Are Veterans Subjected to Social Indifference?

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Introduction:

Social Indifference is a difficult thing to prove. There have been many studies on the subject and often the conclusions lead us to believe that social indifference was a primary factor. Yet indifference can be one of many underlying contributing causes that may lead to the end results, and therefore it would be a fallacy to argue its existence based on the actions of a large cohort simply because such generalized assumptions could have any number of different causes contributing to an end result. Nevertheless, indifference is a very real problem.

Bennett (1998) conducted a study on indifference as it applied to politics and national responsibilities. His study showed that a greater exposure to higher education among today's younger generations has not produced a birth cohort very interested in public affairs or inclined to expose itself to political media. As a result, today's youth are poorly informed about political affairs at home and abroad. (Bennett, 1998) Bennett's supporting contributions to his study included Stein (1983), who stated "In a state of astonishing ignorance, young Americans may well not be prepared for even the most basic national responsibility – understanding what the society is about and why it must be preserved." (Stein, 1983). Stein believed that young people ignorant to political affairs are not prepared to continue the society because they basically do not understand the society enough to value it.

As Bennett discovered through the use of his research, which was conducted using numbers from past and present PEW and NES polls, the majority of Americans below the age of 30 cared more about sports and entertainment than they did about news, politics or foreign affairs, so much so, that the vast majority actually go out of their way to avoid coming into contact with political matters or affairs of state of any kind. (Bennett, 1998) Bennett concluded that the less people pay attention to media stories about public affairs, the more politically ignorant they are as a result. Furthermore, the primary contributor to this was noted to be social indifference. As a whole, the majority simply did not care about the subject matter enough to want to pay attention to it. (Bennett, 1998) While that may seem an obvious remark, the question remains as to whether those results remain consistent today, and whether the advancement of the information age has affected the decline in public affairs interests Bennett showed.

Another relevant study on indifference – as it may apply to Veterans and those with disabilities – is Calderbank's (2000) study on social indifference towards the abuses suffered by individuals with disabilities. Calderbank discussed whether the forms of abuse experienced by disabled people resulted from either vulnerability of the individual, or as a consequence of social attitudes towards disabled people as a whole. (Calderbank, 2000) Furthermore, Calderbank claimed that the evidence suggests that individuals with disabilities are socially and personally devalued as both human beings and citizens, which is a contributing factor to the existence of indifference towards the issue. (Calderbank, 2000) Calderbank's conclusions were that the sheer absence of studies conducted on social disability issues – the lack of research literature on the topic – directly indicates a lack of both social awareness and concern by society as a whole for the topic, and to which leads to further perpetuation and compounding of the issues. (Calderbank, 2000) As a result, we are led to believe indifference is the root cause, even though there may be many other contributing factors.

In both these studies, indifference was concluded as the primary underlying root cause for the issues existence. While the evidence may support the conclusions in one way or another, and there is no argument that indifference is a severe issue for any social issue, we are left with possibilities that other social factors might remain the true cause. So in the attempt to identify social indifference towards a sociological issue, we instead need to clearly identify a number of social factors supported by sociological theories that can be tied to indifference from several different perspectives, and to where they can be used to isolate indifference as the most predominant underlying cause for each factors existence. Therefore, in the search for generalizable social indifference towards a particular social matter, three important questions are required: How is it that indifference is the primary root cause affecting the matter, what are the contributing factors, and are the findings consistent in similar matters. In the effort to answer the research question at hand – Are Veterans Subjected to Social Indifference – a clear understanding of how multiple social theories impact social causes is essential for the isolation of indifference as the primary root cause.

Military service members frequently do jobs that are arguably the most dangerous jobs in the world. War is physically, psychologically, and spiritually damaging. Veterans who are injured or wounded – either physically or psychologically – will suffer from physical and/or psychological disabilities that directly impacts their quality of life. While most physical disability treatments have received major improvements over the years in medical science, psychological disabilities have been historically far more difficult to treat. For example, an amputee may suffer the loss of a limb, but medical technology in the field of prosthetics has made significant advancements

towards restoring lost mobility or use. On the other hand, the traumatic effects of depression, anxiety, and PTS(d) come alive in expressions of fear, sleepless nights, nightmares, concentration issues, anger management issues, isolation, substance abuse, and even suicide, and while there does exist today a large array of drugs, treatments, and therapies designed to help with these issues, modern science has yet to find cures for psychological traumas.

Veterans are consistently subjected to a lifetime of issues – physical and psychological – unique to the Veterans community. (Wolfe, et al., 1999; Riggs, Byrne, Weathers, and Litz, 2005; Dobie, et al., 2004) While there are a large host of services and organizations that exist today to help and aid Veterans exclusively with many of these issues, the majority of services are designed for actively serving service members, and either stop or are reduced upon the Veterans exit from service. Unfortunately, however, many of these traumas last for the rest of the individual's life. They are both life altering and pose significant hardships and challenges at restoring some manner of a Veterans quality of life, and many do require a lifetime of continued care and unique services to some degree. (Casarett, et al., 2008) Furthermore, Veteran reintegration into civilian society – or within some cultural aspect of a society – has historically been a unique challenge for Veterans, and many Veterans are never fully able to reintegrate upon return from in-theater service. (Sayer, et al., 2010)

It is because Veterans issues exist that a large number of organizations and charities have been created to attempt to address Veterans issues and even help to provide legislation for them. Yet, like most charities and service organizations, meaningful support in the form of monetary charity and volunteer work are often the only ways to provide their services and achieve their goals. Unfortunately, social indifference has become the limiting factor in many support causes and campaigns' ability to succeed. Instead, what we are finding is a society of individuals willing to offer token support (words of support, a hand shake, a "like" or a "share" on social media) simply to make themselves feel like they have accomplished the provision of support, while confirming such notions because others see them as supporting a cause (Symbolic Self-Completion and Slacktivism). Social rules state that people within a society should be proud of their Veterans and support them (both in the effort to defend the nation, and in the Veterans time of need), and most choose to do so with words of "Thanks" and/or a handshake. However, when confronted with the option to support a cause with meaningful support, the majority choose to simply "Like" it (either by acknowledging its existence, or by clicking a like button online), and fewer will "Share" it (either through display of a pin or a wristband, by telling others about the cause, or by clicking on a share button online), but fewer still will offer up the meaningful support requested by the campaign (either through donations or volunteering), and an even smaller number will offer up an array of reasons as to why they cannot provide meaningful support.

It is here where social rules might actually be responsible for the creation of Symbolic Self-Completion, and the spread of Slacktivism as a result, simply because social indifference exists towards the cause from the beginning. If individuals are indifferent towards the issues of concern, but social rules make them feel obligated to offer support of some kind, then Slacktivism is the best way for the individual to show that support while providing as little actual support as they possibly can in the process. Choosing token support instead of meaningful support is the easiest path towards achieving Self-Completion, thus making them feel like they provided real support by confirming it publically, and therefore obeying the social rules. In the end, the rules were followed, no actual support was provided, the individuals feel good about themselves, and yet the cause is left unfulfilled. With the presence of Symbolic Self-Completion and Slacktivism, and an understanding of Social Rule Systems Theory, we are more able to rule out other possibilities and identify social indifference as a primary root cause.

Supporting Theories:

SOCIAL RULE SYSTEMS THEORY
Social rule systems are used to examine all levels of human interaction. (Burns and Flam, 1987; Giddens, 1984; Goffman, 1974; Harré, 1979; and Lotman, 1975) They provide more than potential constraints on action possibilities, they also generate opportunities for social actors to behave in ways that would otherwise be impossible; for instance, to coordinate with others, to mobilize and to gain systematic access to strategic resources, to command and allocate substantial human and physical resources, and to solve complex social problems by organizing collective actions. In guiding and regulating interaction, social rules grant behavior recognition, show characteristic patterns, and make such patterns understandable and meaningful for those who share in the rules.

Actors adhere to and implement rule and rule systems to varying degrees. (Flam and Carson, 2008) Compliance with, or refusal to comply with, particular rules are complicated cognitive and normative processes. Typically, there are diverse reasons for rule compliance, however, the key factors to highlight in the case of social indifference are: Interest Factors and Instrumentalism, and Identity and Status. In the case of Interest Factors and Instrumentalism, actors may advocate rules to gain benefits or to avoid losses. (Mirowsky, Ross, and Willigen, 1996; Woodbine, 2002) In the case of Identity and Statuses, Adherence to rules – and commitment to their realization – may be connected to an actor's identity, role, or status, and the desire to represent the self as identified by, or committed to, the set of rules. (Nghe & Mahalik, 2001; Waterman & Goldman, 1976; McLean & Pratt, 2006).

Social rule systems theory is important in the identification of indifference because social rules guide the behavior of both individuals and large groups or populations of people. They are responsible for the underlying development, construction, maintenance, and evolution of culture, and not only include a continuously adapting set of norms, but a list of taboo's for

continuously adapting set of norms, but a list of taboo's for which to avoid. Finally, social rules contribute to the prevailing sense of identity, social statuses, interests, and instrumentalism factors that lead to the socially indifferent behavioral patterns that make it difficult to create interest in social causes, prompt social action to create change, and generate social willingness to provide for meaningful participation and support.

SYMBOLIC SELF-COMPLETION
Symbolic Self-Completion is the idea that people define themselves as musicians, athletes, etc. by use of indicators of attainment in those activity realms, such as possessing a prestige job, having extensive education, or whatever is recognized by others as indicating progress toward completing the self-definition. (Wicklund and Gollwitzer, 1981). The self-completion idea postulates that when important symbols—indicators of self-definition—are lacking, the person will strive towards further, alternative symbols of the self-definition.

Symbolic Self-Completion provides individuals with the easiest way to express their need to be seen by others as the person they want to be – without actually being that person in real life – through the use of third-party confirmation. (Fishback, Dhar & Zhang, 2006) An example of this would be the sharing of a charity campaign through social media, which is seen by an individual's connections, and therefore creates the image that the individual actually supports that charitable cause. This then affirms the individual's identity as a charitable person, despite the fact that a "share" is equal to token support and not meaningful support, and therefore, the individual isn't really charitable at all, nor have they provided support for that cause. Symbolic Self-Completion is relevant to include here because it supports the scapegoat loophole in social rules that state people should be charitable, despite the fact that the individual maintains indifference towards the social cause, and it allows for the creation of Slacktivism as a by-product.

SLACKTIVISM
Slacktivism may be a new word as far as social science is concerned, however, its existence is hardly new at all. Slacktivism is the idea that an individual would rather give token support than meaningful support of any kind because they feel that token support is just as supportive and meaningful as meaningful support, and their self-image of fulfilling the social obligation of support is already fulfilled through a showing of that initial act of token support. (Kristofferson, White & Peloze, 2014) (Gollwitzer, Sheeran, Michalski & Seifert, 2009).

Slacktivism can be directly contributable to the failure of a charitable campaign for a few reasons. If individuals display an initial public token degree of support for a cause, they will be less likely to subsequently provide more meaningful support in the future because 1): their desire to create a positive self-image in both their own eyes, and the eyes of others has been fulfilled (Impression Management); and (2):

because public observability has kept them in-line with their previously displayed values (the desire to remain consistent with one's own values). (Kristofferson, White and Peloze, 2014) This particular research is highly valuable to society today due to the large (and growing) number of charitable causes around the world – who are each attempting to provide tangible, meaningful action to fix social and world issues of all kinds – but whose campaigns for tangible, meaningful support receive more token support than meaningful support, ultimately leading to failure in the campaign.

As such, Slacktivism progresses the identification of indifference as an underlying social problem. It shows in one way (out of many) how society's failure to be willing to offer anything of value or importance is governed by their idea of already completing that task through symbolic gestures of support, despite the fact that such token support fails to provide any meaningful support at all. This makes Slacktivism a key aspect in the search for, and confirmation of, the existence of indifference towards a social issue because it provides the ability for indifferent individuals to fulfill social rules without actually participating.

Case Studies:
Before beginning to analyze the case studies used to answer the research question at hand, a comparative example where social indifference has been clearly identified must first be established. To do this, the method will be to use the supporting theories in a way that isolates social indifference as the primary root cause by removing other possible factors. Additionally, the comparative example used must also act as a control. It cannot be tied directly to Veteran's causes – as indifference directed towards Veterans is what is being looked tested for in this study – but must be of a similar nature, such as a charity that directly seeks to impact a significant social cause. As such, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge will be used as the comparative example because of the following similarities:

It is an established and well-known charity that directly seeks to impact a major social cause, and as such, it is able to provide a similarity for reference in the following case studies covering campaigns that seek to support Veterans charities that directly impact significant social causes for Veterans.
It has nothing to do with Veterans, and therefore can act as a control.
It gives the ability to establish the method of stripping away alternative possibilities, thus leaving social indifference behind as the primary root cause, which can be repeated for the following case studies.

ALS ICE-BUCKET CHALLENGE: 2014

Introduction: In the summer of 2014, the "ALS Ice-Bucket Challenge" became widely popular as an Internet fad, and while there is no doubt that the social phenomena raised awareness of ALS, the numbers indicate a disproportionate level of participation versus donations.

Background Information: Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)—also referred to as motor neuron disease (MND), Charcot disease, and, in the United States, Lou Gehrig's disease—is a neurodegenerative disease with various causes. It is characterized by muscle spasticity, rapidly progressive weakness due to muscle atrophy, and difficulty in speaking, swallowing, and breathing. Individuals diagnosed with the disease typically live no longer than 6 to 8 months.

ALS is the most common of the five motor neuron diseases. The disorder causes muscle weakness and atrophy throughout the body due to the degeneration of the upper and lower motor neurons. Individuals affected by the disorder may ultimately lose the ability to initiate and control all voluntary movement, although bladder and bowel function and the muscles responsible for eye movement are usually spared until the final stages of the disease. Cognitive function is generally spared for most patients, although some (about 5%) also develop frontotemporal dementia. A higher proportion of patients (30–50%) also have more subtle cognitive changes, which may go unnoticed, but are revealed by detailed neuropsychological testing. Infrequently ALS coexists in individuals who also experience dementia, degenerative muscle disease, and degenerative bone disease as part of a syndrome called multisystem proteinopathy. Sensory nerves and the autonomic nervous system are generally unaffected, meaning the majority of people with ALS will maintain hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste throughout the duration of the disease.

Significance: The ALS Ice-Bucket Challenge was a widespread Internet social media-based phenomena designed to prompt individuals to participate through a "challenge" that increased social pressure to prompt further participation for the purpose of generating significant monetary donations to the ALSA for funding of research efforts to find a cure for ALS. The phenomena turned into a social fad as symbolic self-completion created Slacktivism resulting from generalizable social indifference towards the cause itself.

Results: Forbes, the BBC, and Time each gave consistent figures showing the growth of awareness, participation, number of individual donations, and total amount donated throughout the summer of 2014. As cited by each, by the end of August, the social media giant, Facebook, indicated more than 2.4 million Ice-Bucket Challenge videos had been uploaded, and over 30 million interactions – views, likes, comments, and shares – were reported. On Instagram – a Facebook subsidiary – over 3.7 million videos were uploaded as well, and even the Wikipedia page dedicated to ALS received more than 2.7 million visits from 1 August to 27 August 2014. (Townsend, 2014; Diamond, 2014; Stampler, 2014) Finally, while the ALSA gained over $100 million in donations covering the time period from the start of the Ice-Bucket Challenge phenomena to the end of August, the amount of new donors attributed to the awareness created by the campaign itself was estimated at close to 740,000. (Steel, 2014)

Discussion: If we use the Facebook numbers alone, out of 30 million interactions, 1 out of every 12 resulted in a video contributing to the perpetuation of the challenge, while 1 in 40 actually resulted in a donation of any kind. That means that only 0.0246 percent of all individuals who both saw and interacted with the challenge over Facebook in any way ended up donating. Why is this important?

Social rule systems theory states that individuals will comply with social rules to maintain or follow a norm, to show their compliance and gain acceptance, to confirm identity or protect identity, or simply to avoid loss. (Mirowsky, Ross, and Willigen, 1996; Woodbine, 2002) (Nghe and Mahalik, 2001; Waterman and Goldman, 1976; McLean and Pratt, 2006) The percent of individuals that provided meaningful support was 0.0246, while the percent that chose to avoid giving meaningful support of any kind was 0.9754. Out of the total, 0.3 percent was willing to offer a form of token support, and there are confirmed cases of overlap where those who offered token support followed up with meaningful support. However, even if we assumed 100 percent of all who offered token support also offered meaningful support, the total figure would still only come out to 0.3246, meaning that 0.6754 percent yet still refused to offer any form of support at all.

$100 million divided by 740,000 comes out to a figure of $135.14 per donor, but that would also leave out the large number of celebrities and wealthy who donated large sums themselves – Charlie Sheen, for example, openly donated $10,000. (ALS, 2014) It would also leave out individuals who already donate on a consistent basis, and those who donated without interaction via the ALS Ice-Bucket Challenge over social media. Finally, these figures only account for interaction and participation figures from one social media platform, meaning that – out of the $100M total figure – adding in the combined figures from all other sources of the challenge that resulted in a donation would make that 0.0246 figure even smaller. In reality, the "1 in 40" figure could be closer to "1 in 100" or "1 in 500"… but that is just speculation. We may not know what the actual figure would end up as, however the evidence shows it is worse than "1 in 40".

Finally, it must be understood that all of these figures – in fact, the entire ALS Ice-Bucket Challenge campaign itself – where gathered from online interactions through the use of social media. Therefore, it would be safe to assume that the vast majority of interactions came from social media users who could obviously afford Internet access in one way or another. It would not be appropriate to assume that all those who maintain some form of Internet access suffer from financial difficulties either. Therefore, given the evidence based on percentages of interactions versus meaningful support, it is safe to say that the majority of people who saw the campaign ultimately were not motivated to follow-up with meaningful support. This indicates indifference towards the cause because if the individuals did care about it, they would have been motivated to offer meaningful support to some degree regardless of personal circumstances.

Case Use for Comparative Analysis and Control: A large number of widely known charities have used everything from celebrities to fund raisers, from advertisements to social media campaigns to attempt to spread awareness of their cause, gain donations, and prompt participation. The ALS Ice-Bucket Challenge was different only in the sense that it was not sponsored or created by the ALSA, but instead became a social phenomenon due to random faddish trends. As the evidence shows, 30 million interactions over a single social media platform proves a vast majority of individuals were only willing to offer token support, meaning that Slacktivism and Symbolic Self-Completion are directly in play. Additionally, social rules would dictate that it is socially acceptable – and therefore good – to contribute to a charity and socially unacceptable – and therefore frowned upon – to not donate to or refuse to donate to help a cause such as ALS.

Therefore, with a near completely online social media campaign, and a figure of less than 0.0246 percent of actual meaningful support, factors other than social indifference can be removed as possibilities. Social rule systems theory, combined with the presence of symbolic self-completion, and resulting Slacktivism, make it clear that individuals only provided token support simply to avoid the loss of their self-image or to gain a positive self-image at the confirmation of third parties. Even though they all possessed enough financial capabilities to afford an Internet connection of some kind, the overwhelming vast majority refused to offer any amount – not even a single $1 – of meaningful support. Despite the trend over the summer of 2014, the ALS Ice-Bucket Challenge was still the victim of social indifference, and potential donations were lost due to the loopholes of Slacktivism and Symbolic Self-Completion. Simply put, the number of potential donations that could have been received as a result of the phenomenon suffered greatly due to social indifference to the cause itself.

The isolation and identification of generalizable social indifference towards the ALS Ice-Bucket Challenge, combined with the applied use of social theories that allow for the isolation of social indifference as a root cause for the failure of the campaigns achievement of its goals, develops the method to test for indifference as a cause in subsequent campaign efforts. Further, identification of the subject of indifference can be isolated through the use of comparative analysis across several campaigns who, 1: maintain only that single subject in common, and 2: show consistency in the identification of indifference as the primary root cause for each campaign failure. Generalizability can also be established as a result due to, 1: identification of the subject of indifference, and 2: identification of consistency of indifference directed by a cohort towards that specific subject across many varied cases.

In the following case studies, the same social theories – social rule systems theory, symbolic self-completion, and Slacktivism – will be used in consistent applied methods to, 1: establish the presence of social indifference towards the campaign, 2: subsequently identify the subject of social indifference within each campaign, and 3: establish generalizability of social indifference towards the subject itself. To accomplish this, 2 large-scale and interconnected campaigns that focused exclusively on the provision of military specific content to build a large cohort that identified with the such content, and then subsequently campaigned directly toward the same cohort to generate monetary funding for Veterans causes, will be used to establish the presence of social indifference. Next, an additional three independent Veterans charity campaigns that each maintain the idea of helping to aid disabled Veterans through the use of meaningful support as the sole similarity between them, will be used to identify the subject said social indifference is direct toward. Finally, analysis across all campaigns will be used to test for generalizability of the results.

1) Military Photography: March 2013 – July 2014

Introduction: Two Australian media professionals started Military Photography in March of 2013. The company was a subsidiary under the control of Carbine HQ that served two purposes. One, to provide a media service entirely dedicated to photographic media that covered military forces around the world, and two, to receive monetary funding from sales designed to generate funding for charities that helped and aided disabled combat Veterans. To acquire such funding, Military Photography generated a large fan base through the use of its Facebook page, and then marketed items for sale directly to that fan base whereby 40% of all profits from sales went straight to help fund Veterans charities that directly supported disabled Veterans and their families.

Results: Within 12 months of the start of its Facebook page, Military Photography had grown a fan base of 118,000 followers worldwide. In addition, this fan base was consistent in active participation with the page, meaning that comments, shares, likes, views, emails, and requests where a daily norm. The pages email inbox routinely registered 1,000+ messages a week, while Facebook analytic figures showed over 500,000 interactions every week, and the page was continuing to grow on a daily basis. This offered a large online presence for which to campaign to.

By March of 2014, the page had become so engaged that the team had grown to include 8 individuals. Three media professionals from Australia (including the two founding members), the first international administrator was a retired U.S. Army service member and professional photographer from the United States, a retired military photographer from Canada became the fifth member, the sixth was a currently serving combat camera soldier from Belgium, and the seventh and eighth where also United States service members and professional photographers. The international team went to work improving the pages content and growing the followership. However, after the sales campaign started, analytic figures showed consistent near-zero engagement figures for any post tied to the campaign.

The more the page campaigned to offer items for sale for the purpose of generating funding to help disabled Veterans, the less active the engagement became. Eventually, the pages engagement had lowered below the 25,000 per week mark, then plummeted below the 10,000 per week mark, and the followership was being lost as well, lowering below the 100,000 mark by May 2014. The only type of posts that received any engagement at all were the posts that portrayed photos containing military content – which were completely free to view by all page fans – while any post that was a part of the campaign effort to generate funding to aid disabled Veterans was nearly completely ignored.

By July 2014, Facebook analytic figures show engagement levels below the 5,000 mark per week, and by August, the page was shut down. Military Photography and Carbine HQ were subsequently dissolved and the assets divided amongst the two cofounders. The two cofounders went their separate ways – one founder retained ownership of the Military Photography Facebook page – and after several months, by October of 2014, the page was restarted and today has rebuilt a fan base of more than 110,000 followers.

Discussion: The original Military Photography Facebook page existed for 15 months, with a cohort of 118,000 individuals worldwide, and consistent interaction figures averaging 500,000 per week. This indicates that the 118,000 cohorts shared in the premise of Military Photography as a whole, and identified with Military Photography to a large extent. Yet, as soon as Military Photography initiated its campaign to provide meaningful support for Veterans through the use of items for sale, both the interaction levels and the total cohort numbers began to decline.

Loss of interaction numbers can be directly attributed to individual wall posts on the Military Photography Facebook page. Posts that had anything to do with the marketing campaign were largely ignored, and therefore, every time a post that contained information about the campaign or its mission to provide support for Veterans was posted on the Facebook page, a loss in interaction numbers resulted. Yet, while that may indicate indifference by the cohort towards the campaign, the fact that said cohort were yet still members of a page dedicated to showcasing all facets of the world's militaries would naturally lead to the belief that the cohort actually did care about Veterans to some extent. After all, why become a fan of a page dedicated solely toward showcasing the world's armed services if you didn't support Veterans?

That question therefore brings us to the next problem the page faced, a loss in followership. The analytic numbers showed a slightly fluctuating but steady decrease in followership over time, starting with the launch of the marketing campaign. With each new campaign post, the total number of fans who were members of the page decreased as a result. Not only were fans ignoring the posts, many ended up leaving the page to avoid seeing them. This would be consistent with Bennett's (1998) study on social

indifference towards political affairs and political media whereby individuals actually went out of their way to avoid coming into contact with the subject of indifference.

Social indifference directed at disabled Veterans then can be isolated when social rules and symbolic self-completion are applied. What are seen in the numbers from Military Photography are 118,000 individuals who wanted free access to that visual media, but didn't actually care about the intent to help disabled Veterans. Once posts began marketing items for sale in a campaign specifically designed to provide monetary support for disabled Veterans, interaction numbers decreased and followership slowly declined. The cohort ignored posts that had anything to do with the campaign to provide funding for disabled Veterans and many left the page purposely to avoid exposure to it.

2) Military Media: May – July 2014

Introduction: Started on the 1st of May 2014, Military Media was a paid subscription news service that focused exclusively on military related news and media from around the world that featured an international team of service members, Veterans, and experienced media professionals as contributors. The monthly subscription fee was $5 USD/AUD/CAD/EUR per month; however, the real purpose behind the service was its selling point. Forty percent of all profit was donated directly to Veterans charities, and research organizations that provided services for disabled Veterans and research for PTS(d). Military Media was hosted by the Internet based independent news service provider Beacon, and in order for Military Media to launch and officially receive financial funding from Beacon, the service needed 800 individual subscriptions by June 30th, 2014. Military Media was a subsidiary under the control of Carbine HQ and controlled by the same eight Veteran and media professionals that staffed Military Photography, while a contributing staff consisted of a worldwide network of Veterans and media professionals who lived in key locations around the world.

Military Media was created as a response to the increasing demand from Military Photography fans. The fans consistently sent in emails to Military Photography's account expressing the desire for more content, more writing, more stories, etc. However, the international administrators for Military Photography were all volunteers and did not have the time, resources or funding to provide the fans the amount of content they asked for. Military Media was created to answer that demand. The team would start the subscription-based media service and still provide 40 percent of all subscription fees directly to support Veterans charities. The sales campaign Military Photography had already tried for a year was a failure, but Military Media gave the fans exactly what they wanted while still fulfilling the original mission of providing continuous funding to Veterans charities. Since Military Media was controlled by the same staff as Military Photography, the new service already commanded a 118,000 strong cohort from which to market to, and to which a large portion had previously already expressed interest in. As the

service gained subscriptions, the Military Photography page would only be used for minimal postings and teaser posts to continue to gain traffic to the Military Media site. Since the service was now subscription based, individuals had to be paying members in order to gain exclusive access to everything Military Media had to offer, to which 60 percent of all profit went to cover costs of operations, while 40 percent went directly to support Veterans charities.

Results: Campaign efforts to gain the minimum 800 subscriptions, which were required in order to receive funding, started with the initial launch of the project on May 1st. The team had used the data from Military Photography's Facebook analytic profile to target the Military Photography audience towards the Military Media site, and subsequently subscribe to the service. Advertising remained consistent throughout the 61-day period and used posts to the Military Photography page that maintained an open and honest approach in marketing the new service. The ads fully disclosed the reasons Military Media was created, the fact that the service was new, and the requirement to gain a minimum of 800 initial subscriptions before the official launch of the service would take effect on July 1st, 2014. Yet the largest aspect of the advertising campaign remained the fact that the service would donate 40 percent of all profits directly to Veterans charities.

Since the Military Photography fan base consistently sent the pages administrators messages asking for more photos, more content, and more military related news and stories, and due to the fact that Military Media was specifically designed to provide exactly that, the team believed the initial sign up would take only a week. The adds for the Military Media campaign consistently maintained a reach of over 500,000 weekly, this gave the campaign effort an estimated 4 million reach over the entire 61-day period. However, the interaction figures consistently remained below 1,000 per week, and after 61 continuous days of campaigning efforts with a target audience of 118,000 cohorts, only 34 individuals signed up. As a result, Military Media never reached the initial goal of 800 subscriptions, the service failed before it ever started, and was shutdown by July 1st.

Discussion: Over a 61-day period, 34 individuals signed up out of a total campaign reach of 4 million people, equating to a subscription percentage of 0.0000085% and giving the campaign a subscription rate of 1 person per 117,647 people. If the percent of engagement were restricted to the 118,000 cohorts to whom the service was marketed directly towards, then that figure would become 0.000288, and the campaigns success rate in receiving meaningful support from the target audience would become 1 in 3,470. This would logically represent a more accurate figure, however, it is not possible to assume those numbers are restricted to the 118,000 cohorts because interactions that resulted in a sign-up for the service could have come from outside of that 118,000.

These figures are on the extreme side of being representative of the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge figures. In fact, if the

"faddish" aspect of the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge might never have occurred, the 1 in 40 estimate made earlier might actually end up closer to the 1 in 3,470 rate shown in this case. This would be due to either removing or limiting the role of symbolic self-completion. As individuals would no longer feel pressured to conform to social pressures forced on them by the popularity of the challenge, the byproduct of Slacktivism would be removed as a result.

This is exactly what is being seen here with the results from Military Media. The service was marketed towards the Military Photography cohort, who expressed overwhelming social indifference towards it. However, because it was never popular to begin with, and there was no added pressure to participate, it was easy for individuals to get around the social rules. Individuals were able to preserve their identity confirmation by either ignoring the campaign or leaving the cohort all together. Furthermore, because symbolic self-completion did exist within the Military Media campaign (due to the small numbers of likes and share's) it shares the same model as the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, and indifference is therefore able to be isolated and confirmed as the predominate cause for the services ultimate failure. The service was marketed as a way to provide what the cohort wanted and used to help Veterans as a result. However, the cohort never cared about the service to begin with. After all, why pay for something if you think you can already get it for free?

The Military Media case is a byproduct itself from the Military Photography case. While these two cases do work together to show indifference existed from a large cohort and that indifference was directed towards the campaigns, at this point, there is only a loose connection established between social indifference and Veterans. It very well could be the case that the social indifference expressed was towards the idea of paying for a list of unpopular products offered by Military Photography, or for a media service from Military Media that provided a more enhanced version of the free service already provided by Military Photography. Yet, in both cases all marketing to the cohort made it clear that the products and the services were designed to help provide continuous funding to support disabled Veterans; and in both cases, indifference has been isolated as the primary cause for ultimate failure.

Therefore, it is necessary to use additional independent case studies to test whether that connection is consistent. Through the use of several other independent cases, each of which also places the provision of monetary funding support to help Veterans as their top priorities, combined with the isolation of indifference in each case as the primary cause for failure, it is possible to confirm generalizable social indifference exists towards Veterans, Veterans social issues, and providing meaningful support for Veterans causes. As such, three additional independent social media-based Veterans charity campaign case studies, that do not share any relationship outside of the single aspect of campaigning to provide monetary support for Veterans, will be used to further isolate social indifference in connection with Veterans as a whole, and ultimately test for the presence of generalizability.

3) The Words for Warriors Collection: Book 1, "13 Years of Service": November 2013 – Present

Introduction: The Words for Warriors project was created for the purpose of generating monetary funding for disabled Veterans charities through the sale of a book called "13 Years of Service: My Personal Collection of Military Bizarreness", written by retired German Army Master Sergeant Per M. Griebler. The book was a collection of short stories – reflective personal accounts from Master Sergeant Griebler's time in service – of a humorous nature, written with the intent that the book could be read randomly and spontaneously, and to which remained relatable for service members around the world. The book also contains a large number of small personal quotes from many of Master Sergeant Griebler's personal military friends – from several different nations' military services – that he has met throughout his time in service.

The book was written over a period of one year, from early 2012 until the summer of 2013. It was published on November 24th, 2013, and made available worldwide via Amazon the same day. Marketing for the book focused on the projects primary purpose. Eighty percent of all proceeds from each sale went directly to support a small number of disabled Veteran's charities in the United States, Germany, and Australia. Today, the book is still available for sale worldwide on Amazon in nearly every major country, is available in both English and German, and holds a 5 Star rating. The paperback version is listed for $9.95 USD, and the Kindle version is listed for $4.49 USD.

Results: The Words for Warriors project campaign to market the book started on November 24th, 2013, and still continues to this day. The campaign started a Facebook page dedicated to marketing the book, and by August of 2014, was absorbed under the umbrella of Ruck Headquarters – a Veteran owned small business – in order to continue operating. In 13 months – starting from December 1st, 2013, through December 31st, 2014 – the Words for Warriors project campaign gained a total reach of 23,082. During that same period, however, interaction numbers totaled 3,090, and a total of 298 books have been sold worldwide (Appendix A).

Discussion: 298 books sold out of a total reach of 23,082 equals a success rate of 0.0129. If that number were restricted to the interaction figures only, then the success rate would increase to 0.096. From the time the book was first published, until December 31st, 2014, 13 months later, 1 in 7.4699 was willing to offer some form of token support while only 1 in 77.456 was willing to buy the book. Since the book was about Veterans short stories relatable to other Veterans, it is possible to say that any individual who expressed interest in the book – through either token support or by buying the book – might relate to its content. This would indicate that at least 3,090 individuals out of the total who saw the campaign found the book directly relatable to some extent. At the same time, the book itself was only marketed on a Facebook page and exclusively focused on

the books purpose of generating monetary funding for Veterans charities. This would indicate that the entire 23,082 cohorts remain consistent with the examples found in both the Military Photography and Military Media cases.

Next, since the marketing campaign focused exclusively on informing the potential buyer that the books purpose was to raise money for Veterans charities, it is possible to rule out a misinterpretation as to the intention of the books purpose for sale. The total cohort was introduced to the book as both a military relatable subject and a way to help support Veterans charities by purchasing it, because the campaign made explicit mention that 80% of all proceeds went directly to fund charities that supported disabled Veterans. The figures indicate the audience maintained an interest in the book as a relatable subject only, but were overwhelmingly uninterested in offering any amount of meaningful monetary support for Veterans charities by refusal to purchase the book.

Finally, since the entire campaign was carried out over Internet based social media platforms, it is possible to rule out a lack of financial ability to afford a book under $10 USD. Like the previous cases, all interactions for this campaign came from social media users who could obviously afford Internet access in one way or another. It would not be appropriate to assume that all those who maintain some form of Internet access suffer from financial difficulties either. Therefore, given the evidence based on percentages of interactions versus meaningful support, it is safe to say that the majority of people who saw the campaign ultimately were not motivated to follow-up with meaningful support. This indicates indifference towards the cause because if the individuals did care about it, they would have been motivated to offer meaningful support to some degree regardless of personal circumstances.

As seen in the previous cases, as well as in the control case, social rule systems theory, combined with the presence of Slacktivism and symbolic self-completion, make it clear that individuals only provided token support simply to avoid the loss of their self-image or to gain a positive self-image at the confirmation of third parties. Even though the entire cohort possessed enough financial capabilities to afford an Internet connection of some kind, the overwhelming vast majority refused to offer meaningful support for a campaign they fully understood was purposely designed to provide monetary support for Veterans charities. These factors allow for the removal of other possible contributing possibilities for refusal to provide meaningful support, leaving only social indifference behind as the largest contributing factor to the failure of the campaign itself.

4) Ruck Headquarters – Operation Nijmegen: July 2014

Introduction: Operation Nijmegen is an annual non-profit ruck marching event whereby Ruck Headquarters staff and affiliates participate in the VierDaagse (4 Days) Event – a 100+ mile ruck march that takes place over a period of 4 days and is held every July in the city of Nijmegen, the Netherlands

– for the purpose of raising funding for disabled military Veterans charities, and to promote awareness of Veterans disabilities, PTS(d), and Veterans organizations and programs. The event is both recorded and streamed live – via social media platforms – with the Ruck Headquarters team conducting interviews with fellow Veterans from around the world who are also participating in the march, and at the same time, openly discussing Veterans issues, charities, and organizations, all while the team completes the march themselves. Ruck Headquarters staff and affiliated personnel have participated in the march since 2010 in order to raise monetary donations for Veterans charitable organizations.

Results: From June 1st, through August 31st, 2014, the Operation Nijmegen 2014 campaign gained a total reach of 1.969 million individuals worldwide via Facebook using several Facebook pages – Ruck HQ, Military Photography, Vixens 4 Veterans, Enlist Me, and Words for Warriors – as campaign platforms in order to reach a larger cohort. The majority of those individuals reached were from North America, Europe, and Australia, and in order to maintain interest within those targeted areas, specific Veterans charities that already maintain a large presence within those areas were chosen for both information and interest posts, as well as for the ultimate donation of collected funds. During that period, the campaign had a total of 354,036 individual interactions – including shares, and likes – and finished with a total donation figure of $1,020 USD raised over the crowd funding platform Go Fund Me, from a total of 16 individuals, with 3 of those individuals making repeat donations throughout the period. (Appendix B)

Discussion: Using the numbers from the analytic figures alone, 16 donors out of a total reach of 1.969 million equals a success rate of 0.000008126. If the numbers were limited to interactions only, the rate then comes to 0.1798. That means that 1 out of every 5.56 individuals who saw the campaign offered up some form of token support, while 1 out of every 123,062.5 was actually willing to offer up meaningful support.

The campaign was only marketed via Internet social media platforms and services. Operation Nijmegen 2014 maintained a presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and the Ruck HQ website, however, all marketing was limited to the Ruck HQ Facebook page alone, and shared across other military and Veteran Facebook themed pages from there for the purpose of increasing the campaigns total reach. Additionally, the only Facebook pages used for all shared marketing were those that exclusively focused on military content and Veterans support causes. Since the entire 1.969 million analytic figures came exclusively from the Ruck HQ Facebook page, it is safe to assume that all those who interacted with the campaign found it relatable to some degree. These numbers therefore remain consistent with the examples found in both the Military Photography and Military Media cases.

Next, since the campaign focused exclusively on informing all viewers of its intended purpose – to raise money for Veterans charities – it is possible to rule out a misinterpretation as to the intention of the campaign itself. The total cohort was introduced to Operation Nijmegen 2014 as a way to help support Veterans charities by encouraging monetary donations, all of which went directly to fund charities that supported disabled Veterans. The figures indicate the audience maintained an interest in Operation Nijmegen 2014 as a subject, but were overwhelmingly uninterested in offering any amount of meaningful monetary support for Veterans charities by refusal to donate.

Finally, as seen with previous cases, since the entire campaign was carried out over Internet based social media platforms, it is possible to rule out a lack of financial ability to make a monetary donation of even $1 USD for the purpose of supporting Veterans charities. Like the previous cases, all interactions for this campaign came from social media users who could obviously afford Internet access in one way or another. It would not be appropriate to assume that all those who maintain some form of Internet access suffer from financial difficulties either. Therefore, given the evidence based on percentages of interactions versus meaningful support, it is safe to say that the majority of people who saw the campaign ultimately were not motivated to follow-up with meaningful support. This indicates indifference towards the cause because if the individuals did care about it, they would have been motivated to offer meaningful support to some degree regardless of personal circumstances.

As seen in the previous cases, as well as in the control case, social rule systems theory, combined with the presence of Slacktivism and symbolic self-completion, make it clear that individuals only provided token support simply to avoid the loss of their self-image or to gain a positive self-image at the confirmation of third parties. Even though the entire cohort possessed enough financial capabilities to afford an Internet connection of some kind, the overwhelming vast majority refused to offer meaningful support for a campaign they fully understood was purposely designed to provide monetary support for Veterans charities. These factors allow for the removal of other possible contributing possibilities for refusal to provide meaningful support, leaving only social indifference behind as the largest contributing factor to the failure of the campaign itself.

5) Vixens 4 Veterans 2015 WWII Style Pin-up Calendar: 2014

Introduction: The Vixens 4 Veterans project was a disabled Veterans charity monetary funding campaign designed by Mark Greenmantle of Mark Greenmantle Photography, and co-creator Brittany Jean of Patriot Pinup, whose aim was to develop and produce a full size 2015 WWII style pin-up calendar (featuring famous WWII aircraft) that would be marketed and sold worldwide for the purpose of generating monetary funding to help support disabled Veterans charities that assisted disabled Veterans, but more specifically aided those suffering from PTS(d). Initial planning for the project started in December 2013 and the projects production lasted

10 months until October 1st, 2014. The Vixens 4 Veterans Facebook page was setup on January 16th, 2014, and project development, planning, contacts list, model talent casting, and photo shoot location development took place from February 2014 through June 2014. The photo tour initiated in mid-June through mid-July in Australia, and then took place across the United States from July 21st through August 19th. Final production took place from August 22nd through official launch for sale on October 1st, 2014. The marketing point of the project was specific to its end goal. One hundred percent of all profits went directly to support a small number of disabled Veteran's charities in the United States, and Australia, each of which specifically aided Veterans with PTS(d). Today, the Vixens 4 Veterans 2015 calendar is still available for sale worldwide via WooCommerce on the Vixens 4 Veterans website for $20 USD.

Results: As of December 31st, 2014, more than 500,000 individuals have seen the Vixens 4 Veterans 2015 calendar campaign, which still continues to this day. Over a 12-month period – starting from January 1st, 2014, through December 31st, 2014 – the Vixens 4 Veterans campaign gained a total organic reach of 689,040. During that same period, however, total interaction numbers gained only reached 69,685. From the calendar's official launch date for sale on October 1st, 2014, through the end of the year on December 31st, a total of 78 calendars have been sold worldwide. (Appendix C)

Discussion: 78 calendars sold after a total reach of 689,040 equals a success rate of 0.000113. If the sales figures were restricted entirely to the interaction numbers, the rate would increase to 0.001119. Out of the total reach for the project, only 1 in 9.88 was willing to offer some form of token support for the project, and only 1 in 8,722 was willing to actually buy a calendar for the purpose of supporting Veterans. Again, figures such as the ones represented here remain consistent with all previous cases as the success rate indicates a clearly disproportionate level of interaction versus the total amount of meaningful support gained.

Next, since the campaign focused exclusively on informing all viewers of its intended purpose – to raise money for Veterans charities – it is possible to rule out a misinterpretation as to the intention of the campaign itself. The total cohort was introduced to buying the campaign as a way to help support Veterans charities by encouraging all whom saw the campaign to buy the calendar. The campaign made it clear that 100% of all profit went directly to fund charities that supported Veterans with PTS(d). The figures indicate the audience maintained an interest in Vixens 4 Veterans only so far as the content it provided via its Facebook page, but were overwhelmingly uninterested in offering any amount of meaningful monetary support for Veterans charities by refusal to buy the calendar.

Finally, as seen with all previous cases, since the entire campaign was carried out over Internet based social media platforms, again it is possible to rule out a lack of financial ability to offer meaningful support for the cause. Like the previous cases, all interactions for this campaign came from social media users who could obviously afford Internet access in one way or another. It would not be appropriate to assume that all those who maintain some form of Internet access suffer from financial difficulties either. Therefore, given the evidence based on percentages of interactions versus meaningful support, it is safe to say that the majority of people who saw the campaign ultimately were not motivated to follow-up with meaningful support. This indicates indifference towards the cause because if the individuals did care about it, they would have been motivated to offer meaningful support to some degree regardless of personal circumstances.

As seen in the previous cases, as well as in the control case, social rule systems theory, combined with the presence of Slacktivism and symbolic self-completion, make it clear that individuals only provided token support simply to avoid the loss of their self-image or to gain a positive self-image at the confirmation of third parties. Even though the entire cohort possessed enough financial capabilities to afford an Internet connection of some kind, the overwhelming vast majority refused to offer meaningful support for a campaign they fully understood was purposely designed to provide monetary support for Veterans charities. These factors allow for the removal of other possible contributing possibilities for refusal to provide meaningful support, leaving only social indifference behind as the largest contributing factor to the failure of the campaign itself.

Discussion:
The data and discussion from each case study is able to accomplish the removal of factors other than indifference through the application of several different interconnected social theories that all share indifference as a common factor combined with data analysis to show commonality between individual cases. Analysis of the data shows consistent refusal to the provision of meaningful support in every case, while the application of sociological theories (showing signs of either the presence of them or lack of their presence for specific reasons) shows that indifference remains consistent across all cases. Due to the fact that each case maintains only one similarity between the others (campaigns to generate monetary support for Veterans charities), and that all cases coincide directly with the results of the control, it is possible to say that generalizable social indifference not only exists, but is targeted directly towards the subject of Veterans as a whole.

Conclusions:
The results of this study prove that generalizable social indifference does exist directed towards Veterans, and therefore, the answer to the question "Are Veterans Subjected to Social Indifference" is, yes. Not only are Veterans subjected to social indifference on a large scale, but also, that indifference encompasses the subject of Veterans as a whole. The term "society" itself does not necessarily imply that every single member within remains the same, however, it does imply the overwhelming majority, and as such, generalizability can be applied due to consistency. The reality of the issue is, that – as stated earlier - military service

members frequently do jobs that are arguably the most dangerous jobs in the world, and war is physically, psychologically, and spiritually damaging. Veterans who are injured or wounded – physically or psychologically or both – as a result of their service, will suffer from physical and/or psychological disabilities that directly impact their quality of life. As a result of their service to a nation, Veterans consistently face a lifetime of issues unique to Veterans. However, the society itself simply does not care about its Veterans, the life issues Veterans face, and are indifferent towards Veterans as a whole.

State of the Social Issue:
There exists a very serious problem within society, a culture full of empty words and zero action to back them up. How many times have we heard the words "Thank you for your service" or "We support the troops"? These words have become commonplace throughout the public forum. There is no end to the number of people who, if they came across a veteran or current service member, would offer a handshake followed by these words. However, "Thank you for your service" and "We support the troops" have become the source of a great amount of hatred throughout the Veterans communities. After hearing these two phrases for more than a decade now, many Veterans are filled with a silent rage if their utterance came from anyone except another Veteran. Veterans hate those words because many feel they are empty and meaningless.

As the research from Fishbach, et al. (2006) points out; members of society are expected to say those things. There exists a certain social-psychological rule that states, if you come in contact with a Veteran, you must offer "support" of some kind. (Wicklund and Gollwitzer, 1981) To not do it, would be more than unacceptable, and it will be followed by social backlash of varying degrees. (Fishback, Dhar, and Zhang, 2006) Following the social rules then, the average person would offer up the bare minimum forms of token support, while at the same time, refusing to offer any form of meaningful support, because this allows the individual to follow the social rules while giving as little as possible. (Kristofferson, White and Peloze, 2014) Therefore, the actions the average person takes upon encountering a Veteran or current service member are largely motivated by making themselves look good to the eyes of all other bystanders and said Veteran or current service member. (Fishbach, et al., 2006) It is considered socially acceptable to be proud of a Veterans service; likewise, it is therefore not socially acceptable to not be thankful for their service to the nation. According to this rule, society should be thankful and proud of its Veterans, and as such, there exists the very first set of a long list of underlying social obligations.

To refuse to acknowledge and be respectful and thankful for a Veteran's service is a social crime. It's expected that you offer up something to show that thanks, but given the chance, the average person would never offer a single thing of value if they could get away with it. The need to conform to the social rules – due to the fear of image loss and/or

social backlash that comes from refusal - is where Slacktivism was born. Slacktivism offers society a way to confirm to itself that they care about social issues – even if they don't – through third party confirmation and self-completion, thereby obeying the social rules in the process. It is because Veterans are aware that society in general really does not really care about them that "Thank you for your service" and "We support the troops" is so hurtful to Veterans on a personal level, and why Veterans have grown to hate token support for Veterans and Veterans issues so much.

This study improves upon the current understanding of social indifference by providing a method of isolation and to show how indifference directly impacts a social issue. At the same time, it also provides ground level work for further studies on both direct and indirect effects caused as a result of social indifference towards the subject. For example, the possibility that social indifference might be tied to potentially damaging effects, either direct or indirect, to related social issues. Social indifference may act as a contributing factor for compounding Veterans issues such as homelessness, unemployment, lack of public education/understanding of Veterans and Veterans issues, lack of public willingness to self-educate, Veterans suicide, attitudes, psychological factors, etc. As such, the understanding of the damaging effects of social indifference is key to understanding the state of the social issue itself. Therefore, this study's contribution may find importance in the development of new methods to confront the social issue and identify possible methods to prompt social change.

State of the Science Review:
Today, hundreds of organizations and charitable causes exist whose missions are to help and aid Veterans through the use of services and legislation that directly impacts Veterans issues. There exist a large array of social issues unique to Veterans, many of them revolving around physical and psychological disabilities that impact a Veteran's quality of life for a lifetime. These organizations and charities exist to help with these issues, and often the only way for them to operate is through the use of meaningful support. Yet meaningful support is consistently rare and difficult to obtain. After careful review of past figures, it seems as if social indifference may be the root cause, however indifference is difficult to prove because any number of other contributing causes may ultimately be the largest contributing factor. As such, in order to prove social indifference exists, indifference must be isolated as a factor so as to show it is the most predominate contributing factor to the end result, therefore proving its existence as a root cause. To do this, the use of Social Rule Systems Theory, combined with supporting evidence from theories like Symbolic Self-Completion and Slacktivism, and case study analysis covering a number of real-life social campaigns and Veterans support projects, allows for the identification of a number of underlying social factors that indicates a direct link to social indifference. This multipronged approach therefore isolates indifference as a primary cause. This process is then applied in several independent case studies in an attempt to discover if indifference was the root cause in each case. The confirmation

of indifference in the cases would thus confirm generalized social indifference exists towards Veterans issues and Veterans as a whole.

The adherence to social rules is a complicated affair to say the least. Social rules are constantly evolving, and many may even become contradicting as a result, however, research leaves little doubt that social rules are at the source of our actions and define our behavior as a society. Understandably then, social rules play a large part in the creation of certain social phenomena like Symbolic Self-Completion and Slacktivism. Individually, people may be indifferent to a particular social issue – for whatever reason – yet because it may be socially unacceptable for the individual to not care about a cause, they are forced to find ways to obey the social rules without actually obeying the social rules. Therefore, we can safely conclude that indifference is the root cause behind "Thank you for your service" and "We support the troops" (token support), because social rules obligated individuals to offer such forms of support publically for the purpose of either personal gain, or to prevent a loss of some kind (public scrutiny). Slacktivism provides that loophole, allowing indifferent individuals to affirm publically that they followed the social norm and making themselves believe they adhered to the rules (through self-completion), while at the same time, doing as little as possible in the process. After understanding how this process is possible, generalizability is easy to confirm simply by running the numbers tied to meaningful support versus token support received for a number of social causes.

Unfortunately, the reality is that you simply cannot force an individual to care about a particular social issue or cause. This means that combating social indifference – even after identifying it as the root cause – may be close to impossible. The only way might be to change the social rules themselves, yet social rules are constantly evolving on their own, and there is no guarantee that efforts to change them for the benefit of a particular social issue will be successful. Is a society truly proud of its Veterans? How do you measure such a question? The easiest way to find out would be to measure the amount of meaningful support. Individuals that truly care about something will take great care of it. As such, does society support its Veterans in a meaningful way? The research would strongly suggest that the majority does not. Individuals would rather not provide support of any kind simply because they could not care less about Veterans or the issues Veterans face as a result of war, yet since social rules say such actions are "taboo", indifferent individuals turn to Slacktivism and Symbolic Self-Completion as loophole methods to get around that social taboo.

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Appendix:

A) Facebook Insights Data Export for Words for Warriors: http://www.facebook.com/wordsforwarriors.org
   (Available upon request from journal)
   a. First column represents the "DATE"
   b. Second column represents "Daily Engagement: The total number of people who engaged with the Page. Engagement includes any click or story created. (Unique Users)"
   c. Third column represents "Daily Reach: The total number of people who have seen any content associated with the Page. (Unique Users)"

B) Facebook Insights Data Export for Ruck HQ – Operation Nijmegen: http://www.facebook.com/ruckhq
   (Available upon request from journal)
   a. First column represents the "DATE"
   b. Second column represents "Daily Engagement: The total number of people who engaged with the Page. Engagement includes any click or story created. (Unique Users)"
   c. Third column represents "Daily Reach: The total number of people who have seen any content associated with the Page. (Unique Users)"

C) Facebook Insights Data Export for Vixens 4 Veterans: http://www.facebook.com/Vix4Vets
   (Available upon request from journal)
   a. First column represents the "DATE"
   b. Second column represents "Daily Engagement: The total number of people who engaged with the Page. Engagement includes any click or story created. (Unique Users)"
   c. Third column represents "Daily Reach: The total number of people who have seen any content associated with the Page. (Unique Users)"

D) WooCommerce Sales Report Data Export for Vixens 4 Veterans: http://www.facebook.com/Vix4Vets
   (Available upon request from journal)
   a. First column represents the "MONTH"
   b. Second column represents "The total number of ITEMS SOLD during same month"