eight questions using a seven-point Likert scale. The questions to check the manipulation of significance loss were: “I felt confused”, “I felt small or insignificant”, “I felt like a person of worth” (reverse scored), and “I felt like I had a sense of purpose in my life” (reverse scored).

Following the manipulation check, participants were exposed to either to a pro-military, pro-environmental, or control narratives which were primed via a Scrambled Sentence Test (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, & Trötschel, 2001; Srull & Wyer, 1979). Participants in each of the narrative conditions were presented with a total of 30 stimuli sets (Appendix D). Each stimulus set was composed of five words presented in a scrambled order. In 24 of the sets, one of the five words was a word associated with one of the three narrative types. Participants were instructed to rearrange the words to form a logical sentence using only four of the five words. In the pro-military condition words related to patriotism, honor, and duty were embedded in the sentences. In the pro-environmental condition words related to balance, environment, and nature were embedded in the sentences. In the pro-military condition, a sample item was “*they protected our nation*”. In the pro-environmental condition, a sample item was “*organic apples are tasty*”. Finally, in the control condition, there was no underlying narrative theme. A sample item for the control condition was “*the summer was hot*”. In all conditions, the fifth word was neutral with no relation to either the military or the environment.

Immediately after the participants completed the priming task, participants were asked a series of questions in which they rated their willingness to join the military or contribute to pro-military groups such as the Wounded Warrior Project and the USO (United Service Organization) or pro-environmental groups such as Greenpeace. Participants were asked to determine how to allocate 100 dollars to one of three charities, a pro-military charity, a pro-environmental charity, or a neutral control charity.

At the end of the experiment, participants completed a funnel debriefing form (Bargh & Chartrand, 2000) that investigated their possible awareness or suspicion concerning our priming manipulation and its effects (Appendix E). Participants were asked: (a) what they thought the purpose of the experiment had been; (b) whether they thought any of the different tasks had been related; (c) whether anything they had done on one task had affected what they had done on any of the other tasks; (d) whether they had ever seen or completed a Scrambled Sentence Test for another experiment; and (e) whether they remembered any of the words from the Scrambled Sentence Test or thought any of the words seemed unusual or distinctive.

#### **4.4 Results**

Participants were first exposed to a writing task that served as the experimental manipulation to induce significance loss. A between groups t-test was used to test for differences in the manipulation of significance loss. The experimental manipulation effectively induced significance loss in the desired direction as results indicated that participants in the experimental condition experienced greater significance loss than those in the control condition ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ),  $t(207) = -11.34$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Overall, study 1 yielded very few significant results supporting the impact of significance loss and narratives on networks. An one-way ANOVA was used to determine the impact that significance loss and exposure to narratives would have on the likelihood that someone would consider joining a branch of the military. Counter to my hypothesis, the results revealed no main effect of significance loss on the likelihood to join the military ( $F(1, 210) = .09, p = .07$ ). However, there was a significant main effect of narrative type such that participants in the military narrative condition were more likely to join the military than those exposed to neutral or environmental narratives ( $F(2, 210) = .443, p = .01$ ). Finally, there was a significant interaction between narrative type and significance loss that predicts the likelihood of joining the military, indicating that individuals in the control condition who were exposed to pro-military narratives show a higher likelihood of joining the military ( $F(2, 210) = 3.75, p = .002$ ).

Next when examining the likelihood of volunteering with a pro-military organization, a one-way ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of significance loss ( $F(1, 210) = .06, p = .08$ ) or narrative type ( $F(1, 210) = .05, p = .94$ ). Additionally, there was no significant interaction between significance loss and narrative type as it predicts the likelihood of joining a pro-environmental group ( $F(2, 210) = .52, p = .059$ ).

When asked how likely it was that the participants would join a pro-environmental organization, such as Greenpeace, a one-way ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of significance loss ( $F(1, 210) = .049, p = .48$ ) or narrative type ( $F(2, 210) = .25, p = .77$ ). Additionally, there was no significant interaction between significance

loss and narrative type as it predicts the likelihood of joining a pro-environmental group ( $F(2, 210) = 1.04, p = .35$ ).

A one-way ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of significance loss ( $F(1, 210) = 1.18, p = .27$ ) or narrative type ( $F(2, 210) = .58, p = .55$ ) in regards to how likely a participant was to volunteer in a pro-environmental organization. There was also no significant interaction between significance loss and narrative type as it predicts the likelihood of volunteering with a pro-environmental group ( $F(2, 210) = 2.33, p = .09$ ).

In the final group of questions in this study, participants were asked to distribute 100 dollars amongst three charities, the Wounded Warrior Project, Green Peace, and the Make a Wish Foundation. A one-way ANOVA revealed no significant main effects of significance loss ( $F(1, 210) = .59, p = .44$ ), narrative type ( $F(2, 210) = .29, p = .74$ ), or interaction of significance loss and narrative type ( $F(2, 210) = .30, p = .74$ ) on the likelihood to contribute to the Wounded Warrior project. Similar results were obtained for the allocation of donations to Greenpeace. There were no significant main effects of significance loss ( $F(1, 210) = .47, p = .94$ ), narrative type ( $F(2, 210) = .02, p = .97$ ), or interaction of significance loss and narrative type ( $F(2, 210) = 1.05, p = .34$ ).

Finally, there were no significant main effects of significance loss ( $F(1, 210) = .04, p = .83$ ), narrative type ( $F(2, 210) = .66, p = .51$ ), or interaction of significance loss and narrative type ( $F(2, 210) = .91, p = .40$ ) as they impacted the likelihood to donate to the Make A Wish Foundation.



#### **4.5. Discussion**

Overall, the findings in study 1 did not support my hypothesis regarding the impact that significance loss and exposure to narratives would have on the support for networks. The results from Study 1 indicated that there is no relationship between significance loss, exposure to narratives, and the willingness to support or join pro-military groups. The findings are contrary to my hypothesis that exposure to narratives and significance loss would increase the likelihood that an individual would be more supportive of pro-military groups.

While the significance loss manipulation achieved the desired effect on participants, the data provide no evidence that an individual will be more likely to join a group as a means to regain their significance. Further, the data indicate that exposure to narratives also do not have a large impact on how supportive of a group a person will be.

The lack of significant results could be the result of the measure used to indicate the willingness to support a group. Despite the desired effect of the significant loss manipulation, it is possible that the following measures did not offer participants the means with which to regain their significance. As such, additional studies should be explored that examine alternative measures of group identification or support following a loss of significance. In addition to exploring alternate measures of group identification, future research should examine the extent to which pre-existing members of groups respond to losses of significance and exposure to the group's narratives. Perhaps in the present study, participants did not have a strong affiliation or connection to pro-military or pro-environmental groups and as a result, did not view

supporting the groups as an effective means to restore their significance. This indicates that perhaps priming alone is not enough to make a given means compelling enough to restore significance.

In order to overcome the lack of effective means to restore a loss of significance, the next study compared students who were members of ROTC to traditional students. By examining a group of students with a preexisting affiliation with a network we were able to provide participants with a more compelling means to restore their significance than used in study 1.

## Chapter 5: Study 2

### 5.1 Overview

A Generalized Random Block Factorial Design (Kirk, 2013) was used to determine if the need for significance prompts military service. Study 1 contained four major sections: an assessment of the need for significance, assessment of beliefs of the military as a source of significance and exposure to military narratives, manipulation of significance loss followed by ratings of the severity of punishments for various crimes, and a final measure of the need for significance.

In the first section, data was collected via a survey instrument comprised of three stages (Appendix A). The first was the Quest for Significance Scale (Kruglanski, et. al., in prep) to measure the need for significance of ROTC students compared to traditional students. Next, participants rated the extent that various career fields and military service are a pathway to significance gain. Finally, participants ranked their exposure to military narratives.

I hypothesized that ROTC students would have a higher need for significance than traditional students. Additionally, I anticipated that ROTC students would rate military careers as a better pathway to significance compared to traditional students. Finally, I expected ROTC students to have had more exposure to military narratives than traditional students.

The second main section investigated the extent that a network can shape the behavior of group members following a significance loss. ROTC and traditional college students completed a task in which proposed punishments for crimes are rated in terms

of severity. I hypothesized that participants would administer harsher punishments in the experimental, significance loss condition, compared to participants in the control condition. Thus, I expected that participants who experience a significance loss would be more likely to rate the punishments of crimes more severely as a means to regain their significance. Furthermore, I anticipated that ROTC students would experience a threat to their significance when presented with vignettes that feature crimes that are detrimental to the military. As a result, ROTC students would be motivated to regain their group's significance and would do so by supporting harsher punishments to the individual who committed crimes that were detrimental to the military.

In the final section, participants completed the Quest for Significance Scale again. This provided clarity on the impact that a significance loss has on an individual's desired state of significance. I hypothesized that both ROTC and traditional students would have higher scores on the final Quest for Significance Scale after being exposed to a significance loss compared to those who were not exposed to significance loss. Further, I anticipated the ROTC students who have been exposed to a significance loss would have higher scores than traditional students who were exposed to significance loss on the final Quest for Significance Scale.

## **5.2 Participants**

183 students from the University of Maryland participated in the study. Eight participants did not complete all sections of the study and as a result, their responses have been omitted from the present analysis. Of the 175 remaining participants, 81 were female, 91 were male, and 3 preferred not to disclose their gender identification. The average age of participants was 20.55 years ( $SD = 2.50$ ). Additionally, participants

were recruited from both ROTC (n = 88) and traditional student (n = 87) populations. The two student groups were matched on their declared college majors, such that there was equal representation of majors in both ROTC and traditional student groups. The largest representation of students was from the School of Engineering (n = 72), followed the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences (n = 54), next was the Behavioral and Social Sciences College (n = 36), and the remaining students were from the colleges of Business, Public Health, and Journalism (n = 21). Participants were compensated with 10 dollars for their time. All participants signed an online consent form and were treated according to APA standards.

### **5.3 Procedure**

Participants were told that they were taking part in a work motivation study that investigated their career aspirations. They were instructed to complete a survey containing three parts (see Appendix A). The first section was comprised of a set of 16 questions that provide a measure of the desired state of significance using a modified Quest for Significance Scale (Kruglanski et. al., in prep). In this section of the survey participants' views on the extent to which they are seeking significance in their life was examined. Participants were asked to provide ratings on 7-point Likert Scales indicating the extent to which they desire to be respected by others, to lead a meaningful life, be remembered by their community, leave a legacy, etc. Next, participants were asked to rate 10 different careers including, military officer, teacher, lawyer, doctor, etc, on the extent to which members of the career get respect. After rating individual careers, participants were asked to rate the extent that themselves and other groups (family, friends, etc.) agree that military service is a source of individual significance.

Finally, participants were asked to indicate the frequency in which they are exposed to military narratives and how frequently they discuss the military with family, friends, and acquaintances.

Next, a writing task was presented in order to manipulate the quest for significance (Appendix B). Participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental (significance loss) or control condition (no significance loss). In the significance loss condition, participants were asked to “think back to a situation in which you felt humiliated or ashamed because you felt like people were laughing at you”. The participants were then asked to describe the situation by answering the following questions: 1) “What happened?”; 2) “Who was involved?”; 3) “How did it make you feel?”. In the control condition, participants were asked to “think back to the last time you watched TV” and then describe the situation by answering the following questions: 1) “What happened?”; 2) “Who was involved?”; 3) “How did it make you feel?”. After completion of the writing task, participants were presented with the same manipulation check as used in Study 1.

After the manipulation check, participants were presented with a series of 10 vignettes describing a variety of crimes and a description of the punishment that the offender will receive (Appendix C). The punishments used in the vignettes included monetary fines, suspension of licenses, probation, and prison sentences. The vignettes featured scenarios in which an individual committed one of the following types of crimes: driving under the influence, fraud, desertion, divulging trade secrets, and abandonment of contractual obligations. For each type of crime, one scenario was presented in which the perpetrator was a member of the military and the other scenario

in which he/she was a civilian with no military known military affiliation. Participants rated the degree to which the proposed punishment is appropriate given the crime committed. These ratings were recorded on a 1 – 7 Likert scale ranging from “much too low” to “much too high” (Miller, Rossi, & Simmons, 1991).

Finally, participants were instructed to again provide a measure of significance using a modified Quest for Significance Scale (Kruglanski et. al., in prep). This scale was the exact same scale that was used in section 1 of this study. The survey examined participants’ views on the extent to which they are seeking significance in their life. They were asked to provide ratings on 7-point Likert Scales indicating the extent to which they desire to be respected by others, to lead a meaningful life, be remembered by their community, leave a legacy, etc.

## **5.4 Results**

Two Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) were run to confirm the one-factor structure of the Quest for Significance scale used to measure the need for significance at two administration points. For the initial administration of the Quest for Significance scale at the beginning of the study the CFA indicated poor fit of the scale,  $\chi^2_{27} = 113.330$ ,  $p = .000$ ; RMSEA = .136, [90% CI = .11, .08]; TLI = .917; CFI = .938 (MacCallum, Browne and Sugawara, 1996). However, when adding covariance error terms to the model after examining modification indices, the overall fit of the model improved indicating excellent overall fit,  $\chi^2_{24} = 406.78$ ,  $p = .017$ ; RMSEA = .03, [90% CI = .00, .08]; TLI = .97; CFI = .98 (MacCallum, Browne and Sugawara, 1996).

For the final administration of the Quest for Significance scale at the end of the study, the CFA again indicated poor model fit  $\chi^2_{27} = 105.64, p = .000$ ; RMSEA = .129, [90% CI = .10, .16]; TLI = .942; CFI = .956. When adding covariance error terms to the model, the overall fit was improved, however the goodness of fit of the model remained poor,  $\chi^2_{24} = 60.59, p = .000$ ; RMSEA = .094, [90% CI = .06, .12]; TLI = .969; CFI = .98.

To test for differences in how ROTC students and traditional students view military service as a pathway to significance, a series of between groups t-tests were used to examine measures of significances as a dependent variable. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and t-tests for all questions on the Quest for Significance scale are presented in Table 1.

Counter to my hypothesis that ROTC students would have a higher need for significance than traditional students, composite scores for the first Quest for Significance Scale (Kruglanski, in prep) revealed no significant differences between ROTC ( $M = 5.22, SD = 1.59$ ) and traditional college students ( $M = 5.21, SD = 1.33$ ),  $t(166) = -0.01; p = .985$ . Next, the Quest for Significance scale was assessed to measure both the current state and the desired state for the need for significance. Of interest, ROTC students felt more significant ( $M = 6.05, SD = 1.04$ ) compared to traditional students ( $M = 5.50, SD = 1.19$ ),  $t(169) = 4.72; p < .001$ . When examining the desired need for significance, ROTC students exhibited lower scores ( $M = 4.46, SD = 1.64$ ) when compared to traditional students ( $M = 5.04, SD = 1.40$ ),  $t(161) = -2.78; p = .005$ . Again, these results were counter to my hypothesis that ROTC students would have a higher desired need for significance. To assess the difference between current state and



desired state of significance, I computed the absolute value of the differences between the current state and desired state measures. This created an index score that represented the discrepancy between the student's sense of significance and their desire to be significant. When assessing this difference, ROTC students had a much larger discrepancy between current state and desired state ( $M = 1.59$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ) compared to traditional students ( $M = 0.45$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ),  $t(167) = 4.54$ ;  $p < .001$ . Descriptive statistics, correlations, and t-tests for all questions on the Quest for Significance scale are presented in Table 1.

In order to examine overall differences in the ratings of career significance, I again used between subjects t-tests to measure the differences between ROTC students and traditional students. Full results of the ratings of career field significance to include means, standard deviations and t-tests, are displayed in Table 2. Overall, military officers were rated as receiving more respect than all other career fields with the exception of doctors. A Wilcoxon Rank Sum test on the rankings of career field respect between ROTC and traditional students found no significant differences between the two groups ( $W=17.5$ ;  $p=0.33$ ). Additionally, there were no notable differences in the ratings of the respect given to military officers between ROTC ( $M = 6.32$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) and traditional students ( $M = 6.38$ ,  $SD = 0.7$ ),  $t(166) = -0.55$ ;  $p = .58$ .

The next set of questions examined the extent to which people view serving in the military as a source of individual significance. ROTC students believe more strongly that serving in the military is a source of significance ( $M = 6.21$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) when compared to traditional students ( $M = 5.59$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ),  $t(162) = 3.22$ ;  $p < .001$ . Further, ROTC student's rate their families as believing the military is a source of

significance higher ( $M = 5.65$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ) than the families of traditional students ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 1.70$ ),  $t(170) = 4.18$ ;  $p < .001$ . When comparing the beliefs of friends there were no noticeable differences between ROTC ( $M = 5.42$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ) and traditional students ( $M = 5.20$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ),  $t(162) = 1.10$ ;  $p < .271$ . However, when asking about the beliefs of acquaintances, ROTC students believe that their acquaintances rate the military as being more of a source of individual significance ( $M = 5.50$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) compared to the beliefs of traditional students ( $M = 5.16$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ),  $t(169) = 1.98$ ;  $p = .048$ . Finally, when comparing the beliefs that Americans and non-Americans have regarding military service as a source of individual significance, there were no noticeable differences between the ROTC and traditional students. Full results of the ratings of the military as a source of significance are displayed in Tables 3 and 3.1.

Next, an examination of exposure to military narratives revealed that ROTC students ( $M = 4.97$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ) recall seeing military recruiting advertisements significantly more often than traditional students ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ),  $t(171) = 6.02$ ;  $p < .001$ . Additionally, ROTC students read books with military themes ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ) far more frequently than traditional students ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ),  $t(170) = 3.69$ ;  $p < .001$ . There were no significant differences between ROTC students and traditional students when watching movies with military themes. However, when watching TV shows with military themes, ROTC students frequently watched more shows ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 3.93$ ) when compared to traditional students ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ),  $t(171) = 3.61$ ;  $p < .001$ . ROTC students read more magazines featuring the military ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ) in comparison to traditional students ( $M = 2.61$ ,  $SD =$

1.39),  $t(172) = 3.13$ ;  $p = .002$ . Full results of the ratings of the military as a source of significance are displayed in Tables 4 and 4.1.

The final set of questions in section 1 addressed the frequency in which people engage in conversations with family, friends, and acquaintances regarding the military. ROTC students engaged in discussions with friends far more frequently ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ) than traditional students ( $M = 1.77$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ),  $t(169) = 16.4$ ;  $p < .001$ . Similar results were found when examining discussions with family members as ROTC students engage in conversations far more frequently ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) compared to traditional students ( $M = 1.70$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ),  $t(164) = 13.44$ ;  $p < .001$ . Finally, ROTC students also discussed the military with acquaintances more frequently than traditional students ( $M = 2.63$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ),  $t(168) = 9.03$ ;  $p = .001$ . Full results of the ratings of the military as a source of significance are displayed in Tables 5 and 5.1.

I followed procedures recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2013) to test the extent to which exposure to military narratives mediates the effect of student type on the evaluation of military service as a source of significance (Figure 1). Exposure to military narratives was measured by averaging the scores for how often each student saw military advertisements, watched tv shows or movies with military themes, and read books or magazines with military themes. The responses from all five questions regarding exposure to military narratives were combined to create an index score of overall exposure to narratives. I regressed the evaluation of military service as a source of significance on student type, which revealed a significant effect of student type (ROTC = 0, Traditional = 1),  $\beta = -.237$ ,  $t = -3.173$ ,  $p = .002$ . Next, exposure to military narratives, the presumed mediator, was regressed on student type which revealed a

significant effect of student type,  $\beta = .636$ ,  $t = -10.726$ ,  $p < .001$ . Then, I regressed the evaluation of military service as a source of significance on student type and exposure to military narratives, neither the effect of student type,  $\beta = -.152$ ,  $t = -1.57$ ,  $p = .118$  or exposure to military narratives,  $\beta = .134$ ,  $t = 1.384$ ,  $p = .168$  were significant. To test the significance of the indirect effect student type on the evaluation of military as a source of significance through the exposure to military narratives, I conducted a bootstrapping analysis (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) based on a 1,000 bootstrap sample. This procedure produced an unstandardized indirect effect of  $-.218$ , which was not significant, 95% CI  $(-.46, .03)$ . Thus, counter to my hypothesis, there is no evidence that exposure to military narratives mediates the evaluation of military service as a source of significance for different types of students.

A between groups t-test was used to test for differences in the manipulation check. Full descriptive statistics, correlations, and t-test results of the manipulation check are contained in Table 6 and 6.1. The experimental manipulation had the desired impact of inducing significance loss in the desired direction as results indicated that participants in the experimental condition experienced greater significance loss than those in the control condition ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ),  $t(167) = -5.78$ ,  $p < .001$ .

A factorial ANOVA was performed on the composite ratings of punishment severity as the dependent variable and student type, significance loss, and vignette type as the independent variables (Figure 2, 3, and 4). Afterward, a Tukey HSD Post Hoc test was used to compare the means for the following independent variables: significance loss condition, student type, vignette type, and group type.

Results revealed a main effect of student type  $F(1,1780) = 75.73$ ;  $p < .001$ . Consistent with my hypothesis, this suggests that ROTC students rate punishments as being too lenient ( $M = 3.85$ ;  $SD = 1.18$ ) when compared to traditional students ( $M = 4.35$ ;  $SD = 1.24$ ). Additionally, the results of the ANOVA revealed no main effect of significance loss on the ratings of punishment severity,  $F(1,1780) = 2.52$ ;  $p = .18$ . A significant main effect of vignette type was found  $F(1,1781) = 39.36$ ;  $p < .001$  indicating that people believe that crimes committed by military members ( $M = 4.28$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) should carry more lenient punishments in comparison to crimes committed by civilians ( $M = 3.92$ ;  $SD = 1.30$ ). Finally, there was no significant significance loss by vignette type interaction  $F(1,1780) = .0001$ ;  $p < .99$ .

In order to assess the impact that a student's major had on the ratings of punishments, I ran a Factorial ANOVA assessing the effects that student type, major, exposure to significance loss, vignette type, and their associated interactions has on the ratings of punishments. After initially testing the ANOVA, I pooled items whose significance value was greater than  $p = .25$  by removing them from the model as recommended by Kirk (2013). After pooling items that were not significant in the model the results revealed a main effect of a student's major on the ratings of punishment severity  $F(1,1761) = 4.2662$ ;  $p < .01$ . Thus, students enrolled in business and behavioral sciences programs are more likely to be more lenient when rating punishment severity.

I also ran a Factorial ANOVA to control for the impact of gender on the ratings of punishment severity. After initially testing the ANOVA which examined the effects of gender, student type, exposure to significance loss, vignette types, and their associated

interactions, I pooled items whose significance value was greater than  $p = .25$  by removing them from the model. The following model revealed a main effect of a student's gender on the ratings of punishment severity  $F(2, 1779) = 5.1240$ ;  $p < .01$  which indicates that males are more likely to be more lenient when rating punishment severity compared to females.

Next, when examining crimes based on type rather than composite scores, there were several occasions in which meaningful differences between significance loss conditions and vignette type occurred. Table 7 contains the correlations for each type of crime featured in the vignette pairs.

When presented with vignettes that described fraud related crimes, there was a significant main effect of student type  $F(1, 341) = 25.42$ ;  $p < .001$ , such that ROTC students judged the punishments as not being harsh enough ( $M = 3.90$ ;  $SD = 0.96$ ) when compared to traditional students ( $M = 4.42$ ;  $SD = 0.99$ ). Additionally a main effect of vignette type was found  $F(1, 341) = 14.28$ ;  $p < .001$ , indicating that crimes featuring military scenarios were deemed to have more lenient punishments ( $M = 4.36$ ;  $SD = 0.93$ ) compared to crimes that had no connection to the military ( $M = 3.97$ ;  $SD = 0.99$ ). There was no main effect of significance loss or a significance loss by vignette type interaction.

The next set of vignettes featured individuals who had been arrested for driving under the influence. Analysis shows that there was a significant main effect of vignette type  $F(1, 341) = 6.85$ ;  $p = .009$ , such that punishments for military members ( $M = 3.40$ ;  $SD = 1.05$ ) were too lenient when compared to punishments for civilians ( $M = 3.70$ ;  $SD = 1.10$ ) who were also being punished for driving under the influence. There was

no main effect of student type, significance loss, or significance loss by vignette type interaction.

The vignettes that described crimes in which individual disclosed trade secrets showed a significant main effect of student type  $F(1,345) = 26.88$ ;  $p < .001$ . ROTC students consistently recommended harsher punishments ( $M = 3.97$ ;  $SD = 1.41$ ) when compared to traditional students ( $M = 4.63$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ ). Additionally, there was a significant main effect of vignette type  $F(1,345) = 26.88$ ;  $p < .001$ , which indicates that the punishments for civilians was not deemed harsh enough ( $M = 3.81$ ;  $SD = 1.30$ ) when compared to the military punishments ( $M = 4.78$ ;  $SD = 1.16$ ). There was no main effect for significance loss or significance loss by vignette type interaction.

The next set of vignettes highlighted crimes of both military and civilian desertion. Analyses revealed a significant main effect of student type  $F(1,345) = 40.71$ ;  $p < .001$ , indicating that ROTC students preferred a higher level of punishment ( $M = 4.27$ ;  $SD = 1.27$ ) when compared to traditional students ( $M = 5.06$ ;  $SD = 1.13$ ). Additionally, there were no main effects for significance loss or vignette type and there was no meaningful significance loss by vignette type interaction.

The final group of vignettes which described criminal acts of bribery, there was again a significant main effect of student type  $F(1,345) = 20.12$ ;  $p < .001$ , indicating that ROTC students prefer harsher punishments ( $M = 3.59$ ;  $SD = 1.20$ ) when compared to traditional students ( $M = 4.14$ ;  $SD = 1.15$ ). The analysis revealed no significant main effect of significance loss or vignette type and did not show a significant significance loss by vignette type interaction.

Following the procedures of Preacher and Hayes (1986), I tested a model to investigate the extent that the current sense of significance, measured at the end of the study, was a mediator of the ratings of punishment severity following significance loss (Figure 5). I regressed the ratings of punishment severity on significance loss (0 = loss; 1 = control) which revealed no effect on the severity ratings of punishments,  $\beta = .019$ ;  $t = .251$ ;  $p = .802$ . Then, the significance loss was regressed on the sense of significance, which revealed no significant effect,  $\beta = -.039$ ;  $t = -.765$ ;  $p = .446$ . The ratings of punishment severity were then regressed on both significance loss and current sense of significance and neither significance loss ( $\beta = .020$ ,  $t = .215$ ;  $p = .830$ ) nor sense of significance ( $\beta = -.038$ ;  $t = -7.52$ ;  $p = .453$ ) was significant. In order to test the indirect effect of significance loss on the ratings of punishment severity through desired levels of significance, I conducted a bootstrapping analysis (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) based on a 1,000 bootstrap sample. This procedure produced an unstandardized indirect effect of .0033, which was not significant, 95% CI (-.0164, .0230). Thus, the results provide no support for the hypothesis that the current sense significance impacts the ratings of punishment severity following a loss of significance (Figure 5).

Finally, a one-way ANCOVA was used to examine the extent to which exposure to significance loss impacted the scores on the quest for significance scales which were measured twice during Study 2, once at the beginning of the study and again at the end. The ANCOVA analysis revealed no significant differences between the initial quest for significance scores and final quest for significance scores while controlling for exposure to significance loss,  $F(1,169) = .05$ ;  $p = .81$ . The results provided no support to my hypothesis that exposure to significance loss would lead to higher levels of



significance in the final quest for significance compared to the scores on the initial quest for significance scale.

## **5.5 Discussion**

Results of study 2 revealed intriguing differences between traditional and ROTC students with respect to their need for significance. Of particular interest were the results which indicated that ROTC students have a higher sense of significance whereas traditional students have a higher desire for significance. This finding implies that ROTC students as a group feel more significant when compared to traditional students, which could be either the cause or the effect of their membership in ROTC and their attraction to the military in general. Due to their membership in ROTC, the students are part of a cohesive social group that provides a tight network and the promise of a career in the military resulting in the fulfillment of their need for significance. On the other hand, traditional college students, for the most part, are still searching for a career path and deciding what life will hold after they finish their degree. As a result, they are not part of a group or organization that fulfills their current need for significance and they have a higher overall desired (and in this sense unfulfilled) need for significance.

A closer examination of the differences between the two types of students yields data implying that ROTC student's close ingroup or network lends support to their decision to join the military. These are potential factors that could lead to their increased sense of significance. Consistent with my hypothesis, ROTC students, their families, and acquaintances all believe that choosing to serve in the military is a great source to gain individual significance. Additionally, ROTC students are exposed to

more narratives regarding the military in their day-to-day lives. They more frequently discuss the military with others and consume more media (books, movies, magazines, etc.) that feature the military when compared to other students. These results suggest that ROTC students live in a tighter more cohesive environment that is characterized by greater consensus with regards to the military as a source of significance. Their social environment is one that is characterized by cohesion and uniformity, and this environment validates their decision to join the military, resulting in their increased significance.

When examining the ratings of vignette punishments, there was no impact of the significance loss manipulation on the ratings of punishment severity. It was hypothesized that participants who experienced significance loss would rate the punishments as being too lenient and would demand a harsher punishment. It was believed that this would offer them a means with which their significance could be restored. The manipulation check showed that the manipulation of significance had its desired effect, but it did not lead to the predicted ratings of punishments. It is possible that these ratings did not offer an opportunity to regain lost significance. Future research in this domain should investigate alternate dependent variables that can afford an opportunity to regain significance.

Despite the lack of impact of the significance loss manipulation, it was surprising to see that overall, people feel that when a military member commits a crime that it should carry a more lenient punishment compared to similar crimes committed by civilians. Perhaps this leniency is associated with the increased significance that is associated with military service. Punishments might be lower because military

members receive a great deal of respect and are positively contributing to society through their service in the military. As a result of their service, people might be more reticent to deliver harsh punishments as the individuals are making positive contributions to society in general. However, when comparing differences between ROTC and traditional students, it became evident that the ROTC students consistently felt that when a military member committed a crime that it should carry a stronger punishment when compared to civilians who committed a similar crime. However, given the cultural norms within the military, it is not surprising that the ROTC students expect harsher punishments when individuals within their in-group violate laws. The military is a culture that is defined by adherence to strict rules and obedience. As a result, this tight culture holds members of the military to higher standards and the ROTC students expect those who violate the norms of the group to be held accountable.

## Chapter 6: General Discussion and Implications

The two experiments in the present study sought to show a relationship between the three N's (needs, networks, and narratives) such that exposure to significance loss can impact the attitudes and behaviors of people regarding the United States military. Specifically, the studies attempted to identify the impact that a loss of significance had on an individual's willingness to support the military and the extent to which they validated punishments for military members who committed crimes. Through both studies, the results showed sparse evidence of the impact of significance loss on how people view the military. In both studies, the manipulation of significance loss was effective, but it failed to have an impact on the predicted behaviors of participants. It is possible that the lack of impact was due to the experimental design and the means with which participants were given to restore their loss significance. Perhaps, the hypothetical scenarios used in the studies did not resonate with participants who experienced significance loss and afforded them little opportunity to regain their significance. Future studies should examine alternative outcome variables that will interact more predictably with the significance loss manipulation used in the present studies.

Even though the main hypotheses of the present research were not supported, the data contained several findings of interest. Consider in this regard the differences that obtained between the ROTC and traditional student populations: ROTC students are different from most traditional college students in that they have a clearly defined career post-college. Possibly for that reason, they exhibit higher current sense of significance compared to the traditional students. Traditional students, on the other

hand, have a higher desired state of significance when compared to ROTC students. This implies that they are less satisfied with their current sense of significance than the ROTC.

Examining this difference closer, we see that the ROTC student's close network could play a considerable role in shaping the extent to which their current, high, sense of significance is attained. When examining the networks and narratives that the students are exposed to, it is evident that ROTC students are embedded within a network that validates the military as a source of personal significance. Further, ROTC students recall being exposed to a wide variety of media that further bolster the narrative that military service is a source of significance. The ROTC cadets read more books regarding the military, watch more tv shows about the military, and recall seeing military advertisements far more frequently than traditional students. This begins to paint the picture whereby ROTC cadets have begun to fully immerse themselves in the military culture and this culture has begun to shape the magnitude with which they feel they are living a significant life.

As a result of becoming embedded within the tight military culture, ROTC students exhibit behavior of admonishing those that might bring dishonor or diminish the significance of the military, when partaking in illegal activities. When rating the severity of punishments within the crime vignette scenarios, ROTC students consistently rated punishments for military members as being far too lenient when compared to traditional students. Being that the military holds tight group norms, it is not surprising that there is significant retribution for those that fail to abide by the military's norms of honor and obedience. Thus, by holding military members

accountable for their crimes and correcting their behavior with rigid punishments, they are protecting the military's norms and values, such that the military can remain a source of significance.

## Chapter 7: Future Directions

The present study identified key differences in how traditional and ROTC students rate their need for significance. ROTC students have a higher need for significance and traditional students have a higher desired need for significance, however, we do not know what is at the root of this difference. Did the decision to join the military present an opportunity for significance gain to the ROTC students or do they receive significance from being recognized as serving their country? Perhaps individuals with a high sense of significance to begin with, chose the military career as one that is commensurate with their sense of self significance? Future research should explore these various possibilities to identify more clearly how the need for significance contributes to the decision to join the military.

Additionally, the present study was apparently unable to identify an effective means for significance gain following a loss of significance. Future research should address alternative measures that can be used to present various pathways in which lost significance, whether by the ROTC or by traditional students can be restored. Perhaps the use of vignettes is not an effective tool in providing an opportunity for significance gain. Researchers should use more creative laboratory techniques to examine the effects of significance loss.

Finally, the data collected should further analyze the magnitude of significance loss exposure to determine how it might impact the ratings of punishment severity. The significance loss variable should be manually coded to account for low, medium, and high levels of significance loss. Afterward the manual coding of the experiences of significance loss, the new data can then be assessed to determine if ratings of

punishment severity become less lenient when people experience greater episodes of significance loss. This examination of the data in terms of severity of significance loss will provide insight into how the magnitude of significance loss might motivate individuals towards engaging extreme behavior.



## Chapter 8: Conclusion

To date, a vast majority of work on extremism has focused on the negative aspects of extremism, but little work has been done on positive or altruistic forms of extremism. The present study sought to examine the extent to which service in the United States military is an altruistically extreme career path. Service in the United States Military comes with a myriad of sacrifices that one willingly accepts when they volunteer to pursue a career in the military. Military members accept the risks that are inherent with military duty. At any given moment, they can be ordered to deploy to a warzone where they might find themselves in the midst of battle. Further when in battle, a military member may be ordered to engage in combat where they are directed to take the lives of others or could potentially lose their own life. In addition to the risks of participating in combat, military members also relinquish control over a number of major life decisions. They are directed where to live, for how long they might live in one location, and will even be ordered to perform a certain job. Even the choice of a career field is something that is directed by the military for any given individual. In so far as extremism is defined by *sacrificing* important concerns for a special cause, service in the military may be characterized as extreme.

By examining the basic human need for significance, it became evident that ROTC students who are pursuing a career in the military have more satisfaction with their current state of significance than do traditional students. As a result, it appears that training to serve in the United States military serves as an important source of significance for college students. As a result, this research contributes to the present body of research on extremism by highlighting the extent to which the need for

significance can potentially drive membership to an altruistically extreme group. Also, of course, even terrorists view their activities as positive rather than negative and in service of their ethnicity or faith system. Which is why many people say, “One man’s terrorist, is another man’s freedom fighter.”

Table 1  
*Study 1 Pre Quest for Significance Scale t-values, means, standard deviations*

	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	ROTC Mean	Traditional Mean
<b>Composite</b> (Pre and Post Scales)	0.01 (165)	.98	5.21 (1.59)	5.21 (1.33)
<b>Current State</b>	4.72 (168)	.001**	6.05(1.04)	5.50(1.19)
		*		
I feel respected	2.70 (172)	.001** *	5.94 (1.09)	5.72 (1.07)
I feel valued by people who are important to me	2.91 (172)	.003**	6.21 (1.03)	5.61 (.99)
I am appreciated by other people	1.58 (163)	.11	5.85 (1.09)	5.51 (0.86)
I feel accepted	1.98 (171)	.06	5.82 (1.14)	5.91 (1.04)
People care about me	5.91 (167)	.06	6.16 (.76)	5.86 (.91)
My life has a purpose	5.86 (171)	.01**	6.26 (1.06)	5.46 (1.17)
I'm doing something important	5.46 (167)	.001** *	6.44 (.74)	5.10 (1.32)
I'm contributing to the world	5.57 (158)	.001** *	6.11 (1.04)	5.10 (1.44)
I feel valued by society	4.46 (166)	.001** *	5.59 (1.07)	4.78 (1.33)
<b>Desired State</b>	-2.78 (161)	.001**	4.46(1.64)	5.03(1.40)
		*		
I wish I could be more respected	-2.72 (170)	.001** *	4.51 (1.51)	5.12 (1.39)
I want to be more valued by people who are important to me	-2.72 (170)	.007**	4.64 (1.56)	5.25 (1.38)
I want to be more valued by society	-2.94 (171)	.003**	4.62 (1.59)	5.31 (1.50)

I wish I was more appreciate by other people	-2.99 (167)	.003**	4.48 (1.63)	5.17 (1.39)
I wish other people accepted me more	-2.12 (156)	.03*	4.51 (1.68)	4.98 (1.22)
I want more people to care about me	-2.61 (163)	.007**	4.44 (1.61)	5.02 (1.28)
		*		
I wish I meant more to other people	-2.73 (157)	.007**	4.42 (1.72)	5.04 (1.25)
I wish other people thought I was significant	-1.59 (164)	.11	4.40 (1.68)	4.77 (1.34)
I have a strong need to be appreciated by other people	-2.179 (171)	.03*	4.09 (1.79)	4.67 (1.70)

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*Note:* Sample sizes for Quest for Significance Scale measures differ slightly due to additional exclusions of those who completed the survey incorrectly. Additionally, the raw Cronbach Alpha for the scale was  $\alpha = .79$ .

Table 2  
*Ratings of Career Field Respect*

	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	ROTC Mean	Traditional Mean
Doctors	1.77 (144)	.07	6.52 (.83)	6.71 (.52)
Military Officers	-0.55 (166)	.06	6.32 (.84)	6.38 (.70)
Engineers	0.79 (172)	.42	6.18 (.80)	6.28 (.86)
Lawyers	-2.30 (162)	.02*	5.62 (1.27)	6.09 (1.17)
Mathematicians	0.007 (172)	.99	5.12 (1.27)	5.12 (1.35)
Psychologists	0.40 (169)	.06	5.06 (1.2)	4.98 (1.39)
Accountants	0.11 (169)	.91	4.82 (1.14)	4.80 (1.35)
Chemists	-2.72 (170)	.007 **	4.64 (1.56)	5.25 (1.38)
Teachers	0.25 (173)	0.79	4.57 (1.63)	4.51 (1.65)
Journalists	0.01 (166)	0.99	4.24 (1.42)	4.23 (1.77)

*Note:* Sample sizes for Ratings of Career Field Respect measures differ slightly due to additional exclusions of those who completed the survey incorrectly.

Table 3

*Belief that Military United States Military is a Source of Significance – t-test*

	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	ROTC Mean	Traditional Mean
Myself	3.22 (161)	.001* **	6.21(1.09)	5.59 (1.43)
Family	4.18 (170)	.001* **	5.65 (1.48)	4.64 (1.70)
Friends	1.10 (171)	.27	5.42 (1.34)	5.20 (1.27)
Acquaintances	1.98 (168)	.04*	5.50 (5.16)	5.16 (1.23)
Americans	-1.88 (169)	.06	5.63 (1.25)	5.96 (1.09)
Non-Americans	0.05 (171)	.95	4.41 (1.36)	4.40 (1.33)

*Note:* Sample sizes for the military as a source of significance measures differ slightly due to additional exclusions of those who completed the survey incorrectly.

Table 3.1

*Belief that Military United States Military is a Source of Significance – Correlation*

	<i>Student Type</i>	<i>Significance Loss</i>	Q4.1	Q4.2	Q4.3	Q4.4	Q4.5
Q4.1 Myself	-.23**	-.06					
Q4.2 Family	-.39***	.13	.43** *				
Q4.3 Friends	-.07	-.01	.45** *	.44***			
Q4.4 Acquaintances	-.14	-.05	.45** *	.29***	.72***		
Q4.5 Americans	.15*	.08	.28** *	.08	.37***	.43***	
Q4.6 Non- Americans	.00	-.01	.17** *	.24***	.29***	.33***	.31***

*Note:* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 4  
*Exposure to Military Narratives – t-test*

	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	ROTC Mean	Traditional Mean
Military recruiting advertisements	6.02 (171)	.001* **	4.97 (1.15)	3.96 (1.07)
Books with military themes	3.69 (169)	.001* **	4.37 (1.24)	3.72 (1.09)
Movies with military themes	0.76 (165)	0.44	5.08 (0.98)	4.97 (0.79)
TV shows with military themes	3.61 (171)	.001* **	4.56 (1.19)	3.93 (1.12)
Magazines with military themes	3.13 (172)	.002* *	3.27 (1.40)	2.61 (1.39)

*Note:* Sample sizes for the military as a source of significance measures differ slightly due to additional exclusions of those who completed the survey incorrectly.

Table 4.1  
*Exposure to Military Narratives - Correlations*

	Student Type	Significance Loss	Q5.1 Ads	Q5.2 Books	Q5.3 Movies	Q5.4 TV
Q5.1 Military recruiting advertisements	-.42*	-.10				
Q5.2 Books with military themes	-.27*	0.02	.42			
Q5.3 Movies with military themes	-.07	0.09	.26	.47		
Q5.4 TV shows with military themes	-.26	.02	.32	.39	.50	
Q5.5 Magazines with military themes	-.23*	0.01	.46	.46	.37	.55*

*Note:* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 5  
*Frequency of Military Discussions – t-test*

	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	ROTC Mean	Traditional Mean
Friends	16.44 (168)	.001* **	3.96 (0.95)	1.72 (0.81)
Family	3.56 (1.70)	.001* **	3.56 (1.00)	1.70 (0.82)
Acquaintances	9.03 (168)	.001* **	2.63 (1.12)	1.36 (0.67)

*Note:* Sample sizes for the military as a source of significance measures differ slightly due to additional exclusions of those who completed the survey incorrectly.

Table 5.1  
*Frequency of Military Discussions - Correlations*

	Student Type	Significance Loss	Friends	Family
Friends	-.78***	-.09		
Family	-.72***	.06	.72***	
Acquaintances	-.56***	.07	.69***	.68***

*Note:* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



Table 6  
*Manipulation Check – t-test*

	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Sig Loss Mean	Control Mean
I felt confused	-6.03 (162)	.001* **	4.05 (1.87)	2.48 (1.89)
I felt small or insignificant	-9.83 (162)	.001* **	4.84 (2.09)	2.37 (2.01)
I recalled an event	1.95 (169)	.004* *	4.21 (1.99)	4.81 (2.08)
I felt like a person of worth	4.25 (1.56)	.001* **	3.55 (1.57)	4.51 (1.56)
I thought of an important event in my life	-0.01 (170)	0.98	3.43 (1.7)	3.43 (1.53)
I felt like I had a sense of purpose	1.55 (170)	0.12	3.62 (2.59)	3.98 (1.52)
I struggled recalling an event	2.55 (167)	0.01* *	3.89 (1.83)	3.15 (2.00)
I felt uninterested	-1.99 (171)	.004* *	3.40 (1.55)	2.94 (1.52)

*Note:* Sample sizes for the military as a source of significance measures differ slightly due to additional exclusions of those who completed the survey incorrectly.

Table 7  
Punishment - Correlations

	<i>Student Type</i>	<i>Significance Loss</i>	Civilian					Military			
			Fraud	DUI	Trade Secrets	Bribery	Desertion	Desertion	Trade Secrets	Fraud	DUI
Civilian Fraud	.19*	.01									
Civilian DUI	.01	-.06	.15*								
Civilian Trade Secrets	.19*	-.05	.33***	.12							
Civilian Bribery	.15*	.00	.22**	.18*	.19						
Civilian Desertion	.21**	.01	.32***	.03	.26***	.06					
Military Desertion	.44***	.00	.37***	-.03	.22**	.20**	.41***				
Military Trade Secrets	.34***	-.01	.37***	.07	.19	.19*	.23**	.56***			
Military Fraud	.31***	-.02	.39***	.06	.16*	.18*	.38***	.40***	.28***		
Military DUI	-.08	-.08	.03	.71*	-.02	.09*	.00	-.08***	-.01	.08	
Military Bribery	-.26***	.07	.28***	.06	.12	.05	-.36***	-.31***	.27***	.28** *	.10

*Note:* Sample sizes for the military as a source of significance measures differ slightly due to additional exclusions of those who completed the survey incorrectly.

Table 8  
*Study Post Quest for Significance Scale t-values, means, standard deviations*

	<i>Cronbach Alpha</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	ROTC Mean	Traditional Mean
<b>Current State</b>		2.96 (170)	.001***	5.79(0.92)	5.37 (0.9)
I feel respected	.84	1.19 (172)	.23	5.67 (1.14)	5.47 (1.08)
I feel valued by people who are important to me	.84	2.06 (169)	.04*	5.94 (1.08)	5.62 (0.95)
I am appreciated by other people	.84	0.36 (161)	0.71	5.59 (1.30)	5.53 (1.01)
I feel accepted	.84	0.81 (171)	.04*	5.59 (1.21)	5.45 (1.11)
People care about me	.83	-0.22 (168)	.82	5.80 (1.14)	5.84 (0.98)
My life has a purpose	.84	2.96 (169)	.003**	6.03 (1.20)	5.45 (1.35)
I'm doing something important	.84	4.84 (166)	.001***	6.08 (1.12)	5.15 (1.38)
I'm contributing to the world	.83	5.07 (164)	.001***	6.04 (1.11)	5.06 (1.42)
I feel valued by society	.84	3.30 (172)	.001***	5.40 (1.17)	4.79 (1.26)
<b>Desired State</b>		-2.01 (154)	.004**	4.54 (1.53)	4.90 (1.16)
I wish I could be more respected	.82	-1.59 (164)	.001***	4.71 (1.63)	5.06 (1.30)
I want to be more valued by people who are important to me	.82	-2.00 (165)	.004**	4.67 (1.62)	5.12 (1.32)
I want to be more valued by society	.81	-1.99 (163)	.004**	4.55 (1.69)	5.01 (1.34)

I wish I was more appreciate by other people	.81	-2.08 (165)	.038*	4.59 (1.67)	5.07 (1.36)
I wish other people accepted me more	.82	-0.91 (159)	.36	4.48 (1.75)	4.70(1.35)
I want more people to care about me	.81	-1.05 (165)	.35	4.65 (1.69)	4.87 (1.48)
I wish I meant more to other people	.82	-0.93 (167)	.35	4.65 (1.69)	4.875 (1.48)
I wish other people thought I was significant	.82	-0.84 (169)	.40	4.51 (1.66)	4.71 (1.45)
I have a strong need to be appreciated by other people	.82	-2.34 (170)	.02*	4.11 (1.78)	4.72 (1.65)

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*Note:* Sample sizes for Quest for Significance Scale measures differ slightly due to additional exclusions of those who completed the survey incorrectly. Additionally, the raw Cronbach Alpha for the scale was  $\alpha = .84$ .

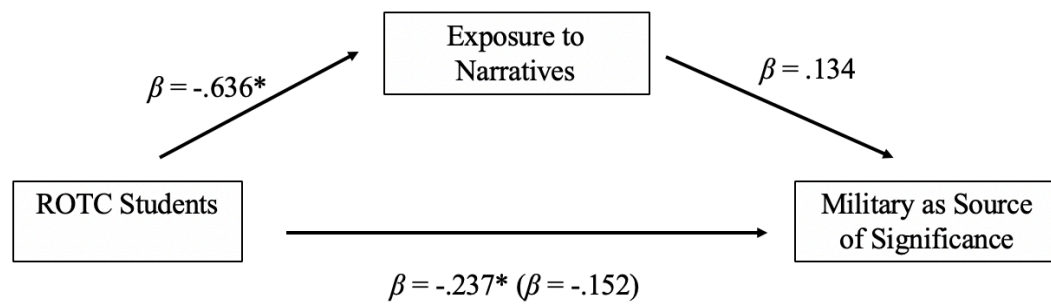


Figure 1.. "Mediation of Exposure to Narratives"

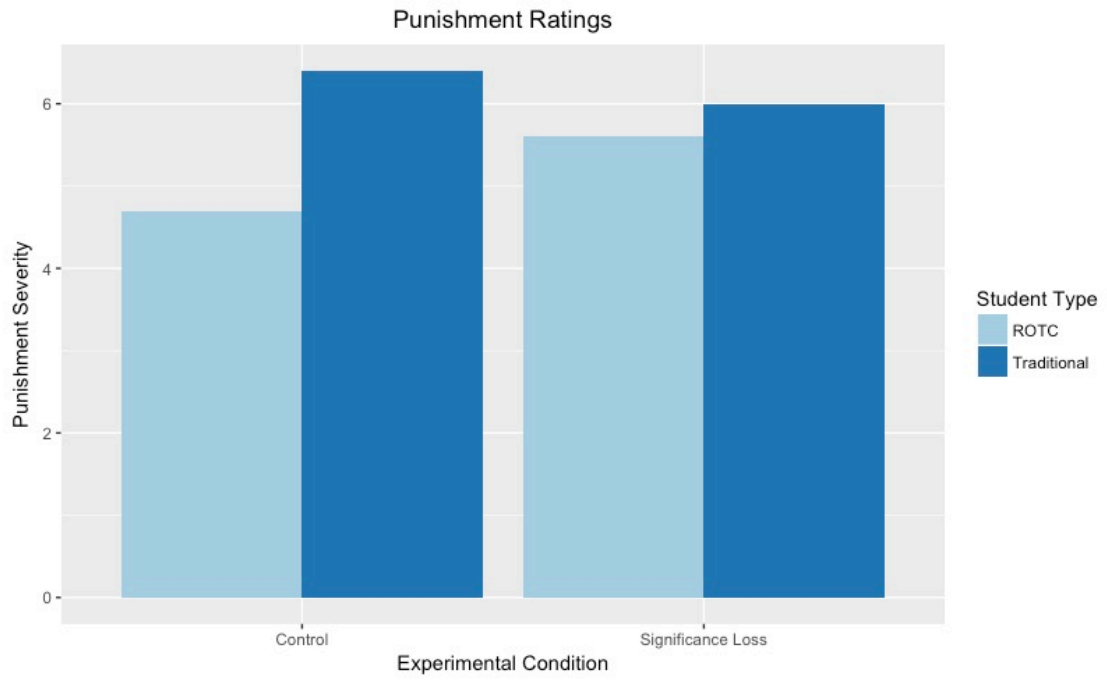


Figure 2. "Ratings of Punishment Severity"

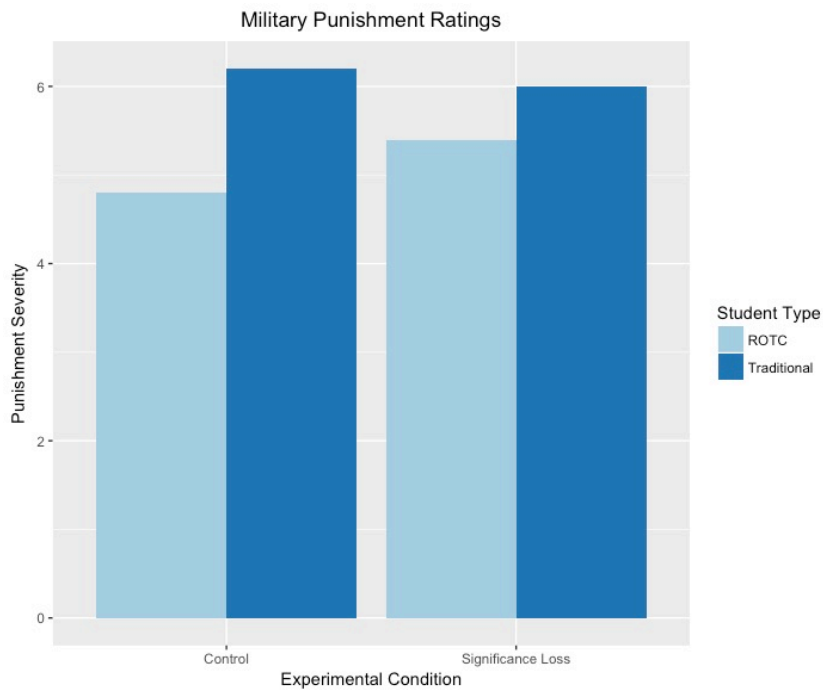


Figure 3. "Ratings of Military Punishment Severity"

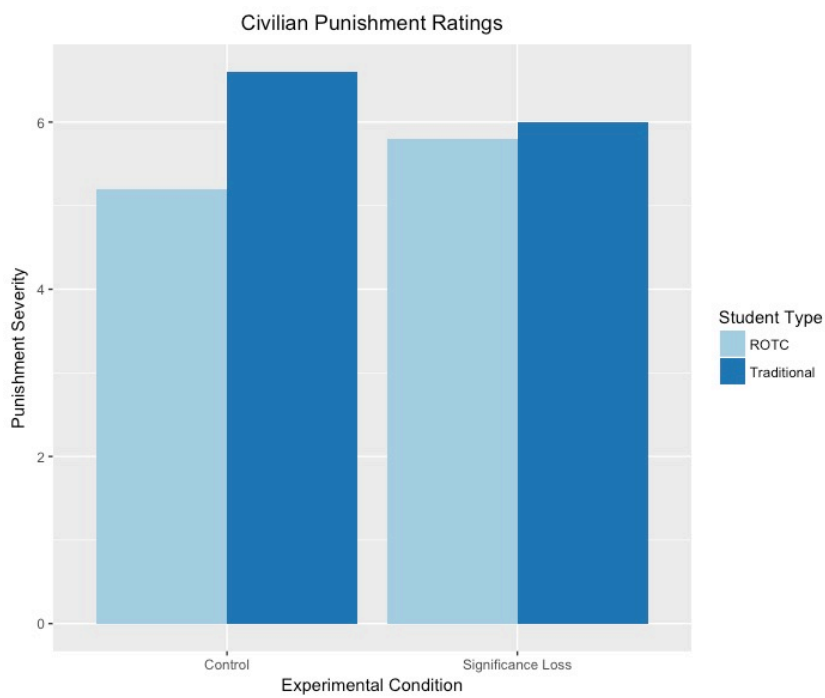


Figure 4. "Ratings of Civilian Punishment Severity"

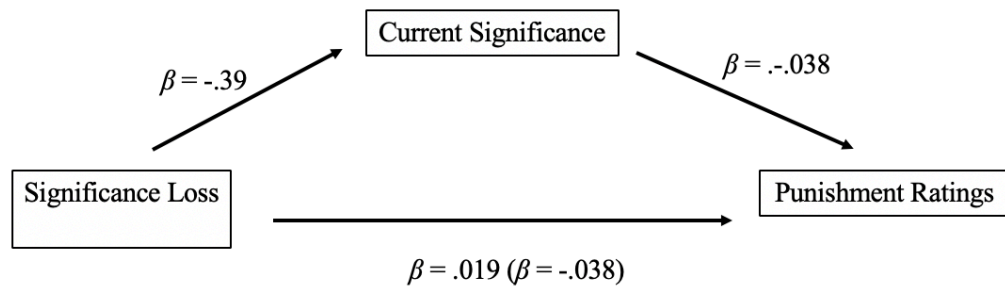


Figure 5. "Mediation of Current Sense of Significance"



## Appendices

### **Appendix A: Significance Loss Manipulation**

#### Significance Loss condition

We would like you to write about a personal experience you have had.

Specifically, we would like you to think back to a situation in which you felt humiliated and ashamed because (you felt like) people were laughing at you. While recalling this experience, please provide a detailed description of how you felt during this situation, who was involved, and what happened to make you feel that way.

If you have never experienced a situation like this, please think about a similar situation that someone you care about deeply, like a child, spouse, family member, or close friend may have gone through. While describing the situation and what occurred, try to "walk in the shoes" of this individual, and describe how you think they would have felt.

What happened?  
Who was involved?  
How did it make you feel?

#### Control condition

We would like you to write about a personal experience you have had.

Specifically, we would like you to think back to the last time you watched television. While recalling this experience, please provide a detailed description of what you watched, the characters in the show, and how the show made you feel.

What happened?  
Who was involved?  
How did it make you feel?

#### Manipulation check

1-7 Likert Scale

Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Somewhat Disagree; Neither agree or disagree; Somewhat Agree; Agree; Strongly agree

While recalling the event...

1. I felt confused.\*

2. I felt small or insignificant. \*
3. I recalled a recent event.
4. I felt like a person of worth. \*
5. I thought of an important event in my life.
6. I felt like I had a sense of purpose in my life. \*
7. I struggled recalling an event.
8. I felt uninterested.

\* Items indicating significance loss

## Appendix B: Scrambled Sentence Test

### Pro-Military Prime

1. was *freedom* our come won
2. he house with fought *pride*
3. *duty* he black had a
4. served *honor* true he with
5. battery was charged the happy \*\*
6. flown the car *flag* was
7. signed *constitution* they swim the
8. *democracy* they warm fought for
9. was parade *patriotic* the jog
10. movie was retired that great \*\*
11. *heroic* his store actions were
12. attacked the *Pentagon* colorful was
13. I good coffee enjoy careful \*\*
14. the tall marched *soldier* slipper
15. large bed the attacked *platoon*
16. studies the full plane was \*\*
17. *protected* nation our they washer
18. *freedom* free is door not
19. sock they the homeland *defended*
20. their clue *deployment* ended long
21. with they fought *valor* sky
22. true the clean was house \*\*
23. a he very received *medal*
24. those *respect* cold who serve
25. clean was *brotherhood* forged a
26. the near was successful *mission*
27. our *uphold* we values fork
28. clear sprint his was *calling*
29. lazy dog the wisely was \*\*
30. I orange pledge *allegiance* my

\* words in *italic* are the prime

\*\* neutral condition sentences

### Pro-Environmental Prime

1. they is prevent *pollution* always
2. from temperature oranges *trees* come
3. is grass careful the *green*
4. *respect* should we it are
5. somewhat prepared I was retired \*\*
6. *climate* he back change studies
7. tasty *organic* careful apples are

8. always natural should *recycle* you
9. saw *ecological* buy items they
10. have drawer breakfast with coffee \*\*
11. is buy his *clean* city
12. ball the throw toss silently \*\*
13. he sunsets prepared *enjoys* the
14. *consequences* likes actions have daily
15. is lately of *consumption* increased
16. chair comfortable studying is the \*\*
17. in *harmony* are wall they
18. ball be protected must *nature*
19. not *resources* natural waste never
20. *Earth* the table home is
21. frame friends are people's *animals*
22. *environment* jars the important is
23. from are Florida always they \*\*
24. respectful she pen is *environmentally*
25. in is beauty printer *nature*
26. wisely *water* it the use
27. she the they *surroundings* enjoy
28. always they *energy* bed save
29. him was nice she always \*\*
30. he protects the *forest* shelves

\* words in *italic* are the prime

\*\* neutral condition sentences

### **Control Group - No Prime**

1. blue the is sky about
2. phone purple my charged is
3. slow traffic pencil was the
4. you and which prefer do
5. game the exciting was blue
6. insensitive comfortable chair was the
7. the was dull knife about
8. dogs plastic are friendly very
9. never class boring is hear
10. teacher my great is stop
11. group hat our smart is
12. prefer very I text to
13. statue the was river tall
14. time what is it instead
15. bag whose is this travel
16. where the is actually library
17. movie that was instead sad
18. enjoyed I tour that whatever

19. me slowly text address your
20. shirt the red was growth
21. starts school today early foggy
22. prefer I classes afternoon plane
23. hungry am bed I very
24. sale that fantastic was highway
25. can you I beach help
26. man that movie funny is
27. your when is birthday marble
28. what dinner is for cross
29. metro crowded the paper was
30. iced enjoy coffee I honest

## **Appendix C: Study 1 Survey Items**

Please rate the level in which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1-7 Likert Scale

Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Somewhat Disagree; Neither agree or disagree;

Somewhat Agree; Agree; Strongly agree

1. I would consider joining a branch of the United States Military.
2. I would volunteer to a group that supports members of the United States military in my community such as the Wounded Warrior Program or the USO (United Service Organization).
3. I would consider joining a pro-environmental group, such as Greenpeace.
4. I would volunteer to a group that supports members of pro-environmental groups, such as Greenpeace, in my community.

If \$100 are available, please indicate the amount that you would like to donate to the following charities:

1. Wounded Warrior Project
2. Greenpeace
3. Make a Wish Foundation

## **Appendix D – Funnel Debriefing**

1. What do you think the purpose of this survey was?
2. Did you think that any of the different tasks were related in any way? (If yes) In what way were they related?
3. Did one task affect what you did on any other task? (If yes) How exactly did it affect you?
4. Have you ever completed a scrambled sentence task in a survey before?
5. Do you remember of the words from the scrambled sentence task or think that any of the words seemed unusual or distinctive?

## **Appendix E: Quest for Significance Scale**

### **MEASURES OF SIGNIFICANCE**

1-7 Likert Scale – Strongly Agree; Agree; Somewhat Agree; Neither Agree or Disagree; Somewhat Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree

#### **Current state**

I feel respected.  
I feel valued by people who are important to me.  
I am appreciated by other people.  
I feel accepted.  
People care about me.  
My life has a purpose.  
I'm doing something important.  
I'm contributing to the world.  
I feel valued by society

#### **Desired state**

I wish I could be more respected  
I want to be more valued by people who are important to me.  
I want to be more valued by society.  
I wish I was more appreciated by other people  
I wish other people accepted me more.  
I want more people to care about me.  
I wish I meant more to other people.  
I wish other people thought I was significant.  
I have a strong need to be appreciated by other people.



## **Appendix F: Vignettes**

### **CONTROL VIGNETTES**

#### **1. Tax Fraud**

A small business owner was convicted of cheating on their federal income tax to avoid a payment of \$1,000.

Over the past five years, this individual has been in court many times on charges like this.

The individual responsible for the crime was sentenced to five years' probation and a fine of \$10,000.

The sentence given was ...

1-7 Likert Scale:

Much Too Low; Low; A Little Low; About Right; A Little High; High; Much Too High

#### **2. Driving Under the Influence**

An individual consumed four beers over the course of two hours at a bar and then decided to drive home. On the way home, the individual was pulled over by a police officer.

The individual failed a field sobriety test, blew a 1.2 on a breathalyzer test, and was arrested for Driving Under the Influence.

The individual was fined \$500 and had their license suspended for 6 months.

The punishment given was ...

1-7 Likert Scale:

Much Too Low; Low; A Little Low; About Right; A Little High; High; Much Too High

### **3. Disclosing Trade Secrets**

An employee of a major food manufacturing company was found guilty of conspiring to steal and sell trade secrets to a rival company.

During a court hearing a judge sentenced the individual to a 5-year prison sentence and a \$40,000 fine.

The punishment given was ...

1-7 Likert Scale:

Much Too Low; Low; A Little Low; About Right; A Little High; High; Much Too High

### **4. Contract Abandonment**

A construction subcontractor abandoned work on a home construction project when offered a more lucrative contract on another project. The subcontractor abandoned and failed to complete the work that they had received an advance payment of \$15,000 on.

During a small claims court hearing a judge ruled that the subcontractor violated terms of their contract and were ordered to return \$15,000 and pay a \$2,500 fine.

The punishment given was ...

1-7 Likert Scale:

Much Too Low; Low; A Little Low; About Right; A Little High; High; Much Too High

### **5. Bribery**

A local restaurant owner in a small city was found guilty of attempting to bribe a health inspector by offering a large sum of cash in return for a favorable inspection rating.

During a court hearing, a judge found the individual guilty of felony bribery and sentenced them to 1 year in prison.

The punishment given was ...

1-7 Likert Scale:

Much Too Low; Low; A Little Low; About Right; A Little High; High; Much Too High

## **EXPERIMENTAL VIGNETTES**

### **1. Desertion**

A member of the military was charged with desertion when they left their unit in a combat zone with the intent of avoiding hazardous duty.

In a military court of law, the individual was found guilty and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The punishment given was ...

1-7 Likert Scale:

Much Too Low; Low; A Little Low; About Right; A Little High; High; Much Too High

### **2. Disclosure of Classified Information**

A military member leaked a large cache of highly classified documents to a publicly accessible web site.

In a military court of law, the individual was found guilty and sentenced to 35 years in prison.

The punishment given was ...

1-7 Likert Scale:

Much Too Low; Low; A Little Low; About Right; A Little High; High; Much Too High

### **3. Fraud**

A military member defrauded the government of over \$5,000 by making false claims on multiple travel vouchers.

The individual was found guilty by a military judge of conspiracy to submit false claims and was sentenced to 3 years in prison along with a fine of \$15,000.

The punishment given was ...

1-7 Likert Scale:

Much Too Low; Low; A Little Low; About Right; A Little High; High; Much Too High

#### **4. Driving Under The Influence**

A member of the United States military was pulled over by a police officer while driving for suspected drunk driving. The officer administered a field sobriety test where the individual blew a 1.2 on a breathalyzer test. The military member was arrested for Driving Under the Influence.

A military judge found the individual guilty of driving under the influence. The individual was punished to a reduction in rank and was enrolled in a mandatory substance abuse program.

The punishment given was ...

1-7 Likert Scale:

Much Too Low; Low; A Little Low; About Right; A Little High; High; Much Too High

#### **5. Bribery**

A military member received multiple bribes from a small business in return for the award of a lucrative defense contract.

The member plead guilty in a military court of law and was sentenced to 3 years in military prison in addition to a \$50,000 fine.

The punishment given was ...

1-7 Likert Scale:

Much Too Low; Low; A Little Low; About Right; A Little High; High; Much Too High

## **Appendix G: Military Survey Items**

### **RATING OF CAREER FIELD RESPECT**

Please rate the extent to which members of the following careers deserve respect:

1-7 Likert Scale - Strongly Agree; Agree; Somewhat Agree; Neither Agree or Disagree; Somewhat Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree

Accountant  
Chemist  
Doctor  
Engineer  
Lawyer  
Journalist  
Mathematician  
Military Officer  
Psychologist  
Teacher

### **MILITARY SERVICE AS A PATHWAY TO SIGNIFICANCE**

Please rate the extent to the following people or groups agree that serving in the United States Military is a source of individual significance:

1-7 Likert Scale - Strongly Agree; Agree; Somewhat Agree; Neither Agree or Disagree; Somewhat Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree

Myself  
Family  
Friends  
Acquaintances  
Americans  
Non-Americans

### **EXPOSURE TO MILITARY NARRATIVES**

Please rate the frequency in which you have read, seen the following:

1 - 7 Likert Scale: Never; Very Rarely; Rarely; Occasionally; Frequently; Very Frequently, Always

Military Recruiting Advertisements:  
Books with military themes  
Movies with military themes  
TV shows with military themes  
Magazines with military themes

Please rate the frequency in which you discuss the military with:  
1 - 7 Likert Scale: Never; Very Rarely; Rarely; Occasionally; Frequently; Very  
Frequently, Always  
Friends  
Family  
Acquaintances

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