

THE EFFECT OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES ON THE ENDEMIC OF  
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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General Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES ON THE ENDEMIC OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY, by Captain Sarah E. Salvo, 104 pages.

The US Army has more resources available than ever to prevent sexual harassment and assault, yet the cancer of sexual assault and harassment continues to erode trust and cohesion within the ranks. The preponderance of offenders of sexual harassment and assault within the US Army are men, yet very few studies explore the relationship between masculine attitudes and belief systems and the occurrence of sexual assault and harassment in US Army organizational culture. This study explores the influence of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity on patterns of sexual harassment and assault within US Army organizational culture. The case study of the Fort Hood Independent Review Report was analyzed to examine this relationship. The major finding of this research indicates that there is a potential link between the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity and behaviors in the US Army that contribute to a culture permissive of sexual harassment and assault. Further research is required to prove a definitive link between hegemonic masculinity and other ideologies that may contribute to patterns of sexual assault and harassment within the US Army.

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To my husband, Tommy, thank you for your patience and for loving me through this past year, even when I made it difficult. I love you always and forever.

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## ACRONYMS

1CD	1st Cavalry Division
3CR	3rd Cavalry Regiment
DoD	Department of Defense
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FHIRC	Fort Hood Independent Review Committee
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
RAND	Research and Development Corporation
SAPR	Sexual Assault Prevention and Response
SARC	Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
SHARP	Sexual Harassment and Assault Response Prevention
US	United States
VA	Victim Advocate



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Sexual assault and harassment have been a cancer within the United States Military for decades. The Department of Defense (DoD) and Congress have struggled to adjudicate the problem for years with very little success. Congressional officials have charged the US Armed Forces of perpetuating a ‘rape culture,’ yet very little literature exists that actually examines what ‘a rape culture’ looks like within the US military. Further, the preponderance of offenders of sexual harassment and assault within the US military are men. However, American society, military and government leaders continue to label sexual harassment and assault predominately a women’s issue rather than seeking to understand the role of men and masculinity in perpetuating a ‘rape culture.’<sup>1</sup>

This study seeks to understand the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and sexual harassment and assault within the US Army’s organizational culture. Additionally, this thesis will examine formal and informal organizational culture to understand what aspects of US Army culture may be preventing leaders from seeing the signs and symptoms of sexual harassment and assault. With a thorough understanding of underlying aspects of Army culture that create opportunities for sexual harassment and assault to occur, Army leaders can be armed with the knowledge to affect positive cultural change that is long overdue.

For the last thirty years, sexual harassment and assault scandals within the US Army have persisted despite the establishment of formalized programs to prevent its

occurrence. In 1988, the DoD conducted the first survey on Sex Roles in the Active-Duty Military prompted by the United States Merit System Protections Board identification of large-scale sexual harassment occurring within the public sector and government.<sup>2</sup> The survey estimated that upwards of 22 % of active-duty military personnel (64% of women and 17% of men) reported one or more incidents of unwanted, uninvited sexual attention in the workplace.<sup>3</sup> These appalling figures drew outrage among the public and lawmakers, prompting the DoD to create the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program with the charge of prevention of workplace sexual harassment.

In 1996, two major sexual harassment and assault scandals within the US Army unraveled, surrounding the Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA), Gene C. McKinney, and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) instructors at Aberdeen Proving Grounds (APG).<sup>4</sup> The scandals followed formal sexual harassment complaints filed by a female trainee against an APG instructor.<sup>5</sup> Following the initial report, approximately thirty-four women came forward to file sexual harassment and assault reports against APG instructors.<sup>6</sup> The incidents prompted the US Army to set up a sexual assault hotline, which would soon receive over 6,000 calls alleging widespread abuse across the US Army.<sup>7</sup>

The Army immediately launched internal investigations into these incidents, focusing on the events occurring at Aberdeen Proving Grounds. During the investigation at APG, what became known as the ‘The Game’ scandal was uncovered. ‘The Game’ was a competition created by AIT Leaders at APG to see who among the leadership could have sex with the most trainees.<sup>8</sup> Amid ‘The Game Scandal,’ the newly appointed SMA McKinney visited installations around the Army urging Soldiers that the equal

opportunity system would work but in order for it to work, Soldiers should come forward and report claims of abuse.<sup>9</sup> SMA McKinney soon became exposed as a perpetrator of sexual harassment and assault as six women filed reports claiming McKinney made unwanted sexual advances towards them on multiple occasions.<sup>10</sup>

The Army ultimately punished AIT leaders at APG and SMA McKinney, however in comparison to the gravity of offenses committed by these perpetrators, the consequences were mild. Of the three individuals involved in ‘The Game,’ one received a 25-year military prison sentence, and the others received six to four months in military prison. SMA McKinney, the most senior non-commissioned officer in the US Army, faced no criminal charges for his misconduct.<sup>11</sup> The court system ‘demoted’ SMA McKinney to the rank of Master Sergeant (MSG/E8), issued him a letter of reprimand for obstructing justice, and permitted him to retire.<sup>12</sup> The reduction did not stand as it violated US Code, so SMA McKinney retired as a Sergeant Major (SGM/E9), allowing the collection of a pension at his current rank.<sup>13</sup>

These incidents were clear indicators that the Army had a severe and widespread problem with sexual harassment and assault, especially considering that many of the perpetrators were male leaders within positions of trust and confidence. These incidents occurred almost eight years after establishing the EEO program, whose sole focus was conducting organizational training to prevent sexual harassment and assault in the workplace. Lastly, the judicial system undermined the likelihood of victim reporting, as offenders of sexual harassment and assault continued to receive mild to no punishments for grave abuses of power and ranks that violate all Army values.

Instead of focusing on the cultural issues leading to the abhorrent behavior occurring within the US Army profession, major conflicts captured the attention of US Army leadership and congressional leadership from the late 1990s to present date. US involvement with conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the attacks of 9/11, and the beginning of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts dominated the narrative and the US Army's focus. However, like any cancerous behavior within an organization, it did not take very long for the systemic occurrence of sexual harassment and assault to resurface.

In 2004, several years after the start of conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan, Service members began reporting sexual abuses occurring in combat.<sup>14</sup> The reporting of sexual harassment and assault significantly increased, prompting media reports and deep criticisms that military leadership was not taking the misconduct seriously.<sup>15</sup> In response, Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Donald Rumsfeld formally established the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program with the primary mission of tracking reports of sexual assaults, supporting victims with medical attention, counseling, and reporting options, and conducting sexual assault prevention training.<sup>16</sup> Before the SAPR program establishment, victims of sexual assault had no medical care resources or mental health support. Subsequently, congressional mandates to report sexual assault began in calendar year (CY) 2004 and became an annual requirement in the 2005 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).<sup>17</sup> It appeared the DoD was finally trending in the right direction to address sexual harassment and assault by all accounts.

Shortly after the US Army established the SAPR program, the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) Gen. Raymond Odierno directed the SAPR program to reorganize,

absorbing the Military Prevention of Sexual Harassment training responsibility formally owned by the EEO program.<sup>18</sup> Gen. Odierno recognized that sexual harassment and sexual assaults were not happening independently of one another.<sup>19</sup> The reorganization resulted in the creation of the Sexual Harassment and Assault Response Prevention (SHARP) Program, known today as the proponent of sexual harassment and assault prevention and response in the US Army.<sup>20</sup> The programs' goal remained the same but simply added the additional responsibility of providing victims of sexual harassment the same support and reporting options available to victims of assault.<sup>21</sup>

As conflict raged on in the Middle East, reports of sexual harassment and assault continued to rise as the US Army integrated the SHARP program. Reports from CY 2004 through 2011 more than doubled, rising from 725 to 1695.<sup>22</sup> US Army leaders quickly justified the reporting increase as 'the program working' and more and more victims being confident in reporting sexual harassment and assault. This rationalization soon was proved inaccurate as major flaws within the SHARP program became magnified.

In 2014, Sergeant First Class (SFC) Gregory McQueen, a victim advocate for the SHARP program in Fort Hood, Texas, was exposed for organizing a prostitution ring consisting of junior enlisted Soldiers under his command.<sup>23</sup> SFC McQueen essentially groomed the subordinate Soldiers to participate in the ring by promising them they could make serious money at the parties he was organizing.<sup>24</sup> McQueen organized the parties for senior officers to have sex with the women.<sup>25</sup> McQueen rented out hotel rooms where the prostituted Soldiers would meet higher-ranking officials for paid sex.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, McQueen hosted parties where he put the Soldiers on display and pimped out to

attendees, who were senior officers.<sup>27</sup> McQueen was court-martialed on multiple charges, which amounted to 40 years in prison.<sup>28</sup> Instead, McQueen plead guilty, resulting in his actual punishment being much less severe. He was reduced to Private (E1), sentenced to two years in prison, and given a dishonorable discharge from the Army.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, little details on the consequences of the ‘senior officers’ known to have frequented these parties are publicly available.

The typical public, DoD, and congressional reactions followed SFC McQueen’s charge. The event triggered major changes to the screening of victim advocates within the SHARP program, requiring more stringent training standards, rank requirements, and background checks for program appointees. The 2014 Fort Hood Prostitution Ring Scandal drew further scrutiny to the SHARP program’s effectiveness and the US Army’s ability to effectively deliver justice to victims. Following this incident and rising statistics across the DoD, Senator (Sen.) Kirsten Gillibrand, a Member of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, began introducing legislation to remove the prosecution of sexual harassment and assault from military commanders’ discretion.<sup>30</sup>

Following the 2014 Fort Hood Prostitution Ring, a congressional inquiry into sexual assault within the US Army became more frequent. From 2008 through 2019, The US Army reports of sexual assault have been on an upward trend with slight variances between years.

Reports of Sexual Assaults (Rate/1,000)	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Unrestricted Reports <sup>1</sup>	1,476	1,658	1,482	1,520	1,398	2,017	2,199	2,046	1,996	2,178	2,576	2,551
Restricted Reports	256	283	299	301	174	318	407	470	501	528	579	668
Total Reports <sup>1</sup>	1,732	1,941	1,781	1,821	1,572	2,335	2,606	2,516	2,497	2,706	3,155	3,219
Total SM Victims <sup>2</sup>	1,337	1,397	1,316	1,378	1,248	1,766	2,072	1,922	1,962	2,123	2,501	2,536
SM Report Rate/1000 <sup>3</sup>	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.3	3.5	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.7	5.5	5.5

**Figure 2: Reported Sexual Assaults in the Army & Rate/1000 (Metric #11)**

1: As of FY14, one victim equals one report, per DoD guidance. (FY08-FY13 adjusted to one victim per report).  
2: Includes only SM victims in restricted and unrestricted reports for incidents occurring while in the military.  
3: Includes SMs reporting incidents occurring prior to military service.

Figure 1. Army Sexual Assault Reports by Year

Source: US Department of Defense, “Enclosure 1: Department of the Army,” in *Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military Fiscal Year 2019* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, April 2020), 28.

Regarding sexual harassment, the DoD has collected top-line estimates of the incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace since 1988 and quantifies the number of formal reports received annually across the services. Formal reports of sexual harassment collected by the US Army and DoD gender relations survey data on sexual harassment have significant disparities. The 2018 and 2019 DoD Gender and Workplace Relations Survey for Active Duty Forces estimated sexual harassment rates of 6.3% for men and 24.2% for women, while only 1,021 formal sexual harassment complaints were filed across the entire DOD.<sup>31</sup> Further, the DoD estimates that only 1 in 3 Service members report sexual harassment and assault to a DoD authority.<sup>32</sup> This disparity is cause for speculation that the occurrence of sexual harassment and assault is far greater than DoD estimates and perhaps may not have changed much from the first DoD survey in 1988, which estimated that upwards of 60% of women and 20% of men experienced some form of sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>33</sup>



The events of 2020 have been a clear example that the US Army's current approach to address sexual harassment and assault is not working and that its occurrence is indeed much more widespread than survey data estimates. In April 2020, Specialist (SPC) Vanessa Guillen disappeared from Fort Hood, Texas, without a trace.<sup>34</sup> SPC Guillen was a hardworking, dedicated Soldier whose disappearance was out of character.<sup>35</sup> After her family could not reach her, they contacted her leadership at Fort Hood, alleged to have responded to the family's concerns apathetically.<sup>36</sup> Vanessa's family eventually secured a lawyer, generated media attention, and approached Congressional leaders in Texas to help find her.<sup>37</sup> During the investigation, Vanessa's family claimed that fellow Soldiers were sexually harassing her, but she was afraid to report the abuse out of fear of not being believed.<sup>38</sup> Two months after her disappearance, Vanessa's body was found in a shallow grave by the Leon River in Texas.<sup>39</sup> Investigators soon discovered that a fellow Soldier, SPC Aaron Robinson, brutally murdered SPC Guillen on post, transported her body to the Leon River, where he and his girlfriend dismembered and disposed of her body.<sup>40</sup> Vanessa's family claimed that Robinson was one of the men sexually harassing her and believed that Vanessa was going to report him, thus why he killed her.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, SPC Robinson's motive will remain unknown as he escaped police custody and was killed during a subsequent altercation.<sup>42</sup>

In August of 2020, Sergeant (SGT) Elder Fernandes died by suicide at Fort Hood after reporting a sexual assault committed by a superior.<sup>43</sup> Fernandes reported a superior for inappropriately touching him and was subsequently transferred to another unit.<sup>44</sup> Peers reported SGT Fernandes to be suicidal after being hazed and bullied for reporting

the assault.<sup>45</sup> He was found dead hanging from a tree in Temple, TX, shortly after seeking behavioral health for the mental distress caused by being assaulted.<sup>46</sup>

The cancer of sexual harassment and assault in the US Army metastasized in 2020, igniting a military social justice movement. The deaths and alleged sexual abuses of both SGT Fernandes and SPC Guillen drew outrage within the military and veteran community, igniting a #MeToo social media movement. Hundreds of thousands of victims flocked to social media to share stories of sexual abuses endured in the military, reflecting a culture tolerant of sexual harassment and assault.<sup>47</sup> The national outrage sparked by the deaths of SPC Guillen, SGT Fernandes, and other Soldiers at Fort Hood prompted Congress to direct the Fort Hood Independent Review to examine the culture and climate that lead to these tragic incidents.

In the words of Ryan McCarthy, former Secretary of the Army, “The murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillen shocked our conscience and brought attention to deeper problems within the culture of the US Army.”<sup>48</sup> In the wake of thirty years of sexual misconduct scandals, 2020 has clearly demonstrated that the US Army can no longer forgo an in-depth examination of organizational culture.

### Problem Statement

The US Army has more resources at its disposal than ever to combat sexual harassment and assault, yet statistics continue to increase, and abuses remain largely unreported. Sexual harassment and assault misalign with the US Army’s formal culture. Sexual harassment and assault violate every Army value and are a punishable offense within the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The time and resources devoted

to the SHARP program across the Army are visible evidence of the Army's dedication to prevent sexual harassment and assault. However, over the last thirty years, sexual harassment and assault scandals in the US Army continue to make national news headlines while leaders blame the incidents on individual behavior.

With a narrowed focus on individual behavior, US Army leaders fail to examine the aspects of Army culture that enabled the behavior in the first place. For instance, in 2019, almost 4,000 men committed a confirmed act of sexual assault within the Department of Defense, which does not even account for unreported incidents.<sup>49</sup> Sexual harassment and assault in the US Army is a men's issue more than a women's issue. However, the role of men and masculine attitudes and belief systems within the US Army often escape in-depth scrutiny.

To overcome an endemic of sexual harassment and assault, the US Army must understand the aspects of its culture that have enabled behaviors contributing to an engrained pattern of sexual harassment and assault within the organization. Attitudes and belief systems drive organizational behavior. Thus, the relationship between masculine attitudes and belief systems and sexual harassment and assault within the US Army must be explored. Programs, policies, procedures, and resources allocated to the SHARP program will continue to be a band-aid solution to the US Army's sexual harassment and assault endemic until organizational culture change occurs.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand how hegemonic masculinities embedded in Army culture influence the occurrence of sexual harassment and assault.

This study seeks to understand the relationship between hegemonic masculinities and patterns of sexual harassment and assault in US Army organizational culture through a case study analysis of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee Report.

Additionally, this study seeks to understand what aspects of Army culture and climate prevent Army leaders from seeing signs and symptoms of sexual harassment and assault, such as hostile work environments to women. Finally, this study will recommend strategies to help Army leaders eliminate behaviors that contribute to sexual harassment and assault and erode trust within the organization.

### Research Questions

#### Primary Research Question

How do hegemonic masculinities embedded in Army culture affect the occurrence of sexual harassment and assault?

#### Secondary Research Questions

What prevents Army leaders from seeing the signs and symptoms of sexual harassment and assault, such as hostile work environments to women, minorities, and some men?

How can Army leaders eliminate behaviors that contribute to sexual harassment and assault and erode trust within the organization?

## Definition of Terms

Artifacts: Visible products of a group, such as architecture, language, technology, style, clothing, manners of address, myths, stories, published lists of values, and observable rituals and ceremonies.<sup>50</sup>

Climate: The feeling that is conveyed in a group by the physical layout and the way in which members of the organization interact with each other, with customers, or with other outsiders. Climate is sometimes included as an artifact of culture and is sometimes kept as a separate phenomenon to be analyzed.<sup>51</sup>

Culture: A pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.<sup>52</sup>

Espoused Beliefs or Values: Ideals, goals, values, aspirations, ideologies, and rationalizations.<sup>53</sup>

Hegemonic Masculinities: Hegemonic masculinity is a concept that originated in the 1980s to highlight the existence of social norms and cultural rituals that promoted a favorable social condition of men over women. Further, the concept presents the idea that all men position themselves culturally to benefit from these favorable social conditions by subjugating themselves to behavior codes that allow social dominance to continue, even if it is to others' detriment. From an ideological perspective, hegemonic masculinity is a version of manhood constructed on the idea that to be a 'real man,' one must be dominating, heterosexual, display violent and aggressive behavior and restrain outward

displays of vulnerable emotions such as crying. Additionally, hegemonic masculinity requires men to exhibit strength and toughness and be competitive and successful.<sup>54</sup>

Sexual Assault: Intentional sexual contact characterized by the use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent. The term includes a broad category of sexual offenses consisting of the following specific UCMJ offenses: rape, sexual assault, aggravated sexual contact, abusive sexual contact, forcible sodomy (forced oral or anal sex), or attempts to commit these offenses.<sup>55</sup>

Sexual Harassment: Conduct that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and deliberate or repeated offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature that includes:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's job, pay, or career;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting that person; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; and
- is so severe or pervasive that a reasonable person would perceive, and the victim does perceive, the environment as hostile or offensive.
- Any use or condonation, by any person in a supervisory or command position, of any form of sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, pay, or job of a member of the armed forces or a civilian employee of the Department of Defense.

- Any deliberate or repeated unwelcome verbal comment or gesture of a sexual nature by any member of the armed forces or Civilian employee of the Department of Defense.<sup>56</sup>

Underlying Assumptions: Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, and values.<sup>57</sup>

### Limitations

The most significant limitations of this study are time and resources. This study seeks to understand the influence of hegemonic masculinities on patterns of sexual harassment and assault observed within the climate and culture of Fort Hood. Different installations within the Army may have variances in how culture and climate contribute to sexual harassment and assault. Due to time and resource factors, this study will focus solely on the culture and climate of Fort Hood to understand the role of hegemonic masculinities in perpetuating culture and climate that tolerate sexual harassment and assault. Further research will be required to validate if this culture and climate are systemic across the Army.

Secondly, this study will not include new interview or survey data. The research timeline only allows for a case study analysis of the Independent Review Report of Fort Hood's command climate and culture.

### Scope and Delimitations

As previously stated, this study will focus on understanding the relationship between hegemonic masculinities and sexual harassment and assault within US Army organizational culture through a case study analysis of the Independent Review Report of Fort Hood's command climate and culture. This study will not provide a quantitative

assessment of sexual harassment and assault data in the US Army, nor will this study analyze current sexual harassment and assault prevention programs in the US Army.

### Significance of the Study

Sexual harassment and assault within the US Army is an abhorrent violation of all the Army values, yet its existence continues systemically within the organization. The Military #MeToo Movement has taken root within the public, military and veteran communities, Congress, and the DoD, demanding accountability and justice for victims and an end to sexual abuses endured as a price for military service.<sup>58</sup> The sexual harassment and assault endemic within the US Army is a great risk to losing public trust and confidence. This study intends to provide US Army leaders with an analysis of organizational culture, climate, social norms, and behaviors that contribute to sexual harassment and assault. These insights can potentially inform program and policy design and provide a platform to facilitate the organizational culture change necessary to eliminate sexual harassment and assault and restore trust within the profession.

### Summary

This study will identify how characteristics of hegemonic masculinities influence patterns of sexual harassment and assault within the US Army. Additionally, this study seeks to understand what aspects of culture prevent Army leaders from seeing the signs and symptoms of abuses such as sexual harassment and assault and hostile climates towards women, minorities, and some men. It is beyond this study's scope to provide an analysis of existing sexual harassment and assault data and sexual harassment and assault prevention programs. This study's desired outcome is to provide US Army leaders with a



deeper awareness of aspects of organizational culture that undermine trust and contribute to sexual abuses.

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<sup>1</sup> Guy Raz, “Jackson Katz: Why We Can No Longer See Sexual Violence as a Women's Issue,” *NPR*, February 1, 2019, accessed May 9, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/689938588>.

<sup>2</sup> John B. Pryor, *Sexual Harassment in the United States Military: The Development of the DoD Survey*, DEOMI Report No. RR-DEOMI-88-6 (Normal, IL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, July 1988), <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA207047>, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Lisa D. Bastian, Anita R. Lancaster, and Heidi E. Reyst, *Department of Defense 1995 Sexual Harassment Survey*, DMDC Report No. RR-96-014 (Arlington, VA: Defense Manpower Data Center, December 1996), <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a323942.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph E. Webster, “Resisting Change: Toxic Masculinity in the Post Modern United States Armed Forces, 1980s-present,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK, 2019), ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>14</sup> Angela Andrew, “Leading Change: Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP),” (Strategy Research Project, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, March 2013), 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>23</sup> M. L. Nestel, “Inside Fort Hood's Prostitution Ring,” *The Daily Beast*, April 14, 2017, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/inside-fort-hoods-prostitution-ring>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Kirsten Gillibrand, “Military Justice Improvement Act: Supportive Editorials,” June 13, 2019, <https://www.gillibrand.senate.gov/mjia/editorials>.

<sup>31</sup> US Department of Defense, “Appendix F: Sexual Harassment,” in *Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military Fiscal Year 2019* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, April 2020), 3-6.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Bastian, Lancaster, and Reyst, *Department of Defense 1995 Sexual Harassment Survey*, iii.

<sup>34</sup> Jennifer Steinbauer, “A #MeToo Moment Emerges for Military Women after Soldier’s Killing,” *The New York Times*, July 30, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/11/us/politics/military-women-metoo-fort-hood.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Rachel Treisman, “Body of Missing Fort Hood Soldier Elder Fernandes Found a Week After Disappearance,” *NPR*, August 26, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/26/906396032/body-of-missing-fort-hood-soldier-elder-fernandes-found-a-week-after-disappearan>.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Steinbauer, “A #MeToo Moment Emerges for Military Women after Soldier’s Killing.”

<sup>48</sup> Secretary of the Army, “DoD Briefing on Findings and Recommendations of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee,” (Briefing delivered at The Pentagon, December 8, 2020), <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/dodbriefingforthoodreviewfindings.htm>.

<sup>49</sup> US Department of Defense, “Appendix D: Aggregate DoD Data Matrices,” in *Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military Fiscal Year 2019* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, April 2020), 6.

<sup>50</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 17.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>54</sup> R. W. Connell and James Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (December 2005): 832.

<sup>55</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Directorate, July 2020).

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-7.

<sup>57</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* 17.

<sup>58</sup> Steinbauer, “A #MeToo Moment Emerges for Military Women after Soldier’s Killing.”

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand how hegemonic masculinities embedded in Army culture influence the occurrence of sexual harassment and assault. Additionally, this study seeks to understand what aspects of Army culture and climate prevents Army leaders from seeing signs and symptoms of sexual harassment and assault, such as hostile work environments to women. The outcome of this study will be crucial in identifying formal and informal levels of Army culture that undermine trust and contribute to sexual harassment and assault. In order to organize the literature, this chapter is broken down into three major areas. These areas are formal and informal levels of organizational culture, the relationship between organizational culture and sexual harassment and assault, and the relationship between hegemonic masculinities and sexual harassment and assault.

#### Formal and Informal Levels of Organizational Culture

To understand the relationship between organizational culture and sexual harassment and assault, examining what constitutes organizational culture is warranted. Due to this study's short time frame, organizational culture models taught by the US Army Command and General Staff College have been selected. This thesis will use Dr. Edward Schein's and Linda Trevino and Katherine Nelson's models of organizational culture to define formal and informal levels of US Army culture.

Dr. Edward Schein is a world-renowned social psychologist whose work implores researchers, leaders, academics, and anyone reading his research to understand that the concept of culture leads us to see patterns in social behavior.<sup>1</sup> Because this thesis focuses on unraveling the pattern of sexual harassment and assault in the US Army, Dr. Schein's book *Organizational Culture and Leadership* will serve as the framework to define formal culture in the US Army.

Dr. Schein describes culture in terms of three levels, artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions.<sup>2</sup> The levels of culture vary in their degrees of visibility to the observer.<sup>3</sup>

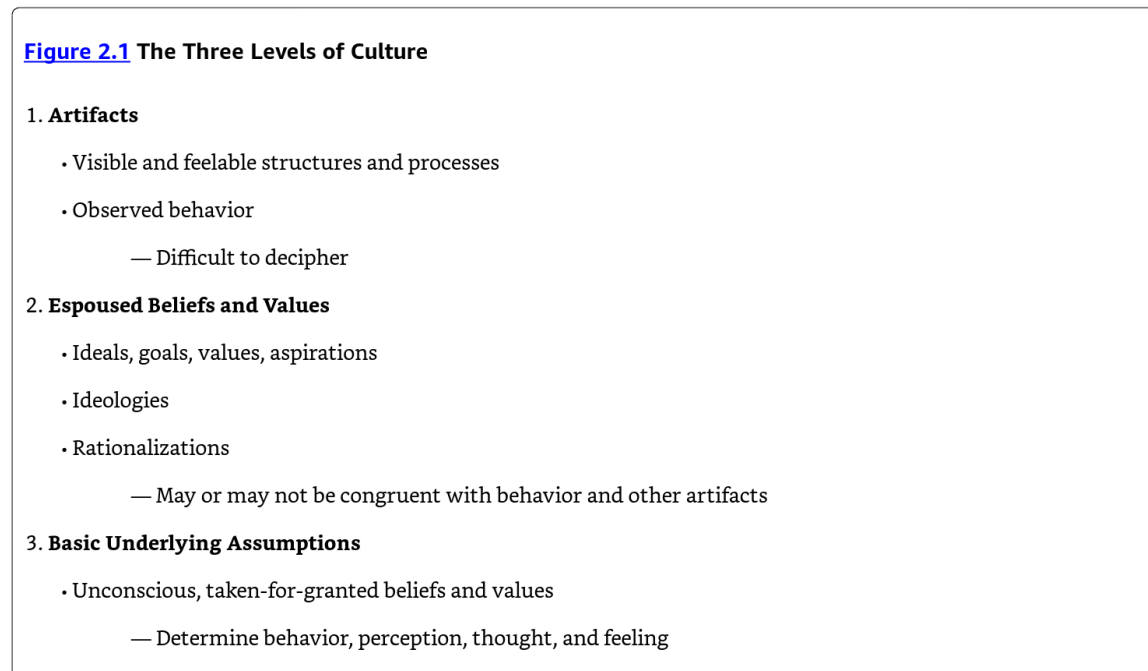


Figure 2. The Three Levels of Culture

Source: Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 17.

Artifacts are described as the visible, feelable level of culture. Artifacts can include language, values statements, emotional displays, rituals, and ceremonies. Organizational climate resides in the artifact level of culture. Climate is the feeling conveyed in a group by the physical layout and how members of the organization interact with each other, with customers, or with other outsiders.<sup>4</sup> Artifacts are the most observable aspects of culture but are difficult to decipher. The meanings of artifacts only become clear when people explain why things are done a certain way, which will uncover the next level of culture- espoused beliefs and values.<sup>5</sup>

Espoused beliefs and values are what drive how a group or organization accomplishes its core tasks. Espoused beliefs and values can range from rationalizations on how to solve problems and operate to organizational value statements and behavior standards.<sup>6</sup> For example, the US Army Soldiers Creed espouses the warrior ethos, 'I will never quit,' thus creating an espoused belief that quitting is unacceptable under any circumstance.

Basic assumptions are the deepest, most unconscious level of culture that ultimately determine organizational and individual behavior, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Basic assumptions are solutions to problems that have become so engrained that alternative solutions are inconceivable.<sup>7</sup> Another way to describe basic assumptions are implicit assumptions that guide behavior by telling group members how to perceive, think about, and feel about things.<sup>8</sup> Basic assumptions tend to be non-debatable until radical evidence proves a more effective solution to a problem.<sup>9</sup> For example, it would be inconceivable for a couple to have a child before marriage in a religious society. The

basic assumption that marriage must occur to start a family. This assumption is so deeply engrained that most religious societies consider having a child before marriage a sin. This might appear to be a dated example as many people in present times chose to have children before getting married. However, in many religions, such as Catholicism, it is considered a sin to have children before getting married. This example illustrates the psychology of basic assumptions and why culture has so much power over behavior.

Reexamining basic assumptions is an anxiety-inducing process, so people tend to perceive the world in cohort with basic assumptions, even if it means denying reality.<sup>10</sup> Once culture prescribes a set of basic assumptions in terms of what to pay attention to, what things mean, how to react emotionally to the world, and what actions to take in certain situations, a mental model or lens of how people view the world is formed.<sup>11</sup> Mental models and lenses tend to become ingrained because individuals and groups are most comfortable with others who share similar views.<sup>12</sup> This highlights Schein's key insight that culture's power lies in the fact that assumptions are shared and mutually reinforced.<sup>13</sup> This means that in most instances, it usually takes a third party with experience in different cultures to illuminate underlying basic assumptions within an organization.<sup>14</sup>

Of important note, all basic assumptions do not necessarily remain unchanged. Rationalizations can be disproved using evidence. For example, people used to think the world was flat until Christopher Columbus sailed across the ocean and made it to America without falling off the face of the earth. Global culture has since changed the basic assumption to the earth is round. Ideals, goals, values, and aspirations cannot be



validated or invalidated in the same way thus are much harder to change. Recall our earlier example of religious cultures deeming bearing children before marriage a sin. Even as society has accepted having children before marriage, most religious societies and cultures still consider the choice inconceivable and a sin because of the ideal that a marriage is the foundation of a strong family. This ideal cannot be proved or disproved using evidence the same way that a rationalization can.

So how do leaders influence and change organizational culture considering how difficult it is to influence basic, underlying assumptions? Schein's research proposes that leaders must use primary embedding mechanisms to teach their organizations how to perceive, think, feel and behave based on the conscious and unconscious convictions held by the leader.<sup>15</sup> Within the US Army organizational culture, leader's conscious and unconscious convictions are expected to be linked to the Army Values. Drawing on Schein's primary embedding mechanisms, US Army Leaders integrate the Army Values and tenants of the SHARP program into organizational culture through what they pay attention to, how they react to crisis and allocate resources, and through deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching.<sup>16</sup> Leaders must consistently employ these tools because if their pattern of attention is inconsistent, subordinates will use other signals or their own experience to decide what is important, leading to more diverse assumptions and more subcultures within larger organizational culture.<sup>17</sup> This cursory understanding of primary embedding mechanism will be helpful to identify opportunities later in this thesis for US Army leaders to use these tools to ensure organizational values align with behaviors.

Sexual harassment and assault are certainly unethical behaviors; thus, a discussion of ethics in organizational culture requires inclusion in the literature review. In their book, *Managing Business Ethics: Straight Talk About How to Do It Right*, Linda Trevino and Katherine Nelson present a framework of ethical culture within the context of the broader organizational culture.

The main idea presented by Trevino and Nelson is that ethical culture is an aspect of organizational culture that represents the way employees think and act in ethics-related situations.<sup>18</sup> Trevino and Nelson propose that ethical culture and decision-making are primarily driven by employee socialization, the process of learning the way the organization does things. Employee socialization can occur through various means, such as formal training and mentorship, but also through daily interactions with peers and superiors, which establishes behavioral norms.<sup>19</sup> The broad theory of socialization is that generally, people behave in ways consistent with culture because they are expected to.<sup>20</sup> Trevino and Nelson also propose that individual behavior within an organization can also be driven by internalization, where individuals adopt cultural standards as their own.<sup>21</sup>

Socialization and internalization are important in understanding ethical and unethical behavior because employees can be socialized into behaving unethically, especially when employees do not have the life experience to know the difference between ethical and unethical behavior.<sup>22</sup> For example, if a young Soldier hears everyone around them using profanity in daily communications, they will likely do the same, even if they feel uncomfortable because if they do not partake, they would likely be ostracized within the group.

The framework this thesis will use to understand how ethical culture is created and sustained is Trevino and Nelson’s Multisystem Ethical Culture Framework.

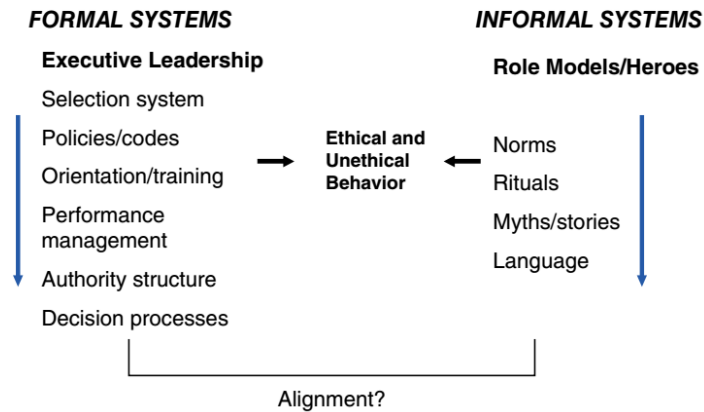


Figure 3. Multisystem Ethical Culture Framework

Source: Linda Klebe Treviño and Katherine A. Nelson, *Managing Business Ethics: Straight Talk About How to Do It Right*, 7th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 161.

The Multisystem Ethical Culture Framework illustrates that ethical culture is balanced between the interaction of formal and informal organizational culture systems. For organizations to send a clear message of what constitutes ethical culture and behavior, both the formal and informal organizational cultures must be aligned.<sup>23</sup>

Revisiting our previous example of a young Soldier being immersed in a unit where all the leaders use profanity, in comparison to the Army values, excessive use of profanity is certainly disrespectful and contrary to the Army value of respect. Performance evaluations within the US Army require all officers and non-commissioned officers to be evaluated on their compliance with Army values. If all the leaders using

profanity and disrespectful language are given a sub-standard evaluation for their failure to act in accordance with the Army values by using profanity, then the unit senior leadership would be demonstrating a clear ethical alignment with formal and informal cultural systems. This action would send a message that profanity is not acceptable in accordance with Army values and behavioral expectations. However, if the unit senior leadership does the opposite and gives spectacular evaluations to the leaders using profanity, then an ethical misalignment of culture occurs. This ethical misalignment sends the message that leaders can behave in ways that are not in accordance with the Army values and still receive strong performance evaluations. While the use of profanity may seem like a minor issue, the example illustrates a serious point: leaders create ethically aligned culture by sending formal and informal messages about what behavior is and is not acceptable. Army leaders can undoubtedly benefit from applying the principles of ethically aligned organizational culture to address the current challenges with sexual harassment and assault.

### The Relationship between Organizational Culture and Sexual Harassment and Assault

This section will describe the relationship between organizational culture and sexual harassment and assault by reviewing themes and patterns of organizational culture and behavior closely linked to sexual harassment and assault.

The first article that warrants discussion is Juanita Firestone and Richard Harris's article from the *Armed Forces and Society Journal*, *Changes in Patterns of Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military: A Comparison of the 1988 and 1995 DoD Surveys*.

While this article was published in 1999, it offers relevant historical insights applicable to current challenges with sexual harassment and assault faced by the US Army.

Firestone and Harris's article's main purpose was to compare and contrast the 1988 and 1995 DoD Sexual Harassment Surveys. While the comparison of surveys showed very little change over a 7 year period, Firestone and Harris offer several keen insights on organizational patterns of behavior. Firestone and Harris argue that sexual harassment will persist until the DoD stops conceptualizing sexual harassment as individual behavior while ignoring organizational norms that tolerate sexual harassment as acceptable behavior.<sup>24</sup>

The article emphasizes that organizational norms within the military have traditionally focused on male bonding rituals designed to build group cohesion, which is a highly valued aspect of military culture.<sup>25</sup> Firestone and Harris then suggest that women and men who do not emulate hyper-masculine traits are generally thought to be unaccepting of male bonding rituals, which causes the dominant group to shift focus by finding ways to exclude those groups from being a part of unit cohesion.<sup>26</sup> This basic assumption allows environmental harassment to become a covert method to restrict women and some men's acceptance to the dominant group while also working to undermine credible reports of sexual harassment as 'false accusations.' Firestone and Harris end the article with a stark warning that the DoD must work immediately to confront the hypermasculine military culture creating a hostile climate towards women and men who do not conform to those ideals to make real progress in decreasing workplace sexual harassment.<sup>27</sup>

Interestingly enough, a similar theme of a ‘hypermasculine culture’ and organizational norms that exclude women surfaced in Dr. Stephanie Switzer’s doctorate thesis *Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault in the Military*. In her 2007 dissertation, Dr. Switzer highlights several themes that influence sexual harassment and assault in the military<sup>28</sup>:

1. A masculinized culture where gender hostility is pervasive and sexually aggressive behaviors are tolerated
2. Men outnumbering women
3. Unit cohesion that protects perpetrators and punishes women for reporting through various forms of retaliation and blaming
4. The abuse of rank and power to perpetrate abuses or ignore abuses completely
5. Organizational climate that takes a laissez-faire approach to responding to formal and informal reports of sexual harassment and assault<sup>29</sup>

Switzer’s dissertation was written to help military leaders recognize and modify personal biases and beliefs that contribute to an organizational culture that sustains high rates of sexual harassment and assault. Her work is incredibly relevant to this study in identifying similar themes within the US Army.

In another 2007 study conducted by Dawne Vogt et al. titled, *Attitudes Toward Women and Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Among Reservists* revealed that attitudes and beliefs about women’s abilities and overall acceptance level of women serving in the military were independently related to tolerance for sexual harassment and assault.<sup>30</sup> Essentially, if those surveyed conveyed the attitude that women could and should serve in the military, they were much less tolerant of sexual harassment and assault than people who conveyed the attitude that women did not possess the capabilities to serve and

should not do so. Vogt et al. findings, which were drawn through original survey data conducted among veterans of the US Military, continue to draw on previous themes that gender hostilities within organizational culture promote an environment tolerant of sexual harassment and assault.

The most recent study available that addresses sexual harassment and assault in the context of organizational culture is a 2017 RAND Corporation study, *Improving Oversight and Coordination of Department of Defense Programs That Address Problematic Behaviors Among Military Personnel*, to assist the DoD with developing a framework to prevent and modify six problematic behaviors: sexual harassment, sexual assault, unlawful discrimination, substance abuse, suicide, and hazing.<sup>31</sup> The report conducted a behavioral analysis presenting significant empirical evidence that attitudes seem to predict problematic behavior best when organizational culture also supports the behavior.<sup>32</sup> In other words, someone is more likely to engage in problematic behavior, such as sexual harassment, if that person perceives that peers and leaders explicitly or implicitly condone those actions.<sup>33</sup> Conversely, people who might be initially inclined toward problematic behavior can be dissuaded if the organizational climate is clearly opposed to such behavior.<sup>34</sup> The report also notes that few academic studies exist examining the relationships among problematic behaviors, establishing a clear need for this study and others proposing organizational and cultural approaches to improve service members' well-being.

## The Relationship between Hegemonic Masculinities and Sexual Harassment and Assault

Next, this study wants to understand previously identified themes of sexual aggression, masculinized culture, and gender hostility to further characterize sexual harassment and assault within the context of US Army organizational culture.

Foundational knowledge of gender order theory is required to understand the root cause of sexual aggression, abuse, and violence. Recall in the previous section that a theme of ‘hyper masculine’ culture was identified multiple times as a contributing factor to organizational sexual harassment and assault. So, what exactly is ‘masculine culture,’ and what is the role of masculinities in sexual harassment and assault?

In a joint article titled *Hegemonic Masculinity: Re-Thinking the Concept*, R. W. Connell and James Messerschmidt present the concept of hegemonic masculinity and discuss its impact and evolution within social science and gender study research over the last thirty-plus years. R. W. Connell’s research on masculinities and social power relations is the most widely accepted framework within sociological gender theory studies. For this reason, this thesis will utilize Connell’s definitions of hegemonic masculinity and gender theory concepts as a theoretical framework to define and understand hegemonic masculinities within US Army culture.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity originated from research conducted by R. W. Connell throughout the 1980s focused on understanding social inequality. Connell’s research proved through empirical evidence that within all local cultures, a normative, dominant ideal of what it meant to be a man (masculinity) and a woman (femininity) existed. Further, Connell’s study identified the existence of gender hierarchies within a



culture. For example, multiple forms of masculinity may exist within a culture, but one form of masculinity always serves as the dominant or hegemonic masculinity, and those that embodied hegemonic masculinity within a culture were the dominant group.<sup>35</sup>

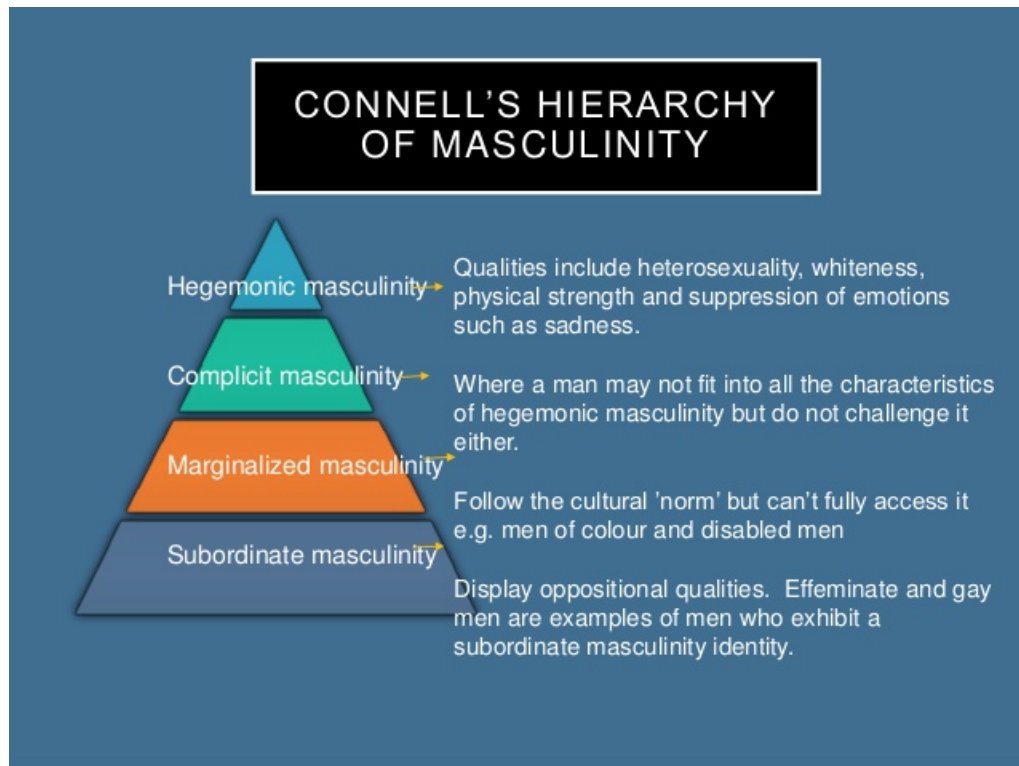


Figure 4. R. W. Connell's Hierarchy of Masculinities

*Source:* Raewyn Connell, "Masculinities," accessed March 13, 2021, [http://www.raewynconnell.net/p/masculinities\\_20.html](http://www.raewynconnell.net/p/masculinities_20.html).

Connell and Messerschmidt define hegemonic masculinity as a distinguished form of masculinity that embodies the current, most honored way of being a man, and consciously or unconsciously, all other men position themselves to benefit from the social gains of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity also has a role within

sociological power structures such as the military, governments, and private corporations. In political sociology, hegemonic masculinity is widely accepted as the pattern and practices within organizational culture (how things are done i.e. artifacts and norms), which allows men's dominance over women and subordinate masculinities to continue.<sup>36</sup>

It is important to note that while only a small portion of men might enact hegemonic masculinity, a dominant form of masculinity is engrained and normative within every culture and often results in the construct of a patriarchal gender system. All men receive the benefits of patriarchy even when enacting subordinate masculinities such as a complicit, marginalized, and subordinate masculinities. Connell and Messerschmidt highlight that the subordination of alternate masculinities paired with compliance among heterosexual women is what makes the concept of hegemony so powerful. While hegemony is not synonymous with violence, it can be supported through force, but most importantly, enacting and/or compliance with hegemonic masculinity is required to ascend to the top of social and power structures within cultures and institutions.<sup>37</sup>

Connell and Messerschmidt note that the harm of hegemonic masculinities is patterns of aggression and abuse enacted by individuals and groups to pursue dominance, power, and social ascendancy. The struggle for hegemony, not hegemonic masculinity itself, links hegemonic masculinities to violence and aggression. Further, the normalization of violent, abusive, and other de-humanistic and aggressive behavior of men and boys within cultures and institutions is the primary driver of highly visible social mechanisms such as oppressive policies, behaviors, and widely accepted practices directed at subordinate groups such as gay men, minorities, and women. Examples can

range from the dismissal of school-age boys' aggression through the 'boys will boys' mentality to criminalizing homosexual conduct.<sup>38</sup>

More importantly, Connell and Messerschmidt argue the less visible mechanisms of hegemony often remove dominant forms of masculinity from the possibility of scrutiny.<sup>39</sup> A major example of this is deeming domestic and sexual violence a women's issue. Globally women and men are harmed predominately by men. Understanding what aspects of culture cause abusive and violent behavior in men is imperative to prevent violence. The role of men in and masculinities must be examined and restructured for change to occur. Still, stakeholders within societal institutions largely allow the ideals of hegemonic masculinities to go unexamined and unchecked, perpetuating vicious cycles of abuses, violence, and other counterproductive social ideologies such as gender discrimination, racism, and sexism.

So, what does hegemonic masculinity look like in the military? The article titled *Real Men: Countering a Century of Military Masculinity* by Joshua Isbell discusses the history of idealized masculinities in the context of military service and points out how the US Military, in particular, is struggling with discrimination and harassment in the ranks because of idealized version of what it means to be a 'real man.'<sup>40</sup> Isbell traces the roots of hegemonic masculinities to Europe before World War I, reminding readers of the invocations of masculine pride that compelled the people of Europe to enter into WWI.<sup>41</sup>

Isbell reminds readers that 100 years ago, the nations of Europe challenged young men to prove their manliness, patriotism, and citizenship through military service.<sup>42</sup> Real men achieved their status in society by fighting the nation's wars, thus interweaving

idealized masculinities and social status with military service.<sup>43</sup> Isbell argues that this ideology created an unattainable version of successful ‘manhood,’ creating a tension between the men struggling to achieve idealized masculinity within society and the contribution of other groups such as women, minorities, and men conscripted into service or fulfilling combat support roles in military service.<sup>44</sup>

While striving to achieve the self and societal ideal of masculinity, men serving in combat roles minimize the contributions of women, minorities, and those serving in combat support roles. This climate reinforces unhealthy social norms within the military that the ‘real men’ fight’ and serve in direct combat roles, and other contributions and roles do not matter in the same way. Isbell illustrates a few examples of inequalities driven by hegemonic masculinities, first citing the pervasive use of the term ‘position other than grunt’ (POG) to describe the service and contributions of those not in direct combat roles. The use of this term is meant to reinforce a power dynamic that the service that matters is the service of men fulfilling direct combat roles. Being called a ‘POG’ is not a term of endearment; its use intends to undermine the contributions of other Service members who do not equate to the social definition of masculinity.<sup>45</sup>

Additionally, Isbell attributes the perceived lack of deference from society to the status and ‘manliness’ achieved through military service to reoccurring outbursts of aggression and violence from men against women and minorities in both the military and society. Isbell believes many men, both military and non-military, dissatisfied by this lack of societal deference are joining white nationalist organizations seeking to impose regressive race and gender hierarchies to validate their place in society. Isbell cites this

example to implore readers to understand the danger of the ideals of hegemonic masculinities. Not only are the ideals unattainable, but the ideals of hegemonic masculinity fail to obtain the inclusiveness the military and society require to maximize performance. Isbell closes his piece by imploring leaders to stop making appeals based on unattainable masculine ideals but instead focuses on the fact that military success has always relied on both men's and women's best contributions.<sup>46</sup>

To further understand the role of hegemonic masculinity in military culture, the next article that warrants discussion is *The Organizational Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity: The Case of the US Navy* by Frank Barrett, discusses the social construction of masculinities within the US Navy. While the focus of this study is the culture within the US Army, Barret's article outlines the inner workings of hegemonic masculinity within a militarized culture in great deal, which makes the concepts worthwhile to explore.

Through life history interviews with twenty-seven Naval officers who served in surface warfare, aviation, and supply, Barrett identifies that all groups of officers construct definitions of masculinity by highlighting the masculine characteristics necessary and unique to one's career path and why those characteristics are more valuable than others. For example, the Naval Aviation officers identified themes of autonomy and risk-taking as masculine traits necessary to thrive as a Navy man, while the supply officers identified themes of technical rationality as the most important.

Most interestingly, masculinity was constructed and 'proven' through social accomplishment and achieved meaning by drawing a stark contrast to femininity.

Essentially, all of the masculinities identified within the US Naval officer corps achieved meaning in contrast with definitions of femininity.<sup>47</sup> Across all men's interviews, women are depicted as emotionally unstable, less physically capable, and unable to handle harsh living conditions, which is consistent with masculine socialization in Western culture. Essentially boys are taught from a very young age that being a man has no other definition than not being a woman- masculinity is defined more by what one is not rather than what one is'.<sup>48</sup>

Barrett proposes that within military culture, ritualistic displays of hegemonic masculinity often become a way to exclude women from social activities or 'othering' women and normalize degrading behavior and language directed at women. The construct of masculinity essentially becomes an invisible, unconscious strategy that undermines women's abilities to meaningfully contribute to the defense of the United States by depicting them as innately unsuited for military service.<sup>49</sup>

Following suit to the argument proposed by Josh Isbell, Barret argues that appealing to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity is a dangerous game for leaders in the US military. Barrett's study clearly identifies the existence of a competitive masculine culture within the US military in which men and women must continuously demonstrate competence that many men in the military also equate to their status as a man.<sup>50</sup> This competitive culture constantly increases the threshold to demonstrate masculinity which can result in violent or aggressive behavior, especially against 'others' such as women and homosexual men. Competitive masculine culture reinforces dehumanizing language as socially acceptable, setting conditions for a climate tolerant of further abuses.<sup>51</sup>

Further, competitive masculine cultures are detrimental not only to women and subordinated masculinities such as minority and gay men but also to the men who feel the social pressures to participate in these masculinity contests.<sup>52</sup> Competitive masculine culture encourages a cycle of continual defensive posturing, validating oneself through outperforming the team and negating the contributions of others.<sup>53</sup> This type of environment is detrimental to teamwork, collaboration, and comradery necessary for the US military to solve difficult and dangerous problems.<sup>54</sup>

Hegemonic masculinity and forced gender roles are ingrained in both men's and women's consciousness from a very young age. Acceptance of sexual aggression and other problematic behaviors such as racism, sexism, hazing, and bullying are direct results of hegemonic masculinities playing out in organizational climates. Further, the trained acceptance of the aggressive and abusive social norms of hegemonic masculinity by society, especially those in leadership, only perpetuates its vicious cycle.

### Summary

A multitude of literature exists within professional, academic, and military institutions regarding the relationship between organizational culture and sexual harassment and assault. While several military-specific studies hint at the idea of hegemonic masculinities as a challenge in combatting sexism, sexual harassment and assault, and other diversity and inclusion initiatives, most of the studies do not explore the ideology in great detail. A focused study attempting to understand and explain the relationship between hegemonic masculinities and sexual harassment and assault within US Army organizational culture does not exist, making this project worthwhile.

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<sup>1</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>18</sup> Linda Treviño-Klebe and Katherine A. Nelson, *Managing Business Ethics: Straight Talk About How to Do It Right*. 7th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 158.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 162.



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<sup>24</sup> Juanita M. Firestone and Richard J. Harris, “Changes in Patterns of Sexual Harassment in the US Military: A Comparison of the 1988 and 1995 DoD Surveys,” *Armed Forces and Society*, 25, no. 4 (1999): 613.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Stephanie Lise Switzer, “Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault in the Military,” (Ph.D. diss, University of Hartford, Hartford, CT, 2007), ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 28-29.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Dawne Vogt, Tamara A. Bruce, Amy E. Street, and Jane Stafford, “Attitudes toward Women and Tolerance for Sexual Harassment among Reservists,” *Violence Against Women*, 13, no. 9 (2007): 879–900.

<sup>31</sup> Jefferson P. Marquis, Coreen Farris, Kimberly Curry Hall, Kristy N. Kamarek, Nelson Lim, Douglas Shontz, Paul S. Steinberg, Robert Stewart, Thomas Trail, Jennie W. Wenger, Anny Wong, and Eunice C. Wong, *Improving Oversight and Coordination of Department of Defense Programs That Address Problematic Behaviors Among Military Personnel: Final Report* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017), xi.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity,” 830.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 832.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 834.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 835.

<sup>40</sup> Joshua Isbell, “Real Men: Countering a Century of Military Masculinity,” *The War Room*, March 1, 2019, <https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/century-of-military-masculinity/>.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Frank J. Barrett, "The Organizational Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity: The Case of the Us Navy," *Gender, Work and Organization* 3, no. 3 (July 1996): 129.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Isbell, "Real Men."

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The broad purpose of this study is to understand how characteristics of hegemonic masculinities influence patterns of sexual harassment and assault within the US Army. Ultimately, the findings of this study will be critical to determine the relationship between hegemonic masculinities and sexual harassment and assault. This chapter is divided into three sections to describe the research methodology. The first section will outline a description of the methodology to address the primary and secondary research questions. The research feasibility will discuss the focus of this study, study limitations, and areas of consideration for future study to validate further the research presented in this thesis. Lastly, the selection of research material section will address the validity of the Fort Hood Independent Review as the focused case study of this thesis.

#### Research Methodology

As outlined in the purpose of this study in chapter 1, the construct of this study will focus on a case study analysis of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee (FHIRC) Report, which will serve as a reflection of broader Army culture. The following section will describe the research framework and theoretical lenses that will inform the case study analysis.

Dr. Edward Schein's definitions of organizational culture described in chapter 2 will serve as this study's research framework to identify and create an understanding of the formal culture as it relates to sexual harassment and assault within the US Army.

Using Schein's levels of culture, the analysis will create an initial understanding of the formal systems and policy within the US Army dedicated to preventing sexual harassment and assault. A foundational understanding of US Army formal culture will lay the groundwork to identify and frame informal and formal culture misalignments observable within the Fort Hood Independent.

Next, drawing from Schein's model of organizational culture, this study will frame the influence of hegemonic masculinity at the underlying assumption level of formal US Army culture. Connell and Messerschmidt's definition of hegemonic masculinity described in chapter 2 will inform this analysis. The link between hegemonic masculinity and the underlying assumption level of culture will create the initial understanding necessary to analyze informal culture in greater detail within the FHIRC report.

Connell's Hierarchy of Masculinities described in chapter 2 will serve as the analytical lens to identify and interpret any norms and social mechanisms associated with hegemonic masculinities observable within the informal culture of Fort Hood as described by the FHIRC.

Sexual assault and harassment, the associated norms and language, and the social mechanisms of hegemonic masculinity are most visible within informal organizational culture. Trevino and Nelson's multisystem ethical culture framework presented in chapter 2 will serve as an additional analytical lens to describe the relationship between the norms, language, and social mechanisms of hegemonic masculinities and sexual harassment and assault observable within the informal culture described in the FHIRC

report. Lastly, Trevino and Nelson's multisystem ethical culture framework (2017) will help identify and frame any observable misalignments between formal and informal culture within the Fort Hood case study.

Using the research framework, Schein's model of organizational culture, and the analytical lenses of Connell's Hierarchy of Masculinities and Trevino and Nelson's multisystem ethical culture framework, this study will use a multi-method research methodology consisting of a descriptive and explanatory case study analysis of the Fort Hood Independent Review Report to answer the research questions. Descriptive case study methods serve the primary purpose of describing a phenomenon or case in a real-world context.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, explanatory case studies focus on explaining how or why some condition came to be.<sup>2</sup>

To answer the primary research question, this thesis will first employ the descriptive case study method and analytical lenses to identify patterns of hegemonic masculine ideology within the culture and climate identified at Fort Hood to provide readers with a real-world context of the phenomena. Next, this thesis will explain the effect of hegemonic masculine ideologies on observable patterns of sexual harassment and assault at Fort Hood using the explanatory case study methodology.

This thesis will use the same methodology and analytical lenses to address the secondary research question to identify cultural themes related to sexual harassment and assault that prevent leaders from identifying the signs and symptoms of sexual assault and harassment. This analysis aims to bring deeper cultural issues into the forefront of US Army leader's shared consciousness and provide a cursory explanation of the

phenomena. Further, this analysis will provide observations and identify cultural themes within the Fort Hood Independent Review to inform thematic analysis for future qualitative research studies.

This study's final research question intends to provide US Army leaders with viable recommendations to mitigate and eliminate dangerous organizational behavior that contributes to sexual harassment and assault and undermines trust. Identifying how cultural ideologies and biases affect US Army leaders' ability to see dangerous problems such as sexual harassment and assault sets the stage to propose recommendations US Army leaders can act on immediately to eliminate organizational behaviors that undermine trust and contribute to sexual abuses. Additionally, this analysis provides US Army leaders an opportunity to identify other installations struggling with systemic sexual harassment and assault and lack of trust in leadership.

### Data Analysis

To address the research questions, the case study analysis of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee Report will focus on the report findings that address the keywords of command climate, climate, culture, gender, male, female, trust, confidence, and sexual assault and harassment. This coding plan narrows the analysis to the following report findings:

Finding #1: The Implementation Of The SHARP Program At Fort Hood Has Been Ineffective, Due To A Command Climate That Failed To Instill SHARP Program Core Values Below The Brigade Level.

Finding #2: There Is Strong Evidence That Incidents Of Sexual Assault And Sexual Harassment At Fort Hood Are Significantly Underreported.

Finding #3: The Army SHARP Program Is Structurally Flawed.

Finding #5: The Mechanics Of The Army's Adjudication Processes Involving Sexual Assault And Sexual Harassment Degrade Confidence In The SHARP Program.

Finding #8: The Criminal Environment Within Surrounding Cities And Counties Is Commensurate With Or Lower Than Similar Sized Areas; However, There Are Unaddressed Crime Problems On Fort Hood, Because The Installation Is In A Fully Reactive Posture.

Finding #9: The Command Climate At Fort Hood Has Been Permissive Of Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault.

After analyzing the FHIRC findings, this study will organize and present major observations applicable to each of the research questions posed in chapter 1.

### Research Feasibility

As previously discussed, this study will employ a descriptive case study analysis of Fort Hood's command climate and culture to understand the role of hegemonic masculinities in perpetuating a culture and climate tolerant of sexual harassment and assault as a representation of the broader US Army culture. Different installations within the Army may have variances in how culture and climate contribute to sexual harassment and assault. Further research will be required to validate if the aspects of culture and climate contributing to sexual harassment and assault at Fort Hood are systemic across the Army.

### Selection of Research Material

The events at Fort Hood in 2020, specifically the alleged sexual harassment and brutal murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillen, prompted a #MeToo movement within the US military capturing global news headlines.<sup>3</sup> Congressional leadership quickly directed an independent, congressionally mandated investigation into the culture and climate of Fort Hood. The investigators published the Fort Hood Independent Review Report, which lists the culture and command climate observations and proposed recommendations that will serve as the case study for this thesis. This report contains the most relevant and current data on sexual harassment and assault within US Army culture and climate. The severity of the situation at Fort Hood and across the Army concerning systemic sexism and racism most certainly warrants a more in-depth examination and explanation of the report's observations on culture and climate.

### Conclusion

The proposed research methodology, feasibility, and selection of research material are broad enough to enable holistic research while focused enough to answer this study's research question and enable project completion. At a minimum, this chapter's methodology will identify cultural themes and patterns contributing to sexual harassment and assault at Fort Hood to inform thematic analysis for future qualitative studies of US Army culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018), 45.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



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<sup>3</sup> Steinbauer, “A #MeToo Moment Emerges for Military Women After Soldier’s Killing.”

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to illustrate how hegemonic masculinity's influence on US Army culture creates conditions for sexual harassment and assault to occur. This chapter will present research findings to address the primary and secondary research questions obtained through a case study analysis of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee (FHIRC) Report.

A review of the concepts of culture and hegemonic masculinity is warranted to set the context for the case study analysis. Schein's model of organizational culture contains three levels, and the deepest level is a culture's basic underlying assumptions which guide behavior by telling group members how to perceive, think, and feel.<sup>1</sup> These underlying assumptions are implicit norms that drive how a group or organization accomplishes core tasks ranging from how to solve problems and operate to organizational value statements and behavior standards.<sup>2</sup> The specifics of the underlying assumptions are hard to identify, but the espoused beliefs and artifacts of a culture provide indications of those underlying assumptions. Schein describes artifacts as the visible, feelable level of culture, which can include language, values statements, rituals, and observable behaviors within a culture.<sup>3</sup>

Nelson and Trevino add to Schein's definition of culture by categorizing culture as both formal and informal. The public statements and ceremonies of the Army are visible elements of formal Army culture. Nelson and Trevino also describe an aspect of

culture that is less defined, less codified as the informal culture. This informal culture is what members of the unit do or say or believe not because of a policy or formal order but because that's what everybody who wants to be part of the group is doing. An example in the Army are the traditions of the companies, platoons, squads that are unique or specific to that unit. Most of those traditions and behaviors align with the espoused values of formal army culture, but some may not as in the case of hazing.

Hazing is one indication of the influence of hegemonic masculinity on Army culture. Connell and Messerschmidt define hegemonic masculinity as a distinguished form of masculinity that embodies the current, most honored way of being a man, and consciously or unconsciously, men and women position themselves to benefit from the social gains of hegemonic masculinity.<sup>4</sup> From an ideological perspective, hegemonic masculinity is a version of manhood constructed on the idea that to be a 'real man,' one must be dominating, heterosexual, display violent and aggressive behavior and restrain outward displays of vulnerable emotions such as crying.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, hegemonic masculinity requires men to exhibit strength and toughness to be competitive and successful.<sup>6</sup> Connell's hierarchy of masculinity identifies that multiple versions of masculinity exist within a culture, but only one form of masculinity is normative and the hegemonic masculinity.<sup>7</sup> Further, those who embodied some or all of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity within a culture were the dominant group.<sup>8</sup>

Drawing from Schein's model of organizational culture, hegemonic masculinity informs basic assumptions that guide how group members perceive, think about and feel things that drive espoused beliefs, how things are done within the organization, and social

norms that drive individual and group behavior.<sup>9</sup> As previously stated, R. W. Connell's extensive research in gender order theory states that hegemonic masculinity is normative. All cultures exhibit one if not multiple forms of hegemonic masculinities. Within sociological power structures such as the military, hegemonic masculinity is widely accepted as the pattern and practices within organizational culture, allowing men's dominance over women and men who embody alternate forms of masculinity to continue.<sup>10</sup> Military culture, specifically US Army culture, is not immune to the effects of hegemonic masculinity within both formal and informal culture.

Recall in chapter 2, Isbell (2019) traces the roots of hegemonic masculinities within the context of military service back to World War I, where government leaders in both Europe and the United States invoked masculine pride of society by challenging men to prove their manliness, patriotism, and citizenship through military service.<sup>11</sup> Real men achieved their status in society by fighting the nation's wars, thus interweaving idealized masculinities and social status with military service.<sup>12</sup> This connection created popular images of masculinity within larger society displaying the 'Soldier' as the embodiment of male sex role behaviors.<sup>13</sup> These associations influence larger society but also still exist within the organizational culture of the US Army.

For example, General Douglas MacArthur was a domineering, aggressive, and authoritarian officer who emerged as a societal and organizational hero following his accomplishments in the Pacific theater during World War II. Following World War II, MacArthur was relieved of command by President Truman in large part because of blatant insubordination and his aggressive approach to expelling the North Korean Army

and People's Liberation Army of China from South Korea during the Korean War of 1950. MacArthur continually made contradictory statements to the press that undermined President Truman's authority and ultimately thwarted the President's attempt to negotiate a ceasefire when the general ordered his troops to invade North Korea and push the NKPA up past the 38th parallel.<sup>14</sup> MacArthur's actions yielded costly results with almost 1,500 casualties incurred at the hands of the Chinese and the total destruction of LTC Don Faith's task force.<sup>15</sup>

Despite all this, Douglas MacArthur is still glorified within US Army culture today. The General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award recognizes company-grade officers who demonstrate the ideals for which General MacArthur stood - duty, honor, and country. This award is a long-standing US Army ritual lead annually by the Chief of Staff of the Army. The MacArthur Leadership award is an artifact that symbolizes the US Army's both conscious and unconscious bias that idealizes leaders such Gen. MacArthur, who embodied hegemonic masculine leadership characteristics despite major flaws of his leadership style that cost significant loss of American life.

Indeed, some of the characteristics of hegemonic masculine leaders like Douglas MacArthur, such as aggressiveness and assertiveness, are necessary to achieve success in combat. The harm of hegemonic masculinities and organizational leaders and team members that embody the ideology are patterns of aggression and abuse enacted by these individuals and groups to pursue dominance, power, and social ascendency.<sup>16</sup> The struggle for hegemony, not hegemonic masculinity itself, links hegemonic masculinities to violence and aggression. Patterns of sexual assault and harassment within

organizational culture and climate are equivalent to patterns of aggression and abuse that can result from hegemonic masculinity. The analysis within this chapter will identify visible artifacts, espoused beliefs, and social norms of hegemonic masculinities within the climate and culture of Fort Hood that contributed to patterns of sexual assault and harassment.

The Sexual Harassment and Assault Response (SHARP) Continuum of Harm is a visual tool to understand the US Army’s continuum of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors which may progress to sexual harassment and assault.

Sexual harassment falls within a continuum of intolerable, unprofessional behaviors that may increase the likelihood of sexual assault. There is a clear correlation between sexual harassment and sexual assault. Attitudes that allow or enable forms of harassment, beginning with hazing and bullying, can lead to more egregious behaviors and progress into sexual harassment/assault.

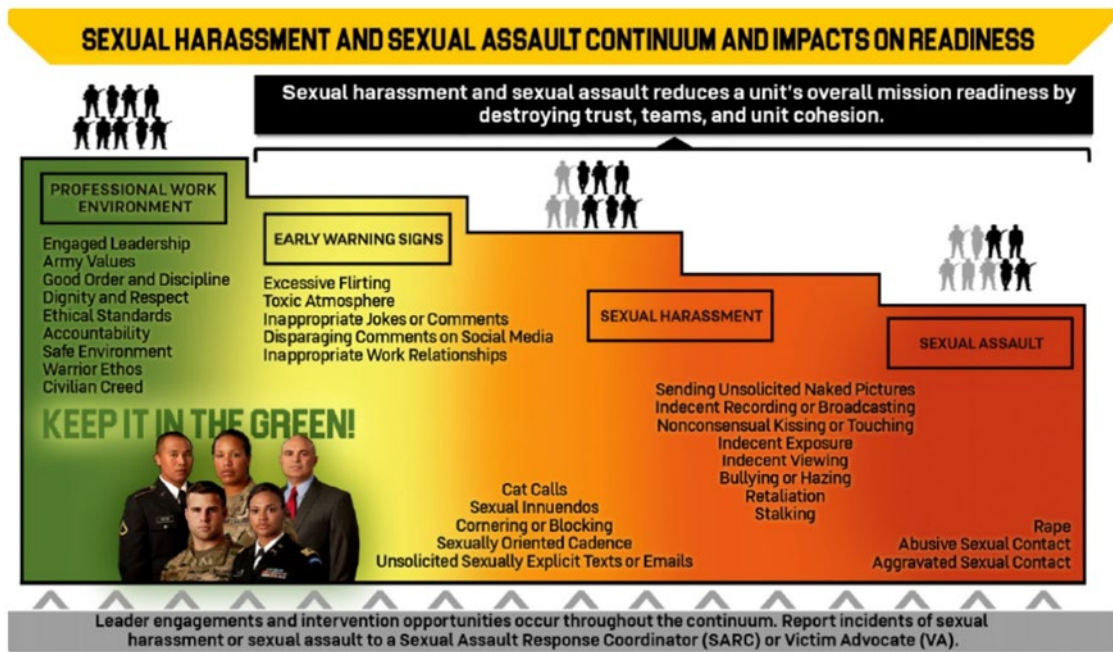


Figure 5. SHARP Continuum of Harm

Source: Army Resilience Directorate, “Army Sexual Harassment/assault Response and Prevention: Continuum of Harm,” US Army, accessed March 17, 2021, <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/sharp/pages/continuum.html>.

As stated at the top of the graphic, sexual harassment and assault reduce a unit's overall mission readiness by destroying trust, teams, and unit cohesion.<sup>17</sup> This graphic and associated SHARP policies are examples of espoused beliefs of formal Army culture. The graphic then depicts and describes the continuum from professional behavior to sexual assault.<sup>18</sup> This Continuum of Harm indicates the Army's acknowledgment that attitudes and behaviors identified as "early warning signs" can lead to unacceptable behaviors such as sexual assault and other forms of violence.<sup>19</sup> As stated on the graphic, Soldiers are expected to 'Keep it in the Green' and sustain a professional working environment consistent with all the characteristics described on the left-hand side of the continuum. Leaders must be engaged to sustain a professional working environment and intervene immediately to correct work environments that stray away from professional.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, leaders and Soldiers are told to report incidents of sexual assault and harassment to SHARP professionals.<sup>21</sup> These espoused beliefs establish clear standards of behavior and provide leaders and Soldiers within the US Army guidance on preventing and handling instances of sexual harassment and assault.

By all accounts, US Army formal culture is very clear on how Soldiers and leaders are expected to think and behave to foster a culture free of sexual harassment and assault. To make things even more apparent, the Army values and other positive behaviors such as engaged leadership are listed as artifacts that reflect a professional working environment or climate within the SHARP Continuum.<sup>22</sup> This distinction of what US Army formal culture communicates as acceptable culture and climate to prevent

sexual assault and harassment will serve as a reference throughout the analysis of the FHIRC report to frame misalignments between formal and informal culture.

The SHARP Continuum of Harm is a visible artifact the US Army employs to create a foundational understanding that attitudes that allow or enable any forms of harassment are the foundation that can lead to more egregious behaviors such as sexual assault and harassment and other forms of violence.<sup>23</sup> Essentially, basic underlying assumptions at the deepest level of culture ultimately influence observable behaviors such as sexual harassment and assault. The premise of this thesis is to explore why men, in particular, commit sexual harassment and assault within the US Army. This warrants a discussion on the relationship between masculinity, which is constructed at the basic assumption level of culture, and its influence on both formal and informal culture.

#### Primary Research Question

The primary research question of this thesis is, how do hegemonic masculinities embedded in Army culture affect the occurrence of sexual harassment and assault? This section will present the author's observations drawn from an examination of the culture and climate of Fort Hood that will illustrate the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and sexual assault and harassment.

#### Observation 1:

There is an apprehension to address the relationship between hegemonic masculinities, gender integration, and sexual harassment and assault within the US Army, even by the Independent Review Committee established to find answers.



The Fort Hood Independent Review Committee (FHIRC) members immediately took an ambiguous stance addressing the relationship between gender integration and sexual harassment and assault within the context and purpose section with this statement:

To be clear, this Report does not suggest—and, the Committee has not identified—a direct correlation between sexual harassment and sexual assault and the Army’s endeavors toward gender inclusion. However, in reviewing the atmosphere at Fort Hood as it relates to sexual harassment and sexual assault, the Committee is not oblivious to the context of gender integration in the Army.<sup>24</sup>

While the FHIRC does not suggest a direct correlation between sexual harassment and assault and gender inclusion efforts, the committee asserts that a culture and climate that fosters a commitment to inclusion and diversity, freedom from sexual assault and harassment, and adherence to the Army values is critical to achieving successful gender integration.<sup>25</sup> However, the contents and findings of the FHIRC report reflect a culture and climate in complete contrast to what the committee deemed necessary for successful gender integration. The FHIRC failed to, at a minimum, recommend that culture and climate, sexual harassment and assault, and gender integration within the US Army be examined in greater detail. Several observed behaviors and norms within the report’s findings indicate that hegemonic masculinities are adversely affecting gender integration and efforts to combat sexual harassment and assault. These problematic behaviors and norms will be described and analyzed throughout this chapter.

As far back as 2014, Fort Hood was identified as a high-risk installation for sexual assault and gender hostilities against women as far back as 2014 by RAND Workplace and Gender Relations Surveys.<sup>26</sup> Subsequent RAND surveys in 2016 and 2018 confirmed that a dangerous environment for women existed at Fort Hood.<sup>27</sup> In all three surveys, Fort Hood was classified as having the highest risk of sexual assault

against women and female gender discrimination.<sup>28</sup> High levels of supervisor workplace, gender discrimination against women paired with low levels of peer respect and cohesion were reported on all three RAND surveys over the four-year period.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, the RAND survey reflected low levels of bystander support to intervene and respond responsibly to incidents of sexual harassment and assault, gender hostilities, and discrimination against women.<sup>30</sup>

RAND Military Workplace Studies aim to understand the detail and frequency of sexual assault and harassment within the military. The studies do not attempt to understand the role of culture in creating opportunities for sexual harassment and assault to occur. Further, the studies did not seek to understand why men, in particular, are the primary perpetrators of sexual assault and harassment. This fact on its own accord should have piqued the curiosity of US Army leaders to explore these issues in greater detail following the completion of the surveys in 2014 and 2016 and begs for a recommendation from the FHIRC to suggest re-examining these surveys to create a greater understanding of the culture driving gender discrimination at Fort Hood.

Nonetheless, these risk inventories clearly described patterns of concerning behavior in how women were being treated by male peers and supervisors at Fort Hood as gender integration was in its infancy. The climate concerns also indicated a pattern of dominating and aggressive behavior exhibited by men against women, which is indicative of the pursuit of hegemony or dominance. Because men enacted the majority of these patterns of behaviors, this survey data indicates existing social mechanisms of hegemonic masculinity within the culture and climate of Fort Hood before gender integration.

Connell and Messerschmidt note that pursuit of dominance paired with normalizing violent, abusive, and de-humanistic from men and boys within a culture is the primary driver of harmful social mechanisms associated with hegemonic masculinity.<sup>31</sup> Recall at the beginning of this chapter, hegemonic masculine ideals exist at the basic assumption level of culture, and basic assumptions are often automatic, meaning we are not aware of the influence they hold over our thinking and behaviors. Often aggressive and violent behavior and language of men and boy is dismissed as ‘just locker room talk’ or by the age-old saying of ‘boys will boys,’ which allow unhealthy social mechanisms to continue without intervention. While it cannot be substantiated whether these patterns were conscious or unconscious, research indicates hegemonic masculinity was likely at play.

Further, drawing from Dr. Schein’s primary embedding mechanisms discussed in chapter 2, leaders integrate the Army values and tenants of the SHARP program into organizational culture through what they pay attention to, how they react to crisis, allocate resources, and through deliberate role modeling, teaching and coaching.<sup>32</sup> These troubling patterns of behavior warranted more direct attention and resources from leaders. Unfortunately, the failure to directly confront these troubling patterns of behavior in the culture of Fort Hood condoned the normalization of deviant behavior within the informal culture.

A similar pattern persisted within the combat brigades at Fort Hood because senior installation leaders ignored the patterns of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and assault. The FHIRC found the combat brigades within both 3rd Cavalry Regiment (3CR) and 1st Cavalry Division (1CD) were struggling with promoting a

climate of dignity and respect specifically towards women. Within both 3CR and 1CD, men outnumbered women by a 7 to 1 ratio, and junior enlisted women comprised most victims of sexual assault and harassment perpetrated by male Soldiers.<sup>33</sup> Within Fort Hood, the rates of violent sex crimes were 30.6% higher than FORSCOM averages and 43.2% higher than the Army.<sup>34</sup> In 2018 and 2019, sexual assault rates within Fort Hood were noticeably higher than in previous years, and data clearly identified young, junior enlisted female Soldiers at high risk of sexual assault. Further, 3CR had the highest rate of sex crimes at the time of the investigation, with incidents increasing by 18.6% from the previous quarter of the fiscal year (FY) 2020.<sup>35</sup>

Confidential interviews conducted with women in both 3CR and 1CD confirmed a culture tolerant of disrespect and abuse towards women. Several women held the belief that the Army only wanted women in combat units for show.<sup>36</sup> This daily negative treatment of women contradicts the Army values causing further loss of trust and a sense of exclusion for these women. Many women cited NCOs openly sexually objectifying young female Soldiers within their care. Observed behaviors ranged from male NCOs and peers running betting pools to see who could sleep with women first, male NCOs openly stating to an entire unit that ‘women are here for our entertainment,’ through male NCOs openly discussing young female Soldiers in sexually graphic terms.<sup>37</sup> A senior female NCO told the committee that ‘sexual harassment and/or assault are almost like an initiation at Fort Hood,’ and she believed ‘sexual harassment happens every single day... nobody stops it; leaders turn a blind eye or they themselves are the offenders’.<sup>38</sup> The interviews further confirmed an absence of primary embedding mechanisms; leaders

were not paying attention to and addressing behaviors that did not align with a professional work environment within the SHARP Continuum of Harm and were not role modeling the behaviors they wanted to see.

Commentary by junior enlisted women confirmed this narrative. Particularly within 3CR, women reported a disregard for their safety and privacy. Young women living in the post barracks reported NCOs barging into their rooms without notice, often when they were partially dressed.<sup>39</sup> In one instance, an NCO attempted to sexually assault a female Soldier after entering her room without permission. In another, a young female Soldier discovered a particular NCO had forcibly entered rooms multiple times and was reported to the chain of command, but the behavior continued.<sup>40</sup> One young Soldier reported two counts of sexual assault to her platoon sergeant, who told her, ‘you can report it, but nothing will happen,’ and nothing did happen.<sup>41</sup> Women within 3CR and 1CD reported a daily struggle to get through their day peacefully without being relentlessly and aggressively pursued in a sexual manner by male Soldiers.<sup>42</sup> The FHIRC even noted, ‘This type of culture towards women in the Enlisted ranks if not addressed proactively creates breeding grounds for sexual assault.’<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the interview sessions, the FHIRC uncovered a climate where women believed they were not wanted and felt unsafe due to privacy violations. Further, the relentless and aggressive pursuit of women by male peers and sexual objectification that persisted after women reported the behavior is indicative of the removal of autonomy, meaning the advances were unwelcome and imposed against their will. Removal of autonomy is a social mechanism associated with hegemonic masculine ideals often

employed to subordinate women and other subordinate masculinities against their will.<sup>44</sup> Revisiting the SHARP Continuum of Harm presented at the beginning of this chapter, the beliefs and climate experienced by these women completely contradict the basic assumptions and espoused beliefs of US Army culture regarding the SHARP program and the Army Values.

These damning statistics and narratives indicate a culture and climate hostile to women, especially young women who do not hold positional power of rank and authority. Problematic attitudes, violent and abusive behaviors enacted by men against women were quantified in multiple command climate surveys and confirmed through large samples of interview data. This data indicates that hegemonic masculine ideologies and associated social mechanisms were active within the culture of Fort Hood. Throughout the report, the FHIRC hints at connections between gender integration, male attitudes, and perceptions about women and subordinated males, and sexual harassment and assault within the US Army. However, the report falls short by failing to recommend further examination of the relationship between the three variables. Considering the sole purpose of the FHIRC was to review the command climate at Fort Hood, the cultural and climate issues discussed in the previous section are begging for actionable recommendations.

#### Observation 2:

Widespread fear of retaliation, exposure, and ostracism for reporting a SHARP violation indicates the enforcement of hegemonic masculinity.

The FHIRC identified that women were often silenced when attempting to report sexual assault and harassment if they even chose to report at all. As discussed in the

previous section, several women in 3CR and 1CD informed the committee that superiors routinely ignored reports ranging from sexual harassment to full-blown sexual assault during confidential interviews. Survey data collected by the FHIRC and the 2018-2019 command climate surveys also indicated that fear of retaliation and ostracism was widespread, especially among women and enlisted Soldiers. The FHIRC collected 31,612 survey responses, of which 28% of women believed that filing a sexual harassment complaint would result in ostracization; 22% believed a reporter would be labeled a troublemaker, and 18% of women believed a reporter would be discouraged from moving forward with the reporting process.<sup>45</sup>

The same questions were asked of filing a sexual assault complaint, and the percentage of responses were 27%, 20%, and 17%.<sup>46</sup> Once again, the percentages for these survey questions were higher within 3CR and 1CD.<sup>47</sup> Further, approximately 1,112 of 5,942 women (19%) did not believe that a sexual assault and/or harassment complaint would be kept confidential by the chain of command. Within 3CR, 27% of female Soldiers felt that a sexual assault and/or harassment report would not be kept confidential.<sup>48</sup>

FHIRC individual interview data revealed that of the 507 females interviewed, 32% (164 total) would not be comfortable reporting sexual assault or harassment through the SHARP program at Fort Hood.<sup>49</sup> Approximately 50% of the same group of women were not confident in their commanders or that they would take a SHARP report seriously.<sup>50</sup> Regarding retaliation, 36% (184 total) of the women interviewed had witnessed or personally experienced acts of retaliation for reporting sexual harassment

and/or assault.<sup>51</sup> The overwhelming majority of women interviewed, approximately 70% (355 total), believed that Fort Hood's leadership did not execute the SHARP program effectively.<sup>52</sup>

The survey data collected across Fort Hood confirms a climate of mistrust surrounding the reporting of sexual assault and harassment and demonstrates a misalignment with the espoused beliefs of US Army formal culture established at the beginning of this chapter. Per the SHARP Continuum of Harm, leaders are to encourage and facilitate a climate that supports the free and uninhibited reporting of sexual assault and harassment. The FHIRC uncovered several beliefs held by many women at Fort Hood that misaligned with this directive. Women clearly believed that reporting sexual harassment and assault will result in more marginalization, embarrassment, and stress. Most importantly, women did not believe reports of sexual harassment and assault would be taken seriously.

The beliefs and narratives surrounding reporting sexual assault and harassment drove Soldiers, both men, and women, to not report sexual harassment and assault. Through individual and group interviews and the installation-wide survey, the FHIRC confirmed that sexual assault and harassment at Fort Hood were grossly underreported. During interviews with 507 female Soldiers, FHIRC discovered 93 counts of sexual assault and 135 instances of sexual harassment.<sup>53</sup> Only 59 of 93 accounts of sexual assault were reported through the SHARP program.<sup>54</sup> Subsequently, only 72 of the 135 incidents of sexual harassment were reported.<sup>55</sup> The results of the FHIRC installation-wide survey further confirmed widespread underreporting of sexual harassment and



assault. Of the 31,000 responses, 1,339 respondents indicated personally witnessing sexual assault within the last 12 months, and 2,625 respondents indicated observing sexual harassment.<sup>56</sup> The results of FHIRC starkly contrasted with the cases of sexual assault and harassment known by the SHARP program at Fort Hood, which recorded 336 counts of sexual assault from 2019 through August of 2020.<sup>57</sup> Regarding sexual harassment, only 71 reports of sexual harassment were filed from 2019 through August of 2020.<sup>58</sup>

The FHIRC uncovered evidence of existing norms, further promoting the silence of victims of sexual assault and harassment. In multiple interview sessions, NCOs revealed the belief that adjudicating sexual harassment and assault was within their realm of responsibility. Further, NCOs exhibited the belief that leadership needed to be shielded from SHARP issues.<sup>59</sup> This dynamic was prevalent within 3CR, where approximately 131 male NCOs within the ranks of E5 through E6 expressed a preference and regular practice of informally resolving sexual harassment instead of reporting issues to SHARP personnel for adjudication.<sup>60</sup> While this practice could potentially originate from the common practice of NCOs ‘handling business’ at the lowest level and could potentially be unconscious, the dynamic contradicts the espoused belief of US Army formal culture and the SHARP Continuum of Harm that charges leaders to report SHARP violations to qualified victim advocates (VAs) and Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs).

Further, this practice exposes a power dynamic of male leaders preventing women and potentially some men from reporting sexual harassment and assault. Consciously or unconsciously, by handling SHARP complaints at their level rather than allowing VAs

and SARCs to handle SHARP, these young male NCOs removed the autonomy of the young men and women within their care, taking away the power of victims to seek formal justice and adjudication to complaints. Essentially, young male NCOs took it upon themselves to decide how, if, and on what terms sexual misconduct is handled, forcing women and subordinated masculinities to adapt to the environment imposed on them. This social mechanism is indicative of hegemonic masculinity because by removing victims' autonomy to report sexual harassment and assault, these young NCOs maintained power over those within their care.

All too often, the FHIRC discovered through group interviews that leaders were ignoring and improperly adjudicating instances of sexual harassment and assault. As previously discussed, NCOs within 3CR often chose to address sexual assault and harassment reports instead of allowing the reports to be adjudicated by SHARP professionals per Army policy. Often, the FHIRC found leaders were perpetrating sexual harassment and assault, which is itself a behavior that erodes trust in the SHARP reporting system and the leadership at Fort Hood, especially within 3CR and 1CD.

#### Observation 3:

The influence of hegemonic masculinity on Army culture is preventing a large portion of male Soldiers from understanding how and why culture needs to change.

Male NCOs and leaders within the combat brigades at Fort Hood often downplayed the magnitude of the sexual harassment and assault at Fort Hood, which indicates the influence of hegemonic masculinity on the culture of Fort Hood. The FHIRC conducted interviews with 131 junior male NCOs in 3CR. During the interviews, most NCOs expressed that they had no concerns about sexual harassment and assault, nor

did they take any responsibility or acknowledge the prevalent issues at Fort Hood or within the Army.<sup>61</sup> Interviews with 48 senior male NCOs (E7-E9) within 3CR revealed a similar belief that Fort Hood did not have sexual harassment and assault issues, with many expressing that Fort Hood does a better job taking care of Soldiers regarding sexual harassment and assault than most colleges.<sup>62</sup>

It is important to note that SPC Vanessa Guillen was assigned to 3CR. In the fallout following SPC Guillen's murder and accusations of sexual harassment that sparked a national conversation about sexual assault and harassment in the military and considering the FHIRC report statistics of systemic sexual assault and harassment, these leaders still did not consider sexual assault and harassment a problem. The inability to see sexual harassment and assault as a major problem is likely a side-effect of hegemonic masculinity's favorable social conditions, also known as benefits from a patriarchal gender system.<sup>63</sup>

Recall in chapter 2, Connell and Messerschmidt identified that dominant forms of masculinity often result in the construct of a patriarchal gender system. All men and even women who enact subordinate masculinities position themselves to receive benefits of this patriarchal system.<sup>64</sup> A common analogy used to define this patriarchal system is the 'boys club.' Men who do not embody hegemonic masculinity and even women often strive to be a part of the 'boys club' because of the social status and benefits that come with club membership. A potential explanation of why the male Soldiers in 3CR struggled to see the magnitude of the sexual assault and harassment problem at Fort Hood is that these men unconsciously minimized the problems with sexual assault and

harassment at Fort Hood to maintain their achieved social status as a member of the ‘boys club,’ or to maintain complicity with the system in hopes of gaining social credibility. Speaking out against sexual assault and harassment by publicly refuting a norm of locker room talk or objectification of women in the workplace would likely result in ostracism from the ‘boys club,’ especially if the norm being refuted is a preferred social mechanism of the dominant group.

An alternate explanation of why young Leaders within 3CR Soldiers struggled to understand the magnitude of the sexual harassment and assault problem at Fort Hood could be because senior Leaders were inconsistent in employing primary embedding mechanisms to drive the tenants of the SHARP program to the lowest levels. When leaders pay attention to too many things or their pattern of attention is inconsistent, subordinates will often use other signals or their own experiences to determine what is important and develop their own set of basic assumptions on how to understand and manage themselves within organizational culture.<sup>65</sup> The commentary from more senior leaders within the organization suggests that both hegemonic masculinity and leadership failures to consistently apply primary embedding mechanisms contributed to this dynamic.

The most senior male leaders (WO1-O4) interviewed by the FHIRC expressed mixed views acknowledging the problem of sexual harassment and assault at Fort Hood. Some of the leaders expressed that they did not believe Fort Hood was safe for junior enlisted females Soldiers, especially in the barracks. However, most of the group did not believe Fort Hood’s issues were different from the rest of the Army. The group expressed

concerns about professionalism and articulated that they were doing what they could to educate Soldiers on appropriate conduct but struggled to understand what constituted ‘unwanted’ behavior in the workplace.<sup>66</sup> Many leaders stated they take the responsibility of mandatory reporting of sexual assault and harassment seriously but felt that many junior enlisted Soldiers do not trust field grade leaders because they witness field grade officers committing misconduct.<sup>67</sup>

Following suit to the groups of NCOs, the majority of the officers minimized the problem of sexual assault and harassment with the false justification that Fort Hood was like the rest of the Army. Data showed Fort Hood having the highest rates of sexual assault and harassment within FORSCOM. However, the officers also publicly acknowledged their role in setting the standards for acceptable conduct. Both of these observed behaviors likely coalesce to the preferred social mechanisms of the hegemonic masculine ideals within the officer corps at 3CR.

As officers, not publicly acknowledging on some level their roles and responsibilities to sustain a professional work environment and support the SHARP program would be damaging to their social status as leaders. Further, the officers acknowledged a lack of trust in field grade leadership due to ‘other’ field grade officers committing sexual misconduct around junior enlisted Soldiers. The FHIRC did not expand on this comment; however, this comment is indicative that the majority of men believe the underreporting of sexual assault and harassment is primarily because of individual behavior or a few ‘bad eggs’ rather than understanding that attitudes, beliefs, and unit climate and culture are the primary drivers of sexual assault and harassment.

This demonstrates a cultural misalignment with the SHARP Continuum of Harm discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The officers expressing a lack of understanding regarding what behaviors were ‘unwanted’ or inappropriate also indicate that a disconnect exists between what the leaders were expected to know about formal culture regarding the SHARP program and how that knowledge failed to be applied at the informal level of culture.

Across several levels of leadership, male Soldiers struggled to acknowledge the magnitude of the sexual assault and harassment problem at Fort Hood and to understand the real challenges faced by female peers. They did not acknowledge their responsibility, nor were they aware of their power to change the situation. This reinforces the previous notion that favorable social conditions created by hegemonic masculinity are unconsciously preventing men from seeing how and why culture needs to change and that men are the primary drivers to make positive changes to make conditions better for everyone. Further, the failure of senior leaders to consistently drive the tenants of the SHARP program to the lowest levels using primary embedding mechanisms may offer some explanation as to why so many of these leaders developed alternate explanations not necessarily grounded in truth to justify and understand the magnitude of sexual harassment and assault at Fort Hood.

The narrative during mixed-gender group interviews with Soldiers from 1CD and 3CR further indicates the influence of hegemonic masculinity’s favorable social conditions or ‘boys club mentality’ on the culture of Fort Hood. On multiple occasions, female Soldiers would speak up during group interviews to share experiences or flaws

with the SHARP program, only to be undermined, contradicted, and sometimes ridiculed by male members of the group.<sup>68</sup> Male Soldiers were comfortable publicly demonstrating hardened attitudes toward female peers in the presence of outside investigators and a JAG officer, both of whom were recording transcripts of the session.<sup>69</sup> The vast majority of male soldiers believed that Army culture did not need to change and that women need to adjust to a male-dominated culture since they chose to join the Army.<sup>70</sup>

The social mechanisms of male Soldiers actively undermining female peers could be enacted by the men to prove their masculinity and social status to the other men in the room and FHIRC while simultaneously reinforcing that women speaking out did not have the social status to do so. This dynamic nests with Connell's assertion that the struggle for hegemony or dominance is the true harm of hegemonic masculinities as it can lead to the aggressive behaviors the FHIRC witnessed in the group interviews.<sup>71</sup>

Further, many men publicly expressing the belief that women need to assimilate to the male-dominated culture indicates that the men believe women need to play along with the cultural rituals and norms of the 'boys club' or social conditions of hegemonic masculinity. Consciously or unconsciously, this type of behavior sends the message that if women want to be a part of the team, they must tolerate problematic norms and behaviors within the culture and even sexual harassment and assault. This dynamic enforces compliance among women while allowing hegemonic masculinity's norms and cultural rituals to escape scrutiny.<sup>72</sup> In other words, the problematic attitudes and belief systems that create the climate for sexual harassment and assault in Army culture will

only be required to change when men decide to change it. This speaks to the power of hegemonic masculinity within Army culture.

### Secondary Research Questions

What prevents Army leaders from seeing the signs and symptoms of sexual harassment and assault, such as hostile work environments to women, minorities, and some men?

#### Observation 1:

Soldiers who do not feel physically and psychologically safe will not report abusive behavior to superiors which caused leaders to underestimate the scope of the problem with sexual assault and harassment at Fort Hood.

While answering the primary research question of this thesis, it became clear that Soldiers at Fort Hood, especially female Soldiers, did not feel physically safe within their work and living spaces. Through multiple platforms, women informed the FHIRC that reports of hostile work environments and sexual harassment and assault were often blatantly ignored, and if actioned, the women who filed reports faced retaliation and ostracism by peers and superiors. Often Soldiers told the FHIRC they felt physically safer in Kuwait and Afghanistan than at home or work during their service at Fort Hood.<sup>73</sup> Of important note, if Congress did not mandate the review of Fort Hood, none of this information would have ever come to light.

The FHIRC identified that leaders at Fort Hood allowed mission readiness to overshadow integrating the elements of the SHARP program to the lowest levels. Leaders did not view the SHARP program as a critical tool to promote Soldier safety, morale and to foster a climate of dignity and respect. Additionally, the number of leaders who chose



to ignore their responsibility to report sexual assault and harassment through the SHARP program or who committed acts of sexual misconduct themselves further degraded trust and confidence in both the SHARP program and within the ranks.<sup>74</sup>

Many Soldiers, especially women, at Fort Hood were in survival mode, constantly fearing for physical safety and expressed hopelessness in having a safe place to report abusive behavior. Fort Hood's leaders failed to provide a safe working environment that resulted in extreme under-reporting of sexual assault and harassment. This made an already dire situation at Fort Hood even worse because a large number of abuses were hidden from view.

While the SHARP program certainly has flaws, The Department of the Army Inspector General (DAIG) Special Interest Inspection of the Army SHARP program conducted in 2014 found that commanders who strive to implement the core elements of the SHARP program to the lowest levels and take personal ownership of promoting climates of dignity and respect in their units on a daily basis have consistently demonstrated success in reducing, even eliminating sexual harassment and assault.<sup>75</sup> This research is consistent with the basic assumptions and espoused beliefs of the US Army formal culture regarding the SHARP program, as illustrated using the SHARP Continuum of Harm at the beginning of this chapter. Leaders that employ primary embedding mechanisms to integrate the Army values and tenants of the SHARP program into organizational culture through what they pay attention to, how they react to crisis, allocate resources, and through deliberate role modeling, teaching and coaching sustain a professional work environment and reap the benefits of happier and healthier units.<sup>76</sup>

How can Army leaders eliminate behaviors that contribute to sexual harassment and assault and erode trust within the organization?

Observation 2:

The research conducted by the FHIRC indicates leaders view sexual assault and harassment as an unsolvable problem creating a numbness to the occurrence of sexual assault and harassment within the force. To improve US Army culture, leaders must realize their power and authority to positively impact and shape culture.

In answering the primary research question of this thesis, it became clear that social norms existed at Fort Hood, which created a permissive climate of sexual harassment and assault and rampant disrespect to women. In the previous sections, female Soldiers communicated to the FHIRC that they were openly and aggressively approached in a sexual manner and objectified by fellow male soldiers daily. Further, the women articulated reporting this behavior to leadership only for leaders to tell them they have no way to stop it. The FHIRC shared the interview dialogue with the senior installation commander at Fort Hood, who quickly responded, ‘what can I do about it?’<sup>77</sup>

If the senior installation commander at Fort Hood believes that he does not have the agency to address these problematic behaviors, one could speculate this sentiment likely adversely affected subordinate leaders’ confidence in their authority to correct the behavior. Certainly, leaders should not set an expectation for women that they should expect to be sexually harassed by male peers at work. Dismissing one’s power as a leader to address and correct behaviors that violate the SHARP Continuum of Harm, such as objectification, catcalling, and excessive flirting, is a form of victim-blaming. The statement made by the senior installation commander unconsciously blames the presence of women in the military for systemic sexual harassment and assault rather than the lack

of discipline and order that far too often creates the breeding grounds for sexual harassment and assault. US Army leaders most certainly can influence the discipline and order necessary to foster a healthy and safe workplace free of sexual harassment and assault. As discussed in the previous section, the Department of the Army Inspector General found that commanders who used primary embedding mechanisms to drive the tenants of the SHARP program and Army values into the climate and culture of their units demonstrated success in preventing and reducing sexual harassment and assault.

Further, research by Trevino and Nelson described in chapter 2 states that socialization, the process of learning how an organization does things, can make or break the sustainment of ethical organizational culture.<sup>78</sup> The broad theory of socialization identifies that generally, people behave in ways consistent with cultural norms because they are expected to, especially in social settings such as work.<sup>79</sup> Further, internalization is when individuals adopt cultural standards as their own.<sup>80</sup> Socialization and internalization are important in understanding ethical and unethical behavior because employees can be socialized into behaving unethically, especially when employees do not have the life experience to know the difference between ethical and unethical behavior.<sup>81</sup> When leaders do not correct aggressive, abusive, and violent behavior of men, such as hypersexuality, dehumanistic language, and women's objectification, those behaviors become ingrained as accepted norms and standards of conduct within an organization's informal culture. In the case of Fort Hood, the normalization of hypersexual behavior and language within the informal culture prevented even the most senior leaders from

understanding the risk for sexual harassment and assault to the Army's culture and failing to address that risk directly.

Further, leader's ignorance of patterns of hypersexual behavior, objectification, and use of dehumanistic and aggressive language towards women within the informal culture of Fort Hood indicates the influence of hegemonic masculinity. Often, the dismissal or ignorance of aggressive and violent behavior by men within organizations allows systemic issues of sexual harassment and assault to pervade.<sup>82</sup> For example, young men sexually objectifying women is often dismissed as 'locker room talk' or through the age-old saying of 'boys will boys'. Leaders must recognize the danger in allowing the visible mechanisms of hegemonic masculinity to go unchecked. Both men and women certainly deserve to be held to higher standards of behavior in a professional working environment.

#### Observation 3:

The SHARP program's primary goal is to address culture change that facilitates discipline and respect; however, addressing attitudes and beliefs and sexual assault and harassment is largely ignored as a prevention strategy.

A notable trend the FHIRC report identified is that many leaders still view sexual harassment and assault as individual behavior and climates permissive of sexual harassment as isolated incidents. The FHIRC substantiated this assertion noting that the primary focus of the SHARP program at Fort Hood was response to incidents and victim support rather than emphasizing prevention which undermined the efficiency of the program at large.<sup>83</sup> This finding explains why so many leaders failed to understand the SHARP Continuum of Harm and the role of attitudes and beliefs underpinning culture

and climates that can lead to sexual misconduct. Prevention is undoubtedly separate from response to sexual harassment and assault and requires dedicated time and attention. The FHIRC noted that effective prevention requires data-informed modification of cultural norms to improve group dynamics and social mechanisms by first acknowledging attitudes and beliefs that promote instances of sexual harassment and assault.<sup>84</sup>

In previous sections, it was noted that the FHIRC documented multiple incidents within mixed-gender group interviews where men openly used language to ridicule, contradict and undermine the concerns female peers had regarding the SHARP program at Fort Hood. Suppose these men held the basic assumption that women do not matter in the same way that men do, which drove them to disrespect female colleagues publicly. The basic assumption in this instance is problematic, but can US Army leaders force someone who holds this belief to change it? Perhaps, but it would take a significant amount of time and buy-in from the individual who holds this basic assumption to change. A more powerful way US Army leaders can foster a climate of prevention is to strictly enforce zero tolerance of disrespectful and dehumanistic language of any kind within the workplace. This strategy sends a clear message that espousing disrespectful attitudes and beliefs is unacceptable. While US Army leaders cannot control and change attitudes and beliefs that Soldiers carry with them from childhood, they do have the power and authority to police aggressive, dehumanistic, and disrespectful language. US Army leaders can implement this tactic immediately to drive ethical social norms, cultures, and climates. This direct approach to prevention will likely yield far greater success than the compliance based approach focused solely on executing ‘check the

block' SHARP PowerPoint trainings that fail to drive tenets of the SHAPR program into the culture of units.

### Conclusion

In answering the primary and secondary research questions of this thesis, clearly, a pattern of disrespect, aggressive and violent behaviors enacted by male Soldiers towards women exists at Fort Hood. This pattern of disrespect and aggression towards women was quantified within surveys that pre-dated the FHIRC investigation and confirmed within the large samples of survey and interview data collected by the FHIRC. This artifact alone is indicative of the influence of hegemonic masculinity within the culture and climate of Fort Hood and requires further examination across broader US Army culture.

The influence of hegemonic masculinity was indicative through beliefs and norms discovered by the FHIRC through group and individual interviews. Many women and men across Fort Hood believe that reporting sexual harassment and assault would result in marginalization and stress and that reports would not be taken seriously. This belief drove significant underreporting of sexual assault. The underreporting and silence surrounding sexual assault and harassment was perpetuated by leaders who either ignored or mishandled SHARP complaints or were offenders of sexual harassment or assault themselves, further degraded trust in the SHARP program. Further, male NCOs within 3CR report a common practice of adjudicating SHARP reports rather than allowing reports to be handled by qualified victim advocates. This practice, paired with a low trust climate, actively prevented the reporting of sexual harassment and assault. Further, these

practices were likely unconsciously enforcing hegemonic masculinity by men deciding how and on what terms sexual assault and harassment would be handled, forcing women to subordinate to patriarchal environments they imposed on them.

Most notably, across all interviews and all levels of leadership, male Soldiers struggled to understand the magnitude of the sexual harassment and assault problem at Fort Hood even when presented with mounting evidence to the contrary. This dynamic indicates the influence of the favorable social conditions of hegemonic masculinity. A potential explanation is that minimizing or downplaying the magnitude of sexual harassment and assault allows men to maintain complicity with the preferred social mechanisms and norms of the patriarchal gender system or 'boys club'. Speaking out against the problematic norms within the Fort Hood culture contributing to sexual assault and misconduct such as objectification of women or 'locker room talk' could result in ostracization from the 'boys club'. The logic follows Connell's construct of hegemonic masculinity, as all position themselves consciously and unconsciously to continue to attain the benefits of hegemonic masculinity.<sup>85</sup> Even the fear of being ostracized may unconsciously sway some men and women from calling out the 'boys club' behaviors and norms. Lastly, none of the male Soldiers interviewed took responsibility for the systemic problems of sexual harassment and assault at Fort Hood. This justification among men indicates the influence of hegemonic masculinity because favorable social conditions and benefits created by hegemonic masculinity unconsciously prevent men from seeing how and why culture needs to change. Further, the justification prevents men

from understanding their power to facilitate positive cultural changes to make conditions better for everyone.

Hegemonic masculinity and other problematic attitudes and beliefs possibly underpinned observed patterns of sexual harassment and assault at Fort Hood. The FHIRC missed an opportunity when executing this review by not conducting personal interviews with male Soldiers to obtain a deeper understanding of attitudes and belief systems, and masculinities within Fort Hood's culture. Such an analysis could have created an understanding of foundational ideologies and behaviors that cause disrespect between genders. Such a deep level of understanding of the relationship between attitudes and beliefs, culture, and climate will be necessary to design future approaches to true violence prevention and character development in the US Army.

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<sup>1</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>4</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 832.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Raewyn Connell, "Masculinities," accessed March 13, 2021, [http://www.raewynconnell.net/p/masculinities\\_20.html](http://www.raewynconnell.net/p/masculinities_20.html).

<sup>8</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 830.

<sup>9</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 832.

<sup>11</sup> Isbell, "Real Men."



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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Barrett, “The Organizational Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity,” 129.

<sup>14</sup> Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, “The Firing of Macarthur,” National Archives and Records Administration, accessed April 17, 2021, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/firing-macarthur>.

<sup>15</sup> Paul E. Berg, ed., *The Last 100 Yards: The Crucible of Close Combat in Large-Scale Combat Operations*, The US Army Large-Scale Combat Operations Series (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2019), 138.

<sup>16</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity,” 834.

<sup>17</sup> Army Resilience Directorate, “Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention: Continuum of Harm,” US Army, accessed March 17, 2021, <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/sharp/pages/continuum.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Christopher Swecker, , Jonathon P. Harmon, Carrie F. Ricci, Queta Rodriguez, and Jack L. White, *Report of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, November, 6 2020), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 835.

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- <sup>32</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 183.
- <sup>33</sup> Swecker et al., *Report of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee*, 19.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>44</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 835.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

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- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., 44.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., 18.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., 41.
- <sup>61</sup> Swecker et al., *Report of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee*, 41.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid., 42.
- <sup>63</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity,” 832.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>65</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 189.
- <sup>66</sup> Swecker et al., *Report of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee*, 42.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid., 41.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>71</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity,” 834.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid., 835.
- <sup>73</sup> Swecker et al., *Report of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee*, 106.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid., 18.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid., 31.
- <sup>76</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 183.
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid., 109.
- <sup>78</sup> Klebe-Treviño and Nelson, *Managing Business Ethics*, 158.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 834.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>84</sup> Swecker et al., *Report of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee*, 52.

<sup>85</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 832.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this research is to identify characteristics of hegemonic masculinity in US Army culture and their influence on the occurrence of sexual harassment and assault. This analysis employed Dr. Edward Schein's model of organizational culture, Linda Trevino and Katherine Nelson's Ethical Culture Framework, and R.W. Connell's definitions and Hierarchy of Masculinities to conduct a case study of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee (FHIRC) Report. Chapter 4 presented the findings of this research by identifying major observations within the context of each research question. This chapter will discuss the results, interpretations, and implications of those findings and provide recommendations for future studies.

#### Interpretation of Findings

The major finding of this thesis indicates that there is a potential link between the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity and behaviors in the Army that contribute to a culture that allows sexual harassment and assault. More research is required to prove a definitive link. The FHIRC report did not go far enough by failing to recommend further examination of the culture at Fort Hood and the Army as a whole. The FHIRC likely did not have the time or expertise necessary to examine the problems at Fort Hood from the perspective of organizational culture. However, analyzing the FHIRC report through the lenses of organizational culture and hegemonic masculinity brought to light the influence of hegemonic, competitive masculinity on Army culture and warrants greater

examination. The patterns of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and assault documented in the FHIRC research indicate that more research and analysis of culture is required to understand the attitudes and belief systems driving the behavior.

While a direct correlation between gender integration, hegemonic masculinity, and sexual harassment and assault could not be substantiated within the FHIRC report, unit cultures that promote inclusion, freedom from sexual assault and harassment, and adherence to the Army values are necessary for both men and women to thrive as Soldiers and Leaders in the US Army. The culture at Fort Hood was not conducive to support gender integration, trust, and inclusion. This led to a climate of mistrust where victims did not trust the Leaders to act on the statements or policies put in place to investigate and prosecute these crimes. The culture of Fort Hood reflects the depth of the problems of sexual harassment and assault that have existed within US Army culture for decades.

To stop sexual violence, the research findings of this thesis strongly indicate that the US Army requires an understanding of hegemonic masculinity's influence on the basic assumptions, attitudes, and belief systems at the deepest levels of organizational culture within the US Army. This understanding will bring the productive and counterproductive beliefs, norms, and behaviors associated with hegemonic masculine ideologies to the attention of US Army leaders. By creating awareness of the counterproductive and abusive social norms and behaviors driven by hegemonic masculinity, the US Army can identify what systemic biases exist within the organization's culture.

A holistic understanding of systemic bias driven by hegemonic masculinity or other problematic ideologies is critical to facilitate the culture change the US Army must make to confront organizational patterns of sexual assault and harassment. Without this understanding, all efforts to drive culture change will fail. One could argue that the most significant reason the US Army fails at preventing sexual harassment and assault is because of a failure to understand the problematic ideologies embedded in current Army culture before implementing programs like the former Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program, Equal Opportunity (EO) and even the SHARP program. While these programs are all well-intentioned and designed to support victims and respond to sexual assault and harassment incidents, effective prevention requires a separate and dedicated approach. Both the FHIRC report and research findings of this thesis noted that effective prevention requires data-informed modification of cultural norms to improve group dynamics and social mechanisms by first acknowledging attitudes and beliefs that promote instances of sexual harassment and assault.

In summary, the findings of this thesis demonstrate that more research is required to understand the role of hegemonic masculinity and other ideologies that may contribute to patterns of sexual assault and harassment within the US Army. Further, the analysis suggests that a deeper understanding of problematic attitudes and belief systems within US Army organizational culture will provide the data necessary to understand underlying assumptions within organizational culture which ultimately drive abusive, violent, and dehumanistic behaviors like sexual assault and harassment. Once US Army leaders acknowledge and understand the underlying assumptions of Army culture that justify

dehumanizing behavior, that understanding must inform the design of prevention programs focused on reducing and eliminating sexual assault and harassment.

Next, this chapter will discuss the major implications of this thesis. The first major implication of this research is that the Army will continue to struggle with preventing sexual harassment and assault until senior leaders, the majority of whom are male, understand how and why certain aspects of US Army culture must change. While women are not exempt from leading or supporting cultural change in the US Army, men still outnumber women by a large percentage, and they hold the largest proportion of leadership positions at the brigade level and below. The narrative surrounding sexual harassment and assault in the military and society generally frame the problem as a women's issue rather than a problem for everyone. This narrative is problematic because it is not correct, men are also victims of sexual assault and harassment, and that narrative sends a subconscious message to men that they do not need to pay attention to sexual harassment and assault. Men absolutely must pay attention to issues like sexual harassment and assault in order to effectively change the culture at the root level, the level of underlying assumptions about who belongs in the military, what type of person is tough enough to be on the front line.

A stronger way the US Army can leverage men's support to combat sexual harassment and assault is to leverage the Army values. Have leaders reward actions that build trust and promote a climate of physical and psychological safety. By rewarding Soldiers for listening to each other, cooperating and caring for each other, and raising concerns over safety or cultural norms that make them uncomfortable, leaders can create



a climate of psychological and physical safety, resulting in a reduction of sexual harassment and assault incidents. Further, a climate of psychological safety will create opportunities for both women and men to more openly discuss counterproductive workplace issues that affect everyone, as well as issues that are unique to women and minorities. This dynamic creates opportunities for both men and women to exercise empathy toward one another and will likely decrease aggressive, abusive, and dehumanistic behaviors such as sexual harassment and assault because Soldiers are conscious that certain behaviors do not promote a climate for teamwork and mission success.

The second major implication of this thesis is that leaders within the US Army have the greatest power to reduce and prevent sexual harassment and assault. Building on the previous implication and supported with the researching findings of this thesis, the most powerful way US Army leaders can foster a culture free of sexual and harassment assault is by publicly upholding the norms and behaviors they want to see. Leaders must support Soldiers who report or correct offensive behavior or SHARP violations and recognize Soldiers who promote and exemplify the Army values, to include the tenants of the SHARP program. Leaders paying attention to subordinates who do the right things to promote a climate of psychological safety will encourage others to do so as well and will create a healthy, professional work environment.

Further, leaders must openly and consistently dispel Soldier misconceptions that everyone endorses norms such as offensive, disrespectful and dehumanistic language. When norms are publicly upheld that contradict Army values and leaders fail to address

them, subordinates will not address the behavior either, likely out of fear of being ostracized from the team. This fear causes Soldiers to comply with norms that counter the stated Army values because those Soldiers believe the majority of the group is comfortable with the behavior, consistent with the basic theory of socialization presented in chapter 2. To stop this vicious cycle, Officers and NCOs must not engage in and must publicly reprimand offensive behaviors and comments to consistently ensure unit culture and climate is consistent with the Army values. Additionally, leaders must ensure that Soldiers who speak up to report SHARP violations or problematic organizational behavior are not ostracized or retaliated against formally through subpar evaluations or being barred from opportunities or informally through social exclusion and isolation or even bullying.

#### Recommendations for Future Study

Finally, this chapter will provide recommendations for future study. Building on the major finding of this thesis, US Army leadership must initiate cultural studies at Fort Hood and other larger installations such as Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Fort Bragg, and Fort Campbell, focused on understanding the influence of hegemonic masculinity and other ideologies that may be contributing to patterns of sexual assault and harassment. A large-scale cultural study will provide the US Army with the data necessary to understand the attitudes and belief systems driving disrespect between genders and expand on the work of the FHIRC. Further, such a study would provide the Army greater insight in understanding systemic cultural issues contributing to sexual assault and harassment. Additionally, it may even serve as an opportunity to identify installations with successful

practices to reduce and prevent sexual harassment and assault. Lastly, in designing such a study, a helpful start may be to seek out research studies on sexual harassment and other dysfunctional workplace behavior conducted in comparable, male-dominated industries such as oil and gas, policing, or finance. It could serve as a frame of reference to inform analysis of Army culture and even provide some validated strategies to address systemic issues.

Another recommendation for future study is for the US Army to consider employing RAND to develop and conduct unconscious bias assessments throughout the officer, NCO, and junior enlisted career cycle to provide Soldiers and leaders an opportunity to see their own specific biases. The majority of US Army leaders across all levels are unaware of their implicit bias tendencies when dealing with different genders, races, or sexualities. Integrating unconscious bias testing across the force would provide the US Army with two important opportunities. First, it is highly probable that by simply making leaders aware of their bias and the harm of those biases, leaders will adjust their leadership style to overcome their shortfalls. Second, employing RAND to develop and conduct unconscious bias assessments will allow RAND to aggregate the data to understand systemic bias across the entire US Army. Once systemic bias is understood, US Army leadership and experts can employ a data-informed approach to design holistic unconscious bias training for integration across the Army. This strategy would provide the US Army with a twofold approach to address unconscious bias at both individual and organizational levels, which gives the organization a greater chance of successful culture change.

## Conclusion

Following the release of the FHIRC report on December 8, 2020, Army Secretary addressed the media to discuss the major findings of the report. One quote in particular from his speech captured the heart of the challenge US Army leaders must face to grow following the fallout of the tragic events of Fort Hood:

The tragic death of Vanessa Guillen and a rash of other challenges at Fort Hood forced us to take a critical look at our systems, our policies, and ourselves. But without leadership, systems don't matter. This is not about metrics but about possessing the ability to have the human decency to show compassion for our teammates and to look out for the best interests of our soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

The longstanding mission of the United States Army is to deploy, fight, and win our Nation's wars by providing ready, prompt, and sustained land dominance by Army forces across the full spectrum of conflict as part of the Joint Force.<sup>2</sup> The mission of the US Army cannot take priority as long as damaging norms and behaviors associated with sexual harassment and assault and other dehumanistic behaviors infect unit cultures. Leaders must be meaningfully committed to confronting challenges within informal unit cultures. They must persist in long-term efforts to build and sustain a culture of inclusion, diversity, dignity, and respect until this culture is universal across the force. This type of commitment is required for the US Army to not only prevail and win against internal enemies and corrosive behaviors such as sexual harassment and assault but to build and sustain the diversity of thinking and expertise necessary to prevail and win against all enemies of the United States in close combat.

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<sup>1</sup> Secretary of the Army, "DoD Briefing on Findings and Recommendations of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee," (Briefing delivered at The Pentagon, December 8, 2020), <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/dodbriefingforthoodreviewfindings.htm>.

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<sup>2</sup> US Army, “Who We Are: The Us Army’s Vision and Strategy,” accessed April 26, 2021, <https://www.army.mil/about/>.

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