

2019

Gender Identity Development of Women in the U.S. Army

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Marshelle Machtan

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The Office of the Provost

Walden University
2019

Abstract

Gender Identity Development of Women in the U.S. Army

by

Marshelle Machtan

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August 2019

Abstract

In spite of a newly developed military policy to facilitate gender integration since 2012, women service members in the U.S. Army today still face a discriminatory social climate. Male-dominated units foster the masculine ideal that subsequently leads to hypermasculine attitudes enabled through gender harassment behavior. Here, women employ coping strategies that facilitate either gender management or a balanced military identity, addressed in Culver's (2013) Gender Identity Development of Women in the Military (GIDWM) 4-phase matrix. A woman service member's position in the matrix is proportional to her level of gender management or military identity development. Similarly, her matrix position is directly related to the degree of gender harassment and cohesion within her unit, and the specific coping strategies she employs. These themes of gender harassment types and coping strategies, positive unit cohesion, and GIDWM identity position define the three research questions which are answered using the contextual framework and participant narratives. Taken together, the results showed that U.S. Army women service members successfully achieve a balanced military identity through effective leadership, mentorship, a cohesive unit, and self-actualization that promotes a meritocracy. These results facilitate an awareness of the present U.S. Army social climate and empower women in non-traditional roles to take similar steps towards a healthy, balanced identity. Therefore, this study represents a source of guidance and strength for and among women in male-dominated professions and presents empirical evidence to direct future gender harassment and gender integration military policies.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all the women service members who have and are presently proudly serving their country, and to the men who support them. Also, this work is dedicated to the memory of my great uncle Karl Machtan, through whose mentorship I have been able to achieve amazing things.

Acknowledgments

“I think that everybody should look at each other equally. I mean we all wear the same uniform. At the end of the day, there are going to be certain things that men need and certain things that women need that are a little bit different. That's just the way it is. But at the end of the day, we are all human.”

– A.S., Soldier

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Women in the U.S. military today have the opportunity to serve in many different MOSs that a decade ago were restricted only to men. Yet in spite of forward movement towards equality via military policy, social barriers based on gender stereotypes and reinforcing the masculine ethic remain. This presents a military identity development issue for women service members.

Here, women in male-dominated units and hypermasculine environments are subject to coercion to adhere to the gendered masculine society of the military. The result is women prescribing to gender management in order to obtain social acceptance. Yet the result causes women to suppress their feminine qualities and adapt certain masculine traits that are both unnatural to their true selves and without professional benefit. However, gender management can be transcended and subsequently lead to the development of a balanced military identity that encompasses traits for professional success and a woman's femininity: a woman warrior.

The purpose of this study was to discover how women navigate through the various phases of identity development in the military in order to reach the level of personal acceptance as both a woman and a warrior. It identifies a specific process with which a woman in a male-dominated society, such as the military, may pinpoint her position within the identity development matrix. By facilitating this awareness, women are empowered to take steps toward positive change. Moreover, indicating identity development commonalities among women in non-traditional occupations will provide a

relatable and positive influence for other women. Therefore, this study represents a means for guidance and strength for and among women.

The following chapter is an overview of gender identity development of women service members, divided into several comprehensive sections. The first section highlights significant literature sources that address specific themes associated with gender identity development, followed by a defined gap in research knowledge that this study fulfills and necessitates. The second section provides an overview of the research problem, establishing its significance in today's military, providing the appropriate framing of identity development for women service members, and authenticating it as a valid course of investigation.

Next is a presentation of the purpose of the study, which presents the research paradigm, the study's intent, and the particular phenomenon of interest. This is followed by three specific research questions that serve as a guide throughout the qualitative research process. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks follow, providing the theoretical matrix and contextual setting that serve as the cornerstones of this study.

The nature of the study section defines the specific methodological approach, population sample prerequisites, and data collection and analysis strategy of this study. This focus is then directed towards key words and their definitions used throughout the study, followed by more technical aspects regarding the assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance of the study and final summary of the chapter.

This next section presents a brief background into the research literature related to the scope of this study. A description of the gap in knowledge within public policy is addressed, wherein an explanation for the necessity of this study is given.

Background

As women have been allowed into combat roles in the U.S. military, the methodology of the adjusted military policy approach has been greatly scrutinized by social theorists (Acker, 1992; Barry, 2013; Britton, 2000; Heinecken, 2017). At the same time, women's entry into combat-related MOSs has been met with resistance in the form of subjective gender stereotyping. For example, print and media sources project an image of women that underscores women's presence in the military as disruptive to military effectiveness and unit cohesion in particular (Egnell, 2013; Rosen, Knudson, & Fancher, 2003).

These outside influences carry over and converge with the male-dominated military history and culture (Duncanson, 2015; Herbert, 1998). As a gendered organization which reinforces gender stereotypes by advocating the masculine ethic, these same concepts are observed through behavioral enactments at the peer level in military units and particularly in hypermasculine environments (Heinecken, 2017; Moore, 2017). Daily task performance and deployment can cause combat stress that is contingent upon individually developed resilience. Yet specific interpersonal stressors in the form of gender harassment related to the masculine-favored social structure not only negatively affect unit cohesion, but also instigate an affront to women's professional development and overall well-being (Duncanson, 2015; Herbert, 1998).

Interpersonal stressors most commonly appear as gender harassment in the form of defamatory language and sexist humor, as they are easily downplayed as trivial social incidences (Sasson-Levy, 2002; Ford, Boxer, Armstrong, and Edel, 2008). Nevertheless, gender harassment plays a significant part in facilitating the particular course of identity development women service members pursue within the military. Here it is proposed that women pursue one of two possible gender identity developments: gender management or a balanced military identity. For example, women subjected to masculine-influenced social coercion and who choose to conform to the masculine ethic as the normative standard are said to be wearing a mask and practicing gender management (Culver, 2013; Sasson-Levy, 2003). However, women who transcend gender-specific interpersonal stressors are able to regulate their social identification and achieve self-acceptance, wherein they remove their masks and embrace a balanced military identity and obtain self-actualization (Maslow, 1943).

Multiple sources have manifested their information regarding women in the military in the form of personal opinions, anecdotes, and stereotypes, such as Browne (2007), DeYoung (2001), Gutmann (2000), Maginnis (2013), Mitchell (1998), and Van Creveld (2002). Yet studies indicate a noticeable gap in the literature that connects women service members' personal testimonies of gender identity development with specific gender harassment types, coping strategies, and the identities women service members confront during their service. This gap is particular to the recent War on Terror and modern U.S. warfare campaigns beginning in 2001 (Benedict, 2009; Culver, 2013; Gustavsen, 2013). Remarkably, the most recent study performed on this specific topic

was concluded by Herbert in 1998. Additionally, there is a gap in testing theories that specifically apply to military women in the modern era (Culver, 2013). Therefore, this study's purpose was to obtain and analyze perspectives of women service members through one-on-one interviews discussing their personal experiences regarding gender harassment as it pertains to gender development within the military environment.

In an era of a fourth feminist movement coexisting with perpetuated gendered practices within cornerstone organizations such as the military, studies that examine women's social identity development are necessitated. Equality in the workplace is not a wishful byproduct of feminist activism such as #MeToo, rather it encompasses every aspect of our lives to include social, economic, and political endeavors. Where inequality is tolerated, discrimination and marginalization are allowed to occur, and the U.S. military is no exception (Goodman, 1978). Gender discrimination officially ended once the Gender Equality in Combat Act had been passed in 2012, yet it tenaciously continues to circulate within the military's social climate. Therefore, it is significant to facilitate an awareness of the gendered practices that have such marked negative effects on women service members' military careers and personal well-being.

This next section provides the problem statement, presented in accordance with relevant and current events and research related to public policy. Multiple research findings are presented, published within the past five years. At the same time, it is significant to note that a copious amount of imperative research associated with this study's topic was conducted outside of this 5-year timeframe. Lastly, a meaningful gap in the literature is pinpointed to further legitimize this study.

Problem Statement

The U.S. Army has opened its combat specialties to women and correspondingly has enacted a policy that promotes gender neutrality. Yet ingrained gender stereotypes remain central to the social culture of the military, whereby significantly marginalizing women service members. In male-dominated environments, coercive practices in the form of selective interpersonal stressors – gender harassment – facilitate social conformity. For women service members, adapting to the military lifestyle within these social parameters can greatly impair their gender identity transitional and developmental progress.

During this metamorphosis, encountering overwhelming interpersonal stressors can mutate one's true self into a fractured and compartmentalized masked identity in which gender management is practiced. The long-term effect of adopting this false identity and denial of one's true self impedes a service woman's overall career and well-being. Yet within the same gender identity development matrix, a woman service member may achieve identity internalization regulation, in which coercive practices are transcended and self-actualization confirmed. Subsequently, the true self is recovered and combined with the military professional, developing a self-effacing woman warrior and androgynous military identity. This study aims to discover the coping strategies women service members utilize to transcend gender management and identity masking in favor of developing their own woman-warrior military identity.

Following the First Persian Gulf War 1990-1991 and the passing of the 1991 National Defense Authorization Act, research began to emerge that focused on gendered

institutions and women service members' experiences (Acker, 1990, 1992). Paralleled by the third feminist wave, research highlighted women's identity development, combat policy, and gender harassment in the military (Baumgardner, 2011; Enloe, 1983; Herbert, 1998; Maclaran, 2015; Miller, 1997, 1998). After the commencement of the War on Terror in 2001 and subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, research began drawing connections between social identity development, gender stereotypes, and the masculine military culture (Kumar, 2004; Pin Fat & Stern, 2005; Sanprie, 2005; Sasson-Levy, 2002).

Nearly a decade after the National Defense Authorization Act, permitting women to partake in restricted roles such as combat pilots, the 2012 Gender Equality in Combat Act was passed opening all combat occupations to women. At the same time, a fourth feminist wave emerged, and research began to appear concerning women veterans' health care in connection with combat and harassment stressors (Baumgardner, 2011; Cromptvoets, 2011; Maclaran, 2015; Street, Vogt, & Dutra, 2009). At the same time, a new round of research began that mirrored the same social identity development and masculine military culture connections as in early 1990s research (Brownson, 2014, 2016; Heinecken, 2017; King 2013a, 2013b, 2015; Moore, 2017; Sjoberg, 2015). Therefore, the issue of identity development for women in the military maintains its relevance in terms of research application, particularly as combat occupational specialties have only recently been opened to women service members.

To further demonstrate the legitimacy of investigating the issue of identity development of women service members, studies performed in the past 5 years can be

broken down into specific categories of focus. Each category is encompassed within this study and utilized as supporting evidence to Culver's (2013) Gender Identity Development of Women in the Military 4-phase model (see Appendix D for a table showing Culver's GIDWM theoretical matrix) and subsequent transcendence through Maslow's hierarchal level of self-actualization (see Appendix E for a figure showing Maslow's hierarchy of needs theoretical pyramid).

For example, multiple authors emphasized the issue and repercussions of gender stereotypes in the military, having the effect of marginalization and gender management on women service members (Archer, 2013; Crowley & Sandhoff, 2017; Egnell, 2013; Hauser, 2011; Huffman, Culbertson, & Barbour, 2014; King, 2013b; Nagel, 2014; Sjoberg, 2015; Stachowitsch, 2013). Other studies presented specific interpersonal stressors - such as gender harassment - as utilized in hypermasculine environments that emphasize the masculine ethic and their effects on women (Fleming, 2015; Heinecken, 2017; Hourani, Williams, Bray, Wilk, & Hoge, 2016; King, 2015; Langbein, 2015).

At the same time, many studies began to focus on the effects of interpersonal stressors and their effect on a woman service member's career in terms of retention and well-being in particular (Dichter & True, 2015; Nindl, Jones, Van Arsdale, Kelly, & Kraemer, 2016; Pawelczyk, 2014; Smith & Rosenstein, 2017; Sojo, Wood, & Genat, 2016; Street, Gradus, Giasson, Vogt, & Resick, 2013; Yan, McAndrew, D'Andrea, Lange, Santos, Engel, & Quigley, 2013).

Additional studies incorporated how the military as a gendered organization affects gender equality (Brownson, 2014; Campbell, 2017; Langbein, 2015), where other studies highlighted the need to restructure gendered organizations and reframe concepts of femininity and masculinity (Bunch, 2013; Duncanson & Woodward, 2016; Gustavsen, 2013; Kimmel, 2017). Altogether, these studies serve to disprove many subjective claims that women in combat will disrupt unit cohesion. Instead, it is proposed that the masculine ethic social climate that promotes hypermasculine environments serve as the main barrier to a diverse, effective, mission-ready cohesive group (King, 2013a; Leo, González-Ponce, Sánchez-Miguel, Ivarsson, & García-Calvo, 2015; Zang, Gallagher, McLean, Tannahill, Yarvis, & Foa, 2017).

Multiple studies have discussed women service members' experiences in gender management under interpersonal stressors induced by gender stereotypes. However, only a few studies have applied these concepts to identity development (Benedict, 2009; Butler, 2011; Crowley & Sandhoff, 2017; Furia, 2010; Herbert, 1998; Hullender, 2016; Johansen, Laberg, & Martinussen, 2014; Iverson, Seher, DiRamio, Jarvis & Anderson, 2016; Langbein, 2015; Silva, 2008; Sasson-Levy, 2003).

At the same time, only Culver (2013) combined the social identity theory with aspects of gender management as it pertains to women service members and presented it as a process categorized by specific phases with the possibility of transcending to a balanced military identity. Therefore, this study is a conglomeration of all the aforementioned attributes regarding the gendered military organization being a masculine society and their influence on a women service member's identity development from her

perspective. This perspective is organized into Culver's theoretical matrix organized into four ascending phases, navigating from the first phase of wearing the mask of gender management through the fourth and final phase of transcending the mask and self-acceptance.

This next section introduces the purpose of the study, presenting the research paradigm, intent of the study, and phenomenon of interest, followed by the research questions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discover how women navigate through the various phases of identity development in the military in order to reach the level of personal acceptance as both a woman and a warrior. This inquiry aimed to obtain personal testimonies from women service members regarding their personal experiences concerning interpersonal stressors and corresponding coping strategies pertaining to identity development. Furthermore, this study sought to connect these coping strategies that allowed for transcendence in the identity development matrix with a balanced military identity that represents an acceptance of true self: A feminine woman and professional soldier. Central to this study was to obtain self-reported behaviors women service members utilized to navigate through the four phases of gender management via personal interviews. Specific coercive interpersonal stressors within the category of gender harassment and aspects of effective group cohesion within a male-dominated unit and hypermasculine environment were also explored.

Research Questions

1. What are the main forms of gender harassment that women service members encounter and the coping strategies they use?
2. What are the strategies women service members use to cope with gender harassment?
3. How does a woman service member's position in the phases of gender identity development affect her career and well-being in the military?

This next section provides the theoretical matrix that serves as one of the cornerstones of this study, along with the conceptual framework. It consists of discussing the theories central to this study as cited from the original author. Major theoretical propositions are posed and explained in relation to this study's approach and research questions.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

Social identity theory as defined by Tajfel (1974) was applied throughout this study as it pertains to an individual's development of identity within and respective to a primary group. Goffman's (1977) gender identity theory narrows social identity theory insofar as stating that individuals develop a sense of self in terms of masculinity or femininity, affirming that gender identity is more profound than any other type of self-identification. Johansen et al. (2014) applied this concept specifically to military identity development, here pertaining to the individual's internalization of group attributes in accordance with the military's principal goals, values, and tasks. At the same time, the concept of gender management is presented in accordance with West and Zimmerman's

(1987) “doing gender” theory, which presents the internalization of certain masculine attributes as favored by the dominant male group.

Central to this research was Edwards and Jones (2009) who presented gender identity development phases in their original Grounded Theory of College Men’s Gender Identity Development. This was adapted into the Culver’s (2013) GIDWM theory and was used as the central theoretical basis for this study. Culver’s GIDWM theory specifically addressed women service members’ identities as they cope with the stressors of a hypermasculine military environment. Culver’s model presented four specific phases of identity development: Donning the mask, wearing the mask, recognizing the consequences of the mask, and removing the mask (see Appendix D). Culver’s identity development matrix follows the third research question proposal regarding how a woman service member’s position in the phases of gender identity development affecting a woman’s career and well-being in the military.

There are two main identities that women service members form when adapting to the military lifestyle. The first identity is one based on gender management, which develops from interpersonal stressors associated with gender harassment in a male-dominated or hypermasculine military environment (Sasson-Levy, 2003). The second is a naturally developed military identity based on a balanced gender identity and acceptance of self, which enables a woman to cope with normal stressors associated with professional soldiering (Culver, 2013). As women service members navigate through the first three phases, they experience the effects of gender management as per social coercion in the form of gender harassment. Yet by the fourth and final phase, women are

empowered to transcend gender stereotyped expectations of identity. Women revert to their true selves, develop a healthy balance between their own femininity and soldiering, and adapt a military identity as a true woman warrior.

Culver's (2013) final phase of transcendence is then expanded upon, applying Maslow's (1943) concepts of self-actualization, Fosse, Buch, Säfvenhom, & Martinussen's (2015) self-efficacy, and Bem's (1974) androgyny theories. These define the terminus for transcendence and the means for a positive military identity development. Maslow's (1943) concept of self-actualization parallels Culver's final stage of removing the mask; only after transcending interpersonal stressors and the fulfillment of psychological needs that include unit cohesion can a woman service member gain self-acceptance and fully develop her true identity as a woman warrior.

Additional support to the military identity construct was the concept of self-efficacy, which is connected with self-actualization. Here, faith in one's own capacities gives rise to the transference of one's essential nature into active behaviors, connecting true identity with military performance (Fosse et al., 2015). Further advocating transcendence was the theory of androgyny as proposed by Bem (1974). Here, the dichotomy of gender allows for unique categories to formulate that consolidate both masculine and feminine attributes favorable to the professional climate. This allows transcendence of social limitations of a sex-typed individual practicing gender management and encompasses adaptable behaviors that cultivate professional development and the benefits of resilience and satisfaction.

This next section is the conceptual framework, which discusses the contextual setting that serves as one of the cornerstones of this study. It includes a precise rationale for the selection of this topic, as well as key concepts being investigated. Finally, a brief summary is provided regarding the methodology.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

Social change is often accompanied by other changes in related spheres. Here, changes in military policy concerning women service members occurred concurrently with notable transformations both in and outside the military organization. Within the military, transformations include: force reductions, advancing technologies, changed military objectives and warfare, and altered public perceptions (Williams & Gilroy, 2006). From outside the military organization, regenerated third and fourth feminist waves and women's movements, and influential independent commission assessments have played significant roles in initiating modern military policy change (Baumgardner, 2011; Evans, 2015; Krollokke & Sorensen, 2006; Maclaran, 2015; Sasson-Levy, 2011; Tama, 2016; Van der Tuin, 2016).

Social theorists have placed much doubt on the success of the present military policy towards gender integration. Arguments emphasize the methodological ineptness in the recent military policy approach, as many related gendered organizations in the process of degendering and claiming a gender-neutral policy continue to favor the masculine ethic (Kanter, 1977). Policy changes are aimed primarily at re-proportioning the sex balance within occupations. Yet these gendered organizations, to include the military, have designed their social framework to exclusively represent male interests.

This social framework harbors hypermasculine environments that endorse interpersonal stressors based on social stereotypes and masculine preference in spite of professional competency (Acker, 1990, 1992; Baker, 2006; Britton, 1997; Decosse, 1992; Williams, 1995).

Social identity theory as defined by Tajfel (1974) and moreover Goffman's (1977) gender identity theory have been applied throughout this study to emphasize how identity is developed within certain contexts. In spite of military service being a component of civic duty entitled to all U.S. citizens, the U.S. military represents a gendered organization that enables gender stereotype attitudes to utilize gender harassment to reinforce the masculine ethic (Acker, 1992; Kirby & Henry, 2012; Segal, 1995; Trisko Darden, 2015). Therefore, the organizational social climate of the military both empowers and tolerates the use of gender harassment in the military (Sojo et al., 2016). As Herbert's (1998) study demonstrated, this form of interpersonal stressor strives to coerce individuals to conform to the masculine ethic, most frequently expressed in defamatory language and sexist humor as they are so easily trivialized. This point highlights the first research question aimed at identifying the primary forms of gender harassment that women service members encounter and the coping strategies they employ.

The concept of cohesion as presented by Forsyth (2018) brought to light not only its connection to identity development, but also broadened the spectrum of group cohesion to include five distinct and comprehensive components. Additionally, MacCoun, Kier, and Belkin (2006) and Mullen and Copper (1994) found that task

cohesion promoted effective group performance significantly more than social cohesion. Instead, social cohesion at particularly extreme levels produced a “clubiness” effect, in which performance was undermined in support of the group’s social culture (MacCoun, et. al., 2006, p. 647). Therefore, a hypermasculine unit not only marginalizes group members based on gender, but also reduces its overall cohesion and combat effectiveness in the process.

These findings challenged the general claim that gender integration in combat units will inevitably disrupt unit cohesion. Rather, the hypermasculine environment cultivated during deployments represents the primary obstruction to unit cohesion and successful gender integration (Rosen et al., 2003). This conceptual framework aspect represents the second research question regarding pinpointing the primary characteristics of group cohesion that present an effective unit during deployments as well as in garrison according to women service members.

This next section discusses the nature of the study, which defines the specific methodological approach, population sample prerequisites, and data collection and analysis strategy of this study. This is followed by concise definitions of key concepts referenced throughout this study.

Nature of the Study

Understanding the influences and developments involved in military identity formulation for women forwards the academic fields of social theory, gender studies, and military studies. Moreover, it provides a contemporary conceptual framework that reflects the social reality of women working within gendered organizations. This offers

recommendations for organizations to develop gender harassment policies based directly on women's testimonials. Additionally, it demonstrates the all-encompassing impact of gender stereotypes and gender harassment in social spheres; how gender stereotyped attitudes and gender harassment behaviors affect job performance and retention, and physical and mental well-being.

This qualitative narrative research is based on an adaptation of an original grounded theory study on gender development of college males performed by Edwards and Jones (2009). Here, Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory serves as an expansion of gender identity, a subcategory of social theory. Culver's GIDWM specifically addressed women service members' dynamic identity formation, mapping patterned coping strategies used to circumnavigate interpersonal stressors most prevalent in a male dominated military unit and hypermasculine environment. The resulting matrix presented four specific phases of identity development, beginning with gender management in the form of wearing a proverbial mask and ending with mask removal, self-acceptance, and transcendence into a balanced military identity.

The research population selected specifically represents active duty women veterans serving or who have served in the U.S. Army. Service and deployment dates must include or fall after the 2001 Global War on Terrorism. Participants are to have served in units that were predominantly male, involving MOSs associated with direct combat, and have deployed to the Iraq or Afghan theaters at least once to achieve combat veteran status or have served in or near a warzone. Purposeful selection was assisted by word-of-mouth, snowball sampling and voluntary participation, after initial participants

who fit the criteria had been selected. Interested participant candidates were contacted by the researcher initially using an invitation email, some of whose contact information had been shared with the researcher as a peer during her own service in the U.S. Army 2007 through 2014. Thereafter, candidates were welcomed to contact the researcher directly by email, phone, or messenger with questions or concerns regarding the study prior to consenting to voluntary participation.

The qualitative narrative inquiry methodology relied on open-ended interview questions that prompted the interviewee to reflect on and discuss specific events and life issues related to the research questions' objectives. The role of the researcher was to engage each participant with pre-prepared, open-ended questions in which to instigate personal reflections in a comfortable, communicative manner. Thereafter these biographic reflections were analyzed and interpreted as data within the context of the study. Biographic data were collected as one-on-one audio recorded interviews with the women service members who fulfilled the study's prerequisites and consented to participate. Close consideration was provided regarding each participant's specific communication needs in terms of technology access and comfort-level preferences. Special attention was given to the uniqueness of each individual's experience as well as to how interviewees constructed their experiences within the military organizational context (Rudestam & Newton, 2014).

All interviews took place remotely using the appropriate internet and phone access venues, and recording devices and software to produce seamless, high-quality interviews. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim using Google Docs and then

converted to Microsoft Word files. These completed transcriptions were shared with interviewees via email for verification prior to initiating the data analysis process (Maxwell, 2012). Specialized audio recording devices and computer software were used to record and store original interviews. The online qualitative data analysis software Dedoose was used to store and code transcripts as well as analyze and detect patterns in the personal narratives across participants, wherein chapters 4 and 5 of this study were then formulated.

Definitions

Doing gender: Appearing to possess and performing character traits attributed to a specific gender (Carlson, 2011, p. 75; Goffman, 1976, p. 69; West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126).

Essential nature: The enduring and essential attributes of character or tendencies, enacted as part of an individual's natural expression (Goffman, 1976).

Gender Identity Development of Women in the Military (GIDWM): Social identity theory that specifically mapped women service members' dynamic identity formation in the military, the matrix presented four specific phases of identity development, beginning with gender management in the form of wearing a proverbial mask due to interpersonal stressors and ending with recognition of the consequences of gender management, acceptance of self and subsequent mask removal (Culver, 2013).

Gender harassment: Personal experiences of verbal, physical, or symbolic, behaviors that express hostile and offensive attitudes about members of one gender, typically women. Gender harassment includes offensive gestures, defamatory language

and sexist humor, as well as demeaning symbolic representations that facilitate a hazardous workplace environment (Berdahl, 2007; Ford et al., 2008; Leskinen & Cortina, 2014; Sojo, et. al., 2016).

Gender identity: When individuals develop a sense of Self in terms of masculinity or femininity (Goffman, 1977).

Gender management: When an individual creates a completely separate, unnatural, fake identity or displays an abnormal level of femininity or masculinity contrary to that person's character, utilized as a coping strategy for dominant group expectations pertaining to social values, goals, and behaviors to gain the acceptance of their peers and avert marginalization (Benedict, 2009; Heineken, 2017; Rosen et al., 2003).

Group cohesion: "The integrity, solidarity, social integration, unit and groupiness of a group" (Forsyth, 2018, p. 10).

Hypermasculinity: The expression of extreme, exaggerated, or stereotypic masculine attributes and behaviors, also known as "masculine hegemony" (Rosen, et.al., 2003, p. 326).

Masculine ethic: Social framework gendered organizations practice to exclusively represent male interests, utilized as an exclusionary methodology towards women (Kanter, 1977).

Military identity: An individual's self-regulated social identification and internalization of the military's principal goals, values, and tasks (Johansen et al., 2014).

Social identification: The internalization of the group's values, tasks and goals of an organization (Haslam, 2004).

Social identity: An individual's self-concept which is derived from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1974).

Social identity theory: Self-perception corresponding to group relations and emotional attachment (Tajfel, 1974).

Tokenism: Emerges in groups that are highly skewed, which contain a preponderance of one type of worker numerically (dominants) over another (tokens) up to a ratio of 85:15 (Kanter, 1977; Zimmer, 1988).

Assumptions

1. The participants will answer the interview questions in a capable, honest and candid manner.
2. The participants' MOSs and units at the time of the interview are proportionately considered male-dominated.
3. The participants accept their biological sex and gender to equate as being singly and from birth exclusively female.
4. The inclusion criteria of the sample population are appropriate and therefore, affirms that all participants have experienced the described theoretical and contextual phenomenon discussed in this study.

5. The participants have a sincere interest in the study and are partaking out of their own free will and therefore do not have ulterior motives, are in a vulnerable state, nor were coerced to participate in this study.

Scope and Delimitations

The purpose of this study was to discover how women navigate through the various phases of identity development in the military in order to reach the level of personal acceptance as both a woman and a warrior. This inquiry aimed to obtain personal testimonies from women service members regarding their personal experiences concerning interpersonal stressors and corresponding coping strategies pertaining to identity development. Furthermore, this study sought to connect these coping strategies that allowed for transcendence in the identity development matrix with a balanced military identity that represents an acceptance of true self: A feminine woman and professional soldier.

Women service members represent a significant component of the armed forces, as soldiers and a source of enriching diversity. Therefore, investigating their experiences of social inclusion and identity adaptation provides an insight into modern military society, and attitudes and behaviors towards women in the military by their male peers. Furthermore, this study establishes results for future research on the topic of identity development in the military and gender studies.

The inclusion criteria purposefully narrowed the eligible participants and subsequent sample size. The research population selected consisted of active duty women veterans serving or who have served in the U.S. Army. Service and deployment dates

included or fell after the 2001 Global War on Terror. Participants were to have served in units that were predominantly male, involving MOSs associated with direct combat units, and have deployed to the Iraq or Afghan theaters or have been stationed in or near a warzone at least once to achieve combat veteran status.

Excluded theories and conceptual frameworks were Sasson-Levy's (2003) performance theory approach, Howard and Prividera's (2004) "female soldier paradox" (p. 89), as well as Butler's (2011) concept of performing gender. These theories rely on concepts of mimicry, enactment, and a separation of soldier and femininity instead of self-regulated internalization. Furthermore, Sasson-Levy (2003) and Butler's (2011) studies incorporated Kanter's (1977) criteria of tokenism, which is based on proportions that pivot upon reaching a 15% mark of the total workforce (Kanter, 1977; Morris, 1996). Women service member numbers have crossed over this minimal percentage in the combined military and U.S. Army (Reynolds & Shendruk, 2018), yet harassing behaviors nevertheless continue. Therefore, Kanter's (1977) theory has also been excluded from the primary theoretical framework of this study.

Crowley and Sandhoff's (2017), Langbein's (2015), and Furia's (2010) studies shared a similar contextual framework of identity management under suppressive cultural and social conditions. Yet Crowley and Sandhoff utilized performance theory to explain gender management, highlighting Howard and Prividera's (2004) "female soldier paradox" where women compartmentalize their soldier and feminine characteristics, maintaining them as separate entities (p. 223). Furia also utilized performance theory but from the standpoint that female cadets employed them as shifting social tactics to achieve

social success. Meanwhile, Langbein's study utilized muted theory (Ardener, 1977), which centers on the unrecognition of women's expressed experiences in Western society (Wood, 2005).

Contextually, Crowley and Sandhoff's (2017) study examined gender management as a social strategy women soldiers used to compare themselves to family members in light of marginalization via sexual harassment. As stated, Furia's (2010) study focused on U.S. Army cadets who shift between three primary social statuses to achieve institutional acceptance: emphasizing the feminine, embracing the masculine, and keeping a low profile. Neither of these studies mentioned the phenomenon of transcendence or other means of perseverance to overcome or exit gender management strategies, and therefore this conceptual framework was excluded as well. Finally, Langbein's (2015) study focused on how women utilize identity management to regain their voice in the military. As none of the theoretical nor complete contextual frameworks paralleled this study, these were excluded as primary theoretical and contextual sources.

Transferability of the findings from this study serves to inform on the present social attitudes of women service members in male-dominated environments. Additionally, it aims to provide a platform for future studies to imitate and further endorse Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory to further the fields of social identity, gender studies, and military studies. The knowledge gained from this study will provide insight into the coping strategies employed by U.S. Army women service members in male-dominated units and hypermasculine environments towards the development of a balanced military identity. This insight may extend into related studies concerning

women in other national and international military branches, women in non-traditional fields other than the military, and women veterans as they transition out of the military into civilian life. Culver's GIDWM theory originated from Edwards and Jones's (2009) grounded theory that applied to gender identity development of collegiate men. Therefore, combined with this study, the results open the field for potential studies on gender identity development for male military service members.

Limitations

The purpose of this study was to discover how women navigate through the various phases of identity development in the military in order to reach the level of personal acceptance as both a woman and a warrior. Culver (2013) states that the GIDWM theory can be generalized to women working in all non-traditional occupations that are considered to be male dominated. However, in accordance with the inclusion requirements of this study, the results cannot be assumed to apply to other U.S. military branches or to National Guard or Reserve military elements. Therefore, further studies using the applied parameters may be used in a broader application to demonstrate and confirm Culver's statement of generalization.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the reactionary uniqueness of every individual. Women's behaviors are impacted by multiple environmental influences and personal qualities exclusive to them. Therefore, each woman possesses her own reactionary threshold and reacts to stressors differently, whereby her level of personal acceptance would correspondingly differ from others. These characteristics serve as influential factors on individual behavior and are therefore limitations to this study. At

the same time, it should be noted that these characteristics also serve to diversify and enrich the personal narratives provided by participants as they discuss their experiences from their own unique perspective.

An additional limitation involves the relatively small sample population. In accordance with a qualitative study, the sample size is small. Instead of hosting a large pool of participants, the primary focus was turned towards an exhaustive literature research and developing the richness of data and analysis of the lived experiences and perceptions of the participants. Nevertheless, this aspect presents a limitation in generalizing results to all U.S. Army male-dominated units insofar as hypermasculinity, interpersonal stressors, and gender harassment are concerned.

Furthermore, the inclusion requirements and the small sample size limits consideration of the social conditions that occur in fully integrated units as well as those of male service members. Therefore, obtaining interviews in those contexts from those individuals would help to broaden the scope of the study and subsequent understanding of the women service member participants. At the same time, their stories may retract from the women service members' experiences as those specifically targeted and victimized by gender harassment. Meanwhile, a larger sampling may have assisted in transferability, but would consequently limit the level of rich descriptions a small target group provides.

Edwards and Jones's (2009) Grounded Theory of College Men's Gender Identity Development possessed certain limitations. Firstly, the model was tested on a limited

sample size, and therefore could not be generalized to apply to a larger, more diverse population such as is in the military. Secondly, it was determined that the identities that college men developed were too generalized in comparison to those of military women (Culver, 2013). Although the second issue was resolved upon its adaptation to women in the military, the first issue could not be resolved. Culver (2013) had only proposed an alteration to the grounded theory and did not apply this newly proposed theoretical framework to a study, and this study also utilized a small sample size applying Culver's theoretical model. Therefore, the small sample size being applied to the theoretical framework serves as an additional limitation in terms of generalization and reliability.

Accurate interpretation of the data is paramount. Impartiality and expertise are assumed during the research and analysis process. Careful steps have been taken to ensure a low percentage of error utilizing member checking via respondent validation. However, there is always a risk of reactivity, misinterpretation or misinformation. This may occur due to personal experience that appears as a bias, or inaccurate empathetic interpretation of a participants' experiences during the interview and analysis processes. Additionally, interviews were the preferred method of data collection which requires a certain level of skill to conduct that can only be developed over time with practice (Maxwell, 2012).

Finally, a limitation to the study is acknowledging that over time, opinions of female participation in the military change. As determined by several studies in which women have demonstrated their professional capabilities in combat and have gained subsequent acceptance, particularly within sex-integrated units (Archer, 2013; Barry,

2013; Cohen & Clement, 2013; King, 2013b; Rosen, Durand, Bliese, Halverson, Rothberg, & Harrison, 1996). The public social climate is dynamic and perpetually shifting, women service members' roles have significantly increased in the military in the past three decades, and at present the fourth feminist wave women's movement, overlapping the third feminist wave, is still active (Baumgardner, 2011; Donnelly, 2007; Evans, 2015; Maclaren, 2015). Therefore, concepts as gendered organizations and occupations and gender stereotypes may be antiquated in accordance with these developing trends. In this case, progressive social culture is a proposed limitation of this study.

Significance

The purpose of this study centralized on women service members' identity development in the context of male dominated units and hypermasculine environments that employ gender harassment to maintain masculine ethic primacy. This study brings to light relationships between related phenomenon that influence women service members: Gender harassment types and coping strategies, levels of unit cohesion, and gender identity development phases. This study considers these relationships to determine the effectiveness of the present gender integration military policy, offering suggestions to increase its effectiveness. A truly effective policy would evoke positive change within a gendered organization as a serve as an instrumental influence outside the organization itself.

By facilitating an awareness of the present military policy and related social inconsistencies by presenting women service members' perspectives, the significance is

twofold. Firstly, attention is drawn to social marginalization that affects women in non-traditional roles in spite of blanket policies specifically against discrimination and harassment. Secondly, the perspectives and theory model allow women in similar situations of gender management to become informed, enlightened, and empowered to take steps toward positive change in identity development and self-actualization. Therefore, this study represents a means for guidance, empathy, and self-efficacy for and among women, while reinforcing the value of positive group cohesion, professional competence, and diversity in society.

Summary

Key occurrences often sync to induce political change, such as advancements in military technology and warfare coinciding with a feminist wave and women's movement. Yet without an accompanying efficacious social change, policy successes are limited. Gender stereotypes are fostered throughout American society that are reflected within organizational cornerstones of the United States. Gendered organizations and occupations advocate a discriminatory social culture based on gender stereotypes from institution-wide to individual peer levels. This culture directly affects individuals, group cohesion, and the organization as a whole in terms of effectiveness, retention, and worker well-being. Using the male dominated unit and hypermasculine military environment as the contextual framework as highlighted by Herbert (1998) and contextualized by Forsyth (2018), Culver's (2013) GIDWM matrix as the theoretical framework, and the biographical narratives of women service members, new light and awareness are shone on social climate women in the military endure in the present U.S. Army.

Chapter 2 provides an exhaustive research of literature that centers on providing a strong background, and contextual and theoretical frameworks in support of resolving the proposed research questions and advocating the problem statement. Key influences on military policy and society and explanations for why women serve lead into the origins of a gendered military and MOSs that employ gender stereotypes as a social standard. Concepts of social cohesion and gender harassment are discussed comparatively between cohesive sex-integrated and hypermasculine units, to include the psychosocial effects interpersonal stressors have on women service members.

This contextual framework is subsequently accompanied by Culver's (2013) GIDWM theoretical framework that presents an explanatory matrix of identity development for women in the military. It contextualizes an ascending matrix beginning with gender management and transcending into a balanced military identity involving self-actualization, self-efficacy, and androgyny as catalysts for this transformation. Finally, several social theorist's suggestions towards applicable and positive social change in the U.S. military as a pathway to integration and equality are discussed. These are coupled with recommendations for further study in recognition of future developments and possibilities for women in the military.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Women service members in today's U.S. military have many options for occupational specialties to pursue as a career. Moreover, recent policy changes such as in the National Defense Authorization Act and the Gender Equality in Combat Act have enabled women to serve their country in both support and combat roles. New opportunities for combat recognition, higher rank promotion, and long-term career potential have arisen for women service members to help advocate a productive transition into the military and throughout military units. In fact, in the next twenty-five years it is expected that the percentage of women veterans will steadily increase as their male counterparts' numbers will decline (Spiva, 2018).

Yet as gender restrictions regarding occupational opportunities in the military have been repealed and more women transition into this traditionally male organization and male-gendered occupations, social barriers remain. These social barriers take the form of various coercive interpersonal stressors formulated as gender harassment. These stressors are utilized by peers to affirm their power status based on gender stereotypes, coerce unit members to adapt similar behavior, and reinforce the military's masculine ethic. For women service members, these stressors can hinder their adaptation of a balanced military identity and have a counterproductive effect on their military career and personal well-being. Particularly in male-dominated units, the hypermasculine influence often leads women to manage their gender by suppressing their femininity and displaying

masculine behaviors in an effort to gain peer acceptance in an attempt to solidify unit cohesion.

The purpose of this study was to discover how women service members successfully navigate and eventually transcend the four phases of military gender identity development in the U.S. Army. In the process, the present gap in research regarding gender harassment and identity development of women in the modern U.S. military is addressed. Successful transition into the military requires the development of a balanced military identity and the simultaneous rejection of gender management that masks one's true self. A balanced military identity requires a woman service member to transcend interpersonal stressors and reach a higher level of personal acceptance as both a woman and a warrior directed by self-actualization and enabled by self-efficacy.

By identifying commonalities among women service members, this information will be utilized to positively influence women who are serving in the military and other non-traditional roles. It also offers empirical evidence as recommendations to a more effective military policy approach to gender integration. Notably, the selected gender identity development theory presented by Culver (2013) is set in the context to accommodate women service members as they navigate through the four phases of identity development. Although this theory has specifically been applied to U.S. women service members, Culver (2013) states that this theoretical context can be generalized to women working in non-traditional occupations that are considered to be male dominated. Therefore, this study is a guide to assist and empower women in establishing themselves in male-dominated gendered organizations such as the military, and to help them discover

a healthy balance between their femininity and professional identity by providing other women's experiences as examples.

This research shall serve as a comparative means for military women to understand their present identity phase as well as identify shared commonalities with other women service members. At the same time, outside of this research presentation it is important to implement community outreach in order to create an awareness of the present social culture in non-traditional occupations and provide guidance specifically for women service members. This will be achieved through local women veterans group activism, participation in women's organizations and conferences that influence gender policy and assist women veterans and continued published research on this and related topics to women in the military.

Significant research on the topic of women service members and identity development encompasses key authors who have written multiple articles on the subject of women in the military. These individuals are considered experts and significant theorists in their field. At the same time, the works of many established theorists and researchers in the area of gender identity and women in the military date back to significantly earlier decades. Drawing from this research provides not only presents a timeline but also pinpoints original theoretical propositions for when the particular issue had been addressed. For example, Tajfel's (1974) social identity theory, Kanter's (1977) theory of tokenism, Goffman's (1977) concept of gender identity and West and Zimmerman's (1987) doing gender, and research concerning women in the military

emerged in the late 1970's and 1980's when the issue of integration in a male-dominated institution began to emerge (Holm, 1992).

Following the First Persian Gulf War from 1990 to 1991 and the passing of the 1991 National Defense Authorization Act, further research appeared that questioned gender inequality in the military, a woman's right to serve based on citizenship, and the effects of integration on unit cohesion. This included Herbert's (1998) prominent research regarding women in the military and gender management, expansion on Enloe's (1983) research on militarized femininity, Acker's (1990, 1992) research on gendered institutions, and Miller's (1997, 1998) research on combat policy and gender harassment in the military.

By 2001 and the commencement of the War on Terror and subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the glass ceiling had slowly been removed and research on women in the military began to take refined directions. Women's identity construction began to be tied to the masculine military culture, such as in Sasson-Levy's (2002, 2003) research, and gender stereotypes presented to the public after Private Jessica Lynch's rescue (Kumar, 2004; Pin Fat & Stern, 2005; Sanprie, 2005). Moreover, research began to appear concerning women veterans' health care in connection with combat and harassment stressors (Street et al., 2009).

By 2010 research concerning gender identity, related stressors, and further integration of women in the military increased, particularly since the passing of the 2012 Gender Equality in Combat Act. A new round of notable researchers on the topic have emerged, such as Brownson (2014, 2016), Heinecken (2017), King (2013, 2015), Moore

(2017), and Sjoberg (2007, 2015). But it is important to note that many of their citations reference original theorists and researchers, which advocates cause for utilizing older citations in this study. Therefore, this researcher has cited multiple original sources that remain applicable to the concept of social theory, which defends the use of older journal articles and books as source material.

An exhaustive search has compiled a highly inclusive literature review, which drew from several databases. The primary library used was Walden University's Thoreau Library portal, accessing EBSCO, Homeland Security Digital Library, International Security and Counter Terrorism Reference Center, Military and Government Collection, ProQuest, PsychINFO, and SAGE databases. Google Scholar was also used in order to cross-reference materials and propose supplementary articles available through additional online sources to include the University of Wisconsin, PsycNET, and JSTOR databases.

Armed Forces & Society was the primary journal source, but multiple additional journals were investigated from International Journal, Psychology of Women Quarterly, Security Dialogue, Feminist Theory, Journal of Women and Social Work, Parameters, Men and Masculinities, and Military Psychology. Keyword database searches initially utilized general terms and their combinations: military, armed forces, women, gender, combat, attitudes, masculinity, femininity. Thereafter, more specific keyword applications were used as entries in order to narrow the topic and focus on expert theorists and researchers. These included: military cohesion, gender mainstreaming, gender-based violence, gender identities, military identity, hegemonic masculinity, gender stereotypes, and gender harassment.

To emphasize the standard of triangulation, a total of two hundred and thirty sources have been utilized to compile a thorough literature review over a three-year search to ensure triangulation of literary resources. Journal article dates range in accordance with their relevant application. Therefore, original social theoretical works will present older citations to present an established theoretical framework. Recent studies date back five years, while older studies serve to establish precedence, present a conceptual framework that matches the policy advancements concerning women in the military, and advocate recent studies.

Forty-one articles were reviewed that specifically focused on women's integration into the gendered organizations and the military, combat roles, and aspects of the military culture that include social stereotypes and interpersonal stressors. Twenty periodicals presented a thorough investigation on identity development as it relates to women in non-traditional occupations to include the military. At the same time, many sources discussed multiple keywords as many of the themes are interrelated, falling under the umbrella of social theory.

Additionally, Google Scholar was especially helpful when seeking modern studies on women in the military, as well as the sixteen articles concerning women service member's well-being and the effects of combat and social stressors. It also assisted in pinpointing specific senate bill referendums and correctly citing them. Six articles specifically focused on the topic of citizenship, seven on masculinity and hypermasculinity, and nine on cohesion in the military. Google Books assisted in referencing sources such as books, white papers, and encyclopedia references.

Approximately 30 books that could not be appropriately viewed on the topic of women in the military were purchased, with an additional five books related to gender identity development. These sources were used to verify and reiterate statements made in journal articles, and many authors were identical between publications.

In an analysis of the literature, this chapter is organized into eight comprehensive sections that first provide a detailed background, followed by the conceptual framework and cumulatively build up to the theoretical foundation and concluding thoughts. The first section provides background knowledge in terms of occurrences that influence military policy change from both inside and outside the military. Key policy advocates are addressed: force reductions, women's movements, technological advancements, transformed strategic warfare and military objectives, positive societal attitudes, and independent commissions. This is followed by the second section, which provides an explanation of motives for women to serve in the military, grounds for equal service opportunity based on citizenship, and the paradox of societal differentiation between women and men soldiers. The third section discusses speculations of many social theorists regarding the present policy approach towards gender equality in the U.S. military. Furthermore, this section highlights societal influences of gender stereotypes and women in the military citing subjective print and media discourse.

The fourth section is a presentation of the contextual framework that first demonstrates how organizations and occupations become gendered. This is followed by an exploration of gender stereotypes and the interpersonal stressors that arise due to stereotypical attitudes and beliefs. The fifth section furthers the contextual framework in

terms of self-identity and unit cohesion. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs as well as Forsyth's (2018) matrix of cohesion are employed to compare an exemplar cohesive unit with a male dominated unit and hypermasculine environment wherein women experience interpersonal stressors. The sixth section furthers the contextual framework and presents the specific stressors that impact women service members. Attention is brought to gender harassment and specifically defamatory language and sexist humor, which are reportedly the most frequent and most tolerated forms of harassment in the U.S. military. This section concludes with a focus on the psychological effects of interpersonal stressors, and the negative determinants that they can cause on a woman service member, personally and professionally.

The seventh section presents the theoretical framework, introducing social identity theory and identity development, which includes an explanation of the concepts of military identity and gender management. This is followed by specific studies on gender identity development, emphasizing Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory as the theoretical anchor for this study. Culver's final phase of transcendence is expanded upon, applying Maslow's (1943) concept of self-actualization, Fosse et al. (2015) self-efficacy, and Bem's (1974) androgyny to demonstrate a means for a positive military identity development. This is followed by an eighth and final section that discusses social theorist's suggestions towards real and positive social change in the U.S. military as a pathway to integration and equality. Recommendations for further study are also suggested here, whereby a subsequent chapter summary shall conclude this literature review.

A Background in Aspects that Enable Military Policy Change

Notable political advancements that have transformed military personnel policies are due to key occurrences both in and outside the military organization. These include force reductions, advancing technologies, changed military objectives and warfare, and altered public perceptions (Williams & Gilroy, 2006). In addition, women's movements and independent commissions have played significant roles in initiating modern military policy change. These occurrences have been noted to happen in the same pattern as military policy change, particularly in the case of pursuing gender equality.

Force Reductions, Women's Movements, and Military Policy Change

In the case of force reductions, post-wartime is often paired with a dramatic drawdown in troop levels. Correspondingly, when a new threat appears and a demand for more soldiers occurs, it is inevitably accompanied by a subsequent increase in recruiting efforts to produce a troop surplus. For example, by March 1991 the First Persian Gulf War and Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield had come to an end, a drawdown occurred, and soon after the National Defense Authorization Act was passed. Likewise, after May 2011 it had been determined that the U.S. had achieved its goal by locating Osama bin Laden and defeating the extremist group al-Qaida. Correspondingly, another troop drawdown occurred and subsequently the Gender Equality in Combat Act was enacted.

In the effect that a force reduction occurs, a smaller and more manageable military results. At the same time, more emphasis is placed on examining the competence level and distinguishing qualities of military service members (Williams & Gilroy, 2006).

Here, soldiers who demonstrate themselves as capable and adept in their MOS become candidates for promotion and special training schools. Similarly, once an increase in recruitment is deemed necessary, the U.S. military as an all-volunteer force will attract individuals from a diverse group of the general population, including women.

The occurrence of a troop drawdown combined with a gender equality women's movement - the second feminist wave - has resulted in an increase in women service members since the 1970's (Krolokke & Sorensen, 2006). Equality for women in the military organization and occupations began in 1973 when the U.S. military was converted to an all-volunteer force. Gradually, legal restrictions were removed, such as those that prevented women from certain officer positions or their husbands from being considered dependents (Moore, 2017). However, more modern military history has indicated the most significant change pertaining to military occupational specialties and equal access for women service members.

Advancement and Greater Reliance on Technology and Military Policy Change

Citing advancements in technology and its increased reliance, in December 1991 the National Defense Authorization Act was signed by President George Bush (House of Representatives Bill 2100, 1991). It officially permitted women to fly aircraft in combat missions - to include fixed wing, rotary wing, and drones - which reveals an increasing reliance on advanced technology in modern warfare missions (Stachowitsch, 2013). Again, this policy change took place during a troop drawdown following Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and during the third feminist wave (Krolokke & Sorensen, 2006; Sasson-Levy, 2011; Van der Tuin, 2016).

As Segal (1995) pointed out, in many cases technology has allowed for the substitution of mental ability over physical strength. Indeed, weaponry has become miniaturized and digitized, and equipment lighter and more versatile. Air power is achieved with superior firepower and airstrikes, and drone and helicopter reconnaissance headline military reports. To be sure, this change in approach to military warfare has allowed women to demonstrate their competence and performance in combat-related military specialties, highlighting mental resilience and occupational capability over mere physical strength.

Transformed Strategic Warfare and Military Objectives, and Military Policy Change

Women's roles in the first Gulf War had been much more combat-centered due to the blurred front lines of conflict related to the evolution of engagement tactics. Williams and Gilroy (2006) noted the significant connection between a change in strategic warfare and the shift in military personnel policy to further explain the increase in women service members. As Segal, Segal and Reed (2015) pointed out regarding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, "formal restrictions on women's service do not always match the realities of service in a war zone" (p. 53).

By no means was the coalescence of non-combatant versus combat roles exclusive to the first Gulf War. Women service members' involvement in direct combat situations became more necessary as engagements began in Afghanistan with Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in 2001 and resumed in Iraq in the Second Persian Gulf War with Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2003. In these cases, the kind of skill sets the

military sought were directly connected to the shift in military missions and objectives (Williams & Gilroy, 2006).

In these modern-day operations, the military had transformed its rules of engagement (ROE) to prioritize cultural sensitivity and “winning the hearts and minds” of the local population (Segal et al., 2015). As a direct result, women service members served as troop support attachments to infantry units, as noted in the cases of the *Lionesses*, Female Engagement Teams, and Cultural Support Teams (CST) (Archer, 2013; Moore, 2017; Pierce, 2006). Here, modern warfare produced ill-defined front lines in the form of capsuled forward operating bases (FOBs). This aspect increased the potential for imminent danger from all geographical directions and subsequent potential for soldiers to participate in direct combat, despite enforcing a culturally sensitive ROE objective (Moore & Kennedy, 2011).

The Gender Equality in Combat Act of May 2012 required U.S. military branches to relinquish the discriminatory exclusion of women from ground combat. This meant opening all U.S. military branches’ MOSs to women service members by January 2016. The premise was to obtain gender equality without affecting military “readiness, effectiveness, and unit cohesion” (Senate Bill 3182, 2012). This policy change notably occurred during a slow, but steady military drawdown. Furthermore, as the U.S. possessed the most sophisticated and technologically advanced military in the world, it maintained its culturally sensitive ROE as well as its presence in the Middle East and other parts of the world in the Global War Against Terrorism (Sabol & MacDonald,

2016). Therefore, the timing for this congressional bill fit perfectly within the premise of policy change (Williams & Gilroy, 2006).

The immediate effect of the bill on women service members was the increased opportunities the newly accessible occupations offered, but also an increased risk of danger in combat. At the same time, the overall benefits from opening all military specialties to women were the shared competencies and skills, and new perspectives and characteristics that would increase soldier resilience and mission effectiveness (Gustavsen, 2013). Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter stated in a press conference in December 2015 that he “made a commitment to building America’s force of the future,” and “in the 21st century that requires drawing strength from the broadest possible pool of talent. This includes women” (Rosenberg & Philipps, 2015).

Societal Attitudes and Military Policy Change

In addition to force reductions, women’s movements, changed military objectives and warfare, and advancing technologies, changing public attitudes have also played a significant part in advocating progressive military policy change towards gender equality. As Williams and Gilroy (2006) noted, the gravity of influence societal attitudes have on political policy change is profound. In general, the U.S. military and its soldiers and veterans all share a “high level of public support and confidence” (p. 104). At the same time, in accordance with a recent poll determining the public support given to women serving in direct combat, the result was 66% of respondents supported women's presence in these military occupations (Cohen & Clement, 2013).

The primary analogy for this majority cited the increase in media reporting and depiction of women's successful performance during recent wartime, political salience of women in the military, as well as the large investment in recruitment advertising by the military (Segal, et. al, 2015; Sjoberg, 2007; Williams & Gilroy, 2006). As Daniels and Sherman (2016) emphasized how vital it is for the media to purposefully depict women in varied roles for girls and women to envision themselves doing in the future. This includes male-gendered occupations such as the military, as historically there have been few examples of women in non-traditional roles, appearance-focused occupations, and non-objectified depictions.

In addition, present studies concerning men service member attitudes toward women in the military differ from studies performed 20 years ago in terms of survey results. For example, in a study performed regarding women being "just as good front-line soldiers" when "given the same training," less than 25% of males agreed. In the same study, when inquiring about unit cohesion and mission effectiveness, where "having both genders in a unit improves the work atmosphere" and women have the "killer instinct" required for combat, no more than 30% of male service members agreed (Stiehm, 1998, pp. 91-92).

In comparison, regarding parallel studies in more recent years, it was found that male service members are more accepting of women in the military and in combat. For example, Gustavsen (2013) found that women service members' presence was viewed to bring valuable qualities such as more adept multi-tasking, contemplation, mentality, and social skills. In addition, the overall environment was said to improve through diversity,

as women were thought to bring not only additional adeptness and acuity, but also are perceived as being more receptive and caring to fellow soldiers.

All in all, what has made the most impact regarding male service member attitudes toward women service members is the actual experience of working together during deployments. As Segal et al. (2015) reported, in the Iraq and Afghanistan combat theaters, men have become acquainted with women service members on a personal and professional basis. Here, women service members have demonstrated their mental and physical effectiveness, which has facilitated a more positive attitude toward women in the military and combat specialties (Archer, 2013).

Independent Commissions and Military Policy Change

Independent commissions, whose primary objective is to determine specific military-related outcomes, are considered to have significant influence on military policy and professionals (Tama, 2016). For example, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) affected the Department of Defense's policy decisions insofar as to facilitate the passing of the Gender Equality in Combat Act to rescind combat exclusion of women and "take deliberate steps in a phased approach to open additional career fields and units involved in direct ground combat to qualified women" (p. 418).

The steps toward equality is confidently viewed as a political gain by military women for themselves and for future women service members (Miller, 1998). Yet to understand the value of equality in the military it is likewise important to understand why women choose to serve. Understanding why women serve helps gain perspective on their identities as a citizen-soldier and a woman. Furthermore, it sheds light on the effects of

the stressors women experience during their service that differ from those of men to undermine their fidelity and aspirations as military service women.

This next section is a discussion of women's military ambitions, and their reflections of policy change pertaining to combat MOSs. The section continues the discussion through an exploration of women's reasons for serving in the military in connection with national citizenship. Finally, the discussion turns to the paradox between men and women service members in terms of soldiering. Here, historical projections of masculinity in society contradict democratic ideals of citizenry and inhibit women service members from being viewed as equals to their male peers. Therefore, women may serve, but only men are viewed as true combat warriors.

Why Women Volunteer to Serve in the U.S. Military

Beginning in the First Persian Gulf War and continuing through to the present day, media coverage has presented an in-depth view of women soldiers performing in modern warfare and combat roles. This period also marked the beginning of many books and articles published on women soldiers' deployment experiences based on collections of their personal testimonials (Baron & Wise, 2013; Benedict, 2009; Holmstedt, 2008, 2009; LaGuardia-Kotite, 2012). From these sources, women discuss common themes regarding their reasons for joining a volunteer force during wartime: career opportunities, professional development, a means to support a family or to receiving citizenship, or a source of adventure, a life change, and a personal challenge (Dichter & True, 2015).

Miller (1998) found that overall, women service members support a military policy that would match the needs of the military with "women's choices, skills and

abilities” (p. 34). In the same study, Miller discussed how women service members accept a difference in abilities, but do not advocate the application of such differences to pertain to every service man and woman. In essence, a generalization cannot be made as performance depends on the individual. Miller continued regarding combat roles, “...not all women are unfit for jobs that demand upper-body strength, and not all men are qualified simply because they are men” (p. 35).

Service and Citizenship

A primary or underpinning motive for women volunteering for the military is that it is a means in which to serve their country. Recent studies connect the desire to serve one’s country as a projection of one’s self identity as a citizen of that country. In essence, through service to one’s country people gain recognition and respect as a positive influence in society. In addition, as a member of a democratic society, a citizen has a civic obligation to share responsibility for upholding the democratic ideals their country represents such as liberty, individualism, unity, diversity and equality (Snyder, 2003). This is known as contributing to the common good of collective society, whereupon a soldier is willing to serve and sacrifice themselves for their country (Sasson-Levy, 2002). As a citizen-soldier in the U.S. military, a woman service member may obtain U.S. citizenship and carry out her civic duty and individual responsibility to uphold American democratic ideals.

Furthermore, Burk (1995) noted that citizenship involves an expression of social identity, stating that citizenship is “...a kind of social standing and a quest for respect and recognition in the life of a political community” (p. 504). Gustavsen (2013) stated that the

military allows Americans to “act on one’s sense of patriotic duty, which is so important to many Americans” (p. 368). Minorities and women in particular use the military as a means to not only “demonstrate their political loyalty and worthiness as citizens,” but also to express their freedom of choice in public service and their determination to break through glass ceilings and gender stereotypes (p. 505).

The Paradox of Women Soldiers and Male Warriors

As U.S. citizens, women are already encompassed within the democratic umbrella. Therefore, the civic perspective rejects the exclusive “male warrior” connotation (Snyder, 2003, p. 186), as well as subjective claims that women’s presence results in a “reduction of military effectiveness” (Burk, 1995, p. 510) and “less unit cohesion” (Maginnis, 2013, p.106) as reasons for exclusion in the U.S. military. Such motives convey a political paradox that infringes on such key democratic concepts of equality, diversity, and civic duty. However, through a review of U.S. history and its societal makeup, an explanation arises based on traditional gendered occupations and subscribed gender roles.

As American men have traditionally served in the capacity of soldiers, in accordance with the citizenship concept, they became venerated as exemplary citizens and true Americans who were viewed as warriors for democracy. At the same time, women who served in the military did not receive the same public reception. Although officially women have obtained the same level of citizenry as their male counterparts, as a soldier their service was viewed exclusively as a supportive role prior to the 1991 National Defense Authorization Act. Here, a true patriot was only recognized as a soldier

who had been in combat, whereupon validating their warrior status in the military and citizenry in society. As women were not allowed in combat, the masculine warrior mystique of soldiering remained unchallenged.

Societal fixation on soldiering and combat as a masculine trait originates from historical trends that allowed for the gendering of the military and particular MOSs. Yet even after 1991 and women demonstrating their prowess in both air and ground combat supplemented with media coverage, their service remained undervalued due to definitive separations of gender traits, such as violence and femininity (Acker, 1992; Kirby & Henry, 2012; Segal, 1995; Trisko Darden, 2015). In addition, women service members' achievements in ground combat were unrecognized by the military prior to the Gender Equality in Combat Act in 2012. This is due to their assigned combat units, serving as support attachments to infantry units, and officially women were not yet allowed in direct combat (aside from aircraft pilots and drone operators) according to the Department of Defense regulations.

Although women have been involved in military campaigns since the Revolutionary War, as a political group they did not become organized until the 1920s when campaigning for the right to vote. Neither the U.S. government nor organized women's groups prioritized military service in connection with civic duty (Burke, 1995). As a result, the journey towards gender equality for women in the U.S. military has consisted of small political advancements between decades within the 20th and 21st centuries.

As progress has been made towards gender equality in the military, it has been met with adversity from sources that originate from both in and outside the military. This next section examines specific aspects of scrutiny from social theorists regarding the current policy approach used to gain gender equality in the U.S. military. This component presents a discussion of how equality can be reached by positive mental change through recognition of competency rather than by an increase in numbers of women service members alone. The next section also examines stereotype reinforcement from outside influences on social attitudes towards women service members, namely subjective print and the American media. This topic particularly focuses on the masculine ethic fostered within the U.S. military, and the negative consequences involving women service members.

The Long Road: Policy & Stereotypes

Today, the U.S. Army has a higher percentage of female service members in its volunteer force than many other nations - approximately 15% overall, and over 76,000 serving in the U.S. Army (Moore, 2017; Reynolds & Shendruk, 2018; Statistic, 2016). Moreover, since the commencement of OIF and New Dawn in Iraq, and OEF in Afghanistan, more women have been deployed to combat zones than ever before (Baechtold & DeSawal, 2009). However, the military has traditionally been an all-male occupation, whereupon soldiering has come to represent the very essence of masculinity (Gustavsen, 2013; Moore, 2017). As Nagel (2014) noted, a warrior in the traditional sense and its related culture need to find new relevance in modern warfare to accompany changed mission objectives and rules of engagement during deployments. Redefining the

“masculine-warrior paradigm” via policy change is the ideal situation in the U.S. military, an organization that has traditionally harbored a culture of male-dominance (Dunivin, 1994, p. 29; Crowley & Sandhoff, 2017, p. 222).

Policy Methodology Scrutinized: Changing Numbers and Not Mentality

The policy approach to achieving gender equality has been subject to scrutiny from both social theorists and feminists. For example, Acker (1992) declared that although steps have been taken to incorporate women as equals into organizations, the male presence continues to predominate principle organizations and occupations, whereupon continuing to foster the connection between masculinity and national security. This brings into question the methodology of integration that is being utilized to achieve gender equality in the military.

As suggested by Britton (2000) and Williams (1995), the present integration process is a promotion of numbers or “queueing” feminization rather than a valid advancement towards equality (Williams, 1995, p. 158). The “gender neutral” (DeGroot, 2001, p. 100; Nagel, 2014, p. 203) or “gender mainstreaming” (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 9) proposition that the military has been pursuing may serve to simply entice more women to join male dominated military specialties to obtain a numeric equality in personnel. In essence, the solution is to reach equal quantity disconnected from a unified mentality of equality.

This policy approach had arguably been taken to avoid a so-called “lone woman effect” and achieve a “critical mass of numbers,” wherein eventually enough women would attain leadership positions. Here, policy success pivots upon this imperative

occupational development, as these women in key positions would assumedly mentor junior enlisted and officer women service members while simultaneously gain acceptance with their male counterparts as a “self-sustaining cohort” (Barry, 2013, p. 28). However, Williams (1992) and Britton (2000) commented that present policy changes are aimed primarily at re-proportioning the sex balance within occupations, rather than address the “deeply gendered nature of the workplace - organizations themselves must be restructured to place equal value on masculine and feminine characteristics” (Britton, 2000, p. 426). Therefore, the “just add women and stir” policy approach arguably does not produce an equal representation of both women and femininity in the military (Sjoberg, 2015, p. 444).

Many authors emphasize the improbability of success of a gender-neutral military policy (Acker, 1992; Barry, 2013; Britton, 2000; Heinecken, 2017). Prominent social theorists have noted the primary issue in the process of degendering is that gendered organizations - such as the military - that claim to be pursuing gender equality in the form of a gender-neutral policy, have designed their social framework to exclusively represent male interests (Acker, 1990, 1992; Baker, 2006; Britton, 1997; Decosse, 1992; Williams, 1995). Kanter (1977) specifically identified this as the “masculine ethic” (p. 25). Such strong misogynist conviction relates to a hypermasculine environment and explains the rejection of females in male-dominated military occupations in spite of women demonstrating their competency and even necessity. Archer (2013) verified this attitude towards women, as male service members referenced gender stereotypes when asked about their female counterparts. For example, female engagement team members were

stated to be unaware of their purpose, and women service member's actions were described in terms of emotional expression rather than in operative qualities.

After reviewing military degendering and the gender equality policy method, a fairer approach to gender integration has proposed a renewed policy based on "equivalency" instead of "equality" (Brownson, 2014, p. 765; Heinecken, 2017, p. 205). Here, the equivalency approach acknowledges the physiological differences between men and women, but also forwards the concept of "meritocracy" (Heinecken, 2017, p. 204; Nagel, 2014, p. 203). This represents reward based on competence that has been demonstrated in performance, whereby that person should be allowed to serve in an MOS via merit and regardless of gender.

Nevertheless, the Gender Equality in Combat Act appears to have been instigated the same way it had been adopted: "force by powerful individuals" (Fleming, 2015, p. 519). Therefore, as the present gender neutrality approach continues to be emplaced, specific standards based on male physical performance and masculine social beliefs, otherwise known as "essentialism," remain (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 9). Fleming (2015) questioned the traditional concept of "developing character" used for professional development, calling attention to its ineffectiveness in altering social attitudes and behaviors in the military (p. 523). Instead, Fleming proposed rationality and purposeful deliberation as an inclusive approach to wholly develop soldiers and instill positive change. Regardless, the continuation of male-dominated occupations based on gender stereotypes results in the discouragement of qualified women from joining and remaining in the military (Heinecken, 2017).

The Masculine Ethic, Subjective Print and Media Discourse

For those women service members who meet the physical standards to qualify for a predominantly male MOS, the masculine ethic mentality actively coerces women service members to “embrace masculine values, norms, and behavior to be respected as soldiers” and “suppress ‘undesirable’ feminine traits” in the process (Heinecken, 2017, p. 204). The effect often compels women to “do gender” or “do masculinity” in the form of gender management or “gender performativity” in order to appear to possess masculine characteristics in want of respect from peers and success in their MOS and military career (Carlson, 2011, p. 75).

This masculine ethic has been pursued through different avenues as a source of discouragement and harassment for women service members. The continuous reinforcement of gender stereotypes is one way that the masculine ethic has been preserved over time in the U. S. military. Influential spheres outside the military, such as subjective publications and the media, have attempted to shape society’s concepts of women service members for decades. By influencing social attitudes through the lens of gender stereotypes, attitudes and beliefs are shaped around reinforcing gender roles. The corresponding effect in the military is to generate and enforce the masculine ethic as the desired social paradigm from which true soldiers and warriors are made.

Authors such as Browne (2007), DeYoung (2001), Gutmann (2000), Maginnis (2013), Mitchell (1998), and Van Creveld (2002) all emphasized women's emotional and physical ineptness and subsequent incompatibility with the military esprit de corps. Such comments underscored an assumed underperformance by women service members,

which proposed an inevitable negative effect on unit cohesion, particularly in combat, as male bonding is assumed to be essential to unit cohesion and combat readiness (Egnell, 2013; Rosen et al., 2003). However, Brownson (2014) noted that these accounts are based on “subjective beliefs and the historically male perspective of sex-based inequality” (p. 768). Therefore, the overall effect of these impressions is only the perpetuation of social attitudes based on gender stereotypes.

In addition, the media has served as a means in which to influence public attitudes towards women in the military vis-a-vis traditional gender roles (Stachowitsch, 2013). For example, an original assumption by the media was that women serving in combat roles would be more accepted in the public eye so long as women’s roles were depicted as being temporary, as in the case of a support attachment to implement a ROE of cultural respect. Here, the concept of specialized support groups was popularized and the debate concerning women in combat was successfully contained to a military specific context (Fenner, 1998).

Trisko Darden (2015) argued that during wartime, women involved in the violence of combat are prescribed one of two frameworks by the media: sensational or problematic. By categorizing women’s wartime experiences within one of these two frameworks, the media succeeds in preserving gender roles and stereotypes, while simultaneously presenting conflicting images of women’s identities to society (Sanprie, 2005; Sjolander & Trevenen, 2010). An ideal example is the case of Pvt. Jessica Lynch during the Second Persian Gulf War in 2003, being depicted by some media sources as the “female Rambo” (Pin Fat & Stern, 2005, p. 27). By other sources, particularly in

stories related to her capture, Pvt. Lynch was portrayed a “vulnerable woman” in need of rescue (Kumar, 2004, p. 297).

These two descriptions appeal to the signatory masculine ethic of the military. Service women who perform well in their MOS, particularly during deployments, are described as having masculine qualities that parallel the fictitious characters John Rambo or G.I. Jane. At the same time, women service members are associated with prescribed feminine qualities as weak or soft, whereby necessitating a male warrior presence to save them from their own vulnerability (Pin Fat & Stern, 2005; Sjoberg, 2015). As demonstrated by the case of Pvt. Jessica Lynch, femininity and soldiering would appear starkly juxtaposed with each other, placing the potential for gender equality in question (Pin-Fat & Stern, 2005).

The effects of these outside influences on social attitudes reinforce gender stereotypes and gender roles. The same manipulation used on civilian society carries over into military society. Yet from within the military, gender attitudes are carried beyond discriminatory gender roles (Yoder, 1991). Here, attitudes may be acted upon in a harassing display of behaviors. This takes the form of manipulative social pressure via interpersonal stressors. Heineken (2017) and Kelty, Kleykamp, and Segal (2010) noted that as part of a normal day, interpersonal stressors can include undermining women’s leadership or authority, and subjecting them to unwarranted scrutiny, harassment, sabotage, and social isolation.

Exposure to these behaviors on a continual basis proves to be detrimental to women service members’ performance, health, and military career. Smith and Rosenstein

(2017) found that young recruits do not consider gender attitudes as an important factor when entering the military as it is “already understood to be highly masculine and rigidly hierarchical” (p. 272). Arguably, Matthews, Ender, Laurence and Rohall (2009) warn of a potential “rude awakening” for women service members, which notes that without a change in social attitudes, fewer women will participate in the volunteer service, or choose to be discharged as soon as their initial service commitment is fulfilled (p. 250).

This next section provides the conceptual framework, presenting the military as a gendered organization with gendered occupational specialties. Gender stereotypes are explained, and specific applications of “sex” and “gender” are presented. Furthermore, it leads to an evaluation of gender stereotypes in the military. This includes attitudes and behaviors, taken by both men and women service members that prove counterproductive to achieving gender equality in the U.S. military.

Gendered Organizations and Occupations

Goffman (1977) stated that in modern society, gender is the cornerstone of social interactions and institutions. Gender serves as one way in which individuals are able to understand human nature. Biological differences establish grounds from which social arrangements are cultivated. Furthermore, individuals develop a sense of self in terms of masculinity or femininity, referred to as “gender identity” (Goffman, 1977, p. 304). Goffman affirmed that gender identity is more profound than any other type of self-identification. Here, the theory of social identity is applicable to provide a better understanding for the legitimacy of gender in workplaces and professions.

To begin, in analyzing an institution, two specific levels are defined that directly affect gender identity. The first level is the organization, which influences the social environment. In the case of gendered organizations that either condone segregation vis-a-vis gender, or do not facilitate an organizational structural degendering, the result is stereotypical gender performance by workers and gender inequality within the organization (Pierce, 1996; Williams, 1995).

A second sublevel, as discussed by Ridgeway (1997), is that of social interactions between organization members. This sublevel, when instilled with stereotypical gender beliefs, serves as a mediator between the organization's gendered values and the resulting inequality to ensure its reinforcement. Together, these two levels serve to preserve the gendered collective identity as witnessed in the traditions and culture of the organization and subgroups (Cerulo, 1997). It is within these levels that gender development takes place and is continuously shaped in accordance with social encounters and behaviors (Cerulo, 1997).

Acker (1992) discussed how organizations are not only societies devised along the lines of gender, but moreover are defined by the absence of women. Gendered institutions are defined as organizations in which gender plays a major role in "the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life" (Acker, 1992, p. 567). This produces four significant consequences: occupational segregation, income and status inequality, creation and dissemination of gender norms, and the cultivation of masculine versus feminine behaviors via organizational practices and coercion (Acker, 1990).

The military, sports, business, and politics are all examples of gendered occupations that have arisen due to gender normalization or “gender typing” associated with specific organizations and professions (Britton, 2000, p. 424). As Blackburn and Jarman (2006) discussed, gendered occupations arise due to a higher margin of a specific gender of employees in a particular job position over a period of time. In other words, the sex composition within an occupation becomes skewed to represent one gender over the other (Britton, 2000). Eventually, those occupations become directly associated with either males or females, whereby constructing a stereotype for that specific occupation.

Huffman et al. (2014) take the concept of gendered occupations a step further. They issue that the terms “gender” and “sex” may be used interchangeably when referring to gendered occupations, as the two are so closely intertwined. This concept refers to the dynamic construction of sex and gender, whereby they both permit a separation in accordance with masculine and feminine features (Sjoberg, 2007). Separation in these two constructs is based on gender stereotyped behaviors and perceived sex categorization, whereby identifying gender as a social occurrence and sex relative to biology (Fausto-Sterling, 2005). This is an important assumption to establish, as this discussion focuses on men and women in the military who are clearly defined as either male or female, both psychologically and biologically. Therefore, the particular cases of transsexuals, transgenders, intersexuals and hermaphrodites will not be associated with this study.

Women service members’ reasons for joining the military parallel that of their male peers. Yet women service members’ experiences often differ when assessing mental

and emotional stressors during deployments. Understanding these stressors and the attitudes connected to them offer more insight into reasons for ineffective unit cohesion and premature separation (Dichter & True, 2015). In this next section, the specific aspect of gender stereotypes and the military will be discussed as part of the contextual framework. This encompasses several concepts, to include the proposition of a stalled gender revolution, and how gender roles have affected leadership opportunities and military recruitment advertising. Furthermore, a comparison of military environments shall be discussed. Here, performance-related tasks facilitate resilience and promote a healthy military identity development. This is contrasted with a hypermasculine environment that utilizes interpersonal stressors to enforce social conformity.

Exploring Gender Stereotypes in the Military

In spite of recent reports that provide some encouraging information on male service members' attitudes towards women (Gustavsen, 2013; Segal, et. al, 2015), there continues to be evidence of inappropriate behavior reported based on stereotypical beliefs. Moreover, studies performed at the U.S. Naval Academy found that although the public social climate is changing towards gender roles, the study's results mirrored those of multiple other studies of attitudes within the military. In essence, women were found to have significantly stronger feelings towards equality than their male peers (Bryant, 2003; Smith & Rosenstein, 2017).

As women are increasing in presence in the military, social attitudes continue to reflect gender stereotypes from male peers based on a historical bias in the military that can encumber women service member's performance (Boldry, Wood, & Kashy, 2001;

Kurpius & Lucart, 2000; Lahelma, 2005). This is particularly noted in multiple studies done on gender roles and leadership. Matthews et. al. (2009) study on military cadets that found male cadets were much less approving of women serving in multiple occupational capacities. A study conducted by Epstein, Yanovich, Moran, and Heled (2012) found similar results among West Point and ROTC male cadets. Additional surveys of male military personnel reflect the same attitude of limited acceptance within the ranks (Stiehm, 1998).

Connected with the negative views of a female presence in units is also the effects of these negative viewpoints on leadership selection and promotion (Boldry, et.al., 2001). Heilman and Haynes (2005) performed a study that examined poor representation of women in traditionally male military occupations. They found that gender stereotypes undermined women's representation in team-based work environments. Biased attitudes undervalued women's performance and effectiveness, and consequently affected the promotion selection process, whereby women were afforded less responsibility, recognition, and authority vis-à-vis their male counterparts. Rosen et al. (1996) also performed research on military bases, finding that male soldiers ranked women less competent than themselves.

Women service members encounter numerous stress-related challenges, particularly during deployments. However, the stigma of gender stereotyping unnecessarily adds to this stress via harassing behaviors of military counterparts, both men and women (Herbert, 1998). Matthews et al. (2009) and Titunik (2000) pointed out that women possess traits that are considered crucial to being a good soldier and a good

leader in the military. Yet their performance and leadership are nevertheless undermined due to the prevalence of gender stereotypes. Again, the masculine ethic is strongly intertwined with the military insofar that the concept of masculinity and the occupation of soldiering have become synonymous with each other (Duncanson, 2015; Herbert, 1998).

Stereotypes operate on a dichotomous level in which certain traits are considered feminine and masculine. It formulates a structure for social classification and provides a comparison of the sexes as well as explanations for occupational and organizational presence (Acker, 1992; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). For centuries, American culture has fostered the concept that women are not meant to be killers or even violent (DeGroot, 2001). Instead, women are primarily presented as the weaker sex, requiring protection by men from violence (Berdahl, 2007; Brownson, 2014; Herbert, 1998).

Furthermore, Hochschild (1997) defined modern feminist movements as a “stalled gender revolution” as occurring when women move into traditionally male spheres, such as occupations or sports, yet men do not reciprocate the movement into women’s fields. Therefore, even as women extend into occupations that have traditionally been male dominated, they still sustain the gendered norm of domestic work (England, 2010) in accordance with the “lopsided” gender revolution (Carlson, 2011, p. 76). The outcome of a stalled gender revolution perpetuates social inequalities and transfers them into organizations such as the military. Levy (1998) noted this “convertibility” relationship between military service and social status as civilians (p. 875).

This gender bias can be noted in military recruiting advertisements. For example, shortly after the First Gulf War and the passing of the National Defense Authorization

Act, U.S. Army recruitment advertisements reportedly enticed women by stating they would be doing “amazing things” in their MOS while at the same time doing “familiar things” such as “aerobics, going to the movies or just being with friends” (Herbert, 1998). At the same time, after accusations that women had been pictured exclusively in training scenarios, recent advertisements released by the U.S. Marines depict their desired target audience of women recruits as possessing a “fighting spirit” (Schogol, 2017).

Chodorow (1974) and Gilligan (1982) established how women’s social positions vis-à-vis men as mothers and caretakers have encouraged the marking of certain practices as feminine. Meanwhile, equality in military service had not been a political consideration until 1967 with House Resolution 5894 that eliminated caps on women officer ranks and the 2% limit on women serving in the military (Frank, 2013). With the coalescence of gender stereotypes in society and the deep-rooted masculine dominance in the military, the premise for comprehending the consistent marginalization of capable women service members becomes clearer.

As the gender neutral or “ungendered professionalism” (Rosen et al., 2003, p. 326) approach to policy change maintains male standards and the masculine ethic, gender stereotypes are likewise accommodated in the military organization (Heinecken, 2017; Moore, 2017). The organizational social climate and harmful workplace experiences are interrelated, which explains not only the relationship between the masculine ethic and gender harassment in the military, but also why gender harassment continues to be tolerated (Sojo et al., 2016). Berdahl (2007) stated that all forms of harassment originate from the desire to secure and maintain one’s social status. Men and women are defined

by and compared to the masculine or feminine ideal established by gender stereotypes. It is when these gender lines are crossed, such as when women venture into traditionally male occupations, that an apparent threat to the social culture, identity, and sexual status emerges, and harassing behaviors are the defensive response.

Masculinity and femininity exist as binary definitions, where men are defined by their aggressiveness and strength, while women are defined by their soft and nurturing qualities. These generalities are prescriptive stereotypes that are applied to men and women, defining them by their gender and not as individuals. Therefore, women service members who enter into male-dominated occupational specialties challenge men's masculine status and consequently become repeated targets of gender harassment (Berdahl, 2007).

As the culture of the military has been traditionally masculine and continues to harbor the masculine ethic, the military as an organization likewise fosters stereotypical classifications, whereby enabling gender harassment practices. Gender harassment allows individuals and groups of individuals to reassert the binary gender divide as well as formulate inter and intragroup coercion to reinforce harassment behavior (Berdahl, 2007; Miller, 1997). This next section discusses these specific forms of harassment that are fueled by stereotypical beliefs.

Interpersonal Stressors and Social Conformity

Herbert's (1998) study discussed how interpersonal stressors used in organizations maintain social conformity based on gender. These stressors had a consequential effect on a person's identity, and the severity of these stressors determined

to what degree. The demands of a military lifestyle that involve tasks, such as occupational and physical training, mission execution, and overall performance, are considered normal stressors. Women service members are able to face these normal stressors with resilience that supports individual well-being. Combined with a woman's feminine identity, a balanced military identity is merged.

However, there is a different outcome when normal soldiering stressors are combined with stressors of social conformity specific to masculine-dominant and especially hypermasculine environments. These stressors primarily take the form of gender harassment: defamatory language and sexist humor. Meanwhile, coping strategies employed by women service members - "masking" one's identity via gender management - reflect severe self-consciousness and strained relationships due to social disparity in the unit (Culver, 2013; Sasson-Levy, 2003).

This social phenomenon by no means reflects an effective integrative policy towards gender equality, nor does it support the arguments that claim women service members are the source of detriment to unit cohesion and military effectiveness. This next section centralizes on the concept of social cohesion as it applies to the primary social group in the military: peers and leaders within a military unit. Social cohesion is first explained through social theory as presented by Maslow (1943) and is then broken down into the 5 categories that make a cohesive group. The concept of cohesion is then applied to the military social structure, where it is a means to facilitate effective teamwork but is also a vehicle for coercion in hypermasculine units.

Group Cohesion and its Components

Cohesion is an essential component to group effectiveness and obtaining self-identity. It may be explained using Maslow's hierarchy of needs (see Appendix E), an assessment tool often used in health care to evaluate patients' individual needs (Poston, 2009). At the bottom of the hierarchy are the physiological and safety needs, which include food, water, warmth, rest, security, and safety (Maslow, 1943). Maslow's hierarchy allows for advancement to the next level of "deficit needs" or "D-needs" once the initial needs are met (Boeree, 2006, p. 5). It is important to note that deficit needs are defined to reflect "what we appear to be, according to the standards of society" (Poston, 2009, p. 352). Therefore, once a person's basic salient needs of physiology and safety have been met, a status of homeostasis is reached in these categories, in which thereafter all attention is turned to fulfilling psychological needs (Boeree, 2006).

Psychological needs highlight the desired outcomes of social cohesion: positive social relationships and emotional fulfillment. Here, a person actively attempts to build relationships with others as a means to obtain a feeling of belonging. A person strives to become integrated and accepted into a group with which they specifically identify. In order to achieve acceptance, a person will learn and internalize the behavior of the group. That group behavior then formulates an individual's character and influences their self-esteem. If a person's sense of belonging is low, as in a person who is viewed negatively by a group, then that person will in turn develop a low self-esteem. In time, that person will experience dissolution and withdraw from that group in search of another that will

fulfill the need for social cohesion (Forsyth, 2018; Friedkin, 2004; Griffith, 2002; Poston, 2009).

At the same time, should a person develop a low self-esteem, there is the interim occurrence in which the individual will continually seek acceptance and validation from his or her peers. In addition, that person will display a low level of self-respect, which, as Maslow (1943) stated, will obstruct a person's pursuit towards self-actualization. Often a person with low self-esteem and low self-respect will have unrealistic high expectations assigned to them. In some cases, as Poston stated, "these expectations would be placed by others rather than being placed by the individuals themselves" (2009, p. 351). These concepts correspond with the effects of interpersonal stressors in a hypermasculine social organization, where social expectations are emplaced upon women service members that facilitate gender management.

Forsyth (2018) proposed five components of group cohesion: social cohesion, task cohesion, collective cohesion, emotional cohesion, and structural cohesion. This model compares to a former cohesion conceptual model proposed by Carron, Brawley, and Widmeyer (1998) which proposed four dimensions on two different levels: task cohesion, social cohesion, group attraction, and group integration as it related to sports groups. However, the updated framework by Forsyth is generalized to have extensive application to multiple social group studies and shall be applied here.

To begin, social cohesion involves healthy interpersonal relationships between the group and the individuals, reflected as a general attraction to one another (Forsyth, 2018; Mullen & Copper, 1994). The perceived social cohesion between group members

emulates the bonds of friendship (MacCoun et al., 2006). In military units, social cohesion is important to experience from both peers and leadership, particularly during deployments. Specifically, healthy interpersonal relationships are important for resilience against combat related stress (Bliese, 2006; Griffith & Vaitkus, 1999; Zang et al., 2017). It is also an important component of personal well-being and combat readiness (Griffith, 2002; Yan et al., 2013).

Task cohesion as it relates to group cohesion involves sharing the same objective or overall goal (MacCoun et al., 2006). In addition, it also encompasses a unified fidelity to achieving the designated goal and executed as a unified whole (Forsyth, 2018; Leo et al., 2015). In the military, task relations include sharing the same duties and missions. Task cohesion correlates with group performance insofar that the group shares a mission and is dedicated to completing that mission as a unified team (Mullen & Copper, 1994). Moreover, a group with high task relations was found to be more dedicated to equal contribution in completing an assigned mission (Kier, 1998; MacCoun & Hix, 1993).

Collective cohesion encompasses a perceived and mutual emotion of belonging within a group. This generates a common bond that expresses unity, and an individual feels genuine inclusion within the group from peers (Forsyth, 2018). This facilitates what Cerulo (1997) called the “we-ness” of a group in which similarities between group members stir cohesive motivations (p. 386). Comparative to Goffman’s concept of “essential nature” (1976, p. 75), these similarities between group members were qualities that originated from “physiological traits, psychological predispositions, regional features, or the properties of structural locations” (Cerulo, 1997, pp. 386-387).

Emotional cohesion involves admiring, respecting, caring, and social intimacy among group members. When there is emotional cohesion in a group, the group members indicate enjoyment of each other's company, choosing to socialize with one another and experience the bonds of friendship (MacCoun & Hix, 1993). In this case, individuals are motivated to perform activities that include group members, and a feeling of individual pride is expressed regarding group membership (Forsyth, 2018).

Structural cohesion is the group's level of solidarity. This aspect signifies the relationship strength between peers, wherein each member's role is clearly defined within the group (Forsyth, 2018). Should certain levels of indifference or disrespect occur between peers, individuals as well as the group are negatively affected. Likewise, where role ambiguity or conflict takes place, an individual's self-efficacy is negatively affected, and a unit's overall effectiveness is reduced (Beauchamp & Bray, 2001; Leo et al., 2015).

Cohesion determines the level of trustworthiness between the individual and his or her peers, leaders, organization, and institution (Siebold, 2007). The level of cohesion also influences the degree of performance, attrition, retention, behavioral problems, and attitudes toward military service (Salo & Siebold, 2005). This next section applies the general concept of cohesion to the military social structure. It comparatively addresses the phenomenon of cohesion in a military unit and the effects it has on women service members in a hypermasculine unit. These effects provide a counterargument to claims that women service members in combat roles are the source of disruption to unit cohesion during deployments.

Cohesion in the Unit via Social Identification

In the military, the collective identity of the organization shares a commitment to common values and goals that carry great personal sacrifice (King, 2015). Additionally, adherence to the collective identity is crucial to performance in combat. Soldiers trust each other to perform under the life-threatening pressures of combat engagements. This exceptional level of fidelity has been attributed to strong social cohesion within small primary operating groups dating back to World War II (Shils & Janowitz, 1948). As first identified by Cooley (1909), these “primary groups” fostered cohesion through camaraderie that developed over time (p. 23). Here, sharing common workspace, emotions, security, interests and characteristics facilitate group cohesion and reinforce organizational collective identity.

Siebold (2007) introduced the standard model for socially interactive operating groups in an organization, which parallel the organizational structure of the military. The two smallest components, together known as the primary group, consist of squad and platoon group peers. These components are considered highly personable and rely on direct relations for communication. The next higher level also consists of two components, together known as the secondary group. These two components are the organization and the institution, which make up the largest grouping of military personnel. The organization consists of a company and a battalion, and the institution refers to the specific military branch. In accordance with this study, the institution is the U.S. Army. From a soldier’s perspective, these two components provide more intermittent and indirect interactions.

These four components with which soldiers socially operate have been applied to the study of social cohesion in the military (Griffith & Vaitkus, 1999; Smith & Hagman, 2004). The primary group of squad and platoon personnel within a military unit are the level at which the highest frequency of social interaction occurs for service members, whereby having the most influence on members' "behavior, feelings, and judgements" (Forsyth, 2018, p. 11). The military unit is a peer group, determined to be a relatively closed social network, in which interpersonal relations occur between peers (Siebold, 2007). This is the level at which a service member's positive or negative experiences will determine their perceived degree of cohesion with their unit and type of identity development, both mediated by social identification.

Griffith (2002) connected the concept of individual social identification with a peer group to the overall development of unit cohesion. The level of unit cohesion or "team cohesion" (Leo et al., 2015, p. 61) determines an individual's well-being, stress level, and chances for social disintegration from a group (Griffith, 2002). Therefore, positive unit cohesion contributes to a balanced identity development while simultaneously reducing the negative effects of stress (Griffith, 2002; Griffith & Vaitkus, 1999; Solomon & Mikulincer, 1990). Individual social identification with a peer group has been presented as the most significant factor to unit cohesion (Grinker & Spiegel, 1945; Hogg, 2001; Hogg & Hains, 1998; Shils & Janowitz, 1948). In essence, so long as a soldier's primary social needs are met within the group, commitment to the organizational collective would be maintained (King, 2006).

Under normal circumstances, a deployed unit encourages strong bonding as it will inevitably influence the unit's chances for survival and mission success in combat (Forsyth, 2010; Kviz, 1978; Leo et al., 2015). At the same time, bonding is based on the norms and habits of the unit. Therefore, the expectations of loyalty and combat readiness are intertwined with the behaviors that enforce social control (Siebold, 2007). Most notably, it was the distinct lack of social support in interpersonal relationships that was reported as a significant interpersonal stressor by women service members (Street et al., 2009; Yan et al., 2013). Many women reported that they received less peer and leadership support than their male counterparts (Rosen, Wright, Marlowe, Bartone, & Gifford, 1999; Street, et al., 2013; Vogt, Pless, King, & King, 2005). This next section discusses this aspect of low social identification of women service members at the unit level, where the masculine ethic within the military organization promotes hypermasculine behaviors.

Cohesion and Hypermasculine Units

In today's U.S. military, equal opportunity is endorsed by "addressing unlawful discrimination and promoting equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion" (McHugh, 2015). Yet the policy and regulations that campaign for equality have had little impact on the social attitudes and behaviors of units that continue to harbor the masculine ethic. As Acker (1990) stated, organizations that ostensibly have a gender-neutral policy are "built upon and conceal a gendered substructure" (p. 154). Meaning, in spite of its policy aims in terms of gender equality, the military offers males the opportunity to formulate an identity synonymous with the ideal definition of masculinity and related qualities (Hinojosa, 2010; Siebold, 2001).

In the case of all-male or male dominated units, there is a higher tendency for a hypermasculine social environment to develop. Hypermasculinity or hegemonic masculinity is the “expression of extreme, exaggerated, or stereotypic masculine attributes and behaviors” (Rosen, et.al., 2003, p. 326). It encapsulates the idealized form of masculinity that is essentially unattainable by any human being, wherein all efforts in pursuit of this ideal masculine form enforce subordination, sabotage, and marginalization practices (Sasson-Levy, 2002). Here, the masculine ethic becomes the ideal model which individuals strive to become themselves and with which to comparatively measure others (Migliaccio, 2010). Hypermasculinity fosters a masculine preference wherein unequal acceptance of group members inevitably occurs, as the ideal model is based on gender stereotypes. In accordance with Maslow’s (1943) social theory and Forsyth’s (2018) cohesion matrix, unequal acceptance will consequently affect the cohesion of the unit as a whole.

Moreover, military deployments are the most difficult environments in which to maintain a degendered and equal level of professionalism (Rosen et al., 2003). The context of combat greatly advocates the development of masculine ideals that lead to a hypermasculine-structured society. Again, the U.S. military is a historically male profession wherein social stereotypes equated masculinity with warrior and femininity with weakness. Expression of this attitude in a hypermasculine unit is primarily demonstrated through defamatory language, where all things womanly and feminine are symbolically denounced through insinuation, sexual jokes, or offensive terms (Kelty et al., 2010). As Duncanson (2015) noted, a status struggle between groups often involves

misogynist phraseology where “feminized” terminology is synonymous with personal devaluation (p. 235). However, expression can go beyond gender harassment and expand into sexual harassment as well. Nevertheless, these types of expression are stressors that affect not only women service members individually, but also the level of group cohesiveness within a unit.

For a woman service member stationed in a hypermasculine unit, behavioral expectations instigate masculine behaviors that may be counterintuitive to women service members’ identities (Herbert, 1998). A woman service member who desires to bond with her unit peers to obtain social identification may feel coerced to submit to social control in spite of it being contradictory to her nature. This adds to the falsehood of an identity that is constructed under the premise of gender management. Gender management achieves social cohesion and unit bonding, yet at great psychological stress to the service member.

After reviewing the conceptual framework, a different perspective emerges regarding unit cohesion. As previously stated, opposing arguments to women service member integration in military specialties have centered on the negative women’s presence will have on unit cohesion of male-dominated units (King, 2013b). These arguments have originated primarily from subjective print and media sources that fixate on stereotypical social views. This same standpoint has been integrated into military judgement, specifically relating to the caveat in the Gender Equality in Combat Act (Barry, 2013). Here, the success of the bill had been contingent upon the long-term

impact of integration on unit cohesion and military effectiveness based on how women are received in combat units by men.

Similarly, this social precondition is reflected from within the military organization. As found in the studies of Epstein et al. (2012), Matthews et al. (2009), and Stiehm (1998), the reception for women in the military by their male peers is of an unwelcoming quality. As Snider, Priest, and Lewis (2001) determined in their study on male cadets' perceptions regarding their female peers, the majority viewed women cadets' presence as "detrimental to combat effectiveness" (p. 243). This reflects a generalized preconception that the military's social culture of masculinity risks great disruption at the mere presence of women, regardless of the demonstrated increase in beneficial diversity, qualities, and skillset in sex-integrated units (Barry, 2013; Gustavsen, 2013; King, 2013b; Rosen et al., 1996).

However, Epstein et al. (2012) stated that there is no direct evidence that connects the integration of women into male units and an impact on combat effectiveness. Moreover, Titunik (2000) after a historical evaluation of masculine military groups found that many units that displayed masculine qualities of aggressiveness and assertiveness failed their mission. Titunik notes that these units lacked cohesion due to the absence of prescribed feminine qualities - submissiveness and obedience - that promote devotion and fidelity between members and subsequent group cohesion. These qualities culminate together to produce a qualified unit that can function effectively under pressure and face an enemy in spite of fear.

Additionally, MacCoun et al. (2006) performed a study that contrasted task cohesion with social cohesion in a group setting. It was found that task cohesion, based on a mutually shared goal, was directly linked with group performance. However, social cohesion was found to share little connection with group performance (Mullen & Copper, 1994). Instead, social cohesion at particularly extreme levels produced a “clubiness” effect, in which performance was undermined in support of the group’s social culture (MacCoun et al., 2006, p. 647). Therefore, a hypermasculine unit not only marginalizes group members based on gender, but also reduces its overall cohesion and combat effectiveness in the process.

Nevertheless, social viewpoints continue to reflect subjective opinions of masculinity and femininity, cultivating gender stereotypes and amalgamating them as the social norm. It is within this social mentality that the integration of women in combat roles has been viewed as a large safety and mission risk. Moreover, gender integration has been met with scrutiny, provocation, and delays, as the primary way to obtain conclusive evidence and empirical data concerning the effect of gender integration on unit cohesion is by actually initiating gender integration (Sjoberg, 2015).

Yet recent studies that performed interviews with soldiers who had been in sex-mixed environments would report positive outcomes in the case of integrated units, where women are gaining acceptance in combat, to include ground combat (King, 2013b). Research on sex-mixed units in a training environment found that women had positive effects on morale and performance of their unit members in contrast to gender-segregated units (Rosen et al., 1996). Another study (Barry, 2013), which interviewed

soldiers who had been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in gender-mixed combat units, would further justify gender integration. It was found that a majority of both men and women service members “felt that the presence of servicewomen had not been a distraction and had not affected the judgement of tactical commanders” (Barry, 2013, p. 25). These results of positive reception to women service members delegitimizes the continuation of the masculine ethic mentality. Moreover, King (2013b) explains that successful group cohesion is based on competence and performance, whereby actions are separated from preconceptions. Therefore, cohesion at the unit level is arguably the basis for successful gender integration over a policy issuing gender neutrality based on a balance of gender numbers and women in key leadership positions.

In spite of these performance outcomes and research results in support of cohesion and advocating integration, the masculine ethic mentality perseveres throughout the U.S. military. Likewise, women service members continue to report gender-based harassment that affects their morale and health, and consequently the military’s retention numbers in the form of premature separation (Dichter & True, 2015). This next component reviews the masculine ethic and behaviors in the form of interpersonal stressors that negatively affect unit cohesion and women service members’ social identification. Specific stressors are addressed, with focus on the most common and highest frequency non-sexual gender harassment: defamatory language and sexist humor. Lastly, the psychosocial effects of interpersonal stressors are discussed, which are linked with women service members’ dissatisfaction with their service and early discharge from the military.

Stereotypical Attitudes and Behaviors that Affect Women Service Members

Kanter's (1977) proposal of "tokenism" (p. 282) is greatly related to the concept of the "lone woman effect" in which women as a minority face harassment different from that of men, and only through a higher numeric representation or "critical mass of numbers" can social acceptance be achieved (Barry, 2013, p. 28). Yet modern research supports the proposal that gender, not numbers, plays a significant role in social identification and acceptance. For example, in occupations that were women dominated, the male minority experienced a "glass escalator" and advanced quickly in the organization (Williams, 1992, p. 253). At the same time, Williams (1992) found that in male dominated occupations such as the military, women experienced a "glass ceiling" of resistance to their integration and prevalence (p. 253).

As it was discovered that an increase in numbers will have no effect on the level of social acceptance, it was also noted that the frequency of harassment increases in proportion to the increase in numbers of the subordinated minority due to the threat to the dominant group's status (Stichman, Hassell, & Archbold, 2010). Kanter's theory of tokenism as well as Morris's (1996) perception of hypermasculinity relate to the military policy's concept of reaching a "critical mass of numbers," wherein a token status pivots upon reaching a 15% mark of the total workforce (Kanter, 1977; Morris, 1996). Women have reached this percentage in the overall military, but harassing behaviors nevertheless continue. As Yoder (1994) stated, "A theory of tokenism based solely on numbers is limited by its failure to acknowledge the impact of organizational and societal gender-based discrimination" (p. 150). Therefore, the present U.S. military policy is ineffectual

in addressing the present hypermasculine social climate, whereupon women service members continue to be vulnerable to harmful interpersonal stressors with detrimental effects to their well-being, performance, and military careers.

Sexually-based Harmful Interpersonal Stressor: Sexual Harassment

Sexual and gender harassment are both unwelcomed and detrimental forms of workplace stress that are used to “express hostility, devaluing objectification, or discrimination,” be of a sexually explicit nature or not, and are aimed towards a particular gender (Sojo et al., 2016, p. 11). Bunch (2013) stated that the military is a reflection of our society. Furthermore, he stated that as the military is a male-dominated organization and mirrors male-dominated cultures, women become mistreated. In the military, the target is women service members, and stressors may be interpersonal or intrapersonal experiences (Berdahl, 2007). These occur all within the backdrop of a gendered organizational social climate (Leskinen & Cortina, 2014; Sojo et al., 2016). The difference lies in the behavior, where sexual harassment involves exclusively sex-based harassing behavior in the form of the insinuation of sexual acts on an individual or the undesired direct act of sexual behavior aimed at an individual (Soho et al., 2016). In other words, sexual harassment is sexually-based antagonism while gender harassment is sexist antagonism (Berdahl, 2007).

Sexual harassment in the military has increased, to include sexual assault with nearly 5,000 reported cases in 2014 (Melin, 2016). Moreover, sexual harassment is a tactic most utilized in deployed military units where hypermasculinity is predominant (Campbell, 2017; Rosen et al., 2003). Furthermore, multiple studies have revealed that

sexual harassment is one of the main factors that leads to women's premature separation from the military (Dichter & True, 2015; Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999; Matthews et al., 2009; Sims, Drasgow, & Fitzgerald, 2005).

At the same time, women reportedly experience the non-sexual gender harassment more frequently than sexual encounters such as sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention (Rosen & Martin, 1998; Sojo et al., 2016; Vogt et al., 2005). Although categorized as "less severe" forms of harmful workplace experiences to those which are directly sexual in nature, they are often more pervasive and overlooked organizationally, whereby being more difficult to avoid and prove as inappropriate (Sojo et al., 2016, p. 15). Harrell and Miller (1997) found that male service members often covertly utilize harassing behavior to express their disapproval of a female presence in the military. Here, women service members' accomplishments and leadership are undermined using gender harassment as a vehicle to convey a preconceived attitude towards a feminine presence in a male-dominated military.

Non-sexual Gender-based Harmful Interpersonal Stressor: Gender Harassment

Sexist discrimination is a gender-based, non-sexual experience involving the devaluation, prejudice, or hindrance of a targeted individual's success or satisfaction in the workplace (Sojo et al. 2016, p. 12). Therefore, gender harassment is a direct form of discriminatory practice. Gender harassment encompasses all non-sexual interpersonal stressors to include sexist humor (Ford et al., 2008) and defamatory language (Berdahl, 2007). In the case of gender harassment in the military, women service members are targeted and exposed to non-sexual provocation more often than their male counterparts

(Street et al., 2013). Whereas sexual harassment and sexual assault are also forms of stressors, they do not fall within the category of gender harassment, rather gender harassment is considered to fall under the umbrella of sexual harassment as a non-sexual, sexist category (Gelfand, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1995).

Miller (1997) cited several occurrences of gender harassment in the military against women service members: resistance to authority, constant scrutiny, sabotage, indirect threats, and gossip and rumors (pp. 36-39). Resistance to authority occurs with the context of male service members in subordinate positions who are purposely uncooperative to requests by their superior, who is a woman service member. Constant scrutiny is used to highlight one woman service member's mistakes to undermine her overall performance, and then generalize these mistakes to apply to all women in the military. This particular stressor is cited as the reason for women service members' overperformance to demonstrate themselves as capable as their male peers and gain acceptance (Furia, 2010; Miller, 1997; Silva, 2008).

Sabotage has been reported to happen particularly during combat missions. It relates to vandalizing workstations or assigning faulty or a shortage of equipment. This level of behavior is considered the most damaging as it affects not only the target service member but can also impede a mission and endanger soldiers' lives (Martin, 1988; Schroedel, 1985; Walshok, 1983). Indirect threats can be categorized as a gender harassment stressor so long as they remain a verbal warning. However, they can lead to sexual harassment behavior specifically employed to intimidate using such extreme measures as rape or abandonment (Miller, 1997).

Miller (1997) presented gossip and rumors as a form of defamatory language. Following the “dyke-whore binary” of Sasson-Levy (2003, p. 457), Miller noted how defamatory language is used to demean a woman service member’s sexuality. The effect is meant to marginalize and dissuade from continuing their service, but it also has a chain reaction that affects unit cohesion and mission success. Miller explains that this list is not all-inclusive, and therefore the discussion shall continue concentrating on gender harassment specifically addressing defamatory language and sexist humor.

Gender Harassment: Defamatory Language and Sexist Humor

Gender harassment includes offensive gestures, defamatory language and sexist humor, as well as demeaning symbolic representations that facilitate a hazardous workplace environment (Leskinen & Cortina, 2014; Sojo et al., 2016). In the case of the military, defamatory language and sexist humor are of particular concern, as they are most often left unchecked due to their less severe classification and are therefore viewed as less problematic (Ford et al., 2008; Sojo et al., 2016). As a result, they have been found to be the most effective means in which to reaffirm one’s social status via expressive sexism while advocating a gendered organizational social climate (Berdahl, 2007; Ford et al., 2008; Sojo et al., 2016).

Derogate comments and sexist humor towards women has been fostered in the U.S. military and became tolerated alongside the masculine ethic. This “community of practice” (Suter, Lamb, Marko, & Tye-Williams, 2006, p. 10) involved a mutually agreed means of conduct to include “ways of talking, beliefs, values, and power relations” which influence personal identity (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, pp. 434-435). Therefore,

defamatory language and sexist jokes have become socially accepted in the military organization and employed by men who have prejudice towards women service members as a means of harassment (King, 2015).

Trivialization of such expressions often results as such forms of harassment can fall under the guise of light-hearted humor or trivial “just kidding” incidents (Sasson-Levy, 2002, p. 374; Ford et al., 2008). Trivialization may also occur because women service members wish to gain acceptance within their male-dominated group or because there is little faith in the reporting system, hence episodes continue unreported (Berdahl, 2007; Ford et al., 2008; Sojo et al., 2016). Therefore, through trivialization, gender subordination discourse is validated, further perpetuating harassing mannerisms such as defamatory language (Sjoberg, 2007).

Several studies have reviewed the concept of gender harassment in the form of defamatory language and sexual humor. Pascoe (2007) performed a study on high school students, examining how stressors used to reinforce social conformity, such as name calling, affected the girls and boys. It was found that boys felt their masculinity challenged when engaged in any stereotypical feminine activities were referred to as a homosexual by peers, as in the term ‘fag.’ Similarly, girls’ social identities were challenged using defamatory language such as ‘lesbian’ or ‘slut,’ being accused of either being too masculine or an undesirable female outside of the stereotypical respectable and innocent femininity (Carlson, 2011; Pascoe, 2007; Ringrose & Rawlings, 2015).

Women service members are exposed to gender harassment that parallels these high school studies in the form of the defamatory language social stressor (Benedict,

2009). The “slut-bitch binary” is reportedly the most common and perverse form of defamatory language (King, 2015, p. 381). As Sasson-Levy (2003) reveals, it is common in U.S. military units to hypersexualize women using related discursive language in a “dykes or whores” categorization (p. 457). Therefore, in order to avoid defamatory sexual labels, women service members must balance masculinity with femininity. As Herbert (1998) noted, a woman service member must become “masculine enough” to perform her MOS, but yet not too masculine so as to appear “less than a woman” (p. 46).

The organizational social climate of the military has cultivated stereotypical roles in its traditional masculine ethic, whereby reinforcing the use of social conformity in the form of sexual and gender harassment stressors (Brownson, 2014; King, 2015). As social status plays an important role in the military, alleging that a male service member possesses feminine traits is a hegemonic masculinity expression of power (Connell & Connell, 2005) via “intentional subordination” (Sjoberg, 2007, p. 94).

Meanwhile, women performing at the same capacity presents a challenge to their masculine identity (Herbert, 1998; King, 2015). Rimalt (2007) further reported women service members using the same defamatory language stressors as their male peers. These women practiced androcentric behaviors in order to retain their status within the male dominant social group. Yet this aspiration achieved only “limited inclusion” for themselves amongst their male peers and simultaneous marginalization of their female peers who displayed feminine traits (Sasson-Levy, 2003, p. 459).

The Psychosocial Effects of Interpersonal Stressors

The psychosocial effects of interpersonal stressors experienced during deployments as well as in garrison reveal the ramifications of gender harassment and gender management. They connect the gendered organization and hypermasculine behaviors with the high level of dissatisfaction and shorter military service periods of women service members (Dichter & True, 2015). Both men and women service members demonstrate equal resilience to combat-related stressors (Naclerio, Stola, Trego, & Flaherty, 2011; Hourani et al., 2016). Talcott, Haddock, Klesges, Lando, & Fielder (1999) found that women service members are mainly discharged for medical, psychiatric or behavioral causes, while their male counterparts are more likely to be discharged for underperformance and legal issues. Related research found that interpersonal relationships were reported the highest and most consistent stressor in terms of predeployment, deployment, and redeployment (Vogt et al., 2011; Yan et al., 2013).

Approximately 80% of active duty women service members reported exposure to a form of gender harassment or sexual harassment (Murdoch, Pryor, Polusny, & Gacksetter, 2007). During deployments, events commonly associated with combat exposure were reported as the highest source of stress, such as encountering an improvised explosive device (IED) or firefight, and witnessing bodily harm or death (Vogt et al., 2011; Yan et al., 2013). Aside from combat-related stressors, the interpersonal relationship stressors were also a highly rated concern. The most notable comments included women service members experiencing “discrimination and harassment during development with infantry units” (Yan et al., 2013, p. S552).

Naclerio et al., (2011) stated the psychosocial effects of these interpersonal stressors on women service members envelop a series of mental health disorders to include “depression, anxiety, and mood disorders” (p. 19). Correspondingly, interpersonal stressors and consequential mental disorders affect a service member’s ability to perform their duty in combat and have been reported to increase a service member’s probability for developing severe psychiatric symptoms that lead to PTSD (Crompvoets, 2011; Murdoch et al., 2007). Moreover, these disorders and symptoms continue to affect the service member long after redeployment, wherein social reintegration becomes an arduous process (Yan et al., 2013).

This next section is a presentation of the theoretical framework which discusses the two concepts of gender management and military identity, providing examples from various studies performed on women in non-traditional occupations. Thereafter, gender identity development for women service members is discussed more in-depth, presenting the two main concepts and supporting research, emphasizing the influence of a hypermasculine environment. Next, the specific social theory of gender identity development in the military is discussed. It is important to note, that although studies have alluded to a process of gender identity formation, few have proposed an actual matrix depicting the process of gender identity development.

This study presents Culver’s (2013) gender identity development model, which traces from beginning to end a woman service member’s navigation through four phases of gender management. This particular matrix is unique insofar as it specifically relates to gender identity development for women serving in the modern U.S. military. To conclude

the section, there is an elaboration on Culver's fourth phase involving transcendence. This encompasses the concepts of Maslow's (1943) self-actualization, Fosse et al., (2015) self-efficacy, and Bem's (1974) androgyny. These concepts are proposed to initiate transcendence from gender management and lead to a balanced military identity and true self. Finally, further research inquiries regarding the topic of gender integration in the military in accordance with recent studies and political-military occurrences are suggested.

Gender identity Development in the U.S. Military

Femininity is considered to be flexible to change, and "negotiation between masculine and feminine norms is constitutive of femininity lived today" (Carlson, 2011, p. 80). Instead of relating to masculinity, which defines itself by manifesting clear lines of division to isolate itself from others (Chodorow, 1974, 1995; Irigaray, 1985), femininity is known to be multiplicitous, self-proliferating, and perpetually reinventing itself (Carlson, 2011). Therefore, femininity has the capability to transcend social obstacles, and adopt the necessary qualities for environmental success into their identity.

Women learn to embody the traditionally masculine traits deemed professionally successful in their male gendered occupation (Bordo, 2004). Meanwhile, women continue to practice traditionally feminine traits to maintain their own feminine identity. This apparent split-identity results in neither half being more genuine to one's identity than the other. Instead, the masculine and feminine are not divided identities, rather they are interwoven, cooperative traits that are incorporated as inseparable components of one identity. Bordo's proposal corresponds with Bem's (1974) theory of androgyny, in which

both masculine and feminine attributes favorable to the professional climate are consolidated into one identity.

Ashforth and Mael (1989) proposed three different possibilities in terms of identity development. First, an individual would identify with their primary social identity or attribute, such as soldiering or a combat pilot. Another possibility is an identity development that submits to coercion while avoiding conflict, or even more so “decouple” identities to no longer discern social conflict (p. 30). This presents the course of gender management in which masculine attributes are mimicked and feminine traits are masked in an effort to join the social culture and avoid marginalization. The final third possibility is that conflicting identities may be adopted so that inconsistencies in behavior will no longer play a social factor. Here, women service members adopt masculine identities to obtain social acceptance from their male peers, yet these actions reinforce the masculine ethic in the military rather than promote a policy of gender equality and anti-harassment.

Studies provide examples of this masculine-feminine balance, presenting cases of women who engage in traditionally male occupations while still maintaining their femininity. Ezzel’s (2009) case study on women rugby players found that women participate in this physically rough sport still style their hair and wear makeup. Carlson (2011) explains that “both being a woman and being an athlete serve as two indispensable aspects of their selves, without one of which the other would not quite make sense” (p. 83). Skuratowicz (1996) studied female firefighters who reportedly focused on developing all applicable traits to the profession instead of exclusively focusing on the

stereotypical association of physical strength. Instead, a balance of “strength, flexibility, endurance, and overall physical fitness” were qualities necessary to building a successful career (Britton, 2000, p. 429).

In a related study, Fletcher (1998) examined women engineers who employed communicative strategies in which to empower individuals and facilitate team cohesion. These strategies reportedly dissuaded competitive attitudes and social statuses to create a positive work environment. Additionally, Britton (2000) explored reports of female correctional officers employed in women’s prisons. Employed in a masculine-dominant field of work, female officers did not perceive their job specifically requiring either masculine or feminine traits. Rather, they observed the necessary prerequisites decreed in the uniform code of correctional officers, which included such traits as physical strength, self-discipline, interpersonal skills, and resourcefulness.

At the same time, Pierce (1996) performed a study on litigation attorneys and paralegals in which women reported the profession falling within Kanter’s (1977) prescribed masculine ethic. A successful attorney was described as one who “single-mindedly destroys” their opponents, and highly competing with each other to obtain social status. Defamatory language was common, as less successful attorneys were described as “weak,” “impotent,” or “having no balls” (Pierce, 1996, p. 68). It was found that women felt coerced to conform to the masculine ethic to be successful within their workplace, and hence adapted the same stereotypical masculine attributes of their male colleagues (Britton, 2000).

A similar study mirrored this masculine ethic work environment in insurance sales. Leidner (1991) stated that her observations revealed the effects of gendered organizations and occupations. Although stereotypical feminine traits, such as interpersonal skills, were considered significant to successful sales, the occupation nevertheless emphasized stereotypical male traits such as competitiveness and a “killer instinct” (p. 174). Williams, Muller and Kilanski (2012) studied female geologists, finding that women are often disadvantaged in all-male work groups. Women reportedly received less credit for their efforts less they demonstrate the same “loud and belligerent” behavior of the others in the group, to include having to “bang the table” to assert oneself (pp. 557-558). Here, a cautious approach was expressed by participants as there was a noted dichotomous separation between male assertiveness and being a female “bitch” (p. 558).

Through their studies, Pierce (1996), Leidner (1991), and Williams et al. (2012) demonstrated the marginalizing effects of gendered organizations and occupations on women employees. In addition, evident references from these studies concerning phraseology and defamatory language can be related directly to soldiering and the male ethic that exists within the military. Therefore, the stereotyped male warrior concept is applied to gendered organizations and occupations even outside of the military.

These studies examined how gender stereotypes can overshadow viable qualities associated with an occupation. They also demonstrated how gender stereotypes influence organizations and occupations through worker mentality. Ezzel (2009), Skuratowicz (1996), and Fletcher (1998) presented women transcending their gendered environments

and embracing a balance of qualities that would help them become successful in their occupation regardless of their gender stereotyped associations. At the same time, Pierce (1996) and Leidner (1991) showed how women resorted to gender management to become successful in their occupations.

Culver (2013) proposed the existence of two possible identity developments that specifically apply to women in the military. This emphasizes the fluidity of identity as well as the potential for transcendence of a “gender regime” based on the dichotomous separation of masculinity and femininity (Connell, 2014, p. 120). Cockburn (1991) argued that women’s identity does not follow the dichotomous structure of gender as presented by stereotypical roles, rather it may be congruent to that of other women and men at various times (p. 10). This submits the central theoretical concepts presented in the next section, which focuses on two aspects of gender identity development of women in the military: gender management through a masked identity and a balanced military identity through transcendence.

Social Identity Theory and Gender Identity Development

Tajfel (1974) identified social identity theory as being self-perception corresponding to group relations and emotional attachment. At the same time, Johansen et al. (2014) attributed the development of a military identity to social identity theory. Suter et al. (2006) explained that personal identities are directly influenced by the social practices of the unique communities in which people engage. Their study embraced the logic of the social organization premise of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), stating that a particular community shares mutual involvement in a certain activity. Through

interaction, that community shares and adapts certain ways of demeanor, to include attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, values, conduct, and representations of power.

Johansen et al. (2014) determined that military identity could be compared to the individual's internalization of the military's principal goals, values, and tasks.

Additionally, as society and the military culture changes, so too does the concept of military identity. Presently, the proposed modern military identity embraces the concept of "operational identity," involving the expeditionary, operational, warrior, and peer ethos (pp. 523-524). Generally, these spearhead the willingness to participate in deployments, to cultivate professional and combat skills, to subscribe to the virtues of soldiering, and to facilitate team cohesion.

Meanwhile, gender management relates to the concept of doing gender, where women service members must adapt to the social culture by adopting traditionally masculine attributes that the military society necessitates and promotes. Here, the masculine ethic social standard functions differently from Johansen's et al. (2014) operational identity as well as Forsyth's (2018) spirit of cohesion, especially when set within a hypermasculine environment. Studies have documented that in the modern military, particularly during deployments in which the hypermasculine environment most prevails, women feel compelled to conform to the military male social standard in order to gain group acceptance (Baechtold & DeSawal, 2009; Harsvik, 2010; Sasson-Levy, 2003; Totland, 2009).

Military identity development

Foucault (1978) explained that the true self is revealed only when the person admits to themselves their true identity or “essential nature” that encapsulates the expression of one’s personality (Goffman, 1976, p. 75). Here, the true self is enabled through truth facilitating practices in the masculine or feminine contexts. For women entering male gendered occupations, to exclusively practice masculinity would be “an illusion of a true, essential inner self” (Carlson, 2011, p. 83). At the same time, if the multiple identity fragments that define one’s feminine self cannot cooperatively interact with each other, then the result is the same illusion (Foucault, 1978).

Connected with social identity theory, identity development is linked to the group with which an individual identifies (Forsyth, 2016; Johansen et al., 2014; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identification involves the internalization of the group’s values, tasks, and goals of an organization (Haslam, 2004). Yet the degree of internalization may be self-regulated, which determines the extent of internalization of group values, goals, and behaviors, social identification with the group, and subsequent level of group cohesion (Griffith, 2002).

Military identity development has been connected to the internalization of the specific values and goals of the military and their assigned unit (Johansen et al., 2014). For example, Isaksson (1988) stated that the military identity is a social development instilled in service men and women primarily to support the government's ideology of national security and defense and facilitate subordination to the military organization. However, in accordance with social identity theory, there exists a means for self-regulation of internalization of a group’s values and goals (Griffith, 2002). Therefore,

military identity development allows for a personal filtration of the military's and unit's values and goals that does not guarantee complete subordination. Instead, Johansen et al. (2014) found that the development of a military identity assisted in social identification insofar as individually perceived military skills and competence, whereby displacing the concept of gender with performance and merit (Heinecken, 2017; Nagel, 2014).

Women who enter occupations that are male dominant, such as the military, often undergo identity adjustments in an effort to gain acceptance and succeed in their new environments. Herbert (1998) noted that women who enter male dominated professions, such as the military, redefine their interpretation of womanhood. Bordo (2004) determined that women learn to assimilate the professional masculine attributes of their occupation, such as the shared language and values within that society. Bordo's study identifies with military identity development, where an identity is adopted based on the qualities that will enable women to master the skills and develop the attributes necessary to become a soldier. These skills and attributes prove a soldier capable of modern warfare as provided in basic training, advanced individual training (AIT), and deployment experience.

Benedict (2009) reported multiple interviewees who attested to a distinct transition from a civilian identity to a military identity. When a woman joins the military, a certain loss of femininity is experienced due to military policy in an effort to create uniformity. As an organization, the military employs policies, to include strict regulations on appearance and dress. These regulations affect both men and women, such as in the case of tattoos (Kennard, 2012). At the same time, regulations are subject to change

based on service member feedback. An example is the case of African American women's hair, which could not be factored into the blanket regulation for all women service members' permitted hairstyles (Harris, 2015). In addition to progressive change is the adjustment of unisex uniforms to better fit women's bodies (Martin, 2011), to include Kevlar plate sizes and aviation uniforms to better accommodate women for quicker response and longer missions.

When a woman transitions to a military identity, feminine and masculine qualities realign in accordance with her personal beliefs on what makes a successful soldier (Bordo, 2004; Johansen et al., 2014). At the same time, in military environments where a hypermasculine society is cultivated, women service members may feel the need to over or under emphasize their femininity. As Carlson (2011) and Foucault (1978) stated, practicing exclusively masculine characteristics or an imbalance of components of one's femininity denies the acceptance of a woman's true identity. Moreover, in a hypermasculine environment, individual authority over self-identification is relinquished vis-a-vis social coercion. The woman service member then becomes subordinate to the group's social culture, often to the detriment of her own well-being and performance (MacCoun et al., 2006).

In Herbert's (1998) study of 300 participants, almost half reported that they felt compelled to display either more feminine or more masculine behaviors than normal or face the consequences of marginalization. In this case, a woman service member does not wholly embrace a military identity that accurately balances the soldier with the woman to fittingly coincide. Instead, a woman service member feels obligated to create a

completely separate, unnatural, fake identity as a coping strategy for hypermasculine group expectations (Benedict, 2009; Rosen et al., 2003). Therefore, the adaptation of stereotypical male characteristics and the conscious regulation of feminine characteristics. This phenomenon is known as gender management.

Gender management and hypermasculinity

As women enter the military, they find that they must not only meet physical standards, but in addition are expected to adopt the masculine ethic of social values, goals, and behaviors to gain the acceptance of their male peers (Heinecken, 2017). Gender management arises whenever an imbalance between feminine and masculine qualities occurs. Gender management in the military occurs when a person displays an abnormal level of femininity or masculinity contrary to that person's character. Gender management allows women service members to avert marginalization and cope with social stressors. The outcome is an identity more compatible with hypermasculine attitudes and behaviors in a military unit (Culver, 2013; Herbert, 1998). However, this identity is simply the act of "doing gender" in order to cope with biased social expectations of a hypermasculine environment (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). It is simply a façade that denies a person from building a constructive military identity and is potentially detrimental to a person's ability to sustain healthy professional and social relationships (Culver, 2013).

Herbert's (1998) study specifically explored how women service members experienced the military and adapted to their masculine military culture. As women service members entered into service with intentions of citizenship responsibility and

other inspirations, they also entered into a social framework that represented male interests, and the normative standard was the masculine ethic. As Bordo (2004) pointed out, as women begin to assimilate into their environment, they adopt the attributes that will allow them to become a successful soldier, often in the capacity of androgyny (Bem, 1974). At the same time, a woman service member develops a social identification with her unit in an effort to achieve a level of group cohesion for improved combat performance. In the case of an integrated unit that accepts women service members for their qualities and competencies, absent of socially based coercion, a balanced military identity development can be nurtured (Forsyth, 2018).

However, in the case of a hypermasculine unit where the social masculine culture is priority and stressors such as gender harassment are used, marginalization is likely less a woman service member becomes subordinate to the unit's culture and engages in gender management. Here, women service members adopt men's social norms, values, and goals to demonstrate that she can "make it as a man" and become masculine (Sjoberg, 2007, p. 93). Some researchers have addressed this aspect as a new categorization of women that replaces the slut-bitch binary and indeed allows women to achieve an equal social status with their male counterparts. King (2013a) connected being "one of the boys" (p. 358) with Brownson's (2014) concept of an "honorary man," where competent women are inducted into the male group maintaining a male status.

Yet King's (2015) interpretation centralizes on the claim that men are incapable of conceptualizing women as anything other than sexual beings. Therefore, according to King's logic, women service members have the potential to no longer be marginalized by

their male counterparts once they are accepted as professionals on a nonsexual basis and as men. In this study, it has been demonstrated that in a coercive environment, femininity is often referenced as an undesirable sexual and behavioral trait, and primarily in stereotypical and derogatory terms. Moreover, being accepted as an equivalent man based on masculine performance likewise undermines a woman's feminine identity. All in all, women cannot escape nor avoid the physical and emotional embodiment they exhibit as a woman to the outside world.

Nevertheless, King (2015) and Brownson's (2014) studies provide evidence that women service members are continuing to engage in gender management practices to curtail marginalization and gain social acceptance by their male peers. This denies women service members from accepting their true selves and developing a military identity based on skill and competence, while retaining a token status based on the male hegemonic social culture. At the same time, King (2015) admits that the honorary man concept is "an exceptionally narrow category for women to sustain," inferring that any indication of professional or personal failing will result in the honorary man status being revoked (p. 385). This coincides with Sasson-Levy's (2002) account of acceptance of women practicing gender management by their male peers, stating this was a limited inclusion and temporary status, whereupon marginalization is often the inevitable outcome.

Brownson (2014) recorded one particular testimony from a woman service member - a bomb disposal expert - to support the positive aspect of obtaining the honorary man status. She stated, "...as long as females pull their weight and do what

needs to be done and not create a spectacle of themselves, the guys don't see the difference" (p. 13). Although the honorary man status is questionable, this testimony does indicate that women service members in a sex mixed integrated MOS can gain social acceptance based on professional performance. This signals a separation from the use of gender as a primary basis for evaluating competence in a MOS and a shift towards demonstrated capability and professionalism.

This points towards two significant developments. First it indicates the development of a military identity facilitated through group cohesion, where gender management is transcended and ambivalence to social divisions are excluded. Here, women are accepted by their peers as professionals on a non-sexual basis. At the same time, women are not assigned any particular equivalency status once group acceptance is attained, such as one of the boys, an honorary man, or "one of the lads" (Butler, 2017, p. 55). Therefore, the testimony verifies that gender can be removed as a social factor, which supports a military identity development that embraces the positive aspects of group cohesion in a sex-mixed military unit.

Herbert's (1998) study also presented viewpoints of women service members who attempted to adapt to their social environments, but specifically focused on the practice of gender management. For example, one participant stated that "it is not enough to just be male; one must be 'more male' than the men in the next squad, platoon and so forth" (Herbert, 1998, p. 8). Silva (2008) researched female ROTC cadets who made similar statements. For example, one participant regarding leadership roles stated, "There's always gonna be someone evaluating, and you feel like if you're female you have to work

harder to impress this person more” (p. 946). Furthermore, another participant with regards to physical training standards stated, “I guess it kind of changes guys’ opinions overall because they see the average girl as not up to their standards, so it makes me look kind of better because I am capable of doing more than that” (p. 946).

As described in the testimonies, the coping strategies employed by women service members reflect a social disparity between men and women. Being ‘more male’ demonstrates this disparity but also signals the presence of the masculine ethic that is prescribed to every military service member. Moreover, being constantly evaluated signals the presence of gender harassment, a stressor with unique implementation towards women in male-dominated and hypermasculine environments (Street et al., 2009). Herbert’s (1998) study, as other studies which have noted the practice of gender management, signal the “masking” of one’s true identity. This is often to the detriment of not only a woman’s self-esteem, career, and health, but also her social relationships outside the military that once had thrived (Culver, 2013; Sasson-Levy, 2003).

This next section focuses on recent studies that have centered on the topic of women service member’s gender management and identity development in the military. It presents several studies’ approaches based on contextual and theoretical frameworks, provides a synopsis of key concepts, and explains why these studies theories were not utilized as the primary theoretical framework. This discussion leads to the presentation of Culver’s (2013) GIDWM theory. Adapted from Edwards and Jones’s (2009) grounded theory, GIDWM specifically presents women service members’ identity development in

a matrix format, mapping their promotion and demotion in proportion to the interpersonal stressors they experience in a hypermasculine military environment.

Military Women Gender Identity Development Theory

Sasson-Levy (2003) presented her model concerning Israeli women service members regarding gender identity development in the military that “emulated the masculine model of the combat soldier” (p. 447). Her model was based on the social theory of identity practices which are based on performativity. These practices included:

1. Mimicry of combat soldiers’ bodily and discursive practices.
2. Distancing from “traditional femininity.”
3. Trivialization of sexual harassment (Sasson-Levy, 2003, p. 447).

However, Sasson-Levy’s (2003) performance theory approach is dependent upon Kanter’s (1977) criteria of tokenism and Butler’s (2011) concept of performing gender (Crowley & Sandhoff, 2017). Furthermore, Sasson-Levy’s model is based on enactments that result from women entering the military. As Zimmer (1988) noted, women’s enactment or mimicry of masculine characteristics does not necessarily signify the existence of stressors or social coercion. Moreover, mimicry substitutes the concept of internalization of group values, goals, and behaviors that leads to gender management and the potential for self-regulation of internalization that allows for a decisive military identity development (Griffith, 2002; Haslam, 2004; Johansen et al., 2014). Furthermore, performance theory has arguably been applied to very few studies with small samples, leading to doubts of conclusive applicability of performance theory (Zimmer, 1988).

Furia (2010) performed a study on U.S. Army officers in training to observe women tactics in gaining social acceptance and integration into the masculine culture of the military. Specific tactics were noted, such as:

- Over-accentuating one's femininity, enacting the "damsel in distress" or "motherly nurturer" stereotype.
- Attempting a gender-neutral status to maintain anonymity and remain "under the radar."
- Simulating masculine attributes, such as spitting, while maintaining a feminine appearance.
- Overachieving and fully embracing the masculine ideal, working hard, and adopting masculine traits and appearance (Furia, 2010, pp. 124-125).

Notably, all of these tactics resulted in negative reactions from their male cadet peers. It was found that women cadets received attention because of their gender and were judged in accordance with gender stereotypes. Firstly, if a woman cadet appeared feminine, she received negative attention and was marginalized. Secondly, if a woman cadet succeeded or encapsulated masculinity, she became scrutinized, resented, and her sexuality questioned. Thirdly, a woman who attempted a gender-neutral approach could not retain this hidden status in a dichotomous gendered culture. Finally, performance outcomes that determined underachievement or overachievement were interpreted through the lens of gender stereotypes. Furia's (2010) study emphasized the aspect of "doing gender" via gender management, and the preconceptions of femininity as prescribed by a gendered organization. The study demonstrated that in accordance with

the present military culture, a woman service member cannot be viewed as both a woman and a soldier (Yoder & Adams, 1984).

Limitations of this study include a lack of discussion regarding women remaining within the military while retaining one's true self-identity. This connotes no mention of transcendence, self-efficacy, self-actualization, or androgynous strategies to balance soldiering with her essential nature. Instead, the only two options presented were to either adjust one's strategy by shifting between the four proposed tactics or to give up and transition out of the Army. This approach counteracts the authors own theoretical approach that femininity is fluid and dynamic, and able to recreate itself through social interactions (Carlson, 2011; Connell, 2014; Gerson & Peiss, 1985). Using this theoretical framework should entail a fifth alternative that includes the strategy of transcendence, noting that femininity is a flexible, analytical concept with the capability to operate outside stereotypical constraints (Carlson, 2011).

An additional study by Langbein (2015) centered on women's identity management as it occurred in the U.S. Navy's Nuclear Propulsion Program. Similar to this study, cultural and social conditions were assessed in connection with identity development and management since the passing of the Gender Equality in Combat Act. At the same time, Langbein concentrated on two key concepts that deterred from this study's theoretical framework. Firstly, Langbein utilized muted group theory originally proposed by Ardener (1977). Muted group theory emphasizes the unrecognition of women's voices that provides legitimacy to their experiences and stories in literature (Wood, 2005). Moreover, Langbein's study sought to determine how women utilized

identity management in order for their voices to gain legitimate public recognition. Therefore, both the theoretical approach and aspects of the contextual framework do not coincide with this study. This is especially clear concerning the topic of interpersonal stressors and their influence on identity development, and their overall effect on a woman service member's career and well-being.

Crowley and Sandhoff's (2017) narrative inquiry shared a very similar methodology and contextual framework to this study, highlighting the need for women within attachment units in combat during OIF. Related concepts such as stereotypical classifications of men and women as well as "doing gender" roles were utilized to investigate the gender norms, behaviors, and social context that U.S. Army women veterans experienced during their service. The related sample strategy involved interviewing 12 U.S. Army women combat veterans and snowball sampling.

However, the main theoretical and contextual approaches differed from this study. Performance theory was underlined using Howard and Prividera's (2004) "female soldier paradox," which explains gender management as a catalyst with which women veteran service members are able to bridge an ambiguous gap between their soldier and female identities (Crowley & Sandhoff, 2017, p. 223). Again, performance theory and the female soldier paradox are contradictory to this study's approach to self-regulation of identity internalization towards a conclusive military identity development (Griffith, 2002; Haslam, 2004; Johansen et al., 2014). Furthermore, performance theory has arguably been applied to very few studies with small samples, leading to doubts of conclusive applicability of performance theory (Zimmer, 1988).

Lastly, the study examined language use within units that associated women service members with common expressions used for family members in light of sexual harassment, rather than defamatory terminology employed as a means for gender harassment. Also, the inclusion criteria required participants to have participated in OIF prior to the enacting of the Gender Equality in Combat Act in 2012. Therefore, this study can be loosely modeled as a continuation of a similar premise rather than a pilot study.

The theoretical model and related study introduced by Edwards and Jones (2009) presented gender identity development phases closely related to the development of gender identity the Grounded Theory of College Men's Gender Identity Development. This model presented various developmental phases based on college men's experiences. The significance of this particular model is that its context was predominantly hypermasculine, and parallels drawn concerning the stressors and coping strategies to the experiences of military service members. However, this model possessed certain limitations. Firstly, the model was tested on a limited sample size, and therefore could not be generalized to apply to a larger, more diverse population such as is in the military. Secondly, it was determined that the identities that college men developed were too generalized in comparison to those of military women (Culver, 2013).

Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory adapted Edwards and Jones's (2009) grounded theory to specifically address women service members' identities as they cope with the stressors in a hypermasculine military environment. Culver's model presented four specific phases of identity development (see Appendix D). The first phase, "feeling the need to put on a mask," discussed the insecurities women feel when attempting to

assimilate into the masculine ideal while coping with a potential loss of their true self (p. 68).

Culver (2013) noted two possible insecurities that arise due to the domineering military masculine ethic culture. These insecurities relate to Herbert's (1998) study in which a woman may identify a "warrior insecurity" as an ineptness to live up to the masculine social standards. This encompasses self-doubt in terms of male peer social acceptance, and capability to carry out missions in a violent demeanor. Or she may note an inability to maintain her own sense of femininity that defines her as a woman, a "femininity insecurity" (Culver, 2013, p. 68). Throughout this phase, as women identify insecurities they match them to coping strategies to compensate for their perceived inadequacies.

During the second phase, entitled "wearing a mask," women adopt compensational coping strategies that conceal traits that are components of the true self yet are viewed as undesirable according to the social culture (Culver, 2013, p. 68). The "warrior mask" offsets society's and the military's expectations of a compatible warrior. At the same time, the "femininity mask" counterbalances the effects of society's expectations of womanhood. Centering on the warrior concept, women may make subtle adjustments to their appearance, or dramatic alterations to their essential nature. For example, as Herbert (1998) found, women may avoid wearing makeup, cut their hair short, or participate in a traditionally all-male sport. At the same time, more substantial "unnatural acts" to one's identity may occur to avoid marginalization and gain social

favor (Benedict, 2009, p. 141). Coping practices may be adopted that simulate masculine traits, such as the use of defamatory language and other harassment demeanor.

Culver (2013) explained phase three as a pivotal conscious moment in which a woman undergoes an intimate epiphany, “recognizing and experiencing the consequences of wearing a mask” (p. 69). It causes for personal reflection, leading to the subsequent realization that the coping strategies, or masks, are corroding the woman’s true self identity. Women service members understand the damaging consequences of their gender management on their essential nature, civilian reintegration, and personal relationships. Additionally, recognition occurs regarding the temporary status of social acceptance that inevitably leads to marginalization regardless of the mask worn (Sasson-Levy, 2002). The result is women service members begin to formulate a woman-warrior concept of themselves, a military identity based on self-actualization, self-efficacy, and a transcendence of social stressors (Edwards & Jones, 2009).

In the fourth and final phase - “struggling to take off the mask” - women fulfill their transcendence of the masculine ethic military culture and stereotypical expectations of identity (Culver, 2013, p. 69). Women rediscover their true selves while accepting professionally useful aspects discovered from wearing the mask. These develop together into a new, balanced military identity of femininity and soldiering as a true woman warrior self. Notably, senior women service members often adapt and transcend quickly, whereas junior women service members and women redeploying from combat zones are more likely to transition slowly through these phases. Some may never reach the fourth phase until transitioning out of the military (Benedict, 2009; Culver, 2013).

This next section elaborates on Culver's (2013) fourth phase aspect of transcendence. It reiterates Maslow's concept of self-actualization as a demonstration of transcendence from gender management and wearing the warrior mask. Also, concepts of self-efficacy and androgyny are introduced to further advocate means in which women develop military identities that center on pragmatic task performance rather than social gender stereotypes. Together, these present a means in which to surmount coercive interpersonal stressors and transcend to a representation of the true self as a woman and a soldier: a woman warrior.

Transcending Gender Harassment through Self-actualization, Self-efficacy, and Androgyny

In accordance with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, once all basic and psychological needs are met, a person can then transcend to the highest and final level of self-actualization, or "being needs" (Poston, 2009). Maslow (1943) phrased self-actualization as "the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming" (p. 382). Poston (2009) highlighted that self-actualization represents a satisfied and independent state of being, in which deficit needs have been met and an individual may focus on reaching their full potential. He further noted that people who have reached the level of self-actualization are "focused on what matters most in defining who they are" (p. 352). Here, all attention shifts from deficit needs to being needs. Poston (2009) noted, once a person reaches the level of self-actualization, he or she transcends the desire of pleasing others. Rather, a person fully invests into "getting to know oneself, while being okay and unconditionally accepting of

whatever it is that he or she discovers,” meaning reaching self-acceptance, self-actualization, and efficacy.

However, until a person’s deficit needs are met, focus on self-actualization is delayed and all attention centers on fulfilling the need to resolve those deficits. Therefore, Maslow's (1943) self-actualization concept parallels Culver’s (2013) final stage of removing the feminine and warrior masks through self-acceptance. It is only after the fulfillment of the psychological needs or by transcending interpersonal stressors to obtain a perceived level of social cohesion in the military unit can a woman service member develop her true identity as a woman warrior.

Similarly, Pascoe’s (2007) results from his study on high school students and defamatory language suggested the possibility for women service members to transcend social stressors, such as name-calling. Unaffected by social conformity methodologies, a woman service member may well rise above the external expectations of their hypermasculine military environments, and in effect independently develop their own military identity. Several other studies on women athletes endorse Pascoe’s concept of social conformity transcendence. Their results found that modern women athletes participating in masculine-rooted sports are able to maintain their feminine identity through simple feminine practices such as wearing make-up (Ezzel, 2009; Hargreaves, 1994; Cahn, 1995; Heywood & Dwarkin, 2003; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004).

Sasson-Levy (2002) noted that some women transcended the social confines of gender stereotypes. Here, women service members adopted the characteristics required of

them to become an effective combat soldier, whereby women asserted independent influence over their identity development. The realization of one's true self enables self-actualization and self-efficacy, as faith in one's own capacities gives rise to the transference of one's essential nature into behaviors, connecting true identity with military performance (Fosse et al., 2015). The level of self-efficacy directly affects levels of personal motivation, discipline, ambition, effort, conscientiousness, and perseverance (Fosse et al., 2015; Leo et al., 2015). Moreover, it affects group cohesion insofar as structural cohesion. The higher the level of self-efficacy, the less risk for role ambiguity and team conflict (Leo et al., 2015).

Additional support to the military identity construct was the theory of androgyny construct. Bem (1974) and Kark (2017) stated that the dichotomy of gender allows for independent categories to formulate, consolidated in accordance with socially favored masculine and feminine attributes. This aspect allows a psychologically androgynous individual to strategically incorporate traits of both categories. This subsequently permits the transcendence of social behavioral limitations of a sex-typed individual practicing gender management, while encompassing behaviors that allow the flexible adaptability for professional development (Bem, 1974; Kark, 2017). Studies on androgyny and mental health revealed multiple positive health and relationship outcomes, to include increased well-being, self-efficacy, and career success (Baucom & Aiken, 1984; Bem & Lewis, 1975; Norlander, Erixon, & Archer, 2000).

Formulating the Future and Suggestions for Further Study

In accordance with the gender identity development and gender management, women veterans continue to struggle with establishing a sense of self balance between the woman and the warrior (Hullender, 2016; Iverson et al., 2016). Acker (1990) stated that in order for genuine change to occur, gendered organizations with a deeply rooted stereotyped culture will have to be restructured in coordination with the “redefinition of work and work relations” (p. 155). Here, “virtues of female experience” become valued qualities as productive assets to the group (Ferguson, 1984, p. 168). Heinecken (2017) emphasized these virtues as an effective means for conflict resolution and decision making, and complimentary to men’s combat expertise to increase overall combat effectiveness. Yet this approach seeks “equivalency” instead of “equality” (Brownson, 2014, p. 765).

In this case, for gender equality to succeed in the military, gender can no longer serve as a basis from which to assess capability, and masculinity cannot serve as the standard measurement. Rather, competencies based on performance and group cohesion reflects this motive. This circumvents the limited honorary man concept and submits equality for equivalency (King, 2015). In essence, diversity is respected on a professional level. Moreover, military men and women no longer feel coerced to “do gender,” which encompasses men discontinuing dominant stereotypical roles and women subordinate roles (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Furthermore, social change within the military is a reflection of social attitudes from civilian spheres, whereupon women are accepted as soldiers and in other non-traditional occupations.

Where restructuring the U.S. military and disposing of its hierarchical structure is not feasible, there are potential strategies that will make a positive and impactful difference in the gendered organization. Britton (2000) notes that an effectively degendered organization in a post-gendered context would encompass gendered behaviors without bias. This involves embracing strategies that serve to significantly adjust the masculine military culture and incorporate women on a performance rather than gender premise. Sasson-Levy (2011) proposed a five-point plan to adjust analytical approaches to achieve a positive shift towards true military equality:

1. A departure from dichotomous gender social categorizations towards intersectionality.
2. A departure from the gendered mentality within organizations and occupations based on a gender regime of inequality.
3. A higher emphasis on diversity and accepting women as instruments of policy change.
4. A reanalysis of modern male identities and the masculine ethic.
5. An objective empirical study of the significant effects of women serving in the military that employ these proposed approaches (p. 73).

These five points present a means for researchers, media sources, policy administrators, and military authorities to approach the persistent increase in women joining the military. Sasson-Levy (2011) indicated that these five points allow for increased career opportunities for women service members which in turn will lead to “structural degendering and cultural regendering” (p. 81). Proposedly, with more women

in leadership positions, the masculine ethic will be nullified due to a diversified society based on intersectionality connections rather than gender discrimination. Egnell (2013) supported this analogy specifically in terms of women in combat units, stating that it “should be seen as an opportunity to revise the culture and structure of the armed forces for increased effectiveness in contemporary warfare” (p. 34).

Egnell (2013) questioned the physical and mental standards utilized for training, which are deemed to serve as measurable instruments of effective combat performance. Noting the military as a traditional institution and its historical context of masculinity, Egnell presented the aspect that performance standards have not been revised since 2006 for recruitment purposes. This highlights outdated standards created more than a decade ago that are still employed post 2012 Gender Equality in Combat Act.

Egnell’s (2013) study drew attention to the concept of “feminist framing,” which arose during second wave feminism (Miller, 1998, p. 59). Feminist framing approached equality through a gender-neutral lens and had been applied to women service members as an inclusive methodology (Segal, 1982). Yet this concept, which mirrored the same attitude of the military, included women on the basis of “sameness” (Miller, 1998, p. 37; Sasson-Levy, 2003, p. 442). This involves the prerequisite that all female service members must fulfill the same physical requirements as its male service members based on male standards. Most notably, feminist framing did not fit the necessities nor perspectives of the women the feminist movement was meant to benefit (Sasson-Levy, 2011). This led to reinforcing the stereotype that women are too weak to fulfill military standards.

Segal (1982) pointed out that training, not brute strength, was the true determinant of a service member's performance capability. Segal (1982) and Miller (1998) highlighted that women service members can engage in physical training for strength, while achieving the competency training that determines performance and is vital to combat effectiveness and unit cohesion. Additionally, Friedl (2005) makes a significant argument against the physical requirements set by the military. Physical fitness requirements are skewed towards male performance and weigh heavily on strength tests. Friedl argues that this causes many women's capabilities to be overlooked and underestimated. Equipment and clothing reshaping, and physical training provide the means in which women may be better integrated into the military to meet the needs of modern warfare.

Recent studies have proposed a more effective physical training program that balanced aerobic and strength training, which was customized to the specific demands of a service member's MOS (Friedl et al., 2015; Nindl et al., 2016). These studies served to not only recreate more effectual military physical fitness standards, but to also better accommodate women service members into combat-centric roles to facilitate a streamlined and effective military force.

Britton (2000) noted that gender differences between men and women are minimized in gender-integrated organizations. Moreover, women value their feminine traits and utilize their qualities as a means to envisioning their career success. When women are in positions of influence, the masculine ethic culture is reduced in intensity with relevance to leadership success (Ely, 1995). At the same time, Dichter and True

(2015) noted that as women service members are a significant minority in the military, same-gender mentorship opportunities are proportionately lower than their male peers.

Leadership and mentorship are important factors in military integration, yet they cannot promise equality in the military alone. Here, Kelty et al. (2010) suggested a means for self-efficacy, career development, and retention of women service members in the form of promoting mentorships, role-modeling, and peer camaraderie. Furthermore, Langbein (2015) noted the overall positive effects that leadership guidance, social acclimation, and peer support together can have on assisting women service members when adapting to the military environment. These studies reflect a current political effort to increase the number of peer-to-peer counselors in Veterans Affairs (VA), meant to provide counseling for women veterans. The proposal, entitled the Women Veterans Peer Counseling Enhancement Act, had recently been introduced in December 2017 and continues to be in a pending congressional status (Senate Bill 4635, 2018).

At the same time, just as femininity has undergone change and redefinition, masculinity has been going through a similar change. Pleck (1981) states that men experience anxiety and stress similar to women, yet it is expressed differently in accordance with gender roles. The Male Sex Role Identity (MSRI) that has served as the masculine ideal and has pertained to the masculine ethic in such organizations as the military has been cited as a main source of stress for men. The MSRI established the stereotypical male in society and has influenced how all-male or male-dominated organizations and occupations have socially operated. As Migliaccio (2010) stated, men have also been faced with a level of gender performance and doing gender. Kimmel

(2000) reflected this concept of masculinity by stating, “it exists as an ideology, it exists as scripted behavior, it exists within gendered relationships” (p. 201).

Kimmel (2017) stated that men require liberation from these gender roles, as the behaviors associated with masculinity did not reflect a status of “secure manhood” (p. 188). To the contrary, there is little to no correlation between the prescribed gender roles and men’s confidence in their masculine identity. To be sure, the MSRI established an unattainable idea that caused more anxiety and stress in men in attempts to fulfill their proposed masculine gender roles. Therefore, research has turned to how masculinity is evolving to secure a balanced nature that encompasses self-expression and concepts of femininity (Kimmel, 2017). This in turn signals a means in which attitudes and behaviors can change by not only a greater acceptance of femininity, but also by a renewed definition of masculinity.

Weiss and DeBraber (2012) noted that “women are demonstrating their achievements through successful leadership of battalions, physical fitness, and competent use of weaponry.” In Friedl’s (2005) research, women were found to outperform men during extended field operations that required endurance and resistance to sleep deprivation. Harrell, Beckett, Chien, and Sollinger (2002) performed a similar study that found women performed as well as their male peers during AIT, to include non-traditional skill sets. Studies have also revealed how women have viewed their service as a pivotal life experience that led to personal and professional growth (Suter et al., 2006; Sasson-Levy, 2003). This perspective revealed how women utilize emotional occurrences

as character building opportunities, and for women service members these included traumatic experiences during deployments (Pawelczyk, 2014).

Demonstrating competency and capability and celebrating experiences as opportunities for growth are a means to transcending social stressors and developing a military identity that lead to positive well-being and social and professional success. At the same time, Heinecken (2017) and Sasson-Levy (2011) emphasized activism by women service members to influence military change from within the organization. Although this may prove “risky” in terms of marginalization, it demonstrates a growing movement from within the military (Carreiras, 2006, p. 181; Hauser, 2011, p. 629). It serves as a means for social change against a domineering masculine ethic and gender management, and in favor of a positive military identity for present and future women service members.

Women service member advancements in the 21st century U.S. military have extended beyond the Gender Equality in Combat Act of 2012. For example, in December of 2016 President Obama expressed support for women to register for selective service (Moore, 2017). Although this proposal has since been postponed by Congress, it demonstrates further proposed political changes in military policy as a result of gender equality. In addition to further policy changes is the level of identity development of women service members after transcending gender management. Pawelczyk (2014) researched women veterans and how they formulated an identity based on professional merit that provided a means to a successful military career. Specific aspects reported by interviewees included deployment and combat involvement, demonstrating competence

and mental resilience, and constructing a military identity. Such studies allow a means for further exploration into gender integration in the military and identity development. They also give rise to a possible fourth wave feminism, which may demonstrate new paths to degendering organizations and reinvigorating the stalled gender revolution to obtain equality - not equivalency - throughout non-traditional occupations for women.

Conclusion

In summary, specific events accompany military policy change towards gender equality. These events emphasize the changing face of warfare, with greater reliance on technology and cultural sensitivity, occurring alongside a renewed women's movement and altered public perceptions of gender roles. All these aspects of modern conflict necessitate more women service members be involved in combat roles that had originally been segregated for men. Here, the ideal military setting is based on equality in terms of task performance and mental resilience. These professional qualities accumulate merit towards promotion and carry more clout in a sex-mixed unit than masculine performance and social climates. This includes the benefits of having a diverse military force to draw from multiple experiences and character traits to increase cohesive tendencies and unit effectiveness.

Women serve in the military for the same reasons as their male peers. Yet despite equal citizenship and personal motivations to serve, military service is still associated with glass ceilings based on gender stereotypes. Military-wide equal access to combat MOSs has been granted to women, and statistical predictions state that more women than men will be recruited within the next two decades. Yet social barriers remain that take the

form of coercive interpersonal stressors such as gender harassment, in which defamatory language and sexual humor reportedly occur the most frequently.

Interpersonal stressors are segregated from task-related stressors, as interpersonal stressors are of a social origin and task-related stressors are of a professional origin. Interpersonal stressors employ a form of social coercion on unit members to adapt similar behavior based on the masculine ethic, usually present in a hypermasculine environment and especially during deployments when combat stress is at its highest. Acceptance to adopt the social norm, manage one's gender, and reinforce the military's masculine ethic can lead to several personal and professional consequences for lack of social identification and identity internalization regulation. For women service members, these interpersonal stressors can hinder the progressive development of a military identity and negatively affect their career and well-being, while simultaneously reinforcing gender roles should gender management result.

The purpose of this study was to discover how women service members successfully navigated the four phases of military gender identity development in the U.S. Army towards transcendence. The social theoretical framework presented the GIDWM theory proposed by Culver (2013). This approach acknowledges the internalization of group values, goals, and behaviors over superficial performance that lead to gender management. Women service members navigate through the four phases of identity development until the final phase is reached and transcendence is obtained through self-actualization, self-efficacy, and androgyny. Here, transcendence serves as a

means to a balanced military identity development and self-acceptance of a woman warrior.

At the same time, a more effective approach to military policy change is called for in which the masculine-warrior paradigm and masculine ethic normatives are challenged and the military social climate altered in favor of equality not equivalency. Here, a meritocracy is widely promoted as individuals are evaluated based on professional performance rather than gender qualities. Therefore, a formal degendering of the military organization that reinforces equality, rather than the masculine ethic, on the occupational level must occur. In this case, there are multiple options for a call to action and open areas for further research regarding women in the military.

In addition, this study fills the gap in research application on two distinct and interrelated levels. First, it addresses women service members' identity development, presenting the phenomenon within a defined theoretical matrix. Second, this study is based on data collected from women service members serving in the modern U.S. military, post War on Terror and Gender Equality in Combat Act (Culver, 2013). The qualitative narrative approach is justified here, as authentic, detail-rich accounts from women service members are central to authenticating the proposed contextual and theoretical frameworks by answering three key research questions.

This next chapter centralizes on providing detailed information on the selected research design and methodology and addresses influential factors on trustworthiness of the study. Important highlights include a review of the research questions, and conceptual

and theoretical frameworks with respect to research development, instrumentation, and data collection in light of ethical standards and valid data facilitation.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to discover how women navigate through the various phases of identity development in the military in order to reach the level of personal acceptance as both a woman and a warrior. It identifies a specific process with which a woman in a male-dominated society, such as the military, may pinpoint her position within the identity development matrix. By facilitating this awareness, women are empowered to take steps toward positive change. Moreover, indicating identity development commonalities among women in non-traditional occupations will provide a relatable and positive influence for other women. Therefore, this study represents a means for guidance and empathy for and among women in non-traditional occupations, particularly the military.

In addition, this study fills the gap in research application on two distinct and interrelated levels. First, it addresses women service members' identity development, presenting the phenomenon within a defined theoretical matrix(Culver, 2013). Second, this study is based on data collected from women service members serving in the modern U.S. military, post War on Terror and Gender Equality in Combat Act.

This chapter begins by first revisiting the research questions and central concepts and phenomenon stated in Chapter 1. This first section then continues with identifying the research tradition selected for this study and the rationale for selecting that particular tradition. The next section discusses the role of the researcher during data collection as an observer and interviewer. Personal relationships and related bias through personal

experience shall also be discussed in terms of compensating for potential bias and maintaining validity of the study.

The third section proposes the specific methodology this study pursued by first discussing the sampling strategy associated with participant selection and the inclusion criteria involved: Authentication of participants meeting the criteria, rationale for the sample number chosen, recruitment information, and the relationship between saturation and the selected sample size. The discussion includes a specific research-developed instrumentation description with respect to data collection and the sufficiency in which the research questions were satisfied.

The fourth section is designated to addressing issues of trustworthiness: Credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and coding reliability. Ethical procedures follow that discuss IRB documentation that address institutional permission and potential ethical concerns. Finally, this section and chapter 3 is concluded with a summary of the chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions selected for this study fall in alignment with the contextual and theoretical frameworks presented in chapter 2 and were inspired by personal observations while serving on active duty in the U.S. Army. These events revealed commonalities that justified the following three central research questions that lead this study to understand the gender identity development path that women service members navigate using specific coping strategies in the modern U.S. Army.

1. What are the main forms of gender harassment that women service members encounter?
2. What are the strategies women service members use to cope with gender harassment?
3. How does a woman service member's position in the phases of gender identity development affect her career and well-being in the military?

The present military reform policy to promote gender integration and equality since the Equality in Combat Act of 2012 has been scrutinized by social theorists. Arguments emphasize the methodological ineptness in military policy approach, as many related gendered organizations in the process of degendering and claiming a gender-neutral policy continue to favor the masculine ethic (Kanter, 1977). Policy changes are aimed primarily at re-proportioning the sex balance within occupations, in which their social framework is designed to exclusively represent male interests.

Therefore, the present military integration policy fails to address social conditions that harbor hypermasculine environments which endorse interpersonal stressors based on social stereotypes and masculine preference in spite of women service members demonstrating professional competency (Acker, 1990, 1992; Baker, 2006; Britton, 1997; Decosse, 1992; Williams, 1995). The effect is that qualified women are socially marginalized and group cohesion is skewed, risking task accomplishment and mission effectiveness (Forsyth, 2018; Rosen et al., 2003).

The military's gendered social climate both enables and tolerates the use of gender harassment in the military (Sojo et al., 2016). This interpersonal stressor strives to

coerce individuals to conform to the masculine ethic, most frequently expressed in defamatory language and sexist humor, particularly as these forms of harassment are so easily trivialized. In effect, and in accordance with the theoretical framework following Culver's (2013) GIDWM model, women employed gender management as a coping strategy in which to be socially accepted by their male peers. However, by adopting male traits juxtaposed to their natural essence, women risk ending their career prematurely and lay vulnerable their overall well-being.

To test these conceptual and theoretical frameworks, the previously listed three research questions were formulated. They inquire into the central concepts and phenomenon regarding gender harassment and coping strategies, successful group cohesion, and positioning within Culver's (2013) GIDWM model. The research questions inquire into the effects of gender harassment on women service members' professional career and personal well-being as they were experienced from their perspective. Through a qualitative narrative inquiry, women service members' experiences are captured through their audio recorded biographical recollections. The qualitative narrative approach centers on obtaining the lived experiences of individuals to capture a deeper understanding of the concepts and phenomenon regarding gender identity development and women service members (Rudestam & Newton, 2014).

In accordance with the qualitative approach, a priority of this study was to highlight the stories collected from participants as being their own personal interpretation of chronological events in accordance with life-course incidences. The participant's subjective stories function as an oral history recorded as a biographical study, chronicling

women service members' experiences as they naturally and contextually occurred as the participants personally recounted them. This holistic study concentrates on inductive theoretical research that specifically examines intimately interconnected phenomena that pertain specifically to women service members that is whereby primarily explicable through their narratives. Culver's (2013) GIDWM 4-phase model serves as this study's primary theoretical framework as an identity development matrix. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs highest pyramidal attribute of self-actualization serves as this study's secondary theory as it compliments Culver's final phase of transcendence.

This next section discusses the researcher's role in this study as it pertains to the participants as an interviewer and possible past association on a professional level. The next section addresses any potential biases that may have resulted from these prior associations and service within the U.S. Army and how they were managed to present an objective research study.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher was to complete an exhaustive literature review to ensure the triangulation of data and collect and analyze detail-rich data from participants. Emphasis on comprehensive descriptions in this exploration for understanding is exhibited not only through open-ended interview prompts, but also through the member-checking approach of verifying transcripts and keeping an open line for any potential questions or concerns to fully involve participants in the study. This close collaboration with participants maximized accuracy of the restorying process. This approach specifically benefitted this study during transcript production, as participants were asked

to review their statements for accuracy and thoroughness, wherein increasing accurate coding and data interpretation.

Some research participants were previous professional acquaintances during the researcher's active duty service in the U.S. Army between 2007 and 2014. Therefore, there is potential for bias regarding former contact and personal experience in male-dominated units and hypermasculine environments. However, this bias is mitigated due to the four-year span since the researcher's honorable military discharge, direct contact with fellow women service members, and exposure to the U.S. Army military environment. Above all, positive communication, convenient scheduling, and facilitating a comfortable environment were paramount in establishing and maintaining rapport with participants. In this case, participants' experiences were the centerpiece of this study, not this researcher's personal and possibly outdated opinion on the topic.

This next section presents the methodological approach to this study. The study participant selection logic are discussed in depth as well as the instrumentation selected. In addition, the procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection procedures are discussed. Lastly, a comprehensive data analysis plan is presented in reference to the research questions, coding strategy, analysis software, and treatment of discrepant cases.

Methodology

In accordance with the focus of this study, the sample population is drawn exclusively from U.S. Army women service members. The sampling strategies chosen involved a combination of purposive critical case and snowball sampling. From former

acquaintances initial study candidates may be recruited, as rapport has already been established. These select individuals fit the inclusive criteria that inspired this study and are potential sources for recommending additional participants who likewise fit the participatory requirements. Moreover, these first participants' initial answers to the research questions will provide confidence in the proposed contextual and theoretical framework concerning gender identity development for women service members in the U.S. Army. This sampling strategy best suits this study as the proposed sample size is small; participants were drawn from a particularly narrow subgroup, and because there are few related and current studies encompassing this specific research topic.

The inclusion criteria narrowed eligible participants and subsequent sample size. The research population selected consisted of active duty women veterans who have served in the U.S. Army in or near warzones. Service and deployment dates included or fell after the initiation of the Global War on Terror in 2001. Participants were to have served in units that were predominantly male, involving MOSs associated with direct combat units, and have preferably deployed to the Iraq or Afghan theaters at least once to achieve combat veteran status.

Each of the participants took part in the study voluntarily and without promise of incentives. Participants' anonymity was animatedly respected throughout this study to ensure their privacy and uphold ethical practices. To ensure that all participants met the inclusion criteria, potentially eligible participants were contacted via several avenues: phone, email, or messenger apps to include: Phone text messaging, Facebook messenger, Skype messenger, or What's App. The inclusion criteria were posed either in written

form via email, although participants were encouraged to relay any questions or concerns to the researcher via phone, messenger, or email. All contact with participants – potential and qualified – was saved or recorded appropriately within the context of its original format, such as in emails, messaging, and interview recordings. Additional exclusionary conditions involved those participants in potentially vulnerable circumstances, specifically those who have been diagnosed with an illness or disability that would otherwise affect their ability to provide consent or endanger their well-being by participating in this study.

Once participant eligibility had been verified, the interview sessions then commenced in accordance with participants' availability and access to the Internet and Skype application. One-on-one interviews were conducted based on the sensitive nature of these personal recounts. A total of 15 participants was proposed to be recruited for this study in order to reach data saturation. Here, data saturation and the number of participants chosen equate in accordance with emerging and repeated patterns that thoroughly answer the research questions. Due to the complex themes within the research questions and to gain detail-rich accounts in an objective inquiry, interviews were scheduled to last 30-45 minutes based on participant availability. In addition, both U.S. Army enlistees and officers of various ranks and demographic backgrounds were included in this study to maximize triangulation within the homogeneous population sample.

Instrumentation for Researcher-Developed Instruments

Data collection materials – the interview questions – were generated by this researcher and issued via one-on-one interviews. The primary data collection instrument used is the software application Skype and the accompanying audio recording platform TalkHelper, both of which are contingent upon internet access. As a contingency, should an internet connection fail, a telephone placed on its speaker setting accompanied by two high-quality audio recording dictation devices adjusted for conference call sound could be used. Standby audio equipment included the audio MP3 recording software Audacity, and the two MP3 audio recording dictation devices as stated. The primary analysis and data storage tool used for this qualitative study was the online qualitative data analysis application Dedoose. A designated backup thumb drive was used to prevent loss of original raw data in case of server failure or data hacking of Dedoose. This thumb drive could only be accessed using the researcher's password protected computer and was secured in a locked cabinet when not in use.

Notetaking was utilized to highlight specific details stated by the participant from which to request further elaboration during the interview process. These notes were also used to comment upon any unique situational factors to include environmental contexts, behaviors, and non-verbal cues in which a recording may not have appropriately accentuated. All notes and recordings were treated justly as sensitive information, and therefore maintained and secured accordingly within the data analysis program and locked cabinet.

Open-ended interview inquiries, guided by the research questions, were posed within the prescribed time limit of 45 minutes to ensure sufficient collection of data. The primary basis for instrument selection and development were related theoretical and contextual qualitative studies. For example, Edwards and Jones's Gender Identity Development (2009) grounded theory study was used to enable this study utilizing Culver's (2013) GIDWM theoretical model. However, studies that researched similar contexts of military women were also used to facilitate this methodological approach (see Brownson, 2014; Dichter & True, 2015; Hinojosa, 2010; Pawelczyk, 2014; Sasson-Levy, 2003; Silva, 2008; Williams et al., 2012). Crowley and Sandhoff's (2017) qualitative approach is particularly highlighted as an inspirational methodological approach for this study. They specifically utilized the qualitative narrative approach, with snowball sampling that involved 12 U.S. Army women combat veteran participants.

Validity was maintained as all data were closely moderated by the researcher, keeping in check personal bias and expectations of study outcomes. The researcher remained encouraging during the interview in order to gain candid explanations from participants while practicing respectful neutrality. Participants were recruited as a legitimate, representative sample of their respective population. Working with a smaller sample population provided an increased opportunity for detail-rich narratives and deep saturation of research within a specific time constraint. Moreover, triangulation of data, respondent validation, and strong research techniques assured an appropriate level of validity in this qualitative research design.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Data were collected using one primary interview, with a second interview scheduled in case a follow-up was necessary for additional questions, transcript clarification, or interview interruption which required rescheduling. As participants were available at different locations throughout the United States, remote interviews were conducted using a recorded Skype or contingent phone call. Interviews and data collection occurred over the course of three months, in which transcripts were created and recurrently examined for accuracy. Interviews did not extend past 45 minutes unless the participant consented to continue. Every effort was made to ensure an environment of convenience, comfort, and respect throughout the interview process, to include active listening and empathetic openness to the participants' experiences.

The primary data collection instrument used was the audio recording platform TalkHelper, specifically designed to record and store Skype calls in both AVI and MP3 file formats. At the same time, should an internet connection fail, the contingency is the telephone placed on its speaker setting and accompanied by two high-quality audio recording dictation devices adjusted for conference call sound. Once the interviews had been completed, the recorded call files were then transferred to the online application Dedoose, the primary analysis and data storage tool used for this qualitative study. Standby audio equipment included the MP3 audio recording and analysis platform Audacity, and two high-quality MP3 audio recording dictation devices.

Notetaking was also utilized to highlight specific details of unique importance during the interviews, such as key statements or situational factors. All resulting

transcripts and recordings were uploaded to the secured Dedoose data analysis program, which was accessed on a password protected personal computer designated for this study. A designated backup thumb drive was used to prevent loss of original raw data in case of server failure or data hacking of Dedoose. This thumb drive could only be accessed using the researcher's password protected computer and was secured in a locked cabinet when not in use.

In the case of less than six participants being recruited, the study would have had three potential options. The study could have been widened to include non-veteran U.S. Army active duty women service members. This study could also have been further widened to include National Guard and Reservists. Another option would have been to have invited women service members from all military branches to participate in this study. Although the hypermasculine environment is considered the most viral and potent in the deployed environment, the masculine ethic nonetheless exists throughout the U.S. military in units that are predominately male. Therefore, the expanded inclusion criteria would provide further insight into the contextual situation on a comparative level between deployment and garrison environments, duty status, and U.S. military branches.

This study's participation formalities were reviewed with participants in accordance with the consent form outline appropriately during the interview process: voluntary nature, risk and benefits, privacy, and contact and questions. In addition, as participants verified their transcript, they were likewise welcomed to add additional thoughts at the end of the transcript that may have occurred post-interview. Participants were given one week to complete member checking of their transcript; in which case a

reminder was then emailed and messaged. Extensions were granted upon request, wherein a reasonable deadline was negotiated.

In the case of equipment malfunction or interview interruption, unclear or misinformation in the transcript, or upon request of the participant, follow-up interviews were scheduled, less the participant preferred other arrangements. The researcher's, the dissertation Chair's, and an IRB representative's contact information was provided to the participants should any questions or concerns have arisen.

Data Analysis Plan

Data from each recorded interview were then transcribed verbatim using Google Docs, transferred to a Microsoft Word document, and subsequently uploaded and coded within the Dedoose analysis program pending participant approval. Raw data were coded as each transcription was completed and member checked using Dedoose's upload feature for Microsoft Word files. All transcripts and audio files were uploaded simultaneously into the Dedoose analysis program, with a contingent designated flash drive to preserve original raw data files. The transcript files were coded in accordance with inductive content analysis. This process requires some thought and preparation, as it entails contiguity-based relationships to be identified based on organizational, substantive, and theoretical categories (Maxwell, 2012). To compliment the continuity strategy is the open coding methodology. In this case, the narrative transcripts are meticulously reviewed for primary and secondary categories until saturation is reached and clear patterns emerge (Rudestam & Newton, 2014).

The research questions served as the initial organizational categories, providing central categories from which to provide an investigative base and an initial means to systematize and code data. Substantive and theoretical categories of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks presented in chapter 2 coincided with transcript content. The substantive categories related to the participants' descriptive narrations, while the theoretical categories were relative to the researcher's etic theoretical concepts. These relationships became clearer and were strengthened through data saturation, wherein the selected coding categories increased in relevance. Together, these categories established a comprehensible design that enveloped a properly coded matrix that established conclusive empirical connections with clear patterns within the data (Maxwell, 2012).

The desired outcome is to connect the research findings with the initial problem statement regarding U.S. military policy and the social climate of the U.S. Army with regards to women service members. However, discrepant cases that contradict the desired results may occur, they nonetheless should be reported. Although these cases may not conform to the original tentative conceptual or theoretical frameworks, they nonetheless hold significance as diverse human manifestations that occur within the U.S. military and to veteran women service members. As this study sought to understand how women are able to successfully formulate a balanced military identity, all concepts are representative and were likewise included in the research findings.

This next section examines issues of trustworthiness. It involves internal validity; determining strategies in which credibility may be established. The next section also discusses external validity, in which strategies regarding transferability involving such

aspects of thick description and variation in participant selection are addressed. In addition, dependability is considered in terms of providing audit trails and triangulation. Lastly, confirmability strategies are determined through such approaches as reflexivity.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Concerning the issue of trustworthiness as it pertains to the quality of data analysis, several elements have been considered. Each subsection was planned in accordance with securing validity, reliability, and objectivity in a qualitative study. This segment is then followed by addressing ethical procedures concerning this study's participants and their rights and a final concluding summary of the chapter.

Credibility was established through a series of careful internal validity checks. Triangulation was achieved via an exhaustive research and multiple personal narratives, drawing from as many original sources as possible. To further advocate this effect, newly published related periodical articles to add to the literature review were investigated. Also, contact with participants occurred at different times in different formats in order to maximize participation, diversify opportunities to provide rich data, and in effect increase credibility.

Interviews were conducted up until the qualitative narrative inquiry quota was reached, which was specifically guided and determined by data saturation and prior related studies. This assessment involved utilizing the rich descriptions collected to provide strong and repeated pattern emersion. Internal validity increases proportionately

with the quality and thoroughness of the narratives provided, leading to data saturation and establishing strong credibility.

At the same time, interview transcripts were systematically reviewed for unintelligibility, clarity and accuracy of statements. This process specifically involved member checking through transcript validation as well as participants' own post-interview comments added at the end of the Word document transcript. This ensured that the participants are directly involved in the research process to enhance credibility and strengthen participant-researcher rapport.

Finally, reflexivity was closely observed to ensure a wholly objective literature research, data collection and analysis, and reporting of the findings at every step of the process. As preconceptions, beliefs, values, assumptions and position may affect research authenticity, all potential biases have been appropriately reported.

Transferability was addressed through strategies to include thick description and variation in participant selection. External validity can be reinforced by emphasizing the value of obtaining thick descriptions in a smaller number of participants that is particular to qualitative narrative inquiries. Greater generalizability is desired, although this aspect is subjectively determined by the reader within the contexts of reported personal experiences (Rudestam & Newton, 2014). Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory proposed to be applicable to women operating in multiple gendered organizations. Yet from a methodological standpoint, thick descriptions and rich data can be achieved during the interview process. This employs triangulation strategies, which relies on widening

credibility. An exhaustive literature review, and varying contact times and accessibility modes with participants assisted in this goal. This signals an intensive and long-term involvement with the literature, participants, and data (Maxwell, 2012). Furthermore, remaining abreast of applicable literature, maintaining close and open contact with participants, and investing in lengthy observation of data promised a deeper understanding of the research that was reflected in the results and potential for transferability.

Dependability allots for data stability as it is collected, analyzed, and presented as conclusive results. This cohesive process employs facilitating an audit trail of meticulously maintained and preserved records so as to ensure replication of the research steps. This involves sustaining all raw data collected throughout the data collection process, but also encompasses concept of self-reflection in the form of reflexivity to describe the research process, contain bias, and disclose discrepant cases.

Again, emphasizing the aspect of triangulation can assist in strengthening credibility as well as dependability. Concerning data, an appropriate mixture of participants in accordance with demographic representation, accessibility and communication methods, and thoroughly considering and reporting the possibility of error or bias. Concerning the research literature, an exhaustive search for original theoretical sources as well as conceptually similar studies occurred all in an effort to corroborate on data and cross-check information (Rudestam & Newton, 2014).

Confirmability highlights the significance of reflexivity in terms of how a researcher's bias may affect the research process. Again, conscious objectivity was strictly observed to ensure that the research findings were presented within the context of the research process, whereby minimizing error and bias as much as possible. An additional means in which to advocate confirmability is to repeatedly revisit the literature and data in order to deeply reflect, revise, and incite additional patterns and observations to emerge (Maxwell, 2012). This process is cyclic, and therefore reinforces confirmability of results. At the same time, confirmability is apparent as research is presented in a clear, detailed, and concise language with which findings are accurately represented. These points are primarily enacted via a collaborative approach to data collection and analysis with participants, as in member checking and respondent validation.

This next section discusses the ethical procedures, in which participant access in accordance with IRB approval are relayed. This encompasses IRB permissions, ethical concerns, and data handling with regards to preserving participant confidentiality.

Ethical Procedures

Central to this study was the observance of such core ethical principles as beneficence, respect, and justice for the people and information involved in this study. Misrepresentation and fabrication were strictly avoided in pursuit of these primary goals to produce ethical and valid data. Ethical standards were enforced to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of each participant by gaining IRB approval, obtaining consent from participants, and properly protecting and securing data.

Before proceeding with any data collection, IRB approval was obtained to ensure this study was within ethical standards regarding human subjects (Walden University approval number 12-17-180159196). In addition, as per IRB requirements, potential participation candidates were informed of their rights and provided within their corresponding consent form, which voluntary participants electronically approved via email (See Appendices A and B for the invitation email and approved IRB consent form, respectively). It was of essence to ensure each participant was able to make an informed and competent decision regarding voluntary involvement in the study, free from any exclusionary criteria such as coercion, retribution, or physical, mental, or emotional vulnerability. Each participant retained a copy of the consent form that included the scope of the study, voluntary participation, and consent guidelines.

At the same time, the researcher reviewed the consent form parameters with each participant at the beginning of the interview, prior to the commencement of study questions. As nature of the study did involve a mild risk in terms of emotional discomfort or distress, small breaks between the study's three interview sections were purposefully scheduled. These small breaks were employed as an opportunity for the participant to pause, refresh, and relax; the researcher providing positive reinforcement and alerting them to the interview time and questions remaining. Most importantly, the contact information of the researcher, dissertation chair, and IRB representative were provided should any questions or concerns have arisen during the data collection process, to include the desire to withdraw from the study.

All data were consolidated and stored electronically in the online cross-platform application Dedoose. Dedoose serves qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research alike as it assists in the data collection, coding and analysis process. Due to its online presence as a centralized research data platform, the sensitivity of information is provided appropriate security by several means. In accordance with ethical compliance, data uploaded and stored in the Dedoose platform is encrypted, password protected, no metadata or third parties are involved without user consent, and both SAS 70 Type II and HIPAA compliance requirements are strictly observed.

Furthermore, to endorse confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, the researcher did not divulge any information between participants and the names of the participants were changed. Lastly, no other parties were provided access to any data collected during the research process. All data was conveyed and stored electronically. All data were uploaded to the Dedoose program and any copies were immediately deleted. All data stored on the Dedoose platform were retained for two years whereupon they were then permanently deleted.

This final section of chapter 3 is the summary. It offers a summary of information presented in the chapter as well as a brief introduction to the next chapter 4.

Summary

This chapter reviewed key components of the methodological approach regarding this study. The specifics of the research design and its rationale for selection were reviewed. Next the role of the researcher was discussed in terms of data collection and bias mediation, leading to a presentation of the proposed methodology strategy. Sampling

strategies were discussed as well as specific instrumentation in which to amply answer the research questions. Next, issues of trustworthiness in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and coding reliability were addressed. Finally, ethical procedures followed that discussed IRB documentation, which addressed institutional permission and potential ethical concerns.

Chapter 4 revisits many key themes presented here, discussing data in terms of actual findings and proof of trustworthiness. It presents a comprehensive analysis of each participant's narrative reflections as guided by each research question in an open-ended inquiry. The findings from the study were sequentially organized in accordance with the three research questions. Additionally, chapter 4 includes additional participant information and readdresses specific methodological aspects such as data collection and analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to discover how women navigate through the various phases of identity development in the military in order to reach the level of personal acceptance as both a woman and a warrior. It identifies a specific process with which a woman in a male-dominated society, such as the military, may pinpoint her position within the identity development matrix. Central to this study was to obtain self-reported behaviors and strategies via personal interviews women service members utilized to exercise transcendence of the four phases of gender management in spite of their male-dominated environment.

In order to correlate with these personal experiences reported by participants, a conceptual framework was established based on the social culture within male dominated units and a hypermasculine environment as presented in Herbert's (1998) paralleling study. In addition, Forsyth's (2018) group cohesion model to understand concepts of professionalism and unit cohesion contrasted with hypermasculine environments that employ specific coercive interpersonal stressors of gender harassment. Pertaining to the theoretical framework, Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory was the primary catalyst as it directly pertained to this study's overall purpose. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs proposal of self-actualization adds to Culver's GIDWM theory's final stage of removing the identity mask to transition to a balanced military identity. Taken together, these key concepts led to the formulation of the following research questions:

Research questions

1. What are the main forms of gender harassment that women service members encounter and the coping strategies they use?
2. What are the main components of group cohesion that present an effective unit during deployments?
3. How does a woman service member's position in the phases of gender identity development affect her career and well-being in the military?

The following chapter 4 is a presentation of this study's results regarding the gender identity development of women service members. It is divided into several comprehensive sections: Setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results by research question, and a summary of the data.

Setting

This study employed a remote approach to scheduling and conducting interviews, which participants found convenient. At the same time, two key issues arose during the interview process that required some management and adjustment. One repeated issue involved securing enough participants for this study. Although multiple potential participants were located, many of these women had multiple other obligations that made scheduling commitments difficult. Out of approximately 30 potential participants contacted, 16 became potential participants and 14 completed the interview process. Two participants required rescheduling, and several required an extension to review and confirm their transcripts. Although the total participants achieved was one participant less

than the originally proposed goal of 15 participants in chapter 3, data saturation was nevertheless achieved.

Another issue that occurred was participant preference concerning how the interviews were conducted. The required IRB data collection protocol for interviews to be exclusively audio recorded was adhered to. However, a majority of participants preferred to be contacted by phone rather than by Skype due to individual convenience, personal comfort levels, and device compatibility. One individual requested special arrangements of Google Doc sharing and live messenger only. When Skype was used, the software program TalkHelper recorded the interview's audio in MP3 format. When participants were interviewed by phone, two digital handheld dictation devices were used to record the conversation as a conference call in MP3 format. In the special case of Google Doc live messenger, the completed Google Doc interview document was directly transferred to the transcript format.

In all situations, a hardcopy of the interview questions was used for reference and potential notetaking. After each live interview concluded, the recording was uploaded to the password-secured computer, checked for quality, and transcribed using Google Docs. The completed transcriptions were then converted to a Microsoft Word file and emailed to the respective participant for their verification and additions. Upon participant approval, the transcription was then uploaded to the analysis tool Dedoose for coding and data analysis. All raw data was maintained on a contingent designated flash drive, accessed on the password-protected computer, and secured in locked cabinet when not in use.

This next section is a short presentation of the demographics pertaining to the participants of this study.

Demographics

Participants were all women who have served in the U.S. Army during or after the Global War on Terror (GWOT) in 2001 to the present. Thirteen of the participants served or are serving as junior, mid-grade, or senior enlisted personnel plus one participant as an officer. All participants have served in male-dominated units, and in a variety of MOSes to include: Military Intelligence, UAS Operator, UAS Mechanic, Helicopter Mechanic, Helicopter Crew Chief, Communications, Aviation Logistician, Flight Operations, Travel Coordinator, Recruiter. Participants served in a variety of elements within the U.S. Army command hierarchy: the unit command, battalion, brigade, and joint task forces. Demographics included women from three main ethnicities: Caucasian, African American, and Latino, and from various ages ranging between 20 and 60 years old.

This next selection presents the data collection process as it occurred regarding participants, location, duration, and how the data were recorded. Variations to the originally proposed data collection strategy in chapter 3 are discussed, to include any unusual circumstances.

Data Collection

Data were collected over the course of three months in the form of audio recorded Skype and phone interviews. Participant recruitment began on December 19, 2018 and ended on March 25, 2019 after a total of 14 participants consented, were interviewed, and

had validated transcripts. Only one participant favored using Skype for an interview setting, whereas the remaining 12 participants preferring phone interviews, and one participant requesting special arrangements of live messenger via Google Docs. The interviews took place at a pre-arranged time and place that was most convenient for the participants. All interviews were recorded from the interviewer's home office to ensure a private and quiet environment. The 3-month period reflects the intricate qualitative process that embraces obtaining critical case interviews, enabling snowball sampling, and member checking for respondent validation of transcripts.

This study employed snowball sampling to obtain potential participants, who were contacted via a combination of phone and Facebook social media messaging. Invitation letters for participation were sent out via email with the IRB consent form attached for a potential participant's review and approval (See Appendices A and B). Consent was first obtained from all participants prior to commencing the interview sequence. Thereafter, an interview date was scheduled. To conduct the interviews participants were contacted for interviews via Skype or phone. The consent form was reviewed with the participant just prior to soliciting the interview questions to ensure an understanding of the study's premise and their rights for participating. Thereafter, the interview commenced, and the specific IRB approved interview questions were asked (See Appendix C for the interview questions and procedures).

The interview questions were divided into three sections: Part one asked participants questions about the U.S. military organization, part two asked about the service member's unit, and part three asked about the participant's military job

performance. After each section a participant was asked after their comfort level and if they required a short break. Most interviews lasted 30-45 minutes. However, if any interview approached the 45-minute limit, the interviewee was asked for their permission to continue until the interview was completed. Upon completion of the interview, the audio recording was immediately uploaded to the designated password-protected computer and tested for audibility. Once the recording had been verified, the recording from the digital recording dictation device was deleted, as well as the audio recording from the backup dictation device.

Each post-interview had a designated 1-week period in which the audio recording could be transcribed to written form using Google Docs dictation by this researcher. The audio recordings were reviewed by this researcher three times each: once to confirm a quality recording, a second time to perform the transcriptions, and a third time to compare the transcript with the recording for accuracy. These transcriptions were then transferred to a Microsoft Word document and emailed to their respective interview participant for their individual private review. Participants were allotted one week to review, make adjustments and approve their interview transcript, which concluded with the last interviewee on March 25, 2019. Participants emailed their approved transcripts to the designated email of the researcher as stated on the consent form, whereupon these transcripts were then uploaded to the Dedoose website for coding and data analysis.

Some variation in data collection occurred in terms of participant requirements. Originally, potential participants needed to have served up to or after when the Gender Equality in Combat Act was passed on May 15, 2012. However, it was determined to be

more inclusive for participants and more legitimate to filling the gap in literature since Herbert's (1998) study to modify this date to the commencement of GWOT on September 11, 2001.

Another variation in data collection involved participant interview preference. Although Skype was the suggested interview platform, a majority of participants preferred to hold their interviews over the phone. In this case, TalkHelper was the recording software coupled with Skype, and two MP3 audio recording dictation devices set for conference call quality were used for phone calls. Additionally, one participant preferred to converse using Google Docs messenger while answering the interview questions due to the participant's assertion of social anxiety, and therefore an aversion to live verbal communication. The participant followed the same interview procedures of consent via email, scheduled interview date, and transcript verification deadline.

One additional variation from the originally proposed data collection procedures involved participant review time of transcripts. Participants were provided the originally proposed one week to review transcripts, although due to multiple requests, extensions were allowed until the final due date of the last interviewee's prearranged due date of March 25, 2019.

This next section discusses the data analysis process. This process is explained in terms of moving from inductive, coded units to larger representations of categories and themes. Specific codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the data are provided, and are further elaborated upon in the results section of this chapter. How discrepant

cases were handled is also explained in this next section, and again elaborated upon in the results section.

Data Analysis

As each participant provided their transcript approval, transcripts were then uploaded to the online data analysis program Dedoose for qualitative data coding and analysis. A total of 14 transcripts were uploaded to Dedoose, one for each participant. This researcher used the research questions, interview questions, and main theories proposed in this study to provide the coding framework for data analysis. This approach led to assigning the following four main codes: Coping strategies, social shift, army of men, and unit cohesion. Each of these main code categories had subcategories. For example, the first main code army of men had four subcategories: Gender harassment, hypermasculinity, social coercion, and stereotypes. Gender harassment had its own two subcategories of (gender harassment) by whom and location.

The second main code of coping strategies had one subcategory of self-acceptance. The third main code of social shift had two subcategories of negative and positive change. The fourth main code of unit cohesion had four subcategories: professionalism, role confusion, role knowledge and social acceptance. In many cases, selected transcript data for coding fit more than one category. This overlapping of data strengthened the study as it provided examples that suited multiple aspects of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. This aspect allowed for gradual consolidation and correlation of categories with this study's conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

As each transcribed document was read, a specified selection was highlighted and coded in accordance with the answer the participant provided as it related to its corresponding main or subcategory. These selections were captured, colored coded, and then applied as enriching interpretations of the four themes covered within this study: Gender harassment types and coping strategies, positive unit cohesion, and GIDWM identity position. Several patterns began to emerge between transcripts as each transcript was read, coded, and analyzed. These emergent themes were connected with inductive reasoning in which repeated themes between transcripts indicated patterned behavior and furthermore demonstrated shared experiences between U.S. Army women service members. Moreover, these repeated themes answered the three prescribed research questions discussed in the next section.

The next section is a presentation of the results utilizing the three research questions as an outline. Subheadings are organized in accordance with conceptual and theoretical frameworks presented in chapter 2 as well as referenced in accordance with U.S. Army and Department of Defense policies. Findings in the data are presented as direct quotes from the participants in order of each research question theme: gender harassment types, coping strategies, and the identities women service members confront during their service. Discrepant patterns outside the expected set frameworks are presented and noted as unexpected results within their appropriate theme subheading.

Results

The results of this study were organized in accordance with three proposed research questions centering on four primary themes: gender harassment types, coping

strategies, and the identities women service members confront during their service. Data from 14 separate interviews from U.S. Army women service members were explored to identify patterns between participants. This exploration revealed unique patterns that could be matched to conceptual and theoretical framework categories in Chapter 2 as well as categories proposed within U.S. Army and Department of Defense policies.

Firstly, the main forms of gender harassment towards women and their coping strategies are presented in accordance with participants' narratives. Secondly, the main components of group cohesion that present an effective unit during deployments are provided in the same manner. Finally, the last research question section provides examples that demonstrate how a woman service member's position in the phases of gender identity development affect her personally and professionally in the military.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked, "What are the main forms of gender harassment that women service members encounter and the coping strategies they use?" This research question has been split into two different segments in which the main forms of gender harassment are firstly addressed, and thereafter the coping strategies to these interpersonal stressors are presented.

Forms of gender harassment. Interpersonal stressors as part of gender harassment are social barriers that take several coercive forms. Recall that gender harassment encompasses several interpersonal stressors that serve as coercive measures to enable the consequential effects of conformity and marginalization. As noted by

Heinecken (2017), Kelty et al. (2010), Leskinen and Cortina (2014), Miller (1997), and Sojo et al. (2016), these gender harassment interpersonal stressors include the following 10 categories: Undermining leadership or resistance to authority, sabotage, constant or unwarranted scrutiny, indirect threats, defamatory language, sexist humor, gossip and rumors, offensive gestures, demeaning symbolic representations, and social isolation.

Undermining leadership and resistance to authority. This form of gender harassment involves emasculating an individual's level of leadership and authority regarding professional expertise, merit, and clout to instigate interpersonal stress. Participants discuss this form of undermining and resistance as it affected them during their service. For example, ASH stated, "I did not feel like I fit in at all. It was not welcoming when I PCSed here. I was an E6 but I was treated like I was a little PFC." DH mentioned how her expertise was undermined by her male peers, "I have been in environments where I was just quiet, and I listened to people talk. Because they really didn't want to hear my opinion, or my thoughts, or my wisdom." ASH echoed a similar experience, stating, "In one of my units there was a male in our smaller section. We were both E5s and he had his platoon. We each had 10 soldiers. He had his and I had mine. And he was always put in charge whenever our Platoon Sergeant left. Whenever something needed to be done, he was always put in charge." DM related to these statements adding, "They still try to uphold and enforce respect by way of negative counselling if you're being disrespectful. But at times, it's like a double-edged sword. Cause then they'll go behind your back and talk about you to the junior enlisted if you're an NCO and you're not a favored NCO. And they'll tell them to not listen to you or tell

them things that will encourage the junior enlisted to not respect you in any way or to not listen to you.”

Scrutiny. This form of gender harassment is employed as an interpersonal stressor to draw meticulous attention to and exaggerate discrepancies to the advantage of the instigator on a continuous basis. Participants shared their experiences regarding constant or unwarranted scrutiny, for example, DH stated that, “They always remind me ‘you can't say this’ or ‘you can't say that.’ And to my male counterparts, they won't say the same thing. They always correct me. A male will always correct me. ‘Well, that’s not quite...’ and I’m like, ‘You know, from my experience as a female this is what I’ve been through. And the gentleman, or the male, that's his experiences. So why are you correcting me when you won't correct the male?’” DH adds, “[...] some of my conversations with the male counterparts don't always include our thoughts, our understanding, our techniques.” ASH added to this aspect of exclusion, quoting male peers, “‘You don't know what you're doing, that's not the way we do things.’ I don't see why not, and I would explain it, and then they say, ‘Oh I guess that makes sense,’ but still it would get thrown out. Or, some of my ideas, they would say, ‘Oh men don't do that,’ and so it would just be whatever.”

AM discussed the persistent challenges presented to her by her male peers, “When you get to your unit, they kind of kick you to the curb, it seems like. If you can't keep up, then you're nothing to them.” Adding to the concept IM stated, “[...] Company NCOs, especially in my platoon would just find something to yell at me for. Everything from, ‘There's a wrinkle on your uniform,’ and I mean everybody had it because they were ACU's, to ‘You have one hair out of place, go do push-ups.’ It was pretty rough.”

SR continued this concept, “Always having to prove myself to be just as good, if not better than my male counterparts. It was always something that I had to do. I always had to be good at PT, if not better just to earn their respect.”

Hazing. Multiple participants noted that they had to prove themselves as females in their units as their performance would be otherwise highly scrutinized. These experiences parallel the initiation process of hazing. BK notes, “It’s a big challenge. It’s like you constantly have to prove yourself over and over, and nothing is good enough.” Two participants specifically mentioned hazing, a form of harassment as part of an initiation process that often involves severe scrutinization of an individual (Keller, Matthews, Hall, Marcellino, Mauro, & Lim, 2015). SRo acknowledged hazing rituals occurring in her unit and RE spoke out regarding hazing in the unit stating, “I think at first, as a female, they would really, really go out of their way to try and haze you to see what you are made out of. Way more so than with the male soldiers. And they say flat out that they are doing it on purpose because so many females are just riding along as a mechanic but not really wrenching.”

Sabotage. This form of gender harassment involves the intention to destroy, damage, or obstruct a woman service members’ professional development (EEOC, 2016). Participants discussed their experiences regarding how their male peers employed this form of gender harassment to impede their professional career. As reported by participants, these methods of sabotage include irrelevant duty assignments and obstruction to promotion and career opportunities.

Professional irrelevance. Regarding professionally irrelevant duty assignments, IM stated, “I was constantly being passed up for any opportunities, and I was constantly put on ‘stupid duty.’ Like, CQ was a constant with me.” ASH adds to this concept, “So I’m supposed to be working at the flight line. But instead of me working at the flight line with all the other people, I got stuck in the mail room in an area down in a hole. I didn’t get to expand my career until a year and a half later.” ASH continues, “When I was in the military it was really hard because I always got put in those office spots. In those office jobs. And I hated being in the office more.”

SR commented on her related experience, “When I finally got into country, I don’t know if it was a bridge that was burned or me having to prove myself, but before I could do any intelligence collection outside of the wire, out in the field, I had to go on these nonsense presence patrols to show that I could keep up with all of the other Infantry men.” RE continues, “Never any males with my same-shared MOS would ever have to go out on these - not made up missions, it wasn’t a mission, it was so that they could go out and test me - missions where I was not necessarily needed. My male peers with my MOS wouldn’t have to go and do any of those things versus the females, we would have to.”

Promotion obstruction. As a method of gender harassment, an additional form of sabotage is promotion obstruction, to include career progressing opportunities, in which a women service member’s professional military career is delayed or hindered. For example, MP stated, “I always felt like I had to be better at everything just so that I could maintain the same promotion rate as my counterparts.” AM included an account of her

experience, “I was actually the last Specialist to get promoted, actually. That kind of was a punch in the gut. Because everyone else got promoted and I was the last one. It was more time in service. It was, you know, you've been in there for so long you get promoted automatically, unless you do something stupid. But there were people who got into the military after me that were promoted before me, and they were all male. They got jumped ahead on the list while I was pretty much behind.” IM echoed this experience saying, “I was never treated equally, unfortunately. I was often passed up. I know that my paperwork for my promotion from E2 to E3 was shoved to the bottom of the pile more than once because they didn't want to do it. I watched all the guys that got in at the same time as me get their E3, while I sat there going, ‘Where’s mine?’”

ASH addressed command role opportunities, “Of course [the U.S. Army] is veered towards men. Women are pushed out of leadership positions.” IM added to this concept saying, “Because I was never handed any opportunities, even when I actively sought them out, I felt like it hindered me constantly.” BK discussed her experience of promotion obstruction that touched on all of these prior statements, “I feel that the females don't have as many opportunities as males. Job opportunities, and it's harder for females to rank up than the males. I felt as though it was easier for the males to rank up than for females. Because of the promotions, not being able to get promoted due to being a female, which I have seen that. We're overlooked more often than the males.”

Two participants furthered this aspect of sabotage to specifically target women service members regarding pregnancy and children. For example, SR stated, “Another female is actually trying to transfer to my unit because she's being discriminated against

by her immediate leadership for being pregnant. [...] She has gotten pregnant and now she's gotten what seems to be the short end of the stick. So, she's looking to transfer to a more positive environment.” ASH paralleled this similar exclusivity, “I had my kids with me, so they took that as a downfall because I had kids.”

Indirect threats. This type of gender harassment involves foreboding conditions and hidden intimidation that perpetuates a hazardous work environment (Miller, 1997). For example, DM notes that as a woman service member, “First impressions are everything. If you're a female, you either impress them as someone that is mechanically inclined right off the bat, or you don't. And if you don't prove yourself immediately, they have a tendency to be less respectful towards you.”

AM addressed indirect threats requiring trivialization, “As I said before, accept their jokes, accept their looks. Just try to go along with their ‘immaturity.’ There's a lot of immature people in the military. You had to go along with it. Because if you said something to them, they just bashed you for anything. They'd make you feel uninvited. If you didn't go along with it, you were just excluded, pretty much. And you would work with these people every day, and you don't want that. You see them every day, you work with them every day. So, you had to kind of deal with it.”

Additionally, AM notes the unspoken threat women service members risk when reporting harassment cases, “I feel that's everything, because a comment or report goes out, then everyone kind of judges you differently. If you're a female or a male they just judge you because they don't believe you or they feel like if they say something wrong

about you you're just going to tattle-tale on them, and they don't have that trust in you anymore, it feels like.” BK continues with this form of interpersonal stressor stating, “Anytime and anything you told anybody anything, everybody knew. Nothing was personal. You might as well have been sitting out there and talking to everybody else if you wanted to have a personal conversation because that's the way it happened. It went out to everybody else. MP echoes this experience, “I had one incident where I felt very isolated and I felt that my professionalism was under threat. It was because we have a senior in our unit who was known to sexually harass other soldiers and I was the one who reported him. So, I ran into a lot of trouble with that. I mean, it was quite a little fiasco.”

Defamatory language. This type of language involves vulgar insinuations whose purpose is to specifically slander an individual’s reputation, where all things womanly and feminine are symbolically denounced through insinuation, sexual jokes, or offensive terms (Kelty et al., 2010). MP discussed the general atmosphere of communication from their male peers in their unit, “I think men are more vulgar than women. They speak sometimes without thinking about what they're saying, and it's kind of disgusting. I guess that would be a masculine trait, the vulgar speaking.” RE echoed this stating, “The way that the NCOs would speak to us, you know, it was just a bunch of guys. It was a very locker-room environment and all of the things that that implies.” SRO agreed with the general “guy talk” used in male-dominated units.

For example, RE discussed her experience in which her male peers “insinuated that I got my rank, I'll be graphic, by sucking dick, and accusing me of sleeping with anyone I ever spoke to for longer than 5 minutes.” DM continued with this theme

discussing her experience with enlisted male peers “talking sexually explicit about other females.” For example, “They would make some sort of comment like, ‘Oh, I wouldn’t touch her,’ or ‘Yeah, she’s hot, I would do her.’ You know, those little cat-call comments like that about any females that would come into the maintenance office.” DM noted an occasion when a male peer remarked on a woman service member in the unit, “[...] he made the comment about how at least he didn’t date her or marry her or knock her up. So, they would say horrible things like that about females.” RE mirrors these explanations of defamatory language, “There’s a big stigma of female soldiers in technical jobs who aren’t really technically savvy, but just flirting their way through the day, if you will.” RE continues, “It’s either guys trying to sleep with you or guys trying to find out who you slept with or whatever the case. No, you’re not really ever actually one of the guys. Insinuating that I was not as good as a technician because I was a female.”

Name-calling. Defamatory language is directly related to the element of name-calling, as Pascoe has proposed (2007). Here, participants discuss multiple forms of derogatory language used by their male peers toward women service members. For example, ASH stated [...] Somebody always acting like you’re being rude because you won’t take the time to stop and talk to them. Then you would start to get cussed at, start being called names.” RE adds to this aspect of defamatory language, “I had an NCO once who told me, ‘You’re going to have to make a choice. You can be either a bitch or a whore.’ And I chose bitch. And once you make that choice you never really integrate; you never really have any friends.” BK continues stating the connection with reporting

harassment: “Once you come forth and say something to one person, then you're known as a ‘shit starter.’”

ASH continues this theme of name calling connecting with an offense to one’s intelligence, “I still don't get taken seriously because I'm a female and because the way I work things are different. I always got called ‘Oh you're stupid.’” ASH continues, “A lot of the women would be taken as ‘Oh, you're ditzzy.’ So, I wanted them to know that I'm not, and to take me more seriously.” Additionally, ASH states, “So lots of people always called me “college girl” because I already had my college degree and nobody else around me had theirs.

Sexist humor. As eluded to by several participants, sexually explicit language is used albeit masked by a playful or humorous tone. As IM stated, “I had comments about my chest, about my butt, a couple times where it was like, ‘Oh, you're fun to watch, walk away.’ Those kinds of things. A lot of it was just comments on my body.”

Gossip and Rumors. Defamatory language is also directly related to gossip and rumors as they are likewise circulated for use as a harassment tool to defame and marginalize an individual. Wilke (2019) addresses gossip and rumors as public discussion of an individual’s private or professional affairs that may be of a slanderous or harmless nature, yet, as stated by Goldsmith (2007) are nevertheless considered “destructive comments” (p. 40). For example, RE discussed her experience with rumors, “All I had to do was walk with someone to the DFAC and that was it. The rumor mill would start, and I was sleeping with that person.” RE continued with a story regarding a male friend, “I

hung out with him all the time because he was the only person I had to hang out with while we were in Iraq. And about three or four months into the deployment, he told me 'Hey, look man, I'm really sorry but I can't talk to you anymore because the guys are telling my wife,' or the guys are telling their wives and their wives are telling his wife, and now his wife thinks that he's got a girlfriend in Iraq, and he just can't be my friend anymore. So, it's always complicated like that."

AS comments on her experience with rumors, "Especially when I was younger in the military, there were some threats as far as my professionalism because of rumors that other people created." DM added, "You have to be careful with who you associate yourself with. Because, like I said, if you talked to the same male too much, all the time on a regular basis, and you are seen with that same person outside of work all the time, the rumors start flying. And once you the make the mistake, if the rumors are actually true, and you're having a sexual relationship with that male, that's all it takes. Just that one thing to lose the respect of all your male co-workers."

Offensive gestures. This type of gender harassment includes gestures, leering, and staring that are sexually suggestive (EEOC, 1992). For example, KM highlights aspects of gender harassment, and speaks specifically to offensive gestures, "Mostly verbal. Nothing physical. Mostly verbal, gestures, little slick comments, eye winking. You know, just that 'hover over you' type thing or whatever. I mean all of it is bad, but the physical is when people are getting too comfortable and taking it too far." Similarly, DH noted, "If I try to act female, like, if I wear my uniform with a skirt, the men always look at my legs. They always check out my legs. It has gotten to where I just wear my pants. And I

wear flats. I wear a bigger uniform so it can hide my figure, to be more masculine. So, I'm not arousing the visual effects of what I have seen can do to a man.” ASH discussed a similar situation, “[...] they changed it now so you can have your hair in a ponytail during PT, which I thought was stupid. They should always have it in a bun. Because that designates more of a distraction for the males. I don't know why, but they're just weird about ponytails. That was one thing that was bad too, so you have to wear your hair up otherwise it was more of a distraction for the males.”

Demeaning symbolic references. In the case of gender harassment, demeaning symbolic references identify certain symbols within American society that can be used suggestively and negatively (Leskinen & Cortina, 2014; Sojo et al., 2016). For example, AM described how marriage can be used as symbolic sexual promiscuity and maturity: “As far as things that were said, and jokes that were made and stuff, you know, I heard on more than one occasion things like: They were surprised that I hadn't gotten married and changed my name yet.” ASH mirrors this experience stating, “Every day over there I got asked by somebody if I'm getting married or if I wanted to get married, or something like that. The point I'm getting to is being taken seriously. Like, nobody would take me seriously.”

Social isolation. Socially isolating women service members from a support chain is a means of gender harassment as a direct form of marginalization (Heinecken, 2017). For example, DH noted the “clubiness” effect as noted by MacCoun et al. (2006, p. 647), “I would have to say, when men predominantly hang around men, and you see that that clique is like ‘the good old boy club’ as we used to call it. Where men were only

affiliated with that piece. And when they go to a drinking establishment together and then a woman comes with them, and then somebody finds something offensive with something someone else did. Then they typically will not invite the women anymore.” AM added to this social concept, “I got stuck on a Marine base, is where my unit went. It was 90% males, pretty much. So, they pretty much they back each other up. They back each other up, it seems like, and that's pretty much what happened to me in my case. Everyone backed the person who was accused of, because he was a friend, he was an NCO, and NCOs wouldn't do something like that!”

AM discussed how “clubiness” affected her level of inclusion in her unit (MacCoun, 2006, p. 647), “I had a couple NCOs that I felt I could rely on. But then, they left. They got out of the military and I pretty much had no one then.” AM continued, “I felt like I was already being outcasted at work. So, I didn't really talk to anybody. I was kind of outcasted. I really didn't talk to anybody outside of work or inside of work. The only time I would ever talk to somebody at work, was when if we needed to get a job done. Or when I had to do work, was the only time I talked to anyone. But other than that, I really didn't talk to anyone.” RE notes the difficulties of making friends in the U.S. Army, “I didn't have a lot of really good friends. There is a lot of loneliness. You can't really every actually let your guard down. I guess that is the sad reality. I never fostered any long-standing friendships that weren't ever at some point muddied by some kind of sexual nuance with anyone in my unit. It's very difficult to make friends as a female.”

ASH added purposefully being omitted from key communication disseminations, “I would be left out of the loop a whole bunch. They wouldn't let me know when things

were going on. They were like, ‘Oh well you're supposed to know,’ and then I would get in trouble because of no communication. They would communicate between themselves but not with me.” DH included a similar experience stating, “I was told to figure it out, that ‘you are strong enough to do it without us, so get it done.’” ASH brought this social climate concept full circle, emphasizing a tone of women being an unwanted presence, “The men are just more offended, and they feel like they don't want women in it. There's lots of the men that just don't want to work around women.” DH echoes this comment addition, “[...] it was challenging when I first came in as a woman, because they did not want women as Aviation, the men really shunned that.” AM continues, “I did not feel like they wanted me there at all. And that's why they transferred me to a different unit, troop anyway.”

The next section discusses the second component of the first research question, addressing the coping strategies women service members employ to manage their interpersonal stressors.

Coping Strategies

Participants present multiple perspectives on coping strategies that they employ to mitigate gender harassment in the military. These strategies are presented in 4 main categories. The first category involves a masculine-feminine balance utilizing primary social identity characteristics and feminine qualities that parallel Goffman's (1976) “essential nature” theory. The second category focuses specifically on different reporting methods that women service members use to alleviate gender harassment. This category includes 5 subcategories: Speaking out for oneself, speaking out for others, mentorship,

SHARP and EO, and support chain. The third, fourth, and fifth categories involve coping strategies that have negative consequences and can reinforce gender harassment. These categories include trivialization, avoidance and relocation, and being more male, respectively.

Core interests and femininity. Women service members discussed their coping strategies as denoted by Carlson (2011) and Ezzel (2009) in which women employed aspects of their primary social identity and femininity in which to enable a masculine-feminine balance. Participants discussed both core interests as well as expressions of femininity that reinforced coping strategies to interpersonal stressors with varying degrees of success.

Core interests. BK gave her example, “Music. Any chance that I was able to play music, I would play it. It kind of got me in the zone to just focus on my job and not everything else around me, the negativity.” DH discussed other options, “A lot of folks will cook together. We’ll do a lot of dining together. So that seems to be more of the home, family, feminine trait.” JM added, “The only ways that I expressed my femininity was with like sewing and making sure they had food to eat and listening to them.” ASH continued this theme, “I would use colorful pens. [...] I made things more colorful. I would put pictures up of family members.” MP mirrors this statement, “[...] the collection of my family on my desk.”

Femininity. DM discussed the significance of makeup, “I remember I had one NCO ask me, “Why do you have to wear all that makeup on your face?” Well, it's the

only thing that still connects me to feeling female or feminine. Because I wear a uniform all day, every day. I work a male-dominant job in a male-dominant environment. It's the only thing I feel that still connects me to feeling feminine is wearing makeup. And it also helps makes me feel better about my outward appearance." SR mirrored, "I wear a little bit of makeup. That's about it." KM continued with this concept, "I do try to keep my hair and my nails nice." SRo also stated, "I have nice manicured nails, and keep my hair long." BK related to this coping strategy, "Wear makeup. Definitely wear makeup. I even tried out false eyelashes just trying to bring it out so that the others would look at me and say, 'Okay this is a female, so we've got to give her a break, ease up on her, not work her so hard.' But that doesn't work either."

AS gave additional examples, "I wear my wedding ring; I cross my legs. I cross my legs when I talk. Like, if I'm having a conversation with somebody." JM added, "I kept my long hair." ASH added to the theme of feminine practices, "I put smelly stuff around so that way it would smell nice around me, like scented candles. I would wear perfume, and then I would have scented candles or an air freshener to try to freshen up around me. Especially because the dirty ACU smell, like week-old ACU, it really smells." DH echoes this statement, "I will tell you that in my Army now, people like the smell, light candles and stuff to do scents, and air fresheners."

AM discussed how simplicity can serve as a coping strategy, "I really didn't have an image. I thought, pretty much, easiest was best, is what my opinion was. Like, I had short hair, I had "guy hair." The shortest hair I could have for a woman, because it was easy to manage. You didn't have to put it up in the morning, you didn't have to style it a

certain way. I wouldn't have gotten yelled at for it being down or up. It would be out of the way. It was quick and easy.” AW emphasizes this aspect of comfort as a coping strategy, “I might style my hair in a feminine way or wear perfume to stand out. But I really just like to do whatever makes me feel good or comfortable.”

IM added to this coping strategy a professional component, “Because I'm not a makeup person, I always just try to have a clean, well-kept appearance to anyone that I meet. So, I'll having my hair nicely combed through, either pulled back properly or what not. I've always just tried to have a clean, nicely-dressed type of appearance.” IM continued, “A properly fitting uniform. I was given Mediums but I'm a Small-Tall. So finally, I went out and found a nice Small-Tall, made sure that it fit me properly, and I felt pretty darn good about myself when I had a nice-fitting uniform.”

Reporting Methods. As Fletcher (1998) suggested, multiple participants discussed how they utilized communication in which to develop coping strategies to gender harassment. Here, women service members described reporting methods that involve speaking out for oneself or others and correcting others. Communication also encompassed seeking counsel and offering mentorship to others. Participants also referenced the U.S. Army's EO and SHARP programs effective within their support chain.

Speaking out for oneself. AW discussed this coping strategy to gender harassment, “Usually one of the big things in the Army is if you hear or see something, that you stop it right away. Let them know that it's not okay. Or we can go to someone

else, if they're not comfortable with that approach, go a third party to better educate them. Because some people can get offended with what they're saying." AW continues, "I work with some Infantry guys and they're not used to working with females. And sometimes some comments will slip out and I will correct them, that they cannot say that and don't say it."

SR continued with this concept, "Intervention all the way. Calling it out, calling it as you see it. Other times, I don't want to say putting the person on the spot, but showing or explaining to them or calling it out to say, 'Why, because I'm female?' Usually in a joking manner. But usually in that joking manner it would prompt an engaging conversation. Sometimes yes, because I was female or sometimes because other soldiers were females. It would usually start off as humor or as a joke, but it would really prompt positive dialogue. And it still works today." MP mentioned, "I asserted myself from the get-go. I let them know I'm not your average female and you're not going to push me around. And that seemed to work very well for me."

IM continues this direct form of intervention as a coping strategy for gender harassment, "I've seen one girl in encourage it until they realized that they were being stupid. I just kind of shrugged, kept walking, and ignored them. I have seen another girl just straight-up hammer them down, just shut them down immediately, just straight-up yelled at them. I've also seen, not just one female, but also another male shutdown another male for making a sexually oriented comment. So, it's been used. I have seen it a few times." AM supports this strategy, "If it offends you, you say something, and you tell them to stop once and that's pretty much as far as it goes." SRO continues, "When

something offends me, I inform them. They usually cease discussing that topic / taking that action in front of me.” DM echoes this sentiment, “If I were to have told them straight to their face that it offended me that they would have had enough respect for me to have stopped what they were doing.”

Speaking out for others. AM advocated this coping approach in terms of speaking up for oneself as well as on behalf of others stating that, “You know, in the military they make fun of everyone behind their backs. Because, I don't know why. Ego-boost? I don't know. But I would always stand up for people because that's who I am as a person. I'm a person who cares about other people, so I always stood up for other people, and I always said my mind.” She continues, “ [I say] ‘This is wrong, this is stupid, you shouldn't talk like that. You shouldn't say something like that. You shouldn't make fun of someone behind their back.’ I would always stand up for people because that's who I am as a person. I'm a person who cares about other people, so I always stood up for other people, and I always said my mind.”

DM continues this approach, “I know I have personally had to tell people, ‘Hey look, I know that female, please don't say anything about her, because I do care about this person, and she's not that type of person.’ I know I have had to actually say things like that to them. Or, I have told one of the junior enlisted here that, ‘You're a married man, how can you talk that way? You've got a wife at home,’ just to make them think.”

Mentorship. Several participants discussed the significance of addressing the psychosocial effects of harassment on the victim, and how they used mentorship as a

coping strategy. For example, BK stated, “Pretty much talking to them when I could tell somebody, male or female had been harassing them. That was one thing that I noticed a lot in my last unit. They would pick on one person, kind of single them out of the crowd. I would, [...], try to comfort that person, you know pull them aside and try to talk to them later on. Make sure that their mindset was okay and that they realized it was just teasing. You know, we get over it. It's just words, and move forward, don't let it break us down. Kind of picking them up.”

AW presented a similar strategy by addressing the psychosocial effects of gender harassment, “When you show that you can be feminine and still in the Army, and show them we're on the same level, and try to get them motivated. I see a lot of them that are overweight, and I try to help them to get the weight down so they can feel motivated and think better of themselves.” SR adds, “[...] for me, in my role being a female, I'm able to pass the baton, share my experiences with subordinate females, or just anybody really, saying, “This is what I went through, this is how you can overcome those issues, and here are some positive ways in which to cope with anything that you might encounter that would be similar.” IM advocates this approach, “If anything, it's just letting other women know that they are not alone.”

SHARP and EO. AW advocated this concept, “We have our SHARP program and then we have the Equal Opportunity training which it is a way of educating people in the reporting and prevention procedures and this training teaches you what you cannot say or do to others. I can't say that I have personal experience, but it is something that if an incident occurs, I would speak to that person and correct them.” ASH also mentioned this

approach, “Another way is that people would file complaints, for one. That’s one way. That’s one of the main ways, a lot of people would just file complaints.”

KM advocates this approach, “I’m normally a more straightforward person. So, I normally would be like ‘SHARP.’ You know what I mean? I would throw the SHARP name out there, and kind of gets people to, ‘Wait whoa, I didn’t think it was that serious’ or ‘Well okay maybe I shouldn’t say stuff like that around her.’ But if I see another female who looks uncomfortable or if I think is completely out of line - I know sometimes a joke can be taken the wrong way - but if I feel like no that’s definitely a no-go I would definitely just be like ‘SHARP.’ Or like, ‘Were you not in training last week?’ Or kind of give them that side-eye. ‘Were you not in training last week?’ ‘What training?’ ‘SHARP, remember?’ ‘Oh okay, roger Sergeant.’ It’s a way to get their attention without being too, too much. But if they’re being too, too much then I would take it up to the next level.”

Support chain. Participants comment on their experiences with gender harassment and coping strategies that include employing their chain of support, such as DH “I usually have a Commander or a mentor that I can go to. And ask them about the situation, how to better handle it. I know that we have a lot of EO courses, Equal Opportunity courses, that we can attend, you can get some good tools out of there to help you cope with the situation. And then sometimes it’s just avoiding the situation altogether.” DH continues “[If there is] someone that I can go visit with, it would be my First Sergeant. I can actually go ask him a question and he will find me an answer.” She adds, “[...] I usually go seek out an older gentleman, who is more towards the grandfather age in the

group and visit with them. I truly migrate.” She continues, “Typically, we'll get quiet and we will ask another male for support or another female for support. We will typically listen and be quiet, and not show ourselves, and be just kind of stoic. Then, go to someone else who was part of the meeting and ask for their advice or seek counsel or their wisdom.” AM echoes, “I had a couple NCOs that I felt I could rely on.”

JM discusses her experience in her unit, “There was a guy in the unit that just kept harassing me, just verbally. That was something that I took up at the school. The squad leaders were prior service. So, I took it up with one of them and we talked about what to do. I requested not to report it, and he just had a talk with a guy in question. But then the harassment got so bad that the other guys in my training company went to the drill sergeants about it. Then, when it still didn't stop, they shunned the guy who was harassing me. And then it didn't happen again. ASH notes that a support chain can include friends and relatives outside the unit, “I still have my friends and family to talk to you. So that is what always helped me get through.”

Trivialization. Finally, as Britton (2000) and Skuratowicz (1996) presented the aspect of trivialization, so too did multiple participants discuss the aspect of trivialization as a coping strategy. Participants discussed their experiences regarding trivialization of gender harassment that may appear as humorous intentions as discussed by Ford et al. (2008) and Sasson-Levy (2002). At the same time, participants recounted trivialization as a coping strategy to gain acceptance with the male-dominant social group or simply because there is little faith in the reporting system as previously accounted by Sojo et al. (2016).

For example, AM stated, “[...] I knew it since it was the military, the guys joke about stuff like that, they talk about things like that. I don’t know if it’s the norm for guys to do that, but most of the guys, every time I hung out with my male friends, they do joke about things like that. So, I’m used to it.” IM also stated, “I let more things roll off my shoulders. I take everything with a grain of salt these days. So, if someone catcalls me, I really don't care anymore.” ASH reflected this sentiment, “So I just looked after myself, I didn't care. I already knew that they got their first impression of me and I couldn't change it so. They already looked down on me anyways because I was a woman. I'm already in a losing situation, there's nothing I can really do.” IM added, “The ones that accepted me, accepted me. The ones that just didn't want to come out of their predetermined ideals I just ignored them when I could.”

SR included, “[...] I was raised with rolling with the punches. So, a big part of me is roll with the punches despite how I felt.” DM concurred, “I learned to not be thin-skinned. If it didn’t pertain to me, it did not offend me. But who is to say it wouldn’t offend other females that would walk along and hear these conversations?” MP continues with this concept, “I think that the Army has definitely taught me how to have thick skin and just let it roll off my back. It's the way of life, I guess. As a junior soldier it was more prominent of course. [...] So, as a junior soldier it was more prominent and it got to the point where I was like, ‘Whatever you say doesn’t bother me, you can’t hurt me, you can’t touch me.’” AM also shared, “It really didn't have any “filter,” as what you would say. I'm not really offended, really, by some things they say, but some things do get to me every now and then.”

SRO discussed expectations that influence trivialization, “I think that it’s expected to overlook the lewd comments or what you may call sexual harassment.” She continued, “I’m sure that I made the guys sound bad. They are not bad people. Most of the time they are just being guys around other guys and trying to include the girls in their group, but not necessarily changing how they are.” She continued, “I think I am desensitized. It’s easier to be one of the guys and ignore the gender harassment.” ASH added to this sense of desensitization, “I just learned to just not care. So, I think I blew off a lot of it. Whatever happened, I would just blow it off and not care. So, I didn't listen. I think that I just got so used to it that it just became a normal thing.”

Finally, BK discussed her issue with reporting, “That was something that I never took to anybody. I kept it to myself. Due to not being harassed more about it, just getting more harassed.” ASH shared this view, “I didn't get screwed over very much but I saw a lot of other people. I know of a lot of other people when I saw it happening and I was like ‘I’m just going to keep my mouth shut because I don’t want to get involved in it.’”

Avoidance and relocation. As Friedkin (2004), Griffith (2002), and Poston (2009) stated, if a person’s sense of belonging in the dominant group is low, then that person will in turn develop a low self-esteem. Regarding this aspect of dissolution, eventually that person will withdraw from that group in search of another that will fulfill their need for social cohesion (Forsyth, 2018). Participants discussed this coping approach to gender harassment. For example, BK stated, “Avoid the people that would harass you. Don't make eye contact with them, don't entertain them.” ASH mirrored this approach, “I would lay low. A lot try not to get noticed as much unless I needed to be.”

She added, "I just tried to keep to myself more and I worked out a lot. So that I could do well on my PT score."

IM emulated this approach, "[...] After a while I just hung out with Alpha Company guys because I just got along with them, they got me. The guys in Bravo Company had their predetermined stigmas about the kind of person I'm supposed to be. So, I just started to avoid them." She continued, "I was constantly trying to find one way or another to escape them because of the way they treated me." IM continues discussing her experience, "There were only two females to 40 men. They used to be really hard on us girls. Like, "Your PT test doesn't take as much effort," and that kind of stuff. They always had a superiority complex over us. It got very old, very quick. After a while, I was just ready to leave, I was just done with my unit. I wanted to transfer or find something else."

Being more male. Herbert's (1998) study revealed how many women service members would work harder than their male peers to prove themselves worthy and able. Here, women service members adopt men's social norms, values, and goals to demonstrate that she can "make it as a man" and become masculine (Sjoberg, 2007, p. 93). ASH discussed this form of coping strategy against gender harassment, "Avoidance was one of them. Trying to prove them wrong. Trying to be the best at everything. Trying to get ahead of everybody else. They would try to prove them wrong, try to do something better than them, prove to them that they can do it. That's competition." JM discussed her experience, "The biggest challenges I had were, well, I had to work pretty hard to be able to be considered as an equal for the simple fact that I was in a male-dominated field and I

had not grown up working on things like all of the guys had. And in some respects, I was weaker. There were some things that I could not physically do. Not very many, but there were some. So, I felt like I had to overachieve in other areas.” IM stated, “It was a whole lot of, “I’ve got to prove you wrong. I’m a girl, I can freaking do this too, shut up,” type stuff [...]”

AS emphasizes this effort, “For me, when I first came in, I had to prove myself. I had to prove myself even though I was a female. I did the male standard for PT; I worked my ass off. I worked my butt off to make that standard. I had to prove myself to some of those older NCOs, those older people that I worked with.” DH echoes this coping strategy, “I had to work harder, I had to always study harder, always had to PT harder, always had to shoot better, always had to be earlier to the meetings, stay later, plan harder.” MP discussed this coping strategy in her experience, “You know I think as a female you have to prove yourself a little more than men do. Coming up through the ranks, you just really have to prove yourself more capable of being a leader than men do. Everything is about what you score on a PT test and how well you can fire a weapon.”

AS continues this theme from the standpoint of proving oneself not only to men but also other women service members, “I had to make my place known. I had to let them know that I was smart enough to do it. I forced my way into it, I guess. But you have to. So, I guess that's one thing, there are times when, not even males, but people who outrank you will look at you differently. Even some females. It takes them a minute to grasp what type of person you are. I want to say it's almost like our own gender kind of judges each other, if not worse than some males, because of the reputations of certain females.”

The next section turns to research question two, in which participants discuss their experiences regarding effective group cohesion from their perspectives and in accordance with Forsyth's (2018) five categories of cohesion.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked, "What are the main components of group cohesion that present an effective unit during deployments?" Forsyth (2018) proposed five components of group cohesion: social cohesion, task cohesion, collective cohesion, emotional cohesion, and structural cohesion. These five categories are presented as a framework for participant's narratives regarding effective characteristics of group cohesion. The following presents participants' experiences that they felt helped facilitate group cohesion within their military work environments in each of the five categories.

Social cohesion. MacCoun et al. (2006) explain that social cohesion between group members emulates the bonds of friendship. In military units, social cohesion is particularly important to experience from both peers and leadership. Participants explain their experiences regarding social cohesion from peers and leadership alike.

Peer social cohesion. Participants discussed how communication can facilitate a positive social climate, as DM stated, "Communication, it really helps. That's all the way around. Even if I was able to do, physically able to do my job as a mechanic, good communication helps with everything." MP mentioned, "We had conversations about the differences between men and women. We talked a lot about the females wanting to be Infantry and females wanting to go to Ranger school. Several of my male counterparts and I talked a lot about that stuff, but I never personally felt harassed." JM adds, "It was a

very respectful type of unit as far as, like, not chivalrous, but the guys were always pretty respectful of women.”

AS discussed positive social assimilation of peers, “I think younger soldiers [...] they try to get to know what the guys are into or what their team is into. That way they can see if they like it or not and hang out with them and be on the same page so that they can build that camaraderie. For seniors, I think it's a little bit different, depending on how you come into that position. You go to the book, you demand respect. You're respectful but you take care of them, you respect your seniors. It really depends on your position with that.” JM stated, “Yeah, I mean they pretty much kept us on a level playing field. I don't think I was ever discriminated against as far as not getting chosen for something. If anything, they included me.”

DH discusses how camaraderie takes time to develop and that a professional approach helps facilitate social cohesion, “It takes time to fit in, because you've got to kind of get to know everybody. You've got to see what your place is. You really have to be intelligent. In the unit that I'm in I have to read and know the publications and be an expert in that field. So, it has taken me time to get there, but yes, I feel that I am a key member. I don't always make everybody happy, but they don't always make me happy. So, that's just kind of equal across the board. We have a very diverse work unit here.”

Leadership social cohesion. AW emphasized social cohesion by fostering positive connections through mentorship, “For me, it's mostly connecting with other people. So, if I have somebody come in, I get to know them, and talk to them, and try to find a way to connect with them. So that I can show them how the Army has helped me

in my career and my life and to let them know this is a good opportunity for them and they have more options.” ASH added, “I was trying to make sure that the new younger enlisted that were coming in would feel more comfortable.” Fostering positive social cohesion through mentorship is reiterated by AW, “I talk to a lot of “girly girls,” when recruiting. I tell them, “You can still be a girly-girl in the Army,” you know there's nothing stopping you when you're wearing the uniform, you're not rolling around in the mud 24/7. [...] if you're talking to somebody who you know is stereotyped as like a macho man, you want to go to show them that we're on the same level here, that I can do whatever you're doing and show them that you're strong.”

KM echoes these mentor roles, “I've adjusted my eyes and my ears to look out for those who are lower ranking than me, younger than me. It's like you automatically want to look out for them, knowing they're going in the right direction. You want them to not make the same mistakes that you've made when you were a young soldier when you first joined.” AS augments this supportive approach, “Soldier issues. Their life. Making them understand. Like, they need to understand that the Army is part of their life. What they do outside the Army offsets what they do inside the Army. That's a big one.”

Participants also discussed their experiences as receiving mentorship, such as AS, “They were teaching me, and they were hard on me because they saw potential in me to be a successful leader. They saw that I could become somebody that could take care of soldiers, and I could do the mission and could handle anything. I talked to them later on about it. And I think that communication is a big thing between people. I think the more we communicate, the more successful we will be understanding working together with

males and females or whatever you identify as.” ASH mirrors this perception, “It was a nice little office click and I felt like I fit in. [...] I just felt more accepted there. I didn't have to worry about being teased, being looked at, being gawked at, or being doubted. What I had to say was listened to.” ASH further states, “D. was in one of my units and she was always there. She wasn't there at first, but when she got moved to our unit, then it was great. She was somebody that I could rely on, that we could talk to. She made sure that she was up in everybody's business, trying to get it so that everybody would get along. She was trying to make things smoother, trying to make sure that everybody got along great.”

Peer and leadership social cohesion. Participants reiterated the significance of social cohesion from both peers and leadership, as KM stated, “Yes, I have a lot of support. I have been in this unit for a while. Everyone pretty much knows me. When I got here, we all got here together at this point. So yeah, I have a lot of support whether it's from the top or from the bottom.” AS adds, “I have the support of my leadership. My First Sergeant always has my back, no matter what. My soldiers always have my back, no matter what. Even if it was wrong or if they thought it was crazy, I would explain to them, ‘Hey, this is why we're doing it,’ and even sometimes when I couldn't they would still be like, ‘This is stupid but let's do this.’”

Task cohesion. As Mullen and Copper (1994) presented in their study, in the military, task relations include sharing the same duties and missions. Task cohesion correlates with group performance insofar that the group shares a mission and is dedicated to completing that mission as a unified team. Participants shared their

experiences regarding tasks that advocated group cohesion. For example, KM state, "I'm more of an independent person. But we kind of do have a team. But luckily, I'm on a team where we can kind of split the work. 'Hey this is your area, this is your area, this is your area.' So, we kind of all stay in your own lane when were all there. But when somebody is missing, we just pick up their slack. We just pick up their work for them."

AS reiterated task cohesion as it pertains to teamwork, "Working as a team. I can't stress enough there were so many times when I tried to do everything myself and I know that I can't. I have to lean on my team. Especially as you get into the ranks, you're not successful without your team. My soldiers, I would not have been able to accomplish what we did in the field without them and their hard work. So, teaching them and making sure they know what they need to do. How they need to execute the mission and what they need to do in order to make that mission successful overall. If they have questions, I am there to answer them or point them in the right direction. To find the resources to better complete the mission. So, for me, I feel like it's teamwork. If I have a solid team, and I'm with them, then we can accomplish anything."

JM discussed the circumstances of deployment that often facilitate task cohesion. "My circumstances were a little bit different in that I moved to my flight company the day before 9/11. So, I feel like intense situations like that tend to bring people closer faster. So, I would say that I was pretty much fully integrated by November, December. So, it may have taken a few months, but it could have taken longer. You know we were just thrown together with a lot of work." AW relayed this concept as it pertains to

deployment missions, “I would say so because of the mission that we have to accomplish right now. We're all pretty equal as far as what we need to do to accomplish our mission.”

Collective cohesion. Cerulo (1997) includes “physiological traits, psychological predispositions, regional features, or the properties of structural locations” as aspects of collective cohesion (pp. 386-387). Collective cohesion involves characteristics that can bring a group together in a united social consensus. For example, AS discussed qualities that in her experience inspire collective cohesion, “I think strength. But not just physical strength, but heart, determination, logic. [...] Compassion is something. Understanding. Being able to see both sides of something. I think those are important.” SR adds, “Being able to provide support and receive support. Proper training. Support, training, and just the resources to be able to get the job done.”

SR offers her explanation of collective cohesion, “Just to be resilient. Just to be able to work through a problem. Being empathetic. [...] Physically strong, you know, unfortunately that's seen as a masculine trait, but I definitely think that physical strength is necessary. [...] The physical, and mental strength, the mental ability, and being empathetic. I think that's more for me as a leader. I think that's something that I've always had and seen success with, and then resilience.” DM adds, “You have to be just strong all the way around both physically and emotionally.” KM describes the qualities that she feels facilitate collective cohesion and pertain to her specifically, “Reliable, dedicated, motivated, dependable, trustworthy, I think that's me.” JM adds to this concept, “Just that I was capable.”

SR continues her thoughts to inspire collective cohesion, “Just someone strong and level-headed that soldiers can come to. Neutral. Physical and mental strength, some of those qualities that I have already shared in one of your previous questions. Being resilient, understanding, and empathetic. Someone that doesn't hold judgment. Because I know everybody's life situation is different or circumstances are different. Everybody is in a different season in their life. So just trying to understand that.” KM mentions, “I think warmth. You got to be warm. You can't be a cold-hearted person. Whether you're male or female. Then your superiors or your subordinates will respect you and won't trust you if you're cold. So, you need to be warm.” ASH adds to this perspective, “Some of the feedback that I got from some of the people that I trained was that the first thing when they met me, was how nice and cheerful I was, and how I came up and greeted them, that I didn't care what they thought or how negative they acted towards me, that I was still nice. And I was the only person that went up and was always nice to them. That's something that I tried to do in the military.”

IM emphasizes aspects that helped her succeed in a collective setting, “The discipline that I have learned in the military has helped not just in the military, but out of it. Just being able to stick my nose to the grindstone and keep going. Embrace the suck.” ASH addresses characteristics specific to women service members to enhance collective cohesion, “You need to make sure that you're good at PT, being able to pick up stuff, be strong. Those are things that are very important. [...] staying strong, being proud, don't show weakness. If you show that your weak then it's all gone. So, make sure that you stand proud, proud and strong. Make sure that you're confident. [...] You are a woman

and you are proud that you're a woman and show that you are strong as a woman, and not show fear and not show that you're weak.”

DM shares her experience, “I learned to be more patient. Everybody complains about the “hurry up and wait.” [...] And another thing I learned through the Army is not to be thin-skinned. A lot of us lose those feelings of being thin-skinned once we get into the Army. And we learn more not to take things that are work-related personal; that it's just work. Now, regardless of how they convey their message to you, whether it was disrespectful or respectful, that you should just not take it personally. Deal with how they told you, and just get your job done. JM adds, “[...] a strong work ethic as far as not afraid to get dirty, and the physical aspect of it. The tough skin, you know, you've got to let things roll off of you and not take offense. [...] neatly dressed, attention to detail.”

Emotional cohesion. As reported by MacCoun and Hix (1993), this form of group cohesion is attained once group members indicate a sincere enjoyment of each other's company, choosing to socialize with one another and experience the bonds of friendship. In this case, Forsyth (2018) notes, group members are actively included in group activities, facilitating an individual satisfaction with being a group member. Emotional cohesion embraces not only team activities, but also solidifies a trust in which an individual feels she can confide in group members to openly communicate genuine true thoughts and feelings. Overall, effective emotional cohesion harbors a positive and receptive setting within the group. For example, AS discusses, “We have a lot of Civilian Day activities, at least once a month. They allow us to dress feminine and kind of show

our own side. I guess that's one thing. They are family oriented and we have a couple single mothers, they're real flexible with them as single parents.”

AW notes her experience with communication regarding her chain-of-command group, “I feel that I do have people that I can go to within my office, if I have any issues at all that I need to vent.” AW mirrors this statement, “And I always said how I was feeling to my NCOs. If I was upset, if I was depressed, if I was anything, I would go to them and be like, “Hey, this is how I am feeling.” I wasn't ashamed of it. I'm human, you know. I got feelings. I have things to say.” MP discusses emotional cohesion with her male peers, “When I went through a divorce, and I told the guys, they all rallied around me. You know, took me out to dinner, and made me go out. So, we were a very close bunch.” MP echoes this openness of her peers and chain-of-command, “I worked at the Brigade level, so there were individuals who were very supportive. The Operations Sergeant Major, the Aviation Chief, I had plenty of people. The Brigade Command Sergeant Major was very supportive, and at one point the Brigade Commander. Then he left and we got a new one. But for the most part even my boss fully supported everything I did.”

IM notes the distinct atmosphere produced in an emotionally cohesive group, “When I got transferred to Ops, I had a better support network. People that were willing to talk to me and figure out what's going on and people that knew that I was injured, and I was not healing the way I was supposed to. That was awesome. In fact, the weird part was one of the NCOs that was harassing me [...] was eventually transferred to Ops and he turned into a totally different person. I don't really know exactly know what happened

on his end, but he started to treat me with a lot more respect when that happened. So, in the end I had a fantastic support network. They were all kind of odd balls because we were all injured in some way and got transferred there. So, we all kind of understood each other's struggles.”

Structural cohesion. Forsyth (2018) emphasizes the aspect of clearly defined roles within a unit so as to establish individual purpose and value within a group to accomplish a common task, whereby signaling a strong bond within and throughout the group and its members. Here, participants discuss their interrelated roles as a leader, a professional, a soldier, a warrior, and a friend that support structural cohesion in their unit.

Leadership. DM notes, “[...] I also know there’s a time and place for everything. I have to be mindful of how I conduct myself, because I also know that I need to set a good example for the junior enlisted, being an NCO. AS comments, “If you want to be a leader you have to lead, you have to adapt. I don't want to say you have to adapt who you are, but you kind of do. At the end of the day, I don't have to prove myself to anybody. But I have to prove myself to some people. I have to show them that they understand that I'm smart enough and strong enough to be in the position that I'm in. [...] But they saw what I did, and I saw who I was, and I earned their respect. I feel like our soldiers have to do that with us too. It's anybody. It's earning that position; it's earning that right. I mean, you have to work for it.”

Professionalism. AM discussed how she legitimized her role as a professional in the military, “In my unit that I was with, it was about being the best at your job or PT. Well, that's anything, like being the best at your job.” BK also discussed working hard from a professional standpoint, “I tried to push myself harder and prove myself more that I wasn't just a female. I was a hard-working female there to get the mission, get it done and move forward.” AS stated, “For me, I've always just worked really hard. I've earned their respect and have respected people, and those that didn't respect me I figured out why. I questioned it.” DM discussed, “A lot of them are being given more the benefit of the doubt because a lot of them actually are very mechanically inclined just as much as the males.”

SR echoed, “I've always worked for and supported Combat Arms, and so I've always had to prove myself. I have had to prove myself as a female that I can keep up. I have seen other females have to do the same. But also, in my job as well. I have seen males within my job have to prove themselves to stay in Combat Arms MOSs versus other support MOSs.” JM shared her similar view, “I feel that it took me a while to get to that point. I don't think they were as accepting of me in the beginning as they were of other new guys who came in. But I proved to them fairly quickly that I could pull my own weight.” Participants mentioned strong work ethics, such as ASH, “I think it helped me realize that I got to watch out, and that I have got to do better, and I've got to make sure that I dot my I's and cross my T's on everything.” She continued, “I would try to portray that I know what I'm doing, that I can do it, that I don't need your help.” RE discussed, “[...] for me it was just, for me, from my personal feeling, it made me more

actively wanting to excel. I saw some of the guys that would be able to pick up any pew and carry it up into the catwalk and install it without an assist. And I just knew that I had to do that. So, I did.”

MP emphasized this aspect of a positive work ethic, “I thought that I performed my job very well in every way. [...] I shot better than most people in the unit and performed my job very well.” JM stated, “So, my attention to detail was fabulous. My record-keeping was awesome and very legible. Also, because I did not grow up doing mechanical work, I read the manual. Which meant that my work was always by the book.” IM mirrored this statement, “I know that my general attention to detail came in handy. I noticed that the guys just didn’t have that same attention that a lot of girls do. We have a tendency to take in a lot more of our surroundings [...]. I was able to remember where so-and-so put whatever and tell them where it was. I always had that going for me.” SRO mentioned, “[do you find that you are able to perform your job well?] Always! I was the best.

RE discussed her experience in facilitating structural cohesion, “I just kept my nose down and tried to be better at my job. You know the one thing, the only thing, that levels the playing field in any manner is just to be outstanding in what you do. And so that's what I did. I just worked very, very diligently to be outstanding at what I did. So, it didn't matter what they thought of me personally, and it didn't matter whether or not we were friends outside of work. But the fact remains, that they knew if they put me on a job, the job would get done and it would get done better than half the guys in the unit. So that was just what I did.”

Soldiering. RE discussed her approach to soldiering, “I always felt a very strong sense of responsibility to represent women in the military as best as possible. [...] On a day-to-day basis, I saw myself as a soldier. I expected to be treated as a soldier, no more no less. I didn't need anybody to extend to me any kind of courtesy or privilege or acknowledgement for being a female.” She continued, “You have to just want to be representative. And that's what I did. I just felt that whatever actions I took were representative of not just me, but of every female in the military.” ASH mentioned, “I made sure that I kept up on my PT score because that's one thing that the military is really about. They want to make sure that you pass that PT score.” AS highlighted this point, “Right in our COF area, that's where we do our PT and working out, which is a big thing. Even for the females, that type of masculinity, like working out, lifting weights, has become part of our PT.”

DM discussed maintaining a professional appearance, “I also try to keep up my outward appearance because a lot of times I was always working a job where I had to interact with senior enlisted and also officers of higher rank. You want to keep up your outward appearance and not go up to them looking disheveled.” SR added the importance of experience, “I started off as just as a regular soldier. I have worked my way in my current organization up to being the Company First Sergeant. So, I have seen every role there. So, the integration has been easy.”

Woman warrior. SR discusses the realities of what to expect when joining the U.S. Army, “What used to be expected of a male ground-hounding, dirty, strong, all those typical masculine traits, I think so many women have also taken on those traits. We can

also roll around in the dirt and be dirty, be strong. And vice versa where men can also be seen as sensitive and empathetic. So as opposed to it being seen masculine versus feminine, I think they just accepted traits that anybody can play in those roles.”

AS adds multiple aspects of her experience regarding the U.S. Army and shaping her women warrior identity, “I think for me the Army has evolved me into a person where I can be very flexible with people's personalities. I can read people very well and kind of figure out sometimes what to say and what not to say or how to approach them or how to not approach them. So, I think the Army has made me kind of a universal person, being very flexible. I've had to be a little tougher, I have had to grow thick skin. I've had to be able to take criticism and I've had to push myself to be somebody, number one, who I never thought I would be from all these experiences, but the Army has developed me into a person who I think is great. I'm compassionate because I get to take care of people. My leaders have taught me how to read people in order to understand how to take better care of them, and make the right decision for their safety, on top of my safety. At the end of the day it makes the mission happen.”

Friendship. Strong bonds can be initialized between peers to enhance structural cohesion by supportive roles, such as JM stated, “Yes. I kind of took on the role of - if anyone was going through a difficult time, or going through a breakup, or anything like that - I was the go-to person. When we were overseas, and somebody brought a sewing machine, if anybody had holes in their BDUs or their flight suits I would sew them up. I was kind of like the caretaker. If any of the guys that were out on flights during dinner time, I would make sure that somebody grab plates for them.

BK emphasized structural cohesion by fostering a sense of family, “It was more of a caring, sort of like a motherly type of person to the soldiers. Instead of looking at them as a soldier, I looked at them still as a child.” DM continued this aspect of a motherly role, “My soldiers usually see me as a mother figure. [...] And it's just me helping them grow as an adult. Because I would expect that of someone else. Like, I go get advice, and how do I get through this?” SR echoes this aspect, “When a part of those units I have always been like the mama bear. I was always assumed to be the one to take care of everybody. They would always come to me for women advice or female advice or dating advice.” BK advocates this concept, “Being aware of other's feelings, and more towards being a mother. It's easy for me to say, because I did go in as a mother.” JM emulates this concept of family, “So, I kind of took on the little sister-motherly role.” I think with my peers; my peers are so much younger than me. So, that's kind of like the first thing. Socially they are looking at me kind of like a big sister. SRO emulates this concept, “At first, the unit treated me like their kid-sister; they all wanted to take care of me and ensure that nothing bad happened to me.”

DM discusses how her role enables her to help others, “Being an older female they look at me as a mom figure too. And I guess that a lot of times, they see me as, since I am a mom figure, they figure that a lot of the junior enlisted are more likely to listen to what I have to say when it comes to getting them to do tasks. And a lot of them do actually come to me for advice, at times. And especially some of the ones that are problem children, that are hard to deal with, that some of the senior enlisted have a difficult time dealing with. I don't have such a difficult time dealing with them and

talking to them because, all you have to do is talk to them like they're a person. A lot of the senior enlisted they forget that. They're just all about getting the job done, and heads start bumping, they're frustrated, and they lose their patience. Which is understandable, but sometimes, some people, they take a little bit longer to deal with than others in order to get through to them, and in order to get the job done. And sometimes that takes, like, a parental figure.”

The next section addresses the third research question that connects Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory and this study's primary theoretical framework. The GIDWM theory specifically presents women service members' identity development in a matrix format, mapping their development in proportion to the gender harassment they experience in a hypermasculine military environment. The following section utilizes the GIDWM theory matrix of four phases as a means to categorize participant's narratives. Phase 1: donning the mask, phase 2: wearing a mask, phase 3: consequences of a mask, phase 4: removing the mask.

Research Question 3

Research question three asked, “How does a woman service member's position in the phases of gender identity development affect her career and well-being in the military?” Beginning with phase one, in accordance with Culver (2013) and Herbert (1998), participants discuss their experiences with identifying warrior and feminine insecurities regarding male peer social acceptance. Throughout this phase, as women identify insecurities, they match them to coping strategies to compensate for their perceived inadequacies.

Phase one. BK discussed coercion that preyed upon her insecurities to cause conformity, “I was actually pressured to act more masculine. Because of my build. I'm bigger built than most females, and taller. To act more masculine was asked of me. Physically, with the lifting, and all the things that we had to do daily. Lifting, tear down, put up, you know, all that crazy stuff. They looked at me as one of the guys, because I was just about the size of most of the males in my unit. Some I was bigger than them. These young people come through and they're just tiny people, and I'm like, “Really? What can they lift?” SR echoed this sentiment, “So, when I was supporting Combat Arms, absolutely. I would definitely be expected to be more masculine. It was more accepted if you could present yourself to be able to, again, roll with the punches, be greedy, go days without a shower.”

ASH discussed both warrior and feminine insecurity in terms of donning a mask for both males and females, “One thing I observed a lot of in the unit is men trying to be that ‘tough guy,’ and thinking that they're perfect. Women, a lot of them, were being portrayed as being ‘ditzy’ or not knowing what they're doing, or being too caring, or too loving, like motherly, just too much. They would care too much, and they would let that affect them. So, they would be weak in like a mental aspect. But men would always portray themselves as being strong and cocky and trying to act like they know everything, but they don't really know.”

ASH discussed her thoughts, “I think that's why I never got taken seriously. Because I was happy. I tried to act happy around them, so it would make everybody else happy of who I did talk to. So that way they would just think of me as a happy person.

But instead, they just didn't take me seriously.” DH advocates this aspect, “Yes, absolutely. I have done a few field rotations where I wasn't allowed to smell good. They told me to stop wearing that kind of shampoo, get a different shampoo. I've been told to quit laughing so much. I got told to stop being happy.” RE discussed her experience with donning a mask that paralleled King's (2015) the slut-bitch binary, “I had an NCO once who told me, ‘You're going to have to make a choice. You can be either a bitch or a whore.’ And I chose bitch. And once you make that choice you never really integrate; you never really have any friends. It's either guys trying to sleep with you or guys trying to find out who you slept with or whatever the case. No, you're not really ever actually one of the guys.”

Phase two. Participants discussed this phase of wearing a mask in which to hide their insecurities and appeal to group members. For example, DH states, “Absolutely, I act very different around them. Because I don't want them to see any feminine. I want them to know that I'm the strong, direct woman that is capable of doing the job. And I want to be respected and treated with respect and professionalism in our workplace.” She continued “[...] I've definitely had to be more masculine in the masculine role that we have preconceived in American culture. [...] It has gotten to where I just wear my pants. And I wear flats. I wear a bigger uniform so it can hide my figure, to be more masculine. So, I'm not arousing the visual effects of what I have seen can do to a man. So yes. Definitely more masculine. I even talk more masculine. I talk in a deeper voice in more direct tones.” BK emulates this aspect, “I became just as bad as the males. You want the

truth? Yes. You just kind of turn into the same mindset, you know? And it's sad. You're kind of trying to fit in."

DM discusses the slut-bitch binary as proposed by King (2015) within phase 2 of Culver's (2013) matrix, "It's one of those conversations that we have a lot, too, as females - is that you've got two rolls that you can play during deployment: either the loose, promiscuous female, or you're going to be crazy angry bitch female that no one wants to be around, and she doesn't want to be around anyone anyway. And that's the card I had to play was the crazy angry bitch female that no one wants to be around, and I didn't want to be around anyone. So that they wouldn't assume that I was the loose, promiscuous female. And I think that no matter how they try to change not being gender-biased, it's that part of the Army that is never going to change, in my opinion." RE discusses her experience with wearing a mask, "For me, like I said, I just decided to take the role of the bitch. I didn't take any crap from anybody."

SRO discusses her experience regarding females wearing masks, "Ironically, the general atmosphere leads the women who stay enlisted to develop a certain persona; one of two main stereotypes, that of the princess or the one who is super aggressive, angry, and admonishing. The later type is the most likely to discourage younger enlisted women from continuing. This stereotype is a huge turn-off and is the most aggressive and negative type of person I had to deal with." She adds, "[My second unit] had one of those stereotypical women NCOs that I mentioned, and she created a super toxic environment." She continues, "I think that being a female forces women to work harder to prove

themselves, and that this is what leads to that aggressive NCO stereotype that I mentioned.”

JM discussed her experience with females wearing a mask, “I feel like some girls would go completely the other way and lose their feminine identity. Like with male haircuts and not maintaining themselves in the slightest as a woman. I feel like a lot of other women really played on being a woman. They wore makeup and flirted and some of the girls even had their BDUs tailored. This was obviously not within my unit; this is just other girls I saw. There were a lot that slept around. A lot of people got pregnant while in Iraq, it was crazy.”

DM continues this discussion regarding her observations of wearing a mask by both males and females, “The younger females in particular, a lot of them - they're not the same but a majority of them are the same: very competitive, very caddy. They are very hard to trust. The younger males are hit-or-miss like that as well. I think that's pretty much on both sides of the house, and that's regardless of their age or gender.” KM emulates these observations, “It's like everybody wants to be at the top of the food chain. Nobody wants to bow down to the next one. There's a lot of top-heavy people there. There's a lot of top-heavy, and that's with males and females. The females are trying to make their stance because they are female, and they don't want the males to run over them. Other females want to support them because it's kind of like, ‘Yeah we're here too, it's not just you guys.’ The males are trying to be dominant because they're male and that's just what a male does. I know that sounds so cliché but it's the truth. I would say dominance. Dominance for both males and females.”

ASH echoes this aspect of wearing a mask, “I’ve noticed a lot of the new soldiers that are coming in, a lot of them were very competitive, too. That’s when they start pushing saying, ‘I want to get ahead of you.’ That is starting to come more and more out. But a lot of the females, they want to be more competitive. So, they try to act more like the men. And even some of them are so impressionable that they would go out and try to dress more ‘guy-ish.’ They would try to go with the crowd because they were the only females and the rest were all guys. It was just the normal way. Everybody would go buy hats. So, they would go and buy hats too, and I’m like, ‘Why would you waste your money on a guy hat?’”

AS describes wearing a mask which involves creating a fake identity as described by Benedict (2009) and Rosen et al. (2003), “For me, I act differently when I’m at home. Once I take the uniform off, I put myself in that civilian mode unless I have to be in my Army mode. It’s like a switch. That’s the best way I can describe it.”

RE discusses her experience, “I think I actually did my best to remain as neutral as possible at work. I mean, there were situations down range, especially on deployments, and during field training, I’d be stuck in a tent with 14 guys. There was no time for femininity. I wore no makeup, I had no nail polish, I kept my hair in a very tight, uncomfortably tight bun, or I chopped it all off. I actually did do a crew cut at one point. I wore sports bras and boxers under my uniform, and army green socks. I know what you’re talking about. Like, I had a female NCO, and she had all kinds of random pink stuff thrown in with her military uniform. But mine was just OD green then. I made no attempt to be female at all.”

DH continues her discussion of wearing a mask, “I started being more professional, more direct and not nice. I'm not as happy as I used to be. I'm not as kind as I used to be. I'm kind of more of a, “go look the information up and come back with the information.” I will do PT so I can do better on my PT score. I try to be involved as much as possible, so that they see that I am willing to work. I will work longer hours. I'll be the first one to ask for the deployment. Because they do judge off of that, the men will absolutely. And the leadership, I should say, do judge. Whether you're willing to put the effort in as a female.”

The next category is phase 3 in Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory matrix, which involves a realization of the consequences of wearing a mask and the superficial level of acceptance obtained from their male in spite of practicing gender management (Sasson-Levy, 2002). As a consequence, women service members begin an inner pilgrimage of rediscovery of their primary identity and femininity (Edwards & Jones, 2009).

Phase three. SR describes her defining moment of wearing a mask, “Then maybe about four years into my time in service I had a female leader. Actually, it was a very distinct moment for me. Where a soldier, instead of saying ‘female’ or ‘girl’ he said ‘chick,’ and he was referring to a soldier. This female senior leader intervened, and she said, ‘Did I hear you correctly? Did you just refer to that Soldier as a chick?’ She put him on the spot, and she said, ‘We are all soldiers, we are all the same.’ So that was a very defining moment for me, where I realized I didn't have to adapt to that roll with the punches anymore. I could stand up and say... I didn't have to be male or female anymore, I could just refer to everybody as a soldier versus gender. So, I would say that the first

part of my career, probably the first four years, everything was just roll with the punches. Just go with it. Suck it up and move on. It's not personal. People don't know better. And after four years of service, and I have been in 12 and a half years now, now I'm more comfortable - especially now as a senior leader myself - I am more comfortable with saying, 'In this Army we are One. We're not a gender, it's not he, she or whatever, we are soldiers, period.' That's the best way I can explain it for myself."

AM comments on her experience, "More masculine is what I was like. I didn't mind, more masculine, but I didn't care about that, I really didn't. I wanted to be better a PT, I wanted to be like everyone else, I wanted to be able to keep up with everyone. But there's a certain point. But when you bring someone down, like every day, they don't want to try anymore. That's the thing. And that's what they were doing to me. I just gave up. Because why do I care? I'm not getting any better, they're not encouraging me, they're not. They're not encouraging me and that's what leadership does. That's what soldiers do for each other when you're in a group. So, I don't know why. So, I just kind of gave up, pretty much, because it's like what's the point in trying to be masculine if I can't be up to speed with anyone?"

ASH emulates this aspect, "I didn't learn any ways to cope with it more. It was always the same: that you deal with the way people treat you and they are still going to treat you the same way. That's how they were raised and that's how they feel, and everybody's out for themselves. The men are out for themselves more, and if you're a woman, they're just going to try to get ahead of you more. If there's anything they can do,

they can try to come back and backstab you so that you look worse than them. That's how it always is.”

DH discussed her experience within phase three, “Well, I'm typically a happy person, and I work on that. And I think sometimes, because other people don't want to be happy, they look for the bad things. They try to stifle that happiness. They try to bring negatives, which changes me as a person.” BK identified with her personal discovery of wearing a mask adding, “For me it was an important part, but I didn't feel like I had a woman identity while in the service. I felt like I was losing touch with my female side.” She continues with discussing the psychosocial effects of wearing a mask, “[I would portray being] strong, unemotional, but sometimes that didn't happen because I would have breakdowns. I would just try to be the bear.”

BK continued adding the psychosocial effects of wearing a mask, “Some things I have blocked out since I have been in the military. Because it was something that really bothered me during the military. I've dealt with it and put it behind me, let me put it that way. Some things I just don't want to dig up.” SR discusses her related observations, “One particular female, [...] she was name-called and almost blacklisted. She had no desire to continue her service, but she still wanted to serve despite what had happened to her. Even still [...] she is encountering some difficulty with that acceptance. She's dealing with a plethora of personal issues and it's all stemming from her time on the active side.”

According to Culver (2013), in the fourth and final phase women service members transcend the masculine ethic military culture and stereotypical expectations of

identity by removing their mask. Women rediscover their true selves, issue self-acceptance, and integrate learned professionalism beneficial to their military career. Taken together, a balanced military identity of femininity and soldiering emerges to define a true woman warrior identity. (Benedict, 2009; Culver, 2013).

Phase four. AM provides her perspective of self-acceptance and mask removal, “I am a woman and I'm not going to change just because the military is mainly men. I'm not going to act like a masculine dude. I'm not going to act. I'm not. I got feelings, I'm emotional. I'm going to do to the best of my abilities. I can improve. I'm not going to be the greatest at it the first time. I just feel like it made me unique, because knowing that, being in the U.S. Army as a woman is already hard as it is. And being one of them that stuck it out, even though - I stayed in a few years after the attack just to prove to them that it didn't affect me, and I can still go on. And yeah, I reached my breaking point, but I just wanted to prove that I can still do my work and still be part of the Army, even though the Army kind of abandoned me, it felt like. But I'm still a woman, and I can do pretty much what anything a man can do.”

AW stated her experience, “When I came in, I was older than most trainees, so I was more set in my ways.” She continued, “Being a female in the military or the world in general can be tough, but nothing or no one should make us feel less than what we are, I certainly don't.” Finally, she states, “I'm proud to be a female. It helps me do my job better, and I'm proud of being a female in the office, because I can connect better with the female applicants more than these males.” AS mirrored this sentiment, “Yes. I am proud of being a woman. I'm proud of how I look. It's never stopped me from doing anything.

I'm proud to be a woman. I'm proud to be a woman in the Army. I'm proud to be in the position that I am. I'm proud that I get the opportunity to do things. I mean, it wasn't that long ago where women weren't allowed to do what I am allowed to do now, and I'm proud of that and I hold that to standard. My family, my grandfather was in the Army, my uncle was in the Army, and I'm proud to be the only female that is and continues to serve.”

RE discusses the advantage of age and self-acceptance, “If I hadn't been 27 when I joined the Army - I'm 28 by the time I got to my unit - then maybe things would have been different. But I feel like I was pretty much kind of myself at that point. You were either going to like it or not like it.” She continued, “I was 27 when I joined the Army. And I know, I'm 100% sure that the reason that I was as successful for the 7 years that I was in is because I had a little bit of life experience behind me, a little bit of more confidence and more self-assuredness than the average teenager who joins the military. And that goes for males and females. But, for the females I think it lends itself to an environment that they are at taken advantage of. I saw it in a lot of female soldiers that I worked with. And I think that, for me anyway, it was an age thing that helped tremendously.” DM adds, “I've gotten to that age where I really just don't care what other people think about me. So, I basically just feel welcomed to be myself.”

Participants discuss self-acceptance as knowing themselves, such as SRO, “I always strive to be myself, regardless of external stimuli.” KM adds, “I am who I am. You should accept me for who I am. I'm a soldier just like you. I shouldn't have to act any differently.” She continues, “It's kind of just like, I'm a girl, I get it. But I can still lift

something too, I can still move something too. I put my pants and my boots on just like you guys. I can do it too.” IM advocated this concept, “I’ve been comfortable in my own skin for years.” ASH also commented, “I’m not afraid of much, it’s just I would like to deploy and see the different cultures. I’m not worried about it; I can fend for myself. But the guys would try to like, come at me. But I wasn’t worried about that. I’m not a child, I’m a big girl. And I was like I dealt with it enough in basic training, I dealt with it everywhere, so It was fine. I wanted to deploy.”

Additional participants echoed these same thoughts of self-acceptance, such as AS, “I’ve always been a tomboy and I’ve always been a little rough around the edges. I’m also like a classy lady, as well.” JM mentioned, “I was always involved in physically demanding sports growing up. I wasn’t that much of a ‘girly-girl.’ It wasn’t too big of a difference. I grew up in a strict house. I was used to taking orders. I was used to forms of authority. So, I really don’t think I changed myself too much.” DM stated, “I’ve always been in that nurturing role. It’s something that happens naturally. And, like I said, I don’t even try.”

The next section discusses evidence of trustworthiness that establishes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the actual data collection and analysis methods used to complete chapter 4 compared to the proposed approach in chapter 3 of this study.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

As stated in chapter 3, internal validity checks were the focus of establishing credibility in this study. Firstly, triangulation was achieved via exhaustive literature research to formulate an accurate theoretical framework to include original sources and newly published peer-reviewed articles. Personal narratives were obtained from 14 different U.S. Army women service members and veterans to offer deeply rich information to directly apply to this study's purpose and present gap in literature. As stated, contact with participants occurred over the course of several months offering a variety of interview appointment times and contact formats to maximize participation. Moreover, interviews were conducted one-on-one to ensure participant privacy, increase participant comfort level, and build rapport between researcher and participants, whereby increasing credibility of the study.

Upon interview completion, the audio files were transcribed and thoroughly reviewed for unintelligibility, clarity and accuracy of statements. Member checking was vital at this stage, where participants were directly involved in the study to validate their statements, offer corrections and additional information in a follow-up email. If a participant did not respond after one week, a reminder message was sent. This approach ensured that the participants are directly involved in the research process to enhance credibility and further strengthen participant-researcher rapport. Lastly, reflexivity was closely observed to ensure a wholly objective literature research, data collection and analysis, and reporting of the findings at every step of the process. All potential biases were appropriately reported in chapter 3.

Although this study fell one participant short of the intended participant interview quota – 14 participants verses the proposed 15 participants – data saturation nevertheless still took place in which conspicuous patterns in the richly descriptive data related to the literature research emerged. The quality narratives facilitated repeated patterns that led directly to data saturation and increased internal validity, which proved proportionate to establishing strong credibility. No journaling took place as participants were directly involved in the member checking process that allowed them to validate their transcripts and offer corrections and additions during the follow-up process. All participants were very responsive to this approach due to its convenience, personability, and respect for their busy timelines. Another aspect of deviation was a slight time difference of interviews. Instead of lasting 45-60 minutes as priorly stated, a majority of interviews lasted 30-45 minutes. If the interview lasted longer than 45 minutes, participants were asked permission to proceed until the interview's conclusion. This aspect did not affect data quality, data saturation, nor pattern emergence as was shown in this chapter and shall be carried over to chapter 5 regarding interpretation of the data.

Transferability was assured by obtaining thick, rich descriptions during interviews as well as by providing variation in participant selection. Aspects of credibility endorsed this external validity by achieving quality interviews that included thick descriptions by participants and resulting rich data. Triangulation also advocated further validity and potential for generalization as the patterns that emerged after data saturation could be directly compared with the theoretical foundation and prior studies in peer-reviewed literature discussed in chapter 2. Additionally, seven months were dedicated to careful

recruitment of participants, interview proceedings, and data analysis to facilitate a deeper understanding for the data and accurate interpretation. These were vital aspects to transferability when considering the small number of participants involved in this study, albeit an accepted aspect of the qualitative narrative approach. Greater generalizability is possible in cooperation with Culver's (2013) proposal of her GIDWM theory being applicable to women operating in multiple gendered organizations.

Three deviations from the original proposal potentially affect transferability: Participant quota, variation in participant selection, and required participant service years. As already stated, the participant quota was lessened by one from 15 participants to 14. Nevertheless, quality interviews that provided thick descriptions by participants and resulting rich data could still ensure a high level of trustworthiness in study results. Secondly, the original intention to obtain a relatively even number of U.S. Army officers and enlisted participants. Although over 30 participants were contacted, 10 of which were officers, only one officer elected to participate. The remaining 20 contacted and 13 finalized participants were enlisted. This outcome did not affect the quality of data, and a high level of participant variation was in fact achieved through the division between junior enlisted, mid-grade enlisted, and senior enlisted participants, plus one officer. This consequently diversified job level location, which varied from the unit level, to battalion, to brigade, to joint operations. Moreover, participant garrison duty stations were unique to each participant, ranging from the U.S. to overseas locations.

Thirdly, the required participation dates were changed to include 2001, the commencement of GWOT. This widening of potential participant years allowed for not

only more participants but added an additional dimension to filling the gap in literature during a period that greatly affected the state of the U.S. military. Herbert's 1998 study occurred after the First Persian Gulf War (1990 – 1991) and the passing of the National Defense Authorization Act in 1991. This study fills the gap in knowledge of the U.S. Army social climate between Herbert's study and the present as it includes not only the 2012 Gender Equality in Combat Act but also the significant events that occurred after September 11, 2001: The commencement of GWOT and subsequent wars in Iraq (OIF) and Afghanistan (OEF) and those operations' related present in-country operations. Therefore, this alteration inevitably increases the potential for transferability of this study.

Dependability was demonstrated in the exemplar data stability maintained as data were collected, analyzed, and presented in the results section. The raw data recordings along with transcripts and resulting dissertation are all kept on a designated thumb drive, accessed by a password-protected private computer. This data shall be kept in a secured cabinet for 5 years. Transcripts and coded data were uploaded and stored on the online data analysis tool Dedoose and shall be maintained therein under this researcher's password-protected account until June 2021. This simplistic but consistent process creates an audit trail of meticulously maintained and preserved records to reassure any administrative follow up and facilitate seamless replication of this research.

Again, the aspect of triangulation can assist in strengthening credibility, transferability as well as dependability. Concerning data, an appropriate mixture of participants in accordance with demographic representation, accessibility and

communication methods, and thoroughly considering and reporting the possibility of error or bias via reflexivity. Concerning literature research, an exhaustive search for original theoretical sources as well as contextually similar studies occurred all in an effort to corroborate on data and cross-check information to provide trustworthy and quality results (Rudestam & Newton, 2014).

Confirmability highlights the significance of reflexivity in terms of how a researcher's bias may affect the research process. Again, conscious objectivity was strictly observed to ensure that the research findings were presented within the context of the research process, whereby minimizing error and bias as much as possible. An additional means in which to advocate confirmability is to repeatedly revisit the literature and data in order to deeply reflect, revise, and incite additional patterns and observations to emerge (Maxwell, 2012). This process was indeed repeated on numerous occasions to identify correlation between the literature and data, and to detect patterns and unexpected deviations, whereby reinforcing the confirmability of results in chapters 4 and 5. At the same time, confirmability is apparent as the research was presented in a clear, detailed, and concise language with which findings were accurately represented. Finally, confirmability was further augmented through the collaborative approach to data collection that directly involved participants via member checking and respondent validation. Participant involvement assisted in providing a moral compass that maintained this researcher's conscious objectivity throughout the data collection and analysis process.

This next section is a final summary of chapter 4 regarding the main research question findings and provides a preparatory introduction to chapter 5.

Summary

Chapter 4 was a presentation of this study's results regarding the gender identity development of women service members. The results of this study were organized in accordance with the three proposed research questions. Data from 14 separate interviews from Army women service members were explored to identify patterns between participants. These patterns revealed themes that could be matched to categories identified in chapter 2 in accordance with gender harassment and coping strategies, unit cohesion, and Culvert's GIDWM theory matrix.

Firstly, the main forms of gender harassment towards women and their coping strategies were presented in accordance with participants' narratives. Secondly, the main components of group cohesion that present an effective unit during deployments were provided. Finally, the last research question section provided examples that demonstrated how a woman service member's position in the phases of gender identity development affect her while serving in the military.

Research question one asked, "What are the main forms of gender harassment that women service members encounter and the coping strategies they use?" In accordance with research question one, different forms of gender harassment were discussed by participants that fell within 10 specific categories: Undermining leadership or resistance to authority, sabotage, constant or unwarranted scrutiny, indirect threats, defamatory

language, sexist humor, gossip and rumors, offensive gestures, demeaning symbolic representations, and social isolation. In part two of research question one, participants discussed common coping strategies utilized by themselves and other women service members to mitigate gender harassment in the U.S. Army. These coping strategies involved five main categories: core interests and femininity, reporting methods, trivialization, avoidance and relocation, and being more male.

Research question two asked, “What are the main components of group cohesion that present an effective unit during deployments?” This question centralized on collecting women service members’ narratives pertaining to promoting unit cohesion. Here, descriptions were categorized in accordance with Forsyth’s (2018) five main components of group cohesion: social cohesion, task cohesion, collective cohesion, emotional cohesion, and structural cohesion.

Finally, research question three asked, “How does a woman service member’s position in the phases of gender identity development affect her career and well-being in the military?” This research question collected women service member’s experiences regarding their identity development in the military in accordance with Culver’s (2013) GIDWM theory matrix. Culver’s (2013) GIDWM matrix is comprised of four phases, which map a women service member’s identity development in relation to gender harassment: donning the mask, wearing the mask, realization of the consequences of wearing the mask, struggling to remove the mask.

The next chapter 5 presents five main categories: an interpretation of the findings, limitations of the findings, recommendations, implications, and conclusions.

Interpretation of the findings describe ways the findings relate to the knowledge presented in chapter 2. This section of chapter 5 offers an analysis and interpretation of the data in accordance with the conceptual and theoretical framework, again as presented in chapter 2. The next section discusses the study's limitations, revisiting trustworthiness as originally proposed in chapter 1 and providing revisions to any deviations that occurred from the original proposal. The third section involves describing recommendations for further research that are based on chapter 2 evidences as well as the strengths and limitations of the current study. The fourth section of chapter 5 discusses the implications of the study, primarily as a means to evoke positive social change. This section also involves a description of methodological, theoretical or empirical implications as well as any further recommendations for practice. Finally, section five provides a conclusion of the study, providing a final message to its readers.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to discover how women navigate through the various phases of identity development in the military in order to reach a level of personal acceptance as both a woman and a warrior. It identifies a specific process with which a woman in a male-dominated society, such as the military, may pinpoint her position within the identity development matrix. Central to this study was to obtain self-reported behaviors and strategies via personal interviews women service members utilized to exercise transcendence of the four phases of Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory matrix in spite of their male-dominated environment. Successful transition requires the development of a military identity and the rejection of gender management that masks one's true feminine identity. A balanced military identity requires a woman service member to transcend interpersonal stressors and reach a higher level of personal acceptance as both a woman and a warrior defined by self-actualization and self-efficacy.

Women service members offered numerous experiences in narrative form in which to address four main themes of this study: gender harassment types and coping strategies, group cohesion, and gender identity development within the military. Correlating with these personal experiences is a conceptual framework established based on the social culture within male dominated units and a hypermasculine environment as presented in Herbert's (1998) paralleling study. In addition, Forsyth's (2018) group cohesion model to understand concepts of professionalism and unit cohesion contrasted with hypermasculine environments that employ specific coercive interpersonal stressors

of gender harassment. Furthermore, a theoretical framework helped navigate this study through its conceptual framework by establishing primary theories presented by social and behavioral experts. These primary theories are in accordance with Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory matrix, and Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs pyramid.

Taken together, the themes and frameworks formulated the three proposed research questions that constructed from this study's conceptual and theoretical framework:

1. What are the main forms of gender harassment that women service members encounter and the coping strategies they use?
2. What are the main components of group cohesion that present an effective unit during deployments?
3. How does a woman service member's position in the phases of gender identity development affect her career and well-being in the military?

Chapter 5 is divided into 5 sections: interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and conclusion. The first section addresses an analysis of the data as reported in chapter 4 of participants that addressed the 3 research questions stated above. Key findings are discussed in its final interpretations. The second section involves this study's limitations, as compared to those stated in chapter 1 and pertaining to the issue of trustworthiness. The third section presents recommendations for further research as legitimized through this study's results, limitations, and conceptual and theoretical framework presented in chapter 2. The fourth section of chapter 5

includes a discussion of the potential this study has for positive social change within the community, U.S. Army, and other sources. This includes methodological, theoretical, and empirical implications as recommendations to enable social change. This next section presents an interpretation of the findings in accordance with this study's conceptual and theoretical framework, supported by participants' testimonials.

Interpretation of the Findings

As women are increasing in presence in the military, social attitudes continue to reflect gender stereotypes from male peers based on a historical bias that can encumber women service member's performance (Boldry et al., 2001; Kurpius & Lucart, 2000; Lahelma, 2005). Methods of gender harassment have been fostered and have become widely tolerated in support of sustaining the masculine ethic within the U.S. military (Kanter, 1977). As Suter et al. (2006) proposed, a "community of practice" within the U.S. military has been cultivated that employs gender harassment practices (p. 10). As presented by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), these practices involve a mutually agreed means of conduct to include "ways of talking, beliefs, values, and power relations" which influence personal identity (pp. 434-435). Participants acknowledged this male-dominated social atmosphere, for example, RE stated, "It's a whole other level of chest-thumping and masculinity. The safety brief, the things that they would brief us on, were predominantly geared towards male safety."

This section presents an interpretation of the findings presented in chapter 4 in accordance with this study's conceptual and theoretical frameworks and supplemented by participants' testimonials. Interpretations are organized in accordance with this study's

three research questions, wherein the first research question is divided into two parts, first discussing gender harassment practices in a hypermasculine unit and second coping strategies employed by women service members. The third component is an analysis of the second research question pertaining to positive group cohesion as proposed by Forsyth (2018) group cohesion theory and addressed by participants.

The final component of this section discusses the final research question regarding women service members' gender identity development as they navigate through Culver's (2013) theoretical GIDWM matrix phases in terms of attitudes, behaviors, and psychosocial effects. In turn, Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs pyramid is intertwined with Culver's final phase and correlated with Forsyth's (2018) group cohesion theory.

Research Question 1 Part 1 Interpretation

The first research question asked, "What are the main forms of gender harassment that women service members encounter and the coping strategies they use?" Gender harassment encompasses all non-sexual interpersonal stressors such as sexist humor (Ford et al., 2008) and defamatory language (Berdahl, 2007). In the case of gender harassment in the military, women service members are targeted and exposed to non-sexual provocation more often than their male counterparts (Street et al., 2013). In their explanations, participants identified with all 10 sources of gender harassment as identified by Heineken (2017), Kelty et al. (2010), Leskinen and Cortina (2014), Miller (1997), and Sojo et al. (2016). These gender harassment interpersonal stressors include the following 10 categories: undermining leadership or resistance to authority, sabotage,

constant or unwarranted scrutiny, indirect threats, defamatory language, sexist humor, gossip and rumors, offensive gestures, demeaning symbolic representations, and social isolation.

Undermining and Resistance. Concerning the first category – undermining leadership and resistance to authority – Matthews et al. (2009) and Titunik (2000) pointed out that women possess traits that are considered crucial to being a good soldier and a good leader in the military. Yet their performance and leadership are nevertheless undermined due to the prevalence of gender stereotypes. As Duncanson (2015) pointed out, the masculine ethic is strongly intertwined with the military insofar that the concept of masculinity and the occupation of soldiering have become synonymous with each other. Participants discussed how their rank was undermined by their male peers, how their leadership was undercut and expertise undervalued, and how subordinates were encouraged to act likewise to their male peer instigators. For example, as DM explained,

“They still try to uphold and enforce respect by way of negative counselling if you're being disrespectful. But at times, it's like a double-edged sword. Cause then they'll go behind your back and talk about you to the junior enlisted if you're an NCO and you're not a favored NCO. And they'll tell them to not listen to you or tell them things that will encourage the junior enlisted to not respect you in any way or to not listen to you.”

Boldry et al. (2001) and Heilman and Haynes (2005) conducted studies that found gender stereotypes undermined women's representation in team-based work environments. Biased attitudes undervalued women's performance and effectiveness in

which women were afforded less responsibility, recognition, and authority vis-à-vis their male counterparts.

Scrutiny. The second category of gender harassment – constant or unwarranted scrutiny – as originally proposed by Kelty et al. (2010) and Miller (1997). Participants discoursed on how male service members would persistently correct them, yet concurrently not their male peers. Participants discussed how male approaches to problem solving would differ from their own, wherein their female perspectives would be rejected. Participants emphasized the significance of keeping pace with their male peers in accordance with male standard, less being uninvolved or losing their respect. IM stated,

“[...] Company NCOs, especially in my platoon would just find something to yell at me for. Everything from, ‘There's a wrinkle on your uniform,’ and I mean everybody had it because they were ACU's, to ‘You have one hair out of place, go do push-ups.’ It was pretty rough.”

Unexpectedly, several participants distinctly mentioned their experience with scrutiny in their units in the form of hazing. For example, RE spoke out,

“I think at first, as a female, they would really, really go out of their way to try and haze you to see what you are made out of. Way more so than with the male soldiers. And they say flat out that they are doing it on purpose because so many females are just riding along as a mechanic but not really wrenching.”

This aspect was rather unexpected since the Department of Defense initiated instruction 1020.03 in February 2018 to streamline harassment reporting in the armed services that particularly centered on a no-tolerance policy for hazing (DOD, 2018). This policy was formulated in response to at least three soldier suicides in different U.S. military branches since 2011 due to hazing, bullying, and harassment (Seck, 2018).

Sabotage. The third form of gender harassment discussed was sabotage. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) includes within the definition of sabotage the intentional destruction, damage, or obstruction to an individual's professional career (2016). Participants described two specific forms of sabotage they experienced during their service with the U.S. Army: Professional irrelevance and promotion obstruction. For example, regarding professional irrelevance, participants discussed how they were often assigned duties that had nothing to do with their MOS. ASH augments to this concept,

“So, I'm supposed to be working at the flight line. But instead of me working at the flight line with all the other people, I got stuck in the mail room in an area down in a hole. I didn't get to expand my career until a year and a half later.”

Others added that were assigned to alternate duties while deployed to test their competence and grit prior to being allowed to serve on missions; assignments not expected of their male service member peers. SR commented on her experience,

“When I finally got into country, I don't know if it was a bridge that was burned or me having to prove myself, but before I could do any intelligence collection

outside of the wire, out in the field, I had to go on these nonsense presence patrols to show that I could keep up with all of the other Infantry men.”

This relates to Rosen et al. (1996) study, in which male soldiers ranked women less competent than themselves. By assigning women service members extra duties, they prove themselves capable and dedicated to their male peers enough to be eventually included in their primary MOS and related missions.

Secondly, relating to promotion obstruction, participants commented on how their male peers were promoted before them in spite of merit due to time in service or qualification. They discussed the difficulties with being promoted to leadership positions as well as being provided opportunities in which to enhance their military careers. IM echoed this experience,

“I was never treated equally, unfortunately. I was often passed up. I know that my paperwork for my promotion from E2 to E3 was shoved to the bottom of the pile more than once because they didn't want to do it. I watched all the guys that got in at the same time as me get their E3, while I sat there going, ‘Where’s mine?’”

Participants’ stories of delayed leadership selection and promotion are connected with similar studies conducted by Boldry et al. (2001) and Heilman and Haynes (2005) who found in military settings a poor representation of women and an overall negative viewpoint towards a female presence in units. These biased attitudes undervalued women’s performance and effectiveness, and consequently affected the promotion selection process.

Finally, and unexpected comments concerning sabotage to a woman service member's military career due to pregnancy and having children. SR stated,

“Another female is actually trying to transfer to my unit because she's being discriminated against by her immediate leadership for being pregnant. [...] She has gotten pregnant and now she's gotten what seems to be the short end of the stick. So, she's looking to transfer to a more positive environment.”

Although endorsing the military as a family, the male ethic is still advocated in the preconceived soldier as women's social positions continue to be viewed as mothers and caretakers (Chodorow, 1974; Gilligan, 1982). This is particularly true once a woman service member becomes pregnant or has children. Their role as a soldier becomes ambiguous to the assumed stereotype of housewife. These examples of sabotage were unexpected as the examples in previous studies (Herbert, 1998; Miller, 1997) did not specifically discuss this connection. However, the narratives fit the definition of sabotage and moreover qualify as a form of gender harassment in the military.

Indirect threats. The fourth form of gender harassment reported by participants involved indirect threats. In the military, this form of gender harassment involves conditional situations that the consequence endangers a woman service member's military career or well-being. Participants discussed how indirect threats were used to validate constant scrutiny, coerce trivialization, and discourage harassment reporting for risk of marginalization. For example, BK discussed,

“Anytime and anything you told anybody anything, everybody knew. Nothing was personal. You might as well have been sitting out there and talking to everybody else if you wanted to have a personal conversation because that's the way it happened. It went out to everybody else.”

Examples such as this demonstrate how the potential for leaking harassment report details to the unit can be used as an indirect threat to marginalize the soldier, although Army Regulation 600-20 specifically condones reporting confidentiality (DOA, 2014). As a case in point, Firestone and Harris (2003) reviewed reasons for unreported harassment cases. The study cited three primary beliefs within the military: no action would be taken, reporting would be turned as evidence against women's presence in the military, or repercussions in the form of further harassment would occur. BK's example testifies that this belief continues within the U.S. Army more than 15 years after Firestone and Harris's study. AM further provides evidence to this observance:

“I feel that's everything, because a comment or report goes out, then everyone kind of judges you differently. If you're a female or a male they just judge you because they don't believe you or they feel like if they say something wrong about you you're just going to tattle-tale on them, and they don't have that trust in you anymore, it feels like.”

This aspect hints that a change in policy should not only promote and encourage reporting methods, but also sanction penalties against those who condone repercussions against soldiers who file reports.

Defamatory language. The fifth form of gender harassment participants communicated was defamatory language as defined by Kelty et al. (2010). Several participants commented on the general speech behaviors their male peers employed for communication. For example, MP noted,

“I think men are more vulgar than women. They speak sometimes without thinking about what they're saying, and it's kind of disgusting. I guess that would be a masculine trait, the vulgar speaking.”

Participants highlighted experiences in which their male peers utilized vulgar insinuations regarding women service members' career achievements and work ethic to be based on promiscuity rather than competence. Similarly, as researched by Sojo et al. (2016), these participants added how these assumed promiscuity trends would influence devaluing objectifying comments towards women service members. In addition, name-calling was specifically mentioned by several participants. RE mentioned the terms “bitch” and “whore,” which correspond with King's (2015) “slut-bitch” binary and Sasson-Levy's (2003) “dykes or whores” categorization,

“I had an NCO once who told me, ‘You're going to have to make a choice. You can be either a bitch or a whore.’ And I chose bitch. And once you make that choice you never really integrate; you never really have any friends.”

Sasson-Levy explained that it is a commonality in U.S. military units to hypersexualize women using such discursive language. However, the extent of name-calling reported by participants was unexpected as the event of name-calling compares to

Pascoe's (2007) study of high school students. This signals that adults are utilizing name-calling in a professional military environment. Yet a participant specifically addressed this behavior regarding coerced trivialization. AM stated, "As I said before, accept their jokes, accept their looks. Just try to go along with their 'immaturity.' There's a lot of immature people in the military. You had to go along with it."

Sexist humor. The sixth form of gender harassment is associated with defamatory language – sexist humor. These comments are considered of a crude sexual nature directly related to Kelty's (2010) definition. Surprisingly, only one participant reported specific sexual humor, although others reported the use of defamatory language that carried a similar quality. These reports were mentioned in general terms or consisted of a lowbrow humorous nature. For example, IM stated, "I had comments about my chest, about my butt, a couple times where it was like, 'Oh, you're fun to watch, walk away.' Those kinds of things. A lot of it was just comments on my body." At the same time, it is these forms of defamatory language and sexist humor that are easiest to mask as a trivial incident (Ford et al., 2008; Sasson-Levy, 2002).

Gossip and rumors. The seventh form of gender harassment envelops gossip and rumors, which also falls under the definition of defamatory language. At the same time, it is important to address this form of gender harassment specifically as it had a high rate of reporting by participants. Each commenting participant specified gossip and rumors created and dispersed purely under the guise of projecting sexual promiscuity of the women service member, whereby effectively socially isolating that service member. Due to these "destructive comments" (Goldsmith, 2007, p. 40), formulating camaraderie with

male peers became a challenge within male-dominated units. RE specifically addressed this aspect,

“There is a lot of loneliness. You can’t really every actually let your guard down. I guess that is the sad reality. I never fostered any long-standing friendships that weren't ever at some point muddied by some kind of sexual nuance with anyone in my unit. It's very difficult to make friends as a female.”

As gossip and rumors are closely related to defamatory language, they are equally trivialized. However, the topic of gossip and rumors has recently received a higher amount of criticism and attention in both military and civilian media. More specifically, as early as 2013 and as recent as 2019 employees have filed legal suits against employers in which gossip and rumors where one of the main components of the charges (Lewis & Roth, 2019; Wilkie, 2019). This brings to attention the detrimental effects of gossip and rumors that now may be scrutinized not only as a form of workplace harassment, but specifically as violating an individual’s civil and equal employment opportunity rights.

Offensive gestures. The eighth form of gender harassment to consider is offensive gestures, which includes gestures, leering, and staring that are sexually suggestive (EEOC, 1992). Although most forms of gender harassment have been reported as verbal, offensive gestures nevertheless occur and are entitled to the same level of attention of other forms of harassment have received. For example, KM specifically reported eye-winking and hovering. Other participants discussed their caution in selecting

a professional appearance that expressed their femininity, as this could serve as a social retractor. For example, DH discussed her experience,

“If I try to act female, like, if I wear my uniform with a skirt, the men always look at my legs. They always check out my legs. It has gotten to where I just wear my pants. And I wear flats. I wear a bigger uniform so it can hide my figure, to be more masculine. So, I'm not arousing the visual effects of what I have seen can do to a man.”

Demeaning symbolic references. The ninth form of gender harassment identified by participants was demeaning symbolic references, which are symbols within American society that can be used suggestively and negatively (Leskinen & Cortina, 2014; Sojo et al., 2016). In the case of the participants' experiences, the symbol of marriage was used as sexual innuendo to interpret not only availability, but also sexual promiscuity. According to participants, women service members were often inquired after whether they were already married or not. In effect, unmarried women service members are interpreted as being sexually available and unworthy of respect as they are viewed through an objectified lens by their male peers. ASH stated,

“Every day over there I got asked by somebody if I'm getting married or if I wanted to get married, or something like that. The point I'm getting to is being taken seriously. Like, nobody would take me seriously.”

Social isolation. The tenth and final form of gender harassment encountered by participants was social isolation. Socially isolating women service members from a support chain is a means of gender harassment as a direct form of marginalization (Heinecken, 2017). Multiple participants mentioned that they had no support chain from leadership or peers, to include friendships, throughout their military career, and the subsequent loneliness that ensued due to marginalization. Others noted being purposefully uninvited from key communications and feeling unwelcomed and unwanted in their units. RE notes,

“I didn’t have a lot of really good friends. There is a lot of loneliness. You can’t really every actually let your guard down. I guess that is the sad reality. I never fostered any long-standing friendships that weren’t ever at some point muddied by some kind of sexual nuance with anyone in my unit. It’s very difficult to make friends as a female.”

It is important to note that gender harassment, particularly displays of defamatory language and sexual jokes, have become socially accepted in the military organization and employed by men who have prejudice towards women service members as a means of harassment (King, 2015). At the same time, as reported by Herbert (1998), these same harassing behaviors may be likewise displayed by female peers. Several participants commented on this attribute, such as SRO discussed,

“Ironically, the general atmosphere leads the women who stay enlisted to develop a certain persona; one of two main stereotypes, that of the princess or the one who is super aggressive, angry, and admonishing. The later type is the most likely to

discourage younger enlisted women from continuing. This stereotype is a huge turn-off and is the most aggressive and negative type of person I had to deal with. [...] [My second unit] had one of those stereotypical women NCOs that I mentioned, and she created a super toxic environment.”

In all of these cases, upholding the masculine ethic as proposed by Kanter (1977) was a common theme. The U.S. Army has been a traditionally male venue and continues to display this atmosphere within its social climate. This first component of the first research question involved exploring narratives involving the main forms of gender harassment. They provided an insight into the forms of gender harassment used in the military’s hypermasculine social circles. For women service members, these influential and coercive interpersonal stressors signal entry into Culver’s (2013) gender identity development matrix. Their effect determines her position within the matrix.

Research Question 1 Part 2 Interpretation

The first research question asked, “What are the main forms of gender harassment that women service members encounter and the coping strategies they use?” This next component addresses the second part of the question regarding positive and negative coping strategies used by women service members to cope with gender harassment in their units. These coping strategies were organized into five primary categories: core interests and femininity, reporting methods, trivialization, avoidance and relocation, and being more male. Firstly, the core interests and femininity reflect those identity aspects of a woman service member’s essential nature (Goffman, 1976) that nurture Maslow’s

(1943) self-actualization and enable aspects of Bem's (1974) androgyny to facilitate a balanced military identity.

Core interests and femininity. For example, several participants mentioned various hobbies: music, cooking, sewing, colorful pens, and decorating their office with family photos. Other participants discussed expressing their femininity by wearing makeup, perfume, and their wedding ring, having styled hair and manicured nails, crossing their legs, and using scented candles or air fresheners. BK gave her example, "Music. Any chance that I was able to play music, I would play it. It kind of got me in the zone to just focus on my job and not everything else around me, the negativity."

Others discussed how their preferences helped them cope, such as keeping a simple hairstyle, being in comfortable clothing that fit, and always being clean and well-kept. DM discussed this significance,

"I remember I had one NCO ask me, "Why do you have to wear all that makeup on your face?" Well, it's the only thing that still connects me to feeling female or feminine. Because I wear a uniform all day, every day. I work a male-dominant job in a male-dominant environment. It's the only thing I feel that still connects me to feeling feminine is wearing makeup. And it also helps makes me feel better about my outward appearance."

Carlson (2011) and Ezzel (2009) noted that these coping strategies specifically attributed to advocating primary social identity and femininity in which to enable an androgynous balanced military identity, whereupon ascending to the fourth phase of self-acceptance (Culver, 2013).

Reporting methods. The second component of coping strategies involves different reporting methods. Participants discussed speaking out for oneself, speaking out for others, mentorship, SHARP and EO, and using their support chain to mitigate gender harassment in their units. Comparing these five narrative categories to the U.S. Army's SHARP and EO command policies on reporting, there are noticeable parallels. The U.S. Army Command annotates five main categories of reporting procedures that pertain to harassment: direct approach, indirect approach, third party, chain of command, and filing a formal complaint (DOA, 2014).

Direct and indirect approach. Participants discussed speaking out for oneself which corresponds with the direct approach command policy. This approach involves direct confrontation of the harasser in order to cease the harassing behavior. It can also include indirect reporting in which the victim writes a letter to the harasser, although no participant in this study reported using this method. Multiple participants commented on using the direct approach, such as AW, "I work with some Infantry guys and they're not used to working with females. And sometimes some comments will slip out and I will correct them, that they cannot say that and don't say it."

Third-party. The next narrated category involved speaking out for others, which parallels the third-party intervention of the command policy. The command policy requires that a victim of harassment initiates this intervention themselves. However, many participants stated that they take the initiative as a third-party interlocutor without being asked. AM explained this approach,

“You know, in the military they make fun of everyone behind their backs. Because, I don't know why. Ego-boost? I don't know. But I would always stand up for people because that's who I am as a person. I'm a person who cares about other people, so I always stood up for other people, and I always said my mind.”

Mentorship. The third narrated category addressed mentorship of a victim of gender harassment. This category of psychosocial assistance is not included in the command policy categories as it primarily addresses reporting strategies. Instead, it is assumed that the victim will seek assistance from their chain of command, their SHARP SARC or EEO Office OIC/NCOICs, or the Army medical center's behavioral health services department (DOA, 2014). This voluntary third-party initiative could be due to a few relevant factors. For example, as there is little faith in the reporting system and gender harassment envelops all women (Sojo et al., 2016), women service members intervene directly and indirectly themselves. The third-party initiative may also be associated with the individual's identity as a considerate, self-efficacious person. As DM explained,

“I know I have personally had to tell people, ‘Hey look, I know that female, please don't say anything about her, because I do care about this person, and she's not that type of person.’ I know I have had to actually say things like that to them.”

Third party initiative may also be explained in accordance with Forsyths (2018) proposed five components of group cohesion, particularly highlighting social and collective cohesion which advocate comradery and role knowledge within a group.

Filing a formal complaint. The fourth narrated category included SHARP and EO reporting. This parallels the filing a formal complaint as well as utilizing one's chain of command as each unit is allotted an EO and SHARP representative. Although a recent Pentagon report noted that 70% of cases that include sexual assault go unreported (Kirby, 2019), participants who have used this coping strategy and method of reporting have mentioned positive outcomes. For example, ASH mentioned, "Another way is that people would file complaints, for one. That's one way. That's one of the main ways, a lot of people would just file complaints."

Chain of command. The fifth and final narrated category concerning reporting methods involved using one's support chain as a reporting method and coping strategy. Again, this parallels the command policy of chain of command reporting in which an individual informs their immediate or unit leadership in an effort to resolve the harassing behavior in a concerted effort to resolve the issue. As stated in the third narrated category, units are assigned a SHARP and EO representative to whom soldiers may report harassment incidences. Several participants mentioned specific people, male and female service members, within their chain of command they felt confident going to for discussing personal matters. For example, DH stated, "I usually have a Commander or a mentor that I can go to. And ask them about the situation, how to better handle it."

At the same time, multiple participants stated how they had no one in their unit they could rely upon for support, escalating subsequent social isolation from their peers. Coupled with the unpopularity of reporting (Kirby, 2019; Sojo et al., 2016), there may be a distinct break in group cohesion that facilitates a distrust of these appointed representatives or certain individuals within the chain of command. For example, AM stated,

“They back each other up, it seems like, and that's pretty much what happened to me in my case. Everyone backed the person who was accused of, because he was a friend, he was an NCO, and NCOs wouldn't do something like that!”

AM continues by noting the unspoken threat women service members risk when reporting harassment cases,

“I feel that's everything, because a comment or report goes out, then everyone kind of judges you differently. If you're a female or a male they just judge you because they don't believe you or they feel like if they say something wrong about you you're just going to tattle-tale on them, and they don't have that trust in you anymore, it feels like.”

These commonalities between participants regarding the negative social climate of their unit relate to the three remaining coping strategy categories of trivialization, avoidance and relocation, and being more male.

Trivialization. Firstly, recall that trivialization occurs because it falls under the guise of light-hearted humor or trivial “just kidding” incidents (Sasson-Levy, 2002, p.

374), because women service members wish to gain acceptance within their male-dominated group (Berdahl, 2007; Ford et al., 2008), or because there is little faith in the reporting system, hence episodes continue unreported (Sojo et al., 2016). Multiple participants commented on trivializing gender harassment in their units. For example, SRO discussed her experience with trivialization,

“I think that it’s expected to overlook the lewd comments or what you may call sexual harassment.” [...] “I’m sure that I made the guys sound bad. They are not bad people. Most of the time they are just being guys around other guys and trying to include the girls in their group, but not necessarily changing how they are.” [...] “I think I am desensitized. It’s easier to be one of the guys and ignore the gender harassment.”

Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs states that once an individual’s needs of physiology and safety have been met, that individual then focuses all attention to fulfilling their psychological needs (Boeree, 2006). Connected to Forsyth’s (2018) matrix of cohesion, psychological needs highlight the desired outcomes of social cohesion: positive social relationships and emotional fulfillment. The level of social cohesion within a group and sense of individual belonging is directly proportional to an individual’s level of self-esteem. If an individual is viewed negatively by the group, that individual’s sense of belonging is subsequently low, wherein developing a low self-esteem. As an individual’s psychological needs remain unmet by that group, that person will experience disillusion and inexorably withdraw from that group in search of another that will fulfill that need (Friedkin, 2004; Griffith, 2002; Poston, 2009).

Avoidance and relocation. The fourth coping strategy discussed by participants addressed this event of withdrawing, or “dissolution,” from a group due to a low level of belonging to migrate towards another, more cohesive group (Forsyth, 2018, p. 22). This coping strategy, called avoidance and relocation, was discussed by IM saying,

“[...] After a while I just hung out with Alpha Company guys because I just got along with them, they got me. The guys in Bravo Company had their predetermined stigmas about the kind of person I'm supposed to be. So, I just started to avoid them.” [...] “I was constantly trying to find one way or another to escape them because of the way they treated me.” [...] “There were only two females to 40 men. They used to be really hard on us girls. Like, “Your PT test doesn't take as much effort,” and that kind of stuff. They always had a superiority complex over us. It got very old, very quick. After a while, I was just ready to leave, I was just done with my unit. I wanted to transfer or find something else.”

Being more male. Herbert's (1998) study revealed how many women service members would work harder than their male peers to prove themselves worthy and able. Multiple studies examined how the effect of gender harassment can often cause women service members to overperform in their duties to prove themselves as capable as their male peers and gain acceptance (Furia, 2010; Miller, 1997; Silva, 2008). This highlights the final coping strategy: being more male. Multiple participants expressed this notion of having to work harder than the average male service member to prove themselves socially acceptable to their male peers. For example, AS stated,

“For me, when I first came in, I had to prove myself. I had to prove myself even though I was a female. I did the male standard for PT; I worked my ass off. I worked my butt off to make that standard. I had to prove myself to some of those older NCOs, those older people that I worked with.”

These final three coping strategies accentuate the expectations of women service members as they enter the non-traditional occupation of the U.S. Army. As Heinecken (2017) stated, as women enter the military, they find that they must not only meet physical standards but are also expected to adopt the masculine ethic of social values, goals, and behaviors to gain the acceptance of their male peers. This refers to the proposed “honorary man” status, which King (2015) admits is “an exceptionally narrow category for women to sustain,” inferring that any indication of professional or personal failing will result in the honorary man status being revoked (p. 385). Sasson-Levy (2002) stated that in a hypermasculine environment, regardless of effort to achieve social acceptance, marginalization is the inevitable end.

Therefore, the only coping strategy that will allow a woman service member to achieve self-acceptance is withdrawal from the low cohesive group in search of another in which she can begin formulating a woman-warrior concept of herself (Edwards & Jones, 2009). In this case, core interests and femininity, reporting methods, and relocation (dissolution) are positive coping strategies, while trivialization and avoidance offer only temporary solutions to the larger, impending situation of marginalization.

Research Question 2 Interpretation

This section attends to the second research question, “What are the main components of group cohesion that present an effective unit during deployments?” Forsyth (2018) proposed 5 components of group cohesion: social cohesion, task cohesion, collective cohesion, emotional cohesion, and structural cohesion. These 5 categories are presented as the framework for participant’s narratives regarding effective characteristics of group cohesion.

Social cohesion. With regards to social cohesion, participants comment on two specific aspects that can enhance comradery: peer social cohesion and leadership social cohesion. Firstly, participants mentioned how open communication, mutual respect, intelligence, capability, professionalism, and patience help facilitate social cohesion among peers. As DH discussed,

“It takes time to fit in, because you've got to kind of get to know everybody.

You’ve got to see what your place is. You really have to be intelligent. In the unit that I'm in I have to read and know the publications and be an expert in that field.

So, it has taken me time to get there, but yes, I feel that I am a key member.”

In the case of leadership social cohesion, participants expressed the significance of mentorship and support. This positive approach to social cohesion extends both up and down the chain of command. For example, AS stated,

“I have the support of my leadership. My First Sergeant always has my back, no matter what. My soldiers always have my back, no matter what. Even if it was wrong or if they thought it was crazy, I would explain to them, ‘Hey, this is why

we're doing it,' and even sometimes when I couldn't they would still be like, 'This is stupid but let's do this.'”

MacCoun et al. (2006) explain that social cohesion between group members emulates the bonds of friendship. In military units, social cohesion is particularly important to experience from both peers and leadership. Participants explain their experiences regarding social cohesion from peers and leadership alike.

Task cohesion. The next category of group cohesion is task cohesion. Task cohesion correlates with group performance insofar that the group shares a mission and is dedicated to completing that mission as a unified team (Mullen and Copper, 1994). Participants shared their experiences regarding tasks that advocated cohesion, which centered around the concept of teamwork. Participants alluded to the same characteristics as social cohesion that supplement task cohesion, although it was the mission that provided motivation, determination, and drive to work together. For example, AS stated,

“Working as a team. I can't stress enough there were so many times when I tried to do everything myself and I know that I can't. I have to lean on my team.

Especially as you get into the ranks, you're not successful without your team. My soldiers, I would not have been able to accomplish what we did in the field without them and their hard work.”

Related to the Leo et al. (2015) study, task cohesion in the military involves sharing duties and missions produces a unified fidelity. As Mullen and Copper (1994) noted, the purpose-driven military unit acts towards achieving the designated goal and

executed as a unified whole. Moreover, a group with high task relations was found to be more dedicated to equal contribution in completing an assigned mission (Kier, 1998).

Collective cohesion. The third form of group cohesion addresses collective cohesion. As Cerulo (1997) described, participants discussed aspects in which to facilitate positive collective cohesion in terms of physiological and psychological predispositions to include strength, compassion, support, resilience, dependability, motivation, dedication, capable, empathetic, patience, self-discipline, and professionalism. Together, these characteristics can unite a group as a harmonious unit as they perform their duties and missions in accordance with task cohesion with the bonds of social cohesion. For example, SR expresses her thoughts to inspire collective cohesion,

“Just someone strong and level-headed that soldiers can come to. [...] Physical and mental strength, [...]. Being resilient, understanding, and empathetic.

Someone that doesn't hold judgment. Because I know everybody's life situation is different or circumstances are different. Everybody is in a different season in their life. So just trying to understand that.”

Emotional cohesion. The fourth form of group cohesion in accordance with Forsyth's (2018) categories of group cohesion is emotional cohesion, where group members are actively involved in group activities and a high level of personal satisfaction is generated due to this inclusion. This level of cohesion is vital, as soldiers must share enough confidence in their peers and leadership to alert them to any issue regarding gender harassment in the unit. Participants provided several examples in which their units promoted positive emotional cohesion, such as hosting a family day, communicating

stressful issues, and providing general support when difficult situations arise. IM notes the distinct atmosphere produced in an emotionally cohesive group,

“When I got transferred to Ops, I had a better support network. People that were willing to talk to me and figure out what's going on and people that knew that I was injured, and I was not healing the way I was supposed to. That was awesome.”

MacCoun and Hix (1993) link emotional cohesion with social cohesion, noting that this form of group cohesion is attained once group members indicate a sincere enjoyment of each other's company, choosing to socialize with one another and experience the bonds of friendship.

Structural cohesion. The fifth form of group cohesion is structural cohesion. Forsyth (2018) emphasizes the significance of clearly defined roles within a unit to complete a common task. This aspect also establishes individual purpose and value to a group, whereby fortifying a strong bond within and throughout the group and its members. Here, participants discuss their interrelated roles in accordance with 6 subcategories that support structural cohesion in their unit: leadership, professionalism, soldiering, woman warrior, and friendship. Multiple participants touched on all these aspects to facilitate positive structural cohesion. For example, RE discussed her experience,

“I just kept my nose down and tried to be better at my job. You know the one thing, the only thing, that levels the playing field in any manner is just to be outstanding in what you do. And so that's what I did. I just worked very, very

diligently to be outstanding at what I did. So, it didn't matter what they thought of me personally, and it didn't matter whether or not we were friends outside of work. But the fact remains, that they knew if they put me on a job, the job would get done and it would get done better than half the guys in the unit. So that was just what I did.”

An interesting and principal theme within this category from participants was the need to prove themselves. As priorly stated and connected with Herbert’s (1998) study, feeling the need to prove oneself can be intertwined with gender harassment and ineffective coping strategies. At the same time, participants commented on proving themselves by demonstrating that they are mentally and physically capable in their MOS and as a soldier. They linked this event to subsequent genuine acceptance within their unit as well as a means to a successful military career. Some participants viewed their new units as an opportunity in which to prove themselves and to be their best professionally, wherein they took the initiative to work hard. Others commented that demonstrating one’s abilities in the unit is not an expectation of just women, but men service members as well. As SR stated,

“I’ve always worked for and supported Combat Arms, and so I've always had to prove myself. I have had to prove myself as a female that I can keep up. I have seen other females have to do the same. But also, in my job as well. I have seen males within my job have to prove themselves to stay in Combat Arms MOSs versus other support MOSs.”

Therefore, this perspective attends to the attributes that can increase positive structural and collective cohesion within a group due to role knowledge and high motivational levels. Isaksson (1988) stated that the military identity is a social development instilled in service men and women primarily to support the government's ideology of national security and defense and facilitate subordination to the military organization. In this case, task cohesion unites with a service member's inspiration to perform their civic duty.

At the same time, Bordo's (2004) study specifically mentions that a woman's military identity is developed based on adopted qualities that will enable women to master the skills and develop the attributes necessary to become a soldier. Demonstrating mastery by proving she is adept in her MOS and soldering is a job requirement of the U.S. military, indicating role knowledge and increasing structural cohesion. It is when a woman service member is exposed to interpersonal stressors in the form gender harassment, such as constant scrutiny or employing coping strategies as being more male, that an identity crisis arises, a metaphorical mask is donned, and unit cohesion simultaneously declines.

Research Question 3 Interpretation

In the final research question, participants discussed their position within Culver's (2013) GIDWM theory matrix. Research question three asked, "How does a woman service member's position in the phases of gender identity development affect her career and well-being in the military?" Recall that Culver's theory has four main phases related

to wearing and removing a metaphorical mask that symbolizes a woman service member's level of identity development.

Phase one. Beginning with phase one, women service members identify warrior and feminine insecurities as determined by their male-dominated social climate, governed by the masculine ethic and gender stereotypes. As insecurities are pinpointed, they are managed by matching them to coping strategies to compensate for their perceived inadequacies. As demonstrated in this chapter's discussion of coping strategies, the strategy chosen determines a woman service member's position within the GIDWM matrix, whereby ascertaining her choice between gender management and a balanced military identity. ASH discussed her phase one experience,

“I think that's why I never got taken seriously. Because I was happy. I tried to act happy around them, so it would make everybody else happy of who I did talk to. So that way they would just think of me as a happy person. But instead, they just didn't take me seriously.”

Phase two. In phase two, participants discussed their experiences with wearing a mask in which to hide their insecurities and appeal to their predominantly male group members who endorse the masculine ethic. Ashforth and Mael (1989) described two gender management phenomena – decoupling and conflicting identities – which are formulated in order to reduce incongruence with the masculine ethic and reduce the severity of interpersonal stressors induced by the dominant group. In phase one of the GIDWM matrix, masculine attributes are mimicked, and feminine traits are masked in an

effort to join the social culture and avoid marginalization. As an example of decoupling, AS stated,

“For me, I act differently when I’m at home. Once I take the uniform off, I put myself in that civilian mode unless I have to be in my Army mode. It's like a switch. That's the best way I can describe it.”

An example of conflicting identities is identified in a narrative presented by DH, in which her behavior around her male peers did not match her true self and conspicuous signs of gender management emerged. DH states,

“Absolutely, I act very different around them. Because I don't want them to see any feminine. I want them to know that I'm the strong, direct woman that is capable of doing the job. And I want to be respected and treated with respect and professionalism in our workplace. [...] I’ve definitely had to be more masculine in the masculine role that we have preconceived in American culture. [...] It has gotten to where I just wear my pants. And I wear flats. I wear a bigger uniform so it can hide my figure, to be more masculine. So, I'm not arousing the visual effects of what I have seen can do to a man. So yes. Definitely more masculine. I even talk more masculine. I talk in a deeper voice in more direct tones.”

Both examples fall within phase two of the GIDWM matrix, which initiates the donning of a mask and gender management. This pertains to Benedict (2009) and Rosen et al. (2003) studies in which wearing a mask equates to creating a fake identity, Heineken’s (2017) study in which women suppressed their unwanted feminine qualities

to embrace masculine ethic values, and Carlson's (2011) study that identified the resulting gender management as a coping strategy to evade marginalization. Moreover, Rimalt's (2007) observations of women service members practicing androcentric behaviors verified that women engage in gender management practices by enacting masculine ethic behaviors just as their male peers to marginalize other women service members.

Phase three. Phase three within the GIDWM matrix involves a woman service member's eventual realization of the consequences of wearing a mask along with the temperamental level of acceptance received from their male peers in spite of practicing gender management (Culver, 2013). Recall that Sasson-Levy (2002) noted that regardless of effort to achieve social acceptance, marginalization is the inevitable end. Carlson adds to this logic explaining that to exclusively practice masculinity would be "an illusion of a true, essential inner self" (2011, p. 83). Foucault (1978) specifically addressed the consequences of decoupling and conflicting identities, in which these incompatible identity fragments cannot cooperatively interact with each other and the result is the same illusory identity.

According to Edwards and Jones (2009), this third phase initiates an inner exploration of rediscovery of their primary identity and femininity, whose journey leads towards personal acceptance and phase four of the GIDWM matrix. SR describes her defining moment of wearing a mask,

"Then maybe about four years into my time in service I had a female leader.

Actually, it was a very distinct moment for me. Where a soldier, instead of saying

‘female’ or ‘girl’ he said ‘chick,’ and he was referring to a soldier. This female senior leader intervened, and she said, ‘Did I hear you correctly? Did you just refer to that Soldier as a chick?’ She put him on the spot, and she said, ‘We are all soldiers, we are all the same.’ So that was a very defining moment for me, where I realized I didn't have to adapt to that roll with the punches anymore. I could stand up and say... I didn't have to be male or female anymore, I could just refer to everybody as a soldier versus gender.”

Psychosocial effects. One significant aspect to address within this phase are the psychosocial effects of gender harassment. This pertains to the mental and emotional “invisible wounds” caused by trauma that gender harassment can cause (Kelty et al., 2010). Recall in the discussion on coping strategies in which participants noted reporting methods that specifically involved mentorship. Although SHARP and EO training involves standard reporting methods, no clear guidance is provided in terms of counselling victims of gender harassment. Naclerio et al., (2011) stated these psychosocial effects involve the development of multiple mental health disorders. Correspondingly, as reported by Crompvoets (2011), the development of even mild symptoms of mental disorders negatively affect a service member’s ability to perform their duty in combat. Moreover, Murdoch et al. (2007) commented that presence of mental disorders dramatically increase a service member’s likeliness to develop more severe psychiatric symptoms that lead to PTSD.

As Yan et al. (2013) report, these disorders and their various symptoms continue to affect the service member long after redeployment and into transitioning, wherein

social reintegration as a civilian becomes an arduous process. BK offered her experience that affirms and generates an awareness of the consequences of gender harassment and the mask worn while serving in the military. She stated,

“Some things I have blocked out since I have been in the military. Because it was something that really bothered me during the military. I've dealt with it and put it behind me, let me put it that way. Some things I just don't want to dig up.”

SR discussed her related observations,

“One particular female, [...] she was name-called and almost blacklisted. She had no desire to continue her service, but she still wanted to serve despite what had happened to her. Even still [...] she is encountering some difficulty with that acceptance. She's dealing with a plethora of personal issues and it's all stemming from her time on the active side.”

Phase four. Foucault (1978) explained that the true self is revealed only when the person admits to themselves their true identity and embraces their “essential nature” of their expressive personality (Goffman, 1976, p. 75). According to Culver (2013), in the fourth and final phase women service members transcend the masculine ethic military culture and stereotypical expectations of identity by removing their mask. Women rediscover their true selves, issue self-acceptance, and integrate learned professionalism beneficial to their military career (Benedict, 2009). This pertains to Bem's (1974) androgyny theory, as internalizing learned beneficial qualities, to include masculine qualities, can be cooperatively integrated with one's true self (Bordo, 2004; Griffith, 2002; Johansen et al., 2014). In addition, this phase also appeals to Fosse et al. (2015)

proposal of self-efficacy, once transcendence of gender harassment is achieved and self-acceptance occurs. Taken together, a balanced military identity of femininity and soldiering emerges to abandon the incongruent identity fragments of gender management and define a true woman warrior identity (Culver, 2013). KM provides her example in which she has risen to phase four and transcended the coercive influences of gender harassment,

“I am who I am. You should accept me for who I am. I'm a soldier just like you. I shouldn't have to act any differently.” [...] “It's kind of just like, I'm a girl, I get it. But I can still lift something too, I can still move something too. I put my pants and my boots on just like you guys. I can do it too.”

Culver's (2013) fourth phase incorporates the aspect of transcendence towards a balanced military identity and rediscovery of one's true self. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy pyramid in which self-actualization is the apex, corresponds with this concept of transcendence as deficit needs are met and an individual can concentrate on self-actualization through self-improvement. Recall that in order for both transcendence and self-actualization to occur, a sense of group belonging and cohesion must occur. Forsyth's (2018) proposed five components of group cohesion determined the different levels of cohesion that must occur within a group to determine its overall success, wherein the aspects of transcendence and self-actualizations are enabled.

Some participants attested to this aspect, where they identified with the fourth phase in Culver's GIDWM matrix, expressed self-actualization in their testimonials, and attested to a cohesive unit atmosphere. For example, JM stated,

“Yeah, I mean they pretty much kept us on a level playing field. I don't think I was ever discriminated against as far as not getting chosen for something. If anything, they included me. [...] It was a very respectful type of unit as far as, like, not chivalrous, but the guys were always pretty respectful of women.”

This example and related testimonials of participants demonstrate the potential for successful gender integration from a cohesive unit – an external source – which is based on competence and performance (King, 2013b), and the proposed concept of meritocracy is a plausible actuality (Heinecken, 2017, Nagel, 2014). In a related matter, multiple participants reported particular gender harassment from their male peers pertaining to physical training (PT) scores and negative stereotypes that depict women as the weaker sex (Berdahl, 2007; Brownson, 2014; Herbert, 1998). IM represents her fellow participants comments,

“Aside from when we went out into the field, the females were separated because apparently that's still what they do. I often felt like because our PT test scores were slightly lower than the males, we were always being singled out for being ‘weaker.’ That's the best way of putting it. It was always like, ‘Oh you guys don't have to try as hard.’ So, that all the time.”

As a meritocracy focuses on professional competency, this aspect gives pause to reconsider a renewed policy based on “equivalency” instead of “equality” in which the male standard is no longer ubiquitous as it pertains to physical expectations that do not necessarily pertain to a soldier’s MOS (Brownson, 2014, p. 765; Heinecken, 2017, p. 205).

Lastly, these testimonials support the legitimacy of studies on sex-mixed units in garrison and combat that reported a positive attitude towards women service members and subsequent successful gender integration (Rosen et al., 1996; Barry, 2013). This brings attention to the aspect of constant scrutiny, which is used as a vehicle to highlight one woman service member's mistakes to undermine her overall performance, and then generalize these mistakes to apply to all women in the military (Furia, 2010). In this case, women service members must demonstrate themselves professionally capable in their MOS and as a soldier to alleviate former negative experiences of their male peers with former women service members. JM addresses this aspect,

“I think maybe when I first got to my unit. I wasn't as included in things. Nobody really had any experience working with girls. Those that did had very bad experiences. So, as I said, I had to prove myself. I mean, out of the 20-something guys I worked with, I'd say four had worked with girls before and it was a bad experience. The rest had never worked with girls before. My First Sergeant, that was his first time being in command of a girl. So, they didn't know how to treat me. So, I guess it was a little bit isolating until they got to know me further.”

Taken together, transcendence and self-acceptance, and meritocracy and equivalency can facilitate unit cohesion. Yet one key element remains to mediate social change and successful integration within the military: effective leadership. This next component elaborates on this aspect and concludes this section.

Final Interpretations

This section discussed this study's conceptual and theoretical framework in light of three primary research questions that addressed four main themes: gender harassment types and coping strategies, group cohesion, and gender identity development.

Participants reported gender harassment originates from hypermasculine units that condone the masculine ethic. Age, rank, military or civilian personnel, during deployment or in garrison did not signal any significance as participants reported gender harassment to occur in all of these categories. In addition, equally sex-mixed units in a training and deployed environment, although many reported a positive outcome (Barry, 2013; Rosen et al., 1996), cannot achieve dramatic social change in which to significantly negate gender harassment behavior. Noticeably, one main theme emerged throughout the analysis, reporting, and interpretation stages, that appeared the most influential on gender harassment in the U.S. Army: effective leadership.

Recent studies have reported on the effectiveness of leadership on the levels of harassment within a unit. Daniel, Neria, Moore, and Davis (2019) noted that the chain of command is responsible for handling issues that affect a soldier's performance and well-being. Their study pinpointed the instrumental role that leadership played regarding fully advocating a soldier who decides to come forward and report a harassment concern. This involves not only encouraging and facilitating the reporting process, but also providing emotional support to the soldier and mitigating any potential negative side-effects associated with reporting, such as social repercussions.

As noted in the participants' comments, utilizing one's chain of command or a mentor as a supportive source and coping strategy against gender harassment arose as a distinct pattern throughout this study. Cheney, Reisinger, Booth, Mengeling, Torner, and Sadler (2015) mentioned in their study how one form of coping strategy women service members used was accessing support networks. This directly relates to this study with regards to the coping strategy of reporting methods that involved utilizing a mentor or one's chain of command or providing mentorship as part of the chain of command. Cheney et al. stated how mentorship in particular utilized a cyclical leadership style that circumvented the linear hierarchal structure of the military. This approach nurtured a more personable experience, shifted the responsibility of providing support to first-contact leadership, and minimized continued harassment throughout the unit. This approach relates to Foucault's (2018) group cohesion theory in which mentorship increased collaborative relationships based on trust and mutual respect, specifically touching on the aspects of social, emotional, and structural cohesion.

Ormerod, Fitzgerald, Collinsworth, Lawson, A. K., Lytell, M., Perry and Wright (2005) stated that leadership behaviors are of paramount importance in creating a respectful climate that does not allow for harassment. Cheney et al. (2015) stated that risk and exposure to harassment pivots upon a women service member's retention of sociocultural power. RE noted the significance that this aspect of sociocultural power plays in terms of men in leadership positions over women in a non-traditional profession,

“I thought in a lot of ways when I got out of the military, I would be removing myself from some of that isolation and some of that hardship that I really did feel

because of being a female. But it's the same. Everywhere. If you're in a male-dominated profession, as I am, it's the same. It's apples and oranges, but it's still fruit. I used to feel more emotionally connected to the experiences that I had of that nature in the military. But now that I've had so many of the similar experiences outside of the military, it's just the way men and power are.

Women in leadership positions play key roles in facilitating mentorship practices within the unit. Ormerod et al. (2005) reported on how enlisting and promoting women into positions of leadership is one example of an effective deterrent to harassing behavior. Cheney et al. (2015) stated that women in leadership positions are especially instrumental in not only deterring gender harassment, but also empowering women service members. Firstly, women leaders utilize their position to intervene and reduce harassment cases through enforcement of reporting procedures and punishments and encouraging reporting by delivering direct support to the victim and block potential social repercussions. Secondly, women leaders provide mentorship to their female soldiers through leadership styles that utilize nurturing and cooperative activity. Cheney et al. noted that exceptionally effective women leaders inspire other women soldiers to challenge the masculine ethic and educate them on positive coping strategies to maintain their personal well-being and professional career progression. This particular approach to leadership coincides with Culver's (2013) fourth phase of removing the mask and transcending towards self-actualization (Maslow, 1943) and self-efficacy (Fosse et al., 2015).

At the same time, comments also touched on the effects of poor leadership and the consequences that ensued when discussing the topic of gender harassment. For example, AM commented,

“When you tell an NCO, when it persists, you usually got to tell your squad leader, NCO or whatnot. And I have, and then it stops for like a week, and then it continues on after that. They would have punishment, and then went on with it.”

Ormerod et al. (2005) discovered how the quality of leadership and leadership behavior was directly proportional to the level of gender harassment within a unit. In the case of effective leadership, a higher level of satisfaction with harassment reporting procedures, a higher level of emotional resilience and subsequent retention of soldiers resulted. However, the opposite was true for ineffective leadership that facilitated stereotypes and gender discrimination within a unit. DM professed to this finding,

“He's a married NCO, as a matter of fact, encouraging junior enlisted to talk the same way, encouraging young junior enlisted married soldiers to talk the same way, and I don't think that was very professional of him to do. And it happens on a regular basis, unless you tell them to stop.”

Participants also discussed how the training format itself has become a tedious affair in which leadership could find an alternative means in which to ensure harassment training was taken more seriously by other soldiers at the unit level. As ASH stated,

“A lot of different trainings a lot of EO. All this about gender harassment and about treating everybody equally. Lots of PowerPoints. Lots of just death by PowerPoints. But I don't think it really assisted much, because everybody would

go to the training and sign the training form, but nobody ever changed. It would have also that they could check that box off. I don't think anything ever changed.”

Sadler, Lindsay, Hunter, & Day, 2018. Discussed how effective leadership can be used as a catalyst for endorsing gender harassment training in order to facilitate its effectiveness at the unit level. The full range leadership model (FRLM) as originally proposed by Bass and Avolio (1990), provides a leadership model in terms of behavioral effectiveness from low to high. The model itself is composed of three main types of leadership approaches: laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational (Sadler et al., 2018, p.6). Sadler et al. comment on how effective leaders employ a combination of transactional and transformational behaviors, meaning they fulfill their statements of intention and are an inspirational role model to subordinates, peers, and superiors alike.

Mentorship and assimilation into a cohesive group as a “self-sustaining cohort” can only be presumed without adequate access to proper resources or training (Barry, 2013, p. 28). However, when these positive behaviors are integrated into leadership training and connected with harassment prevention measures at the unit level, leadership becomes one of the greatest catalysts in which to have the largest positive impact upon soldiers. Moreover, the effects increase group cohesion on every level that improves individual and organizational overall satisfaction within the military. This satisfaction not only improves soldier retention numbers as reported by Daniel et al. (2019), but also increases mission readiness and shifts focus from negative gender stereotypes to professional performance as service men and women (Cheney et al., 2015).

Taken as a whole, these findings note that cohesion at the unit level accompanied with active promotion of effective women leaders into leadership positions are the basis for successful gender integration and overall reduction of gender harassment. This approach is favored by present women service members over a policy issuing gender neutrality based on balancing the men to women ratio that assumes women will achieve key leadership positions as an eventual side-effect. As RE stated,

“For lack of a better word, the “shenanigans,” the crap that you have to deal with on top of everything else, is exhausting. I think that it's very difficult, yes, for a male soldier to have to deploy every other year, and to have to be in the military, and deal with his friends, and to deal with all the things that we inherently have to deal with but then to also have to deal with. But, on top of all that we have to deal with being ostracized, and being mistreated, and being very frequently handled differently as a female. That in itself is a whole other set of exhausting trials and tribulations. So, it's much more difficult I think for a female in the military. The stigma of women in the Army are being carried along, in a sense, by the men that surround them.”

This section provided an interpretation of the findings by addressing the three research questions, utilizing this study's conceptual and theoretical framework from chapter 2 and testimonials from participants as supporting evidence. Most notable was the pattern of narrations that circulated around the theme of leadership regarding gender harassment in the U.S. Army. As related recent studies have concluded, mentorship in particular is an effective means in which to intervene in harassing behaviors that allow

women service members to transcend the effects of gender harassment and cause a shift from the masculine ethic towards professional performance; a meritocracy as a genuinely cohesive unit.

As Segal et al. (2015) reported, in the Iraq and Afghanistan combat theaters, men have become acquainted with women service members on a personal and professional basis. Here, women service members have demonstrated their mental and physical effectiveness, which has facilitated a more positive attitude toward women in the military and combat specialties (Archer, 2013). This next section discusses the limitations of the study as originally prescribed in chapter 1, with regards to trustworthiness and the implementation of this study.

Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discover how women navigate through the various phases of identity development in the military in order to reach the level of personal acceptance as both a woman and a warrior. Culver (2013) stated that the GIDWM theory can be generalized to women working in all non-traditional occupations that are considered to be male dominated. However, in accordance with the inclusion requirements of this study, the results cannot be assumed to apply to other U.S. military branches or to National Guard or Reserve military elements. Therefore, further studies using the applied parameters may be used in a broader application to demonstrate and confirm Culver's statement of generalization.

Additional limitations involve the relatively small sample population and rather homogeneous demographic of rank. In accordance with a qualitative study, the sample

size is small. Instead of hosting a large pool of participants, the primary focus was turned towards an exhaustive literature research and developing the richness of data and analysis of the lived experiences and perceptions of the participants. This aspect presents a limitation in generalizing results to all U.S. Army male-dominated units insofar as hypermasculinity, interpersonal stressors, and gender harassment are concerned.

At the same time, the representation of junior enlisted, mid-grade enlisted, and senior enlisted participants, plus one officer was evenly divided between the 14 participants. However, proportionately there were 13 enlisted to one officer. This also presents a limitation to generalization as the perspective of only one officer was presented within this study. If more officers had been included, additional perspectives from their military grade would have provided a more heterogeneous balance of rank between enlisted and officer women service members.

Furthermore, the inclusion requirements and the small sample size limits consideration of the social conditions that occur in fully integrated units as well as those of male service members. Therefore, obtaining interviews in those contexts from those individuals would help to broaden the scope of the study and subsequent understanding of the women service member participants. At the same time, their stories may retract from the women service members' actual experiences. Meanwhile, a larger sampling may have assisted in transferability, but would consequently limit the level of rich descriptions inclusion requirements provide in a small target group.

The prequel to this study's theoretical framework – Edwards and Jones's (2009) Grounded Theory of College Men's Gender Identity Development – possessed certain limitations. Firstly, the model was tested on a limited sample size, and therefore could not be generalized to apply to a larger, more diverse population such as is in the military. Secondly, it was determined that the identities that college men developed were too generalized in comparison to those of military women (Culver, 2013). Although the second issue was resolved upon its adaptation to women in the military, the first issue could not be resolved. Culver had only proposed an alteration to the grounded theory and did not apply this newly proposed theoretical framework to a study, and this study also utilized a small sample size applying Culver's theoretical model. Therefore, the small sample size being applied to the theoretical framework serves as an additional limitation in terms of generalization and reliability.

Accurate interpretation of the data is paramount. Impartiality and expertise is assumed during the research and analysis process. Careful steps have been taken to ensure a low percentage of error utilizing member checking via respondent validation. However, there is always a risk of reactivity, misinterpretation or misinformation. This may occur due to personal experience that appears as a bias, or inaccurate empathetic interpretation of a participants' experiences during the interview and analysis processes. Additionally, interviews were the preferred method of data collection which requires a certain level of skill to conduct that can only be developed over time with practice (Maxwell, 2012).

Finally, a limitation to the study is acknowledging that over time, opinions of female participation in the military change. As determined by several studies in which women have demonstrated their professional capabilities in combat and have gained subsequent acceptance, particularly within sex-integrated units (Archer, 2013; Barry, 2013; Cohen & Clement, 2013; King, 2013b; Rosen, et. al., 1996). The public social climate is dynamic and perpetually shifting, women service members' roles have significantly increased in the military in the past 3 decades, and at present the third feminist wave women's movement is still active (Donnelly, 2007). Therefore, concepts as gendered organizations and occupations and gender stereotypes may be antiquated in accordance with these developing trends. In this case, progressive social culture is a proposed limitation of this study.

This next section discusses recommendations for further study that are grounded in this study's strengths and limitations as well as the literature presented in chapter 2.

Recommendations

Some studies have recently surfaced to address sexual harassment and assault of men, women (Dardis, Vento, Gradus, & Street, 2018; Thomsen, McCone, & Gallus, 2018), and the LGBT community in the military (Gurung, Ventuneac, Rendina, Savarese, Grov, & Parsons, 2018). Harris, McDonald, and Sparks (2018) lightly discussed gender harassment through the lens of "sexism," and hypermasculine units as "sexist environments" (p. 28). Although these new studies are celebrated in advocating an awareness of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the modern military, no other studies to date have been found to specifically address the issue of gender harassment.

Therefore, it is recommended that further studies be compiled that explicitly address this form of harassment.

Buchanan, Settles, Wu, & Hayashino (2018) addressed minority sub-groups within women service members, namely Asian-American service women. The Buchanan et al. (2018) study investigated comparable themes to this study, addressing stereotypes and the effects of sexual harassment. This study specifically identified gender harassment as a category under the umbrella of sexual harassment reporting. Although gender harassment rated second (36.4%) to unwanted sexual attention (64.3%), components of this second aspect fall under this study's definition of gender harassment, specifically offensive gestures, defamatory language to include name-calling, and sexual humor. Therefore, gender harassment is validated as carrying the same weight in exploiting women to the negative psychosocial effects of harassment and should be given the same attention as sexual harassment and sexual assault. Furthermore, Buchanan et al. noted that out of the studies that have focused on the topic of sexual harassment, and to a lesser extent gender harassment, a majority of those studies exclusively involve Caucasian women. This theme draws attention to recommending future focus groups consisting of women minorities that should be investigated for levels of gender harassment, its psychosocial effects, and victim support and prevention measures.

Although research has begun to surface that explores the effects of victimization in sexual harassment and assault trauma cases in the military (MST), very few studies have examined the effects of gender harassment alone. In the U.S. military, approximately 41% of service women and 4% of service men veterans have reported

experiencing MST. Yet the often-trivialized interpersonal stressors of gender harassment are not included in these statistics (Barth, Kimerling, Pavao, McCutcheon, Batten, Dursa, Peterson, & Schneiderman, 2016). Therefore, actual current reported numbers by military service women continue to be speculative in accordance with an older report submitted by Firestone and Harris (2003), in which gender harassment, referred to as “sexist behavior,” was reported to be at 35% by survey respondents (p. 89). In effect, a specific study that obtains a census of actual current data regarding gender harassment statistics is highly recommended.

In addition, the aspect of psychosocial effects on a victim of gender harassment have still to be encompassed within a holistic DOD harassment policy. Although the DOD has undertaken some redrafting of its present policy in addressing sexual assault, to include support for victims and more severe punishment under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), very little information is available relating to any significant attention to gender harassment (DOD, 2018; Stander & Thomsen, 2016). Moreover, an adaptive intra-military branch policy addressing all forms of harassment and assault has yet to be formulated. A streamlined policy that includes integration and coordination between the armed forces, particularly during joint task force missions, can only prove beneficial by increasing cohesive operations and soldiers’ well-being. Therefore, a deeper investigation into military policy attending to the needs of victims and steps to encourage reporting harassment cases to obtain subsequent accurate census data is recommended.

A majority of the studies referenced in this paper focused on the U.S. military in general, rather than on a particular branch of the military. One recent study concentrated

on the Navy, demonstrating that harassment is not secluded to one specific military branch (Stander, Thomsen, Merrill, & Milner, 2018). Stander et al. reviewed patterns that predicted signs of sexual aggression by males in the U.S. Navy. Such signs were determined to be risk factors that lead to sexual harassment and assault included factors which related to this study, such as hypermasculinity, misconduct and delinquency, and hostility towards women. The Stander et al. (2018) study aimed to identify key risk factors as a call to action within the U.S. Navy to counter these specific preludes of sexual aggression. In this case, it is recommended that additional studies focus on specific military branches and their risk factors that lead to harassment to determine distinct commonalities or differences between branches of the U.S. armed forces, and appropriate countermeasures to combat the effects of harassment victimization.

This section presented several recommendations further studies be compiled that explicitly address forms of gender harassment, provide detailed reports on gender harassment regarding women minorities, a census of actual current data regarding gender harassment statistics, include a deeper investigation into gender harassment military policy in supporting victims and encouraging reporting, and research specific military branches and their risk factors that lead to harassment to determine appropriate countermeasures to harassment prevention. The next section discusses implications of this study, involving a discussion of the potential impact for positive social change. Methodological, theoretical, and empirical implications as well as practice recommendations are also included in this next section.

Implications

By identifying commonalities among women service members regarding gender harassment, this study will be utilized to positively influence women who are presently serving, in transition, and have recently discharged from military service. It is meant to create an awareness in the field of women and military studies of the social climate in today's modern U.S. Army. In order to facilitate this awareness in the field, this study shall be published in accordance with Walden University publications. Moreover, this researcher shall remain dedicated to this topic in terms of behavioral developments and women service members. In order to facilitate this awareness in the women veteran community, a presentation of the findings will be given to the United Women Veterans Group of Northwestern Wisconsin (UWVNW). A copy of the findings and presentation will be uploaded to the UWVNW sent to the main United Women Veterans Group of Wisconsin located in Madison, Wisconsin.

Replication of a study is vital in terms of generalization and facilitating further research. Therefore, this study's methodological implications involve providing a conceptual framework and qualitative narrative approach for further studies to follow with regards to addressing gender harassment in the U.S. Army. Theoretical implications are highly stressed as significant to further studies as Culver's (2018) GIDWM theory was applied, one of the few theories that provides a matrix that specifically applies to gender identity development of women in the military. Due to its uniqueness and direct application, Culver's theory is highly recommended in replicated studies. Empirical implications of this study involve updating Herbert's (1998) study on gender

management and women in the U.S. military, albeit this study specifically focused on the U.S. Army.

Overall, this study brings to light interrelated social phenomenon that influence women service members while serving in the U.S. Army. It emphasizes the relationship between effective policy to evoke progressive change within a gendered organization and powerful social influences from both outside and inside the organization. By facilitating awareness of the present military policy and related social inconsistencies through the perspectives of women service members, the significance is twofold.

Firstly, attention is drawn to social marginalization that affects women in non-traditional roles in spite of blanket policies specifically against discrimination and harassment. Secondly, the testimonies and GIDWM theory matrix allow women in similar situations of gender management to become empowered and transcend towards a healthy identity development and self-actualization. Therefore, this study represents a means for guidance, empathy, and self-efficacy for and among women, while reinforcing the value of positive group cohesion, professional competence, and diversity in society. As SR stated,

“[...] for me, in my role being a female, I’m able to pass the baton, share my experiences with subordinate females, or just anybody really, saying, “This is what I went through, this is how you can overcome those issues, and here are some positive ways in which to cope with anything that you might encounter that would be similar.”

IM advocates this approach, “If anything, it's just letting other women know that they are not alone.”

This next section provides a conclusion to this study, that includes final concepts to consider and last messages from participants to readers of this study.

Conclusion

Multiple parallels can be drawn to compare Herbert's (1998) study and the experiences women service members today have regarding gender harassment 20 years later. In spite of DOD and U.S. Army policy updates that aim for a gender-neutral approach and an improved harassment reporting system, the hypermasculine social climate remains unchanged and gender harassment behaviors continue. As recommended, increasing women in leadership positions and providing them with positive leadership training as in the FRLM will inherently increase unit cohesion and usher women towards the fourth phase of transcendence, self-actualization, and self-efficacy.

This recommendation coincides with potential Army- and military-wide social change in effectively and significantly reducing episodes of gender harassment, subsequently increasing soldier morale and retention, and concentrating on developing a meritocracy of mission-ready men and women warriors. As policy change often accompanies political change, the fourth wave feminism combined with the #MeToo movement may be the grounds for cultivating a more positive, legitimate change within the military from the perspective of women service members themselves.

As multiple participants remarked, social change towards women in the military is not isolated to the military alone. As stated in chapter 2, many of these behaviors are

fostered outside the military as well by publications and the media that depict women in accordance with stereotypical and discriminatory attitudes. Participants considered the social paradox associated with women in the military within the public eye during their interviews, noting the need for social change in American society. RE addressed this aspect with regards to the steps that have been taken towards gender equality in the military,

“I think that the military is dealing with a global situation. A nationwide struggle. Something that every employer has to be attentive to and has to deal with on occasion. But that the military deals with it under extremely tumultuous other circumstances. So, to be dealing with gender discrimination, to be dealing with sexual harassment, to be dealing with daily goings-on of having a force that is male and female and having that commingled environment. But also having to do it while at war. I think that it makes the efforts not as successful as they would like but I think that it shows how much of an effort that they put towards it.”

Similar to effective leadership within the military, so too will it take effective leadership to inflict social change outside the military in the public sphere. Initiating such change allows professionalism to prevail over negative stereotypes, diversity to be celebrated, and a supportive network for all to gain a true sense of belonging. It is through this lens that women in non-traditional positions will not be branded as a distraction, emotionally and physical inept, and incompatible with the military esprit de corps. Instead of being considered a “reduction of military effectiveness” (Burk, 1995, p. 510) and initiating “less unit cohesion” (Maginnis, 2013, p.106) as reasons for exclusion

in the U.S. military, women will be included as a vital resource to the military's fighting force. Through this inclusion can both men and women service members enjoy the same democratic aspects of liberty, individualism, unity, diversity and equality for which they are serving to protect. DH provides a summary of many participants' final comments of the U.S. Army with regards to its present and future in terms of equality,

“We are integrating women into Ranger school. We are integrating women into Special Forces. We are integrating women into Combat Arms. We focus more on interacting with males and females from different religions, different ethnic backgrounds, and gender affiliations. [...] We have introduced transgender, we have introduced homosexuality, bisexuality, and many different religions into the Army, and we have to take many different courses. We've had a huge shift since 2012. In fact, many of the transgender changes started taking place around 2014. So, the social aspect of the United States Army has definitely changed. We are a lot more sensitive about all kinds of topics. But not just gender specific. [...] Now there is just a social shift and a cultural shift. I don't know if humans like being at war anymore. I think they would really like world peace.”

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Appendix A: Participant Invitation Email

Dear Invitee,

My name is Marshelle Machtan. I am a doctoral student at Walden University's Public Policy and Administration Program. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting entitled: Gender Identity Development for Women in the U.S. military.

The purpose is to explore how a female service member serving in the U.S. Army is affected by being assigned or attached to a predominantly male unit, where hypermasculinity and corresponding gender harassment may occur.

The study involves completing a 45 minutes one-on-one interview with questions that center on your experiences in today's U.S. military.

Questions shall centralize on the specific types of gender harassment encountered, coping strategies used when gender harassment occurs, and how this experience affects a woman service member's identity, well-being, and career outlook in the U.S. military.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you have the right to decline to answer interview questions, reschedule the interview due to discomfort, or discontinue participation in the study at any time. A participant's contact information is kept confidential, and all data is secured.

If you would like to participate in the study, please read the attached Informed Consent. To begin the study, please return the completed consent form via email to: marshelle.machtan@waldenu.edu with "**I consent**" in the subject line.

Through your experiences an awareness of the current social climate of military units from a woman service member's perspective shall be facilitated, while simultaneously cultivating support for women in similar non-traditional occupations.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Marshelle Machtan, Doctoral Student, Walden University

Appendix B: IRB approved Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study about how a female service member serving in the U.S. Army is affected by being assigned or attached to a predominantly male unit, where gender harassment may occur. The title of the study is: Gender Identity Development for Women in the U.S. Army.

The researcher is inviting active duty women veterans who have served or are serving in the U.S. Army in predominantly male combat units beginning or after 2012. Veterans must have deployed to the Iraq or Afghan theaters at least once to achieve combat veteran status to be eligible for this study.

This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Marshelle Machtan, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore how a female service member serving in the U.S. Army is affected by being assigned or attached to a predominantly male unit, where hypermasculinity and corresponding gender harassment may occur.

Gender harassment includes personal experiences of verbal, physical, or symbolic, behaviors that express hostile and offensive attitudes about members of one gender, typically women. Gender harassment includes offensive gestures, defamatory language and sexist humor, as well as demeaning symbolic representations that facilitate a hazardous workplace environment.

Questions shall centralize on the specific types of gender harassment encountered, coping strategies used when gender harassment occurs, and how this experience affects a woman service member's identity, well-being, and career outlook in the U.S. Army.

All interviews shall be audio recorded.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in an initial one-on-one interview via Skype for 45 minutes, with 5 additional minutes for an informational exchange.
- Review the original interview's transcripts to ensure their accuracy. The participant will have one week to review and approve the transcripts once delivered to them via email, or schedule a follow-up session to discuss the accuracy of the transcripts, if necessary.
 - The follow-up session should take no longer than 15 minutes in a one-on-one interview, phone call, or email/messenger exchanges for clarification and attachment exchange.

Here are some sample questions:

1. What are the greatest challenges you have faced as a female in the U.S. Army, to include gender-based challenges?
2. How does you being a female in your unit affect your social interaction with your peers?
3. What are some ways in which you express your femininity at work?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. Your relationship with the researcher shall remain positive and respected. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as recalling specific events in which gender harassment took place. These events may cause for emotional discomfort or distress. Participating in this study would not pose risk to your safety or well-being. Remember, you have the right to decline to answer certain questions, reschedule the interview due to discomfort, or discontinue participation in the study at any time.

In the case of any harassment that is stated by a participant which is determined using the reasonable person standard as being criminal in nature shall immediately be reported. The U.S. Army SHARP 24-hour hotline is available for reporting all harassment-related crimes: (240) 674-2602. The reasonable person standard includes: If a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances would find the conduct intimidating, hostile, or abusive.

In the case of an individual who encounters an acute psychological state that necessitates referral, the researcher may assist the service member by calling the U.S. Army SHARP 24-hour hotline that serves to connect service members with appropriate services connected to harassment. The veterans crisis line is also available via phone chat or text: 1-800-273-8255; <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line>

Benefits of this study involve creating new, current knowledge in the field of military policy as it applies to women in the U.S. Army. The effectiveness of modern military policy with regards to gender integration into combat units in accordance with the 2012 Gender Equality in Combat Act shall be evaluated through the information provided directly from women service members.

Additionally, this study creates an awareness of the current social climate between men and women service members within combat-related units. In the case of gender harassment in units, the specific types of gender harassment shall be reported, as well as the specific coping strategies women service members employ and how gender harassment has affected their identity development, well-being, and career outlook within the U.S. Army.

In spite of the researcher having served in the U.S. Army, the 5-year cooldown period has been significant to produce a gap in knowledge and distancing from the military organization and its culture.

Payment:

No payment is involved in this study. However, participants shall receive a summary of the findings of the study via a 1-2 page summary and corresponding video presentation upon the dissertation's acceptance.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. In the uploaded analysis data and final report, participants will only be identified by their first and last name initials and whether officer or enlisted. No other information shall be listed in the research records.

All original/raw data – contact information, interview audio recordings, correspondence exchanges, consent forms, transcripts, etc. – will be stored on a designated memory stick and secured in a locked file cabinet when not in use. All uploaded data to the online analysis and coding tool shall be

Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher Marshelle Machtan:

Phone/What's App (334) 477-4041;

email: marshelle.machtan@waldenu.edu;

Skype: live:marshellemachtan

If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University's Research Participant Advocate representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **12-17-18-0159196** and it expires on **December 16th, 2019.**

This research shall take place exclusively online, hence please ensure you have printed or saved a copy of this consent form for your records.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by replying to this email with the words, "I consent."

 2018.12.17
16:22:02
-06'00'

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

I'm going to start the recorder

Thank you for participating in this voluntary study entitled Gender Identity Development of Women in the U.S. Military.

What is gender harassment?

Any comment, remark, joke, gesture, distribution of materials, or non-sexual action such as undermining authority or sabotage, which is inappropriate to the work environment.

All personal information associated with this study shall be kept strictly confidential. If at any time you feel uncomfortable and do not wish to continue with this interview it is your right to terminate this interview session.

This session should take approximately 45 minutes.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Part One-Part Three:

Part One: The U.S. Military Organization

1. How have you seen the Army change with regards to its social climate over the past few years?
2. Would you consider the U.S. Army to be a gendered institution? If yes, how so?
3. Do you feel that there is some discrimination against women involving military service?
4. Are there any socially related aspects that may lead to separation by a female service member from the U.S. Army?
5. What are the greatest challenges you have faced as a female in the U.S. Army, to include gender-based challenges?
6. When does gender harassment happen more often, in garrison or deployment, and by whom?
7. Have you found that the military has assisted you in coping with gender harassment? If so, how?

8. How have you changed yourself to better adapt to the military environment?

Part Two: The Service Member's Unit

9. What kind of masculine traits are common in your unit? Feminine traits?
10. Do you ever feel pressured to act more masculine or more feminine?
11. Do you feel you are treated as equal to your male peers in your unit? If not, how are you treated differently?
12. How well integrated do you feel in your unit? How well do you feel you fit in?
13. Do you feel you have interpersonal support within your unit? Why or why not?
14. How does you being a female in your unit affect your social interaction with your peers?
15. Do you feel that you should act differently when around male service members, e.g. to gain acceptance?
16. How often does gender harassment occur in your unit and around you/other females?
17. What kinds of gender harassment have you experienced or witnessed?
18. What are some strategies you employ or have seen employed by female service members to mitigate gender harassment from other service members?

Part Three: Job Performance

19. What are some masculine (and feminine) traits that are important to performing well as a soldier?
20. In what ways do you find that you are able to perform your job well?
21. How does you being a female in your unit affect your job performance?
22. Is there (or was there ever) any isolation that you experience because of your gender or threat to your professionalism in your unit or U.S. Army?
23. Is being a woman an important part of your identity at work?
24. What image do you try to convey about yourself in the way you appear at work?

25. What are some ways in which you express your femininity at work?

Final question: Do you have any final thoughts or additions to this interview regarding the questions asked?

*Is there anyone else you might recommend who may be interested in participating in this study?

**Remind participants to review and verify transcripts as soon as they are sent via email. A follow-up session may be scheduled for this purpose (if necessary).

***Please use this space below for participants to add their thoughts post-interview.

Appendix D: Culver's GIDWM Theoretical Matrix

Table 1.

Culver's Gender Identity Development of Women in the Military (GIDWM) Matrix

Model of the Theory of Gender Identity Development of Women in the Military		
Phase	Description	
Feeling the need to put on a mask	Women begin to identify insecurities related to one, or both, of two identities	
	<i>Warrior insecurity:</i> insecurity focuses on living up to the masculine ideals of the military and potential inability to serve as a warrior:	<i>Femininity insecurity:</i> insecurity focuses on potential inability to maintain an identity as a real woman while serving in the military
Wearing a mask	Women begin to employ compensation strategies related to insecurities identified in the <i>feeling the need to put on a mask</i> phase	
	<i>Warrior mask:</i> compensation strategies focus on meeting society's and the military's perceived expectations of being a warrior	<i>Femininity mask:</i> compensation strategies focus on meeting what they perceive as society's expectations of being a woman
Recognizing and experiencing the consequences of wear a mask	Women begin to realize that they are losing aspects of their true selves by wearing a mask and that wearing a mask can be harmful to their relationships with others	
Struggling to take off the mask	Women begin to transcend external expectations of their identity and come to terms with their true selves. They fully develop a personal definition of what it means to be a woman, a warrior and a woman-warrior	

Note. From "Woman-warrior: Gender identity development of women in the American military," by Culver, 2013, *Journal of the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University*, p. 70.

Appendix D: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theoretical Pyramid

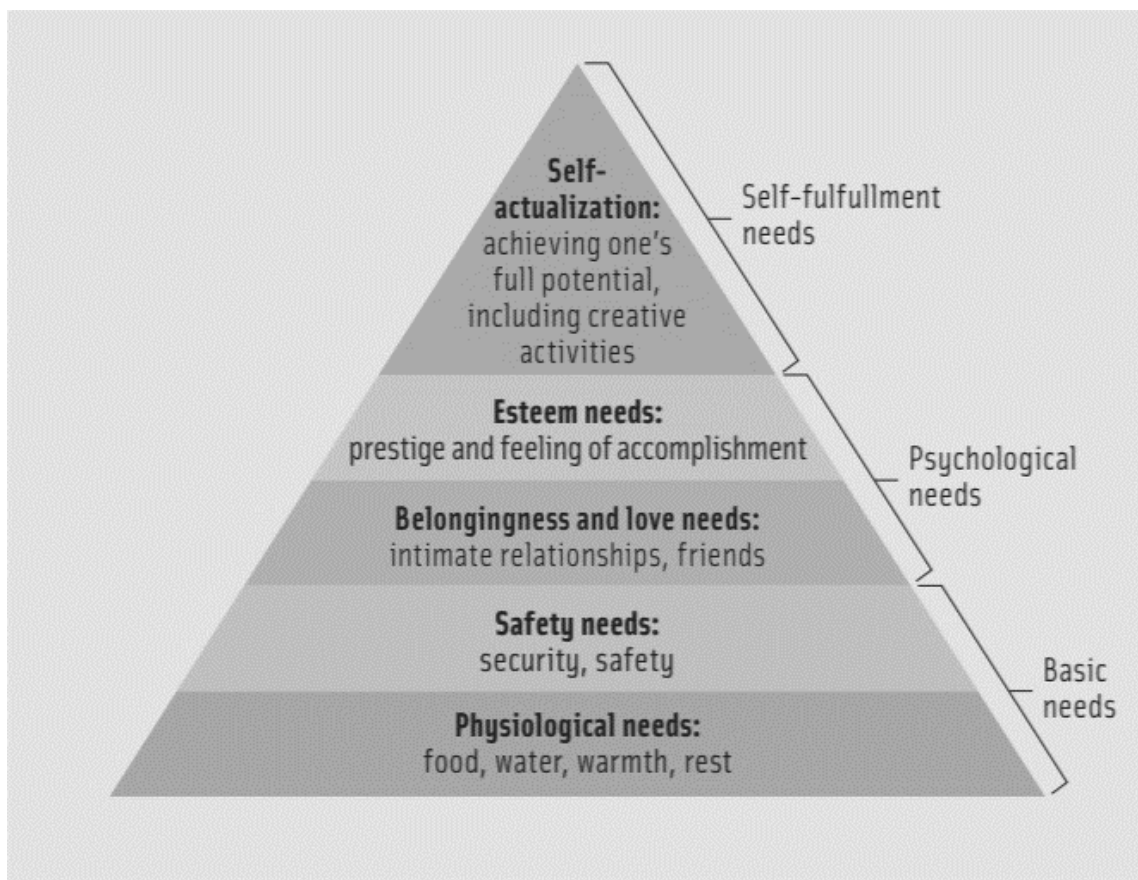


Figure 1.
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid. From "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs," by Poston, B., 2009, *The Surgical Technologist*, 41(8), p. 348.