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# From the Barracks to the Frat House: Hegemonic Masculinity and the Normalization, Promotion and Replication of Rape Culture in Male Dominated Spaces-- A Comparison of the United States Military and the American College Fraternity

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From the Barracks to the Frat House: Hegemonic Masculinity and the Normalization,  
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Comparison of the United States Military and the American College Fraternity

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**From the Barracks to the Frat House: Hegemonic Masculinity and the  
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Fraternity**

“A short guide consist [sic] of the 7 E’s of HOOKING UP! 1. Encounter (spot a girl or group of girls) 2. Engage (go up and talk to them) 3. Escalate (ask them to dance, or ask them to go up to your room or find a couch, depending on what kind of party) 4. Erection (GET HARD) 5. Excavate (should be self-explanatory) 6. Ejaculate (should also be self explanatory) 7. Expunge (send them out of your room and on their way out when you are finished. IF ANYTHING EVER FAILS, GO GET MORE ALCOHOL. I want to see everyone succeed at the next couple parties.”

*-Luring Your Rape Bait, 2013. Email sent by Matthew Peterson, Social Chair, Phi Kappa Tau, Georgia State University.*

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“What did they expect?”

*-Liz Trotta, Fox News Anchor, commenting on women who are raped in the military*

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“You’re a good girl. I know you want it.”

*-Robin Thicke, Blurred Lines.*

**I. Introduction**

For some students, college is a time to establish connections and bonds—through membership and inclusion in their academic institution as a whole, a particular organization within that institution, or simply within a group of friends. Some college students look to find a space of belonging and friendship through a Greek organization, either a fraternity or sorority. Collegiate members, alumni, and some college administrators tout fraternities as organizations that are rooted in brotherhood, philanthropy and service, and the promotion of “gentlemanly” ideals. However, the media has lately uncovered some of the more pervasive and insidious components of fraternal membership. Recently, the websites *Total Fraternity Move* and *Total Sorority Move* published email messages sent over fraternal organizational list serves featuring detailed guides on how to “lure rape bait”<sup>1</sup> and “save the sluts.”<sup>2</sup> These graphic and demeaning emails are an explicit expression of the broader ideologies that characterize male dominated and male-only “fraternal” organizations and spaces. The demeaning, and sometimes violently misogynist messages that are now sent over chapter message boards, list serves and facebook groups are not new; before the internet and social media were available they were exchanged in dorm rooms, locker rooms, and on sports fields.

In a similar fashion, in 2013, the men’s rugby team at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point was temporarily disbanded after “participating in a lewd

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Dorn, “Phi Kappa Tau Member From Georgia Tech Sends Rapiest Email Ever—Let Them Grind Against Your Dick,” *Total Frat Move*, October 2013, <http://totalfratmove.com/%CE%A6kt-member-from-georgia-tech-sends-rapiest-email-ever/>.

<sup>2</sup> Todd Van Luling, “This Fraternity Brother’s Save the Sluts Email Will Make You Vomit,” *The Huffington Post*, January 2014, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/29/fraternity-brother-email-william-and-mary\\_n\\_4688160.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/29/fraternity-brother-email-william-and-mary_n_4688160.html).

email chain that [featured content that] was derogatory to women.”<sup>3</sup> The email detailed the “sexual highs and lows”<sup>4</sup> of the West Point rugby team, and came to light in the midst of several other scandals within the Academy. In 2012, a woman sued the USMA for ignoring her accusations of sexual harassment and assault.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, one month prior to the rugby team’s emails, a sergeant at West Point was charged with secretly filming twelve female cadets while they were in the shower.<sup>6</sup> Male members of the military are required to assume and execute masculinity that is often violently misogynistic. Violent behaviors and identities are cultivated in the “privacy” of the barracks and the bases as well as the shared “community” of the battlefield. Women and female bodies are eroticized and exploited in these military spaces—through the more obvious exclusion of women in combat, as well as the cadence that keeps time using lyrics that feature rape and violent sexism.

When scandals within all-male or male-dominated clubs and spaces surface, the population struggles to attribute these heteronormative, sexist ideologies to a shortcoming in one man who went rogue or the result of poor upbringing or to “boys being boys.” In reality, the views verbalized in these emails or in the lyrics of military marching songs are representative of a group mentality that is tolerated and justified in our culture—a mentality where men and manhood are qualified and

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<sup>3</sup> Katie J.M. Baker, “Butt Plugs and Bitches: The Emails West Point Doesn’t Want You to See,” *Jezebel*, June 2013, <http://jezebel.com/butt-plugs-and-bitches-the-emails-west-point-doesnt-w-511519204>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

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

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

praised in opposition to and at the expense of women and femininity—they are representative of a rape culture.

Rape culture is a pervasive attitude that characterizes our broader social reactions and responses towards women and survivors of sexual assault. Emilie Buchwald defines rape culture as “... a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm.”<sup>7</sup>

A culture of rape in the United States is a normative social attitude that systematically works to subjugate women and female sexuality by “normalizing, trivializing and eroticizing male violence against women and blaming victims for their own abuse.”<sup>8</sup> These definitions of rape culture, taken from the research of Emilie Buchwald, Julia Kackmarek and Elizabeth Geffre, guide and inform my own examination of the normalization of rape culture and rape within male-dominated spaces. In large part, rape culture is sustained and produced through our population’s social adherence to normative gender scripts. Acts of sexual violence that men perpetrate against women rely on the social acceptance of and obedience to normative standards of *both* masculinity and femininity.

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<sup>7</sup> Emilie Buchwald, “Transforming a Rape Culture,” (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1993), iii.

<sup>8</sup> Julia Kackmarek and Elizabeth Geffre, “Rape Culture: Know It When You See It,” *Huffington Post: College*, June 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/julia-kackmarek/rape-culture-is\\_b\\_3368577.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/julia-kackmarek/rape-culture-is_b_3368577.html).

Men both practice and influence ideologies of power through their membership in male-dominated and male-only spaces. Normative gender scripts are deeply embedded within our self-conception as children, continue through adolescence and well into adulthood. Normative gender scripts continually inform the ways in which people develop and assume masculine or feminine identities. The social imperative of fostering and preserving these gendered identities results in spatial spheres of interaction and influence known as gendered spaces. Sociologist Daphne Spain deconstructs these gendered spaces, asserting that “women and men are spatially segregated in ways that reduce women’s access...and thereby reinforce women’s lower status relative to men’s...’Gendered spaces’ separate women from knowledge used by men to produce and reproduce power and privilege.”<sup>9</sup> Separating women from the knowledge of “power and privilege” often begins very early in childhood. The differentiation in parental treatment of boys and girls contributes to the cultivation of separate spaces in which males and females can form homosocial bonds—those that build on same sex socialization—and establish gendered identities. Male participation in male-only spaces like the treehouse (no girls allowed!), for instance, provides men and boys with a homosocial bond that “claim[s] to preserve the best of manhood.”<sup>10</sup> Over time these boyhood spaces give way to more grown-up spaces where young men and adult men continue the homosocial bonds of their childhood. The tree house becomes the fraternity house

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<sup>9</sup> Daphne Spain, “Gendered Spaces,” (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Kimmel, “American Manhood,” (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 206.

or the barracks, and friendship morphs into brotherhood and collective identity, signifying the longevity of these bonds.

Spain's research in *Gendered Spaces* begins by interrogating the connection between space (location) and social theory—a partnership that I contend is crucial to the normalization, promotion, and replication of hegemonic masculinity in fraternities and the military. Spain contends that “space is essential to social science; spatial relations exist only because social processes exist...it is not sensible...to separate social and spatial processes [because they] ‘explain why something occurs...where it does.’”<sup>11</sup> Beginning in early childhood (and sometimes even before birth), we are surrounded by the imperative to subscribe and adhere to normative gender scripts. These normative gender scripts confine and lead us to participate in spaces and practices that reinforce ideologies of normative masculinity and femininity. According to Spain, “status differences between women and men create certain types of gendered spaces [and]...spatial segregation then reinforces prevailing male advantages.”<sup>12</sup>

Reinforcing prevailing male advantages begins with the ways in which parents incorporate gender in their childrearing practices. In her research about parental responses to children and gender nonconformity, Emily Kane suggests that, “Parents begin gendering their children from their very first awareness of those children, [and] children themselves become active participants in this gendering

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<sup>11</sup> Spain, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

process by the time they are conscious of the social relevance of gender.”<sup>13</sup> Parents who “celebrate what they perceive as gender nonconformity on the part of their young daughters” reinforce gender “status differences” because they fail to recognize their daughter’s “nonconformity,” instead, as a subscription to masculinity, and inadvertently, power and privilege.<sup>14</sup> These parents “reported enjoying dressing their daughter in sports themed clothing, as well as buying them toy cars, trucks, trains, and building toys. Some described their efforts to encourage, and pleased reactions to, what they considered traditionally male activities such as t-ball, football, fishing, and learning to use tools.”<sup>15</sup> This type of parental attitude is consistent with Spain’s argument about spatial segregation and the “reinforcement of prevailing male advantages.”<sup>16</sup>

My focus in this paragraph on female childhood spaces is to stress the ways in which the innate structure of children’s activities reinforces “prevailing male advantages.” While participation in typically male activities is encouraged and even celebrated in young girls, they are expected to participate in play, teams, and organizations alone or in the company of other girls. Gender specific sports teams and normative male playtime activity exists to afford girls the opportunity to participate in normative male activity while policing and containing them to a space that is created and structured to mimic male spaces. One of the strongest indications of innate male privilege in childhood play and parental childrearing practice is a

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<sup>13</sup> Emily W. Kane, “No Way Are My Boys Going to Be Like That: Parents’ Responses to Childrens’ Gender Nonconformity,” *Gender and Society*, 149-50.

<sup>14</sup> Kane, 157.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Spain, 6.

young boy's participation in normative female activity. Kane's study shows that "along with material markers of femininity [playing with dolls, wearing skirts], many parents expressed concerns about excessive emotionality (especially frequent crying)" from their sons.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, "these various examples indicate clearly the work many parents are doing to accomplish gender with and for their sons in a manner that distances those sons from any association with femininity."<sup>18</sup> When young boys are taught to distance themselves from femininity and girls early on in their childhood, they internalize that femininity and females relate directly to an ideology or identity that is unfavorable or unacceptable. When parents distance their boys from "feminine" activity, they essentially distance them from females, creating an imperative for male-only spaces as a means of preserving manhood and a masculinity that is dominant over femininity—a hegemonic masculinity.

Male-only and male-dominant spaces and organizations work to preserve male privilege and hegemonic masculinity. The term *hegemonic masculinity* was first proposed in the 1980s by sociologist S.J. Kessler as a critique of a singular male sex role and positing instead an analytic framework of multiple masculinities.

<sup>19</sup>Sociologists William Connell and James Messerschmidt define hegemonic masculinity " ... as the pattern of practice that allowed men's dominance over women to continue. Hegemonic masculinity [is] distinguished from other masculinities...it ideologically legitimate[s] the global subordination of women to men."<sup>20</sup> Sociologist

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<sup>17</sup> Kane, 161.

<sup>18</sup> Kane, 162.

<sup>19</sup> William Connell and James Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender & Society*, 829-859.

<sup>20</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, 832.

Michael Kimmel expands upon Connell and Messerschmidt's definition and notes that "this singular 'hegemonic masculinity' ...is prescribed as the norm."<sup>21</sup>

Hegemonic masculinity is pervasive among groups of American men as the only acceptable performance of masculinity. Moreover, hegemonic masculinity in the United States is sustained and replicated within organizations and spaces that celebrate "one complete and unblushing male."<sup>22</sup>

Male-only and male-dominated spaces, then, become a site for hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity requires not only the subordination and domination of women, but also their degradation. Within a organizational framework of hegemonic masculinity, overpowering and degrading women become synonymous with normative masculinity, and this dominance serves as a qualifier for organizational acceptance and membership. Male-only or male-dominated spaces then morph into institutions, organizations, and brotherhoods that perform hegemonic masculinity and through that practice actively normalize, promote and produce rape culture. The adolescent clubhouse, the fraternity and the military become critical spaces that frame and nurture the normative masculine gender script, and therefore the assumption and replication of a hegemonic masculinity. Because hegemonic masculinities are so intricately woven into the fibers of the United States military and the American fraternity, these organizations and the rich traditions that compose their histories and inform their practices and ideologies, are the focus of this study. I argue that these two spaces normalize, sustain, promote and replicate rape culture by requiring members' performance of hegemonic

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<sup>21</sup> Kimmel, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Kimmel, 48.

masculinity. Members' performance of a hegemonic masculinity contributes to their subscription to a culture of rape. Both groups are structured, historically and currently, through the lens of brotherhood and the tie of the fraternal bond. Each organization places intense value on group dynamics and unified identities, which, in turn, limit members' ability to express views or masculinities that are non-normative or that differ from those of the group or organization at large.

## II. Rape Culture

I contend that the assumption of hegemonic masculinities—specifically in male-only organizations or environments— normalizes, promotes, and replicates rape culture. Although rape culture as a phrase is relatively pervasive in contemporary violence prevention discourse, the discourse surrounding rape culture often gets convoluted. What exactly is rape culture and how does it contribute to misogyny, aggression, and hegemonic masculine identities? In the preamble to *Transforming a Rape Culture*, editors Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher, and Martha Roth assert, “in a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life.”<sup>23</sup> While this statement describes one aspect of a rape culture, it fails to address the different ways in which violence affects men and women. The reality of violence within a rape culture contains very different implications for men and for women. Women are taught that all men have the potential to rape and be rapists. Moreover, women are taught that their own actions incite and justify rape, and that their rape could have been prevented if they had

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<sup>23</sup> Buchwald, 3.

been wearing a longer skirt or if they had less to drink. “Rape culture [teaches girls and women] not to dress a certain way, not to walk alone, and to fear the possibility of sexual assault. [They] are taught to avoid situations that may put us in danger and to always be on guard.”<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, “most boys are taught that only bad people rape, that only the worst of the worst commit sexual assault, and so long as you think you are a good person, you won’t do those things.”<sup>25</sup> The conflict in these messages is problematic because it sets up a very stagnant dichotomy that addresses instances of rape as singular, without engaging the larger implications and associations of rape culture. Additionally, men are taught that as long as they are not “bad,” then they do not have the potential to rape. A broad social characterization of bad men versus good men fails to define sexual assault, rape, and aggression through a culture of consent. Instead, consent and the qualifiers of rape are blurred by a man’s ability to self-identify as good or bad.

If the prevailing norm is that “only bad men rape,” then it seems only natural for institutions like colleges and the military to employ methods of prevention and education that confirm this myth. Within the contextual framework of a rape culture, since men are taught that only bad people rape, they are also taught that they have an imperative and a duty to protect women from being raped—to protect them from these “bad” men. This type of attitude and ideology (which I refer to as the “superman” mentality) fails to recognize men as potential producers of rape *culture* and perpetrators of rape itself. Additionally, it plays on the rape myth of the

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<sup>24</sup> Stephanie Faye, “This is What Rape Culture Looks Like,” *Thought Catalog*, December 2013, <http://thoughtcatalog.com/stephanie-faye/2013/12/this-is-what-rape-culture-looks-like/>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

stranger in the bushes—the unknown man who lurks and waits until women are alone to victimize them. The superman mentality is deeply embedded into peer education modules that are adopted by institutions of higher education and the military. While these models of peer-to-peer education (bystander intervention and ‘how to help a friend’ models) are vital approaches in violence prevention and education, they often do not address the broader ideological context that frames the need for such programs. They focus on rape as an act rather than rape as an ideology. These programs do not explore and address the broader social and educational implications of rape on a campus, nor do they focus on the ways in which women are objectified by men within campus organizations or clubs. Specifically, they fail to address how and why men are agents in the perpetration of rape *and* the production of a rape culture and how certain spaces facilitate ideologies of rape.

The superman mentality and the ways in which it contributes to the production and preservation of rape culture is best demonstrated through the research and methodology of gender violence education scholar, John D. Foubert. As part of his research Foubert created male-centric collegiate sexual assault programming through an organization called “1 in 4.” In his article, “An All Male Rape Prevention Peer Education Program”, Foubert characterizes his programming through the lens of the superman mentality. He begins the article describing the prevalence of rape perpetration against college women, including the statistic that 20% of college women report being forced to have sexual intercourse at some point

in their lifetime.<sup>26</sup> While his statistics are both credible and reflective of the instances of women affected by rape, his approach for this program is dangerous for a number of reasons. First, the title of the program is “How to Help a Sexual Assault Survivor: What Men Can Do.” The very title of the program suggests that men quell rather than perpetrate rape. Additionally, the title and the program as a whole assert a conferred male dominance through imperative that the curriculum places on a male-only space. Foubert’s approach is not applicable to *people*. Instead, he Foubert indicates that “good” men males specifically have an imperative and an ability to protect women from rape and “bad” men. As Foubert explains, “The program open[s] by setting a non-confrontational tone, indicating that participants would be taken through a workshop designed to help them help women recover from rape.”<sup>27</sup> Foubert’s program, which is widely used for male sexual assault educational programming at universities across the country, never addresses how and why men perpetrate sexual assault and rape. Rather, it characterizes “good” men as heroes who have the ability and the power to help women recover from horrific acts of sexual assault (acts committed by a ubiquitous “bad” man—a stranger).

Again, Foubert’s program places its emphasis on providing women with male-aided *recovery* from rape, rather than addressing all men—“good” or “bad” as agents in committing rape and/or perpetrating rape culture. Moreover, the all-male approach has the potential to serve normative gender biases and rape myths. To

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<sup>26</sup> John D. Foubert, “An All-Male Rape Prevention Peer Education Program: Decreasing Fraternity Men’s Behavioral Intent to Rape,” *Journal of College Student Development*, 548.

<sup>27</sup> Foubert, 552.

support his approach Foubert cites other scholars who suggest “lower levels of defensiveness are elicited by all-male programs.”<sup>28</sup> However, through his imposition of all-male and male-only structures of learning, Foubert is similarly reconstituting the insidious aspects of the communities (specifically fraternal communities) that characterize their propensity towards sexual assault and rape. A module of education like Foubert’s Men’s Program affirms Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth’s definition of rape culture, which characterizes sexual violence as a fact of life. Rather than addressing the causes of sexual violence, Foubert’s program chooses to address rape as an inevitable and inescapable act.

Male-only and male-dominated spaces normalize performances of hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, when collegiate programs cater sexual assault and rape prevention strategies to all-male audiences, they reinforce manhood and masculinity as a construction that deserves to be preserved and safeguarded from the feminine. Gendered spaces within the context of college violence prevention programs imply that men and women need to address and react to on-campus violence in different ways—men as protectors, women as victims. Additionally, the separation unjustly confirms the perceived importance of male-only spaces and normalizes the production of hegemonic masculinity within these spaces. The male-only educational space serves as a small-scale *brotherhood*, with the absence of women satisfying fraternal hallmarks of secrecy and ritual. Moreover, Foubert’s programming caters to the assumption that men are inherently different than women and need to have a separate system of learning in order to fully grasp

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<sup>28</sup> Foubert, 549.

content or attain understanding. The Men’s Program is, in itself, a male-only space, which functions to preserve a construction of normative manhood through the presentation of rape prevention strategies. While his attempt is laudable, Foubert’s program creates a male-only space and forum for addressing sexual assault, implying that female inclusion is not necessary when educating men about rape. The social drive to preserve male-only spaces—even within the context of rape prevention— confirms the existence of a rape culture.

### **III. Military Masculinity**

In his book, *Bring Me Men*, political scientist Aaron Belkin defines hegemonic masculinity in relation to members of the military and civilians who claim their masculinity through “warrior identities.”<sup>29</sup> Belkin asserts, “Warrior identities [are] so closely aligned with ideas about masculinity.”<sup>30</sup> He contends that subscription to a hegemonic military masculinity necessitates “a set of beliefs, practices and attributes that can enable individuals...to claim authority on the basis of affirmative relationships with the military or with military ideas.”<sup>31</sup> These beliefs and attributes span from “serving in the military [to] beliefs that military service certifies one’s competence, trustworthiness, or authenticity, [to] physical attributes or

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<sup>29</sup> Aaron Belkin, *Bring Me Men: Military Masculinity and the Benign Facade of the American Empire, 1898-2001* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 2.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

embellishments such as muscles or tattoos to enhance their authority.”<sup>32</sup> This “authority” is a product of the institution as a gendered space. Belkin writes, “warriors attain masculine status by showing that they are not-feminine, not-weak, not-queer, not-emotional.”<sup>33</sup> In Belkin’s definition, hegemonic military masculinity is therefore threatened by any female or feminine presence. Similarly, “most scholars argue that the achievement of [a hegemonic] masculine status requires warriors to disavow, and even crush, any unmasculine aspects of themselves, [and] while the composition of the masculinity can vary from time to time, it remains consistently opposed to the ‘feminine.’”<sup>34</sup>

Hegemonic military masculinity in the United States is rooted historically in conquest ideologies and gender inequality imposed by law. In her classic study of sexual violence, *Against Our Will*, Susan Brownmiller asserts, “from the humblest beginnings of the social order based on a primitive system of retaliatory force...an eye for an eye—woman was unequal before the law. By anatomical fiat—the inescapable construction of their genital organs—the human male was a natural predator and the human female...a natural prey.”<sup>35</sup> Further, she theorizes, “man’s violent capture and rape of the female led first to the establishment of a rudimentary mate-protectorate and then sometime later to the full-blown male solidification of the patriarchy...man’s first piece of real property [was] woman.”<sup>36</sup>

Because women were seen as property, they were reduced to the value of their

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Belkin, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*, (New York, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975),14.

<sup>36</sup> Brownmiller, 36.

bodies as tools of bargain and leverage against friends and adversaries. The female body as adversarial leverage creates a basis and a framework for the subjugation of women in war and, more contemporarily, in the military. In *War As I Knew It*, General George S. Patton is quoted, stating, “[in war] there [will] unquestionably be some raping.”<sup>37</sup> Patton’s words capitalize on hegemonic ideologies that normalize and justify rape through explanations of “men [being] men,”<sup>38</sup> asserting that rape during war is “unconscionable, but nevertheless inevitable.”<sup>39</sup>

The United States holds a tradition of conquest that is undoubtedly connected with rape. As Brownmiller notes, “Rape is the quintessential act by which a male demonstrates to a female that she is conquered—vanquished—by his superior strength and power.”<sup>40</sup> With this definition in mind, it is impossible to look at the history of conquest and war without also exploring its connection to rape. Conquest ideologies place immense value on claiming new territory at any cost. Additionally, Brownmiller further connects rape with conquest, asserting:

And so it has been. Rape has accompanied wars of religion: knights and pilgrims took time off for sexual assault as they marched toward Constantinople in the First Crusade. Rape has accompanied wars of revolution: George Washington’s papers...record that [a soldier] was sentenced to death for rape at Paramus...Rape was a weapon of terror as the German Hun marched through Belgium in World War I. Rape was a weapon of revenge as the Russian Army marched to Berlin in World War II. Rape flourishes in warfare irrespective of nationality or geographic location. Rape [occurred] when the Pakistani Army battled Bangladesh. Rape reared its head as a way to relieve boredom as American GI’s searched and destroyed in the highlands of Vietnam.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Brownmiller, 90.

<sup>38</sup> Brownmiller, 102.

<sup>39</sup> Brownmiller, 100.

<sup>40</sup> Brownmiller, 49.

<sup>41</sup> Brownmiller, 31-32.

Brownmiller asserts that the Vietnam War, specifically, “sheds valuable light on the rape mentality [because it is] a sociological crucible of rape in which certain groups of people have been observed to behave differently from other groups of people.”<sup>42</sup> In a series of interviews with Peter Arnett, an Associated Press reporter who covered the War for eight years, Brownmiller discovered that the Vietcong (VC), “used terror as a daily weapon...but rape was not part of their system of punishment. They were prohibited from...rape, [and the media covering the war] heard very little of VC rape.”<sup>43</sup> Arnett theorized that the scarce reports of VC rape were indicative of more than simply “moral suasion...[rather] Vietcong women played a major role in military operations and...the presence of women fighting as equals among their men acted against the sexual humiliation and mistreatment of other women.”<sup>44</sup> Arnett’s theory is an interesting one—were the Vietcong soldiers truly less prone to rape because of the role VC women played in their military operations? Perhaps. It is possible that the inclusion and importance of Vietcong women within the military fostered an aversion among men? to rape. However, it is also important to note that while this ideology does not subjugate women’s bodies through rape, it justifies abstaining from rape through the acknowledgement of the function and use of the female body. Arnett’s framework fails to recognize that rape is inherently wrong. Rather, it contends that raping women is deplorable and unnecessary only in instances when women are “useful” partners in work or war. In the case of the Vietcong, war and battle were still used as a vehicle through which

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<sup>42</sup> Brownmiller, 87.

<sup>43</sup> Brownmiller, 90.

<sup>44</sup> Brownmiller, 90-1.

women's bodies were qualified—women were “equals” in battle, and therefore, raping them was not justifiable or practical.

While the Vietcong did not approve of raping women as a punitive strategy, their American counterparts often looked to rape as a means of dealing with “boredom” or as an expression of normative military manhood (or hegemonic military masculinity).<sup>45</sup> In her book, Brownmiller offers U.S. Army “official” statistics for rape and related charges in Vietnam from January 1, 1965, to January 31, 1973. There were a total of 86 cases tried, with 50 convictions, which leaves the conviction rate at 58 percent. These statistics are representative of cases in which male soldiers specifically raped Vietnamese women. Brownmiller contends that “as an indicator of the actual number of rapes committed by the American military in Vietnam they are practically worthless.”<sup>46</sup> These statistics do not take into account a lack of reporting or the potential language barriers that existed between U.S. officials and the Vietnamese women who were victimized. However, although she contends that the statistic is weak, it is important because it highlights the ways in which military sexual assault statistics are still skewed today. Brownmiller goes on to qualify the connection between rape and manhood for American soldiers through a specific incident of GI gang rape in Vietnam.

In November, 1966, a squad of five men...approached the tiny hamlet of Cat Tuong...their five-day mission was to have been a general search for VC in the area, but when they entered the village they searched instead for a young girl to take along with them for five days of “boom boom.” It was understood by the men that at the end of the patrol they would have to kill her and hide her body...[A young girl named] Mao was picked out by the men [who proceeded to bind] her hands behind her back [and] march her down the road...Of the

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<sup>45</sup> Brownmiller, 31-32.

<sup>46</sup> Brownmiller, 100-101.

five men in the patrol, only one, Private First Class Sven Eriksson, did not participate in Mao's rape and murder...individual acts of superfluous cruelty practiced on Mao appeared to be a competition for a masculinity pecking order. Eriksson, for refusing to take his turn in Mao's gang rape, was derided by the patrol leader...as a queer and a chicken...Eriksson told his story...and [it was] reported to the Criminal Investigation Division...in each of the court-martial trials Eriksson's manhood was brought into question by the defense. "It's just that he was less than average as far as being one of the guys," one sergeant...testified."<sup>47</sup>

Eriksson's manhood was invalidated by his fellow squad members because of his unwillingness to participate in what they perceived as a test of manhood. The members of his squad viewed their participation in Mao's rape as proof of their own manhood. This account is only one of many that Brownmiller offers in her book. However, it is crucial because it highlights the role that women and the feminine played (and continue to play) as tools in the validation and invalidation of manhood. The subjugation of the female body during wartime is abhorrent, but it is not a circumstance that is specific only to war. The military as an institution continues to promote ideologies of gender inequality and male dominance through the necessity it places on member's denial of the feminine. Members are required to assume a hegemonic military masculinity as a way to assert their manhood and occupy positions of power.

In his book *The Warriors: Reflections on Men and Battle*, American philosopher and college professor John Glenn Gray asserts that there are "curious affinities between love and war."<sup>48</sup> He confirms Brownmiller's theoretical framework of conquest, suggesting that war allows soldiers "an opportunity to

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<sup>47</sup> Brownmiller, 101-3.

<sup>48</sup> John Glenn Gray, *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), 60.

return to nature and look upon every member of the opposite sex as a possible conquest, to be wooed or forced.”<sup>49</sup> He frames his assertion through the Greek myth of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and Ares, the god of war. The myth states, “Ares’ youth and passion captured [Aphrodite’s] heart, though she was the bride of Hephaestos...[Ares and Aphrodite] spent many sweet, illicit hours together.”<sup>50</sup> Gray’s scholarship attempts to forge a “liaison between love and war [that is] familiar in Western history.”<sup>51</sup> Gray uses the Greek myth of Ares and Aphrodite as a tool to highlight the seemingly inherent association between love and battle. He contextualizes this association through his assertion that, during times of war, male soldiers are preoccupied and concentrated “upon the subject of women and, more especially, upon the sexual act.”<sup>52</sup> However, Gray’s definition of love, specifically love through conquest, is dangerous because he qualifies sexual conquest, rape, and sexual assault as acts of “love” rather than as criminal behavior or acts of violence. He frames wartime as a “struggle for existence or the will to live.”<sup>53</sup> Because the will to live and self-preservation are so heightened during periods of battle, Gray contends that the will to “reproduce [is also heightened] because [soldiers] are engaged in destroying other members of the species.”<sup>54</sup> In this assessment, Gray provides an unsettling “natural” justification for rape and conquest during periods of war by framing the acts through the lens of species preservation. This argument normalizes rape because of the carnage of war. In other words, based on Gray’s “will

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<sup>49</sup> Gray, 63.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Gray, 61.

<sup>53</sup> Gray, 63.

<sup>54</sup> Gray, 63.

to reproduce,” war and killing are acceptable and foster an imperative to produce new members of the species at the same time. Again, Gray’s justification for reproduction is ambiguous because it calls for “reproduction” to offset killing that is incident to war. The ambiguity exists in the means by which Gray requires soldiers to reproduce. Gray’s framework of reproduction does not exist between two consenting partners. Rather, reproduction is necessitated through soldiers’ rape and conquest, which subjugates women and defines them as “vessels” and objects for reproductive purposes rather than as human beings.

I contend that hegemonic military masculinity normalizes and promotes sexual assault and rape culture through the overwhelming value it places on men and manhood and its ideological opposition to that which is feminine and embodied by women. Hegemonic military masculinity “is a site where domestic fears of the other have been exaggerated.”<sup>55</sup> On a basic level, because women were excluded from military service and membership for so long, men became the default, and therefore the primary representatives for the organization. According to Gray’s scholarship, the role that women play in the military is complementary—specifically to men. Women are not individually necessary, rather they are a dime a dozen and necessary as sexual objects used to satisfy a man’s need for love during a time of tumult in his life. Gray’s assessment can be explained in part as a product of the time during which he conducted his research and published his theories – 1959. Women were unable to fully participate in all areas on military service. Similarly, Brownmiller’s account of the history of war and conquest and its relationship to the

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<sup>55</sup> Belkin, 5.

objectification of women also occurred during a time in history where women were prohibited from certain avenues of military service. Brownmiller's research takes place largely at the height of the post-Vietnam War feminist movement, most specifically during the period of radical feminism

While both Gray and Brownmiller's research highlights wars in which women were not in battle, it is simplistic to look to female absence in combat as the sole reason for the military's dilemma of female objectification. Female participation in the U.S. military can be traced as far back as the 18th century. Maj. Gen. Jeanne Holm, author of *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution*, asserts that, contrary to contemporary belief, "women's participation in the military is not...of recent origin; it goes back to our nation's beginnings."<sup>56</sup> Throughout military history, female participation in the military (both as members and civilian participants) is policed and normative femininity is maintained through the duties women perform during wartime, the corps and collectives created to serve women specifically, and their dismissal after the wars were over. World War II (the focus of Gray's scholarship) was seen in the U.S. as the greatest war ever. Holm writes "the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had jolted the United States into the war that was to become the most stupendous military struggle in recorded history."<sup>57</sup> The sheer magnitude of the war, alongside its characterization as "a war of survival"<sup>58</sup> necessitated both male and female participation. However, the scope of female involvement during WWII was limited in an attempt to police and preserve

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<sup>56</sup> Holm, xiv.

<sup>57</sup> Holm, 44.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

normative femininity and hallmarks of acceptable female sexuality. Holm speaks to the limited scope of female involvement, asserting, "Of the military occupational specialties...[certain jobs were deemed] 'unsuitable' for women. These included combat jobs, jobs requiring considerable physical strength or working conditions or environment 'improper for women'...all supervisory positions were automatically declared unsuitable...since [in these positions] women might be called upon to classify recruits for combat duty and 'men would resent it.'"<sup>59</sup>

Professor and scholar, Leisa Meyer, expands upon Holm's assertion in her book, *Creating GI Jane: Sexuality and Power in the Women's Army Corps During World War II*. Meyer writes, "The military [serves as] a critical bastion of state power and service within it a determinant of the rights of citizens, allowing...women...to participate within it fully and without harassment or discrimination increases expectations that those same groups will be treated with fairness and respect in the public sector."<sup>60</sup> The military's role as a representative of power and prevailing normative social structures within the public sector caused (and continues to cause) institutional policing and military regulation of normative femininity and masculinity among service members and civilian participants. Meyer notes "women's entrance into the Army was accepted by male Army leaders under the banner of expedience. Supporting the formation of a 'women's corps' [during WWII] seemed a reasonable solution to the expected increase in the numbers of 'women's jobs'...enabled the Army to maintain control over this labor and its employment."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Holm, 45.

<sup>60</sup> Leisa Meyer, 1.

<sup>61</sup> Meyer, 2-3.

The control over the scope of female participation during WWII capitalized upon "public fears of the consequences of establishing a women's army [which] were rooted in a cultural inability to reconcile the categories of 'woman' and 'soldier.' This oppositional division is based on both constructions of military service as a critical measure of cultural 'masculinity' and the asymmetrically gendered relationship between the male 'protector and the female 'protected.'"<sup>62</sup>

Although Gray's work is situated within the context of WWII, he does not speak to women's "work" during the war. Instead, his main commentary on women is rooted in their "role" as sexual tools and objects of comfort for male soldiers. Gray's analysis of women and their imperative to sexually satisfy the men around them (even through rape) confirms Meyer and Holm's assertions regarding control of female participation during the war. Additionally, Gray's scholarship struggles to "reconcile the categories of 'woman' and 'soldier'"<sup>63</sup> through his basic assessment of the scope of female involvement during WWII. Gray's assertions are based in a socially normative reflection of women during the 1940s and 50s, serving primarily as domestic workers and nurturers. Additionally, Gray's scholarship highlights an overwhelming social fear about what it meant when these normative gender relationships were upset or overturned completely: a fear that is still present in modern reactions to and opinions on female military service.

*Against Our Will* focuses on the Vietnam War. Additionally, Brownmiller's scholarship is conducted primarily during the years after the Vietnam War. During the 1970s a visible, vocal, and active feminist movement emerged, which focused in

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<sup>62</sup> Meyer, 3.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

part on patriarchy as a power structure that worked to serve and promote men at the expense of women. Holm asserts during the Vietnam War, that “many military men...contended that a combat area, especially in Southeast Asia, was no place for American women used to their creature comforts and protected environments.”<sup>64</sup> Again, this line of rhetoric and reason is based in a normative construction of women and femininity characterized through comfort, protection, and therefore, weakness. However, “by the time the U.S. forces were withdrawn, some 7500 military women had served in Southeast Asia,”<sup>65</sup> highlighting the important role that many women served in Vietnam. Contrary to post-WWII ideology, “the women who were assigned to jobs in Southeast Asia...proved that...the modern American woman is fully capable of functioning effectively in a military role in a combat environment, even under direct hostile fire.”<sup>66</sup> The role of women in the Vietnam War (though still relatively limited) and the end of the War coincided with a number of public sector social and political movements working to promote gender equality and women’s rights. Therefore, feminist scholarship during the post-Vietnam era looked back at the War through a lens of radical feminism in an attempt to reconcile the changing political and social spheres during the war. Brownmiller’s work certainly utilizes feminist ideologies and frameworks typical of the 1970s and particularly the radical strain of the feminist movement as a means of understanding and theorizing rape and the subjugation of American and Vietnamese women during the War. However, critics point to Brownmiller’s arguments (and second wave feminism as a whole) as

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<sup>64</sup> Holm, 205

<sup>65</sup> Holm, 206

<sup>66</sup> Holm, 207.

revolutionary, but exclusionary, often centering the conversation around the needs and experiences of white women and those women who identified as feminists, and failing to address the needs, voices, and experiences of feminists and women of color.

Women did not become “other” simply by virtue of their historically limited roles within the military. Women are made to be other in the very rituals and training exercises that characterize the military. Military ritual consistently others women through the systematic value it places on hegemonic military masculinity and its requirement of the repression of any “feminine” aspects of one’s identity (any emotion, weakness, or “queerness”). Military men’s repression of “feminine” elements of their identities subverts and devalues women and people who possess feminine attributes or identities. The resulting environment they create is a site where rape culture and violence against women are normative.

Military cadence calls (also known as jodies), are one of the most common sites for female exploitation. Cadence calls are the call and response that soldiers use to keep time while running or marching, as part of daily training during basic training exercises. These cadence calls often feature violent lyrics that attack women and promote acts of rape and brutal murder characteristic of aggressive military conquest ideologies. These cadence calls and jodies are especially dangerous for women because they are not a *formal* part of military training or the military experience. In fact, “the terms jody or cadence call do not exist [formally in military doctrine]...there is no school or class to teach jodies to drill instructors and soldiers,

[rather, there is a] strictly oral approach to the[ir] creation and proliferation.”<sup>67</sup> The strictly oral approach to military cadence leaves the jodies unregulated and more likely to contain misogynistic and violent lyrics. Jodies often feature explicit accounts of rape and conquest and necessitate the acts as qualifiers for manhood and being a worthy soldier. One popular cadence call reads: “Throw some candy in the school ground, watch the children gather round...Load a belt in your M60. Mow those little bastards down. We’re going to rape, kill, pillage and burn. Rape, kill, pillage and burn.”<sup>68</sup> Military cadence is held as an important tradition in which service members are expected to participate. However, when rape and sexual violence are at the very core of the jodies that presumably bond military units together, women—even fellow soldiers—are objectified, exploited, and targets of violence and misogyny among their comrades.

Although military cadence and jodies are explicit examples of the ways in which women are othered through military ritual, there are more institutionalized components of military ritual and life that fashion femininity as “other.” In her research on gender and military culture, author Carol Burke asserts “no detail of military life—even as minor as a haircut, the pitch of a sailor’s white cap, or the chants sung out in basic training—is without significance, whether its meaning is imposed from above or smuggled into the barracks.”<sup>69</sup> Burke specifically references

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<sup>67</sup> Kent Lineberry, “Cadence Calls: Military Folklore in Action,” *Missouri Folk Society*, November 2002, <http://missourifolkloresociety.truman.edu/Missouri%20Folklore%20Studies/Cadence%20Calls.htm>.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Carol Burke, *Camp All American, Hanoi Jane, and the High-And-Tight: Gender, Folklore, and Changing Military Culture*, (Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2004), ix.

the high and tight, “a style of military haircut in which the hair is shaved close to the head on the sides and stands at attention on top.”<sup>70</sup> Certain haircuts are one of the many parts of a service member’s life that are mandated by the military. However, once soldiers complete basic training, they can select from several hairstyles that are permitted, among the most popular of which is the high and tight.<sup>71</sup> The high-and-tight may seem like an insignificant part of military culture; however, Burke asserts “in military life there is no female counterpart to the high-and-tight. Consider an enthusiastic women soldier willing to affirm a cardinal military virtue—that group loyalty trumps individuality—by wearing a high-and-tight...the devil of military culture, at least as it pertains to gender, lives in the details.”<sup>72</sup> Through something as simple as a haircut, women are explicitly excluded from the group identity and physical attribute that characterizes a collective military identity.

In order to understand the intricacies of responses to sexual assault in the military it is important first to understand certain definitions and structures that exist within the armed forces and frame these responses. The Uniform Code of Military Justice, or UCMJ is the governing legal document of all branches of the United States military. Additionally, military law scholar, Elizabeth Lutes Hillman, characterizes the UCMJ as “a separate criminal and administrative jurisdiction with authority over 1.4 million active-duty service members.”<sup>73</sup> The UCMJ “applies to all members of the Uniformed services of the United States: the Air Force, Army, Coast

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Elizabeth Lutes Hillman, “The “Good Soldier” Defense: Character Evidence and Military Rank at Courts-Martial,” *The Yale Law Journal Company, Inc*, 876.

Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, Naval Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Commissioned Corps, and Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.”<sup>74</sup>

Additionally, “cadets and midshipmen at the United States Military Academy, United States Air Force Academy, United States Merchant Marine Academy, and the United States Coast Guard Academy are all subject to the UCMJ. On the other hand, Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) cadets and midshipmen are by law exempt from the UCMJ.”<sup>75</sup> Within the UCMJ there are very specific definitions of what acts constitute sexual assault. The Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 6495.01 defines sexual assault as

Intentional sexual contact characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent. Sexual assault includes rape, forcible sodomy (oral or anal sex), and other unwanted sexual contact that is aggravated, abusive, or wrongful (including unwanted and inappropriate sexual contact), or attempts to commit these acts.<sup>76</sup>

Additionally, “consent” is characterized by “words or overt acts indicating a freely given agreement to the sexual conduct at issue by a competent person.”<sup>77</sup>

Although the UCMJ contains very clear definitions as to what constitutes sexual assault, consent, and rape, the code is an internal military document that is subject to biases. For example, “accused servicemembers, unlike civilian criminal defendants, are permitted to introduce evidence of their ‘good military character’ during the guilt phase of courts-martial.”<sup>78</sup> In military courts, good character and exemplification of strong military service or the assumption of military ideologies

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<sup>74</sup> Uniform Code of Military Justice, <http://www.ucmj.us/>.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Military One Source, [Militaryonesource.mil](http://militaryonesource.mil)

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Hillman, 880.

(and therefore military behavior) are enough to mitigate criminal behavior, presenting “disturbing implications for the roles of rank [and] gender in military justice.”<sup>79</sup> The UCMJ favors high rank and extended service as “immunity from conviction at court-martial.”<sup>80</sup> Moreover, “In a system already marked by extraordinary discretion, from a commander’s decision about whether and how to bring criminal charges to the separate sentencing phase of trial, [tactics and loopholes that favor decorated veterans who perpetrate criminal acts] undercut the military justice system’s commitment to an objective trial process by adding an element of subjectivity...to a court-martial.”<sup>81</sup>

The UCMJ is currently undergoing some changes in regards to its policies on sexual assault. In December 2013 the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which appropriates funds to the military and other government organizations, passed into law. The NDAA for Fiscal Year 14 (the U.S. government’s monetary year—the period between October 1, 2013 and September 30, 2014) calls for “sweeping changes to the UCMJ, particularly in cases of rape and sexual assault.”<sup>82</sup> The proposed changes were proposed as a way to mitigate the biases within the investigation and court-martial processes. The main changes affect Articles 32, 60, 120, and 125. Article 32 amendments place investigative duties, as well as the decision to move forward with a court-martial, in the hands of “trained lawyers

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<sup>79</sup> Hillman, 881.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> David Vergun, “New Law Brings Changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice,” *Army News Service*, January 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=121444>.

[who are] in the best position to make determinations to go forward.”<sup>83</sup> These amendments to Article 32 help to assure that survivors of sexual assault are protected under the UCMJ in the same ways that they would be protected in the civilian courts.

Article 60 deals with pretrial agreements and the “modifying and set[ting] aside findings of a case and reducing sentencing.”<sup>84</sup> Revisions to Article 60 were prompted by an incident in 2013. Air Force Lt. Col. James Wilkerson was convicted of aggravated sexual assault, and his findings of guilt were overturned.

In the new law, legislators said the convening authority can no longer adjust any findings of guilt for felony offenses where the sentence is longer than six months or contains a discharge. They cannot change findings for any sex crime, irrespective of sentencing time.<sup>85</sup>

Articles 120 and 125 (rape and carnal knowledge and sodomy), “now have mandatory minimum punishments: dishonorable discharge for enlisted service members and dismissal for officers...[additionally], Congress has mandated that all sexual assault and rape cases be tried only by general court-martial...[rather than at] summary or special court-martials...which are [reserved for] relatively minor and intermediate offenses.”<sup>86</sup> Congress requires that these modifications to the UCMJ be “phased in over the course of 12 months.”<sup>87</sup>

The amendments to Articles 25, 60, 120 and 125 are a positive start in creating a change in military law and the military’s response to sexual assault after

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

it occurs. However, amending military law does not necessarily constitute a change in military culture. The change in law alone presents a similar problem as John D. Foubert's program that I analyzed in section II—these programs and laws address sexual assault as an individual act rather than as a product of rape culture and the requirement of hegemonic masculinity imposed by the military. Additionally, it is important to note that much of the scholarship on sexual assault and military law was published before the FY14 amendments to the UCMJ. Therefore, much of my research reflects on the experiences and accounts of those working in an earlier version of the UCMJ and thus, a different legal framework. Moreover, restructuring the UCMJ does not mitigate the fact that the governing code exists to separate civilian and military law. The very existence of the UCMJ as a code-- which fosters a legal process that is specific to the military-- confirms a wider social ideology that military life and justice are unique and require a set of laws that are separate from civilian jurisdiction. Moreover, despite the recent change in law, much of the military's ideological structure regarding sexual assault, female inclusion and participation, and the requirement of hegemonic military masculinity for participation remain very much intact.

Hegemonic military masculinity is fostered spatially through the exclusion of women in war and ritual, as well as the repudiation of the feminine. Brownmiller describes men in the military as "...ordinary Joes, made unordinary by entry into the most exclusive male-only club in the world."<sup>88</sup> Brownmiller's characterization of military participation as being exceptional and privileged places its members in a

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<sup>88</sup> Brownmiller, 32.

position of spatially privileged dominance over those who are unaffiliated. The creation of the military as a male-only space or an 'old boy's club' is framed by the anxiety surrounding the feminization of young boys as well as the gendered practices of childrearing that I address in section I. Through Kane's framework of same-sex socialization, the military, then, functions as a means of preserving hegemonic social constructions of masculinity and manhood, which inherently devalue women. Good! Brownmiller goes on to argue that the military:

provides men with the perfect psychological backdrop to give vent to their contempt for women. The very maleness of the military—the brute power of weaponry exclusive to their hands, the spiritual bonding of men at arms, the manly discipline of orders given and orders obeyed, the simple logic of the hierarchical command—confirms for men what they long suspect, that women are peripheral irrelevant to the world that counts, passive spectators to the action in the center ring.<sup>89</sup>

In a space where aggression and dominance are so closely associated with masculinity and where the opponent is feminized, "the unreal situation of a world without women becomes the prime reality."<sup>90</sup> What do we make of a "world without women?" I argue that this construction is problematic because it works to subjugate women as a whole through their exclusion. Moreover, it devalues femininity and the female experience, which creates a hierarchy in which femininity is situated below masculinity. This hierarchy imposes a power imbalance that enforces hostility towards women and leaves them subject to violence, harassment, and contempt.

Female participation in the military is becoming more and more common, and so are instances of sexual assault. While all soldiers assume a certain amount of

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Brownmiller, 33.

physical risk that comes with their service (risk of death, injury, etc), rape and sexual assault have become occupational hazards specifically for women who serve. According to a report from the Pentagon, “between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013 there were 3553 reports of sexual assault, a 43% increase from the year before.”<sup>91</sup> When rape and sexual assault become an occupational hazard, so does reporting. The 3553 reports of sexual assault do not even begin take into account the number that go unreported. Sixty percent of all sexual assaults and rapes go unreported.<sup>92</sup>, and the Department of Defense “believes that because of underreporting, the number is more likely near 19,000 [assaults perpetrated each year].”<sup>93</sup> Additionally, “[in 2013], soldiers were 15 times more likely to be raped by a comrade than killed by an enemy.”<sup>94</sup> Categorizing sexual assault as an occupational hazard of military service rather than as an act of violence undermines the severity of the crime. Additionally, it underscores the necessity of the military’s role in facilitating internal sexual assault prevention (especially in soldier against soldier perpetration). This categorization also fails to address the broader culture of hegemonic masculinity within the military and the requirement for members to assume a hegemonic military masculinity, both of which are embedded throughout the military experience.

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<sup>91</sup> Caitlin Bancroft, "Pentagon Releases Startling New Statistics on Sexual Assault," *PolicyMic*, November 8, 2013, <http://www.policymic.com/articles/72503/pentagon-releases-startling-new-statistics-on-military-sexual-assault>.

<sup>92</sup> United States Department of Justice, *National Crime Victimization Survey, 2008-2012*.

<sup>93</sup> "Panetta: Could be 19,000 Military Sexual Assaults Each Year," *NBC News*, January 18, 2012, [http://usnews.nbcnews.com/\\_news/2012/01/18/10184222-panetta-could-be-19000-military-sex-assaults-each-year?lite](http://usnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/01/18/10184222-panetta-could-be-19000-military-sex-assaults-each-year?lite).

<sup>94</sup> Bancroft, "Pentagon Releases New Statistics."

The documentary film, *The Invisible War*, recounts the experiences of female soldiers who survived sexual assault during their service. Kori Cioca, a veteran of the Coast Guard, is featured in the film and depicts her own experiences of being “brutally beaten and raped by her supervisor.”<sup>95</sup> Some time after her assault, Cioca, along with twenty-five women and three men-- all former members of the military-- filed a suit against Department of Defense officials Donald Rumsfeld and Robert Gates. The suit stated, “[Rumsfeld and Gates’] acts and omissions in their official capacities contributed to a military culture of tolerance for the sexual crimes perpetrated against [the Plaintiffs].”<sup>96</sup> Additionally, Cioca and the other plaintiffs testified, “their reports of serious crimes were met with skepticism, hostility, and retaliation by military authorities...[which] describes a culture of sexual predation in the military, fostered by the acts of [Rumsfeld and Gates].”<sup>97</sup> After hearing their argument, “the district court issued an order...dismissing the [case].”<sup>98</sup> In coming to this conclusion, the court noted “the unique disciplinary structure of the military...[as a] special factor that counsels against judicial intrusion...although the court observed that the allegations raised [by Cioca] were ‘egregious’ it reiterated that the Supreme Court “strongly advised against judicial involvement.”<sup>99</sup> Additionally, the Court held that “the unique disciplinary structure of the Military Establishment...requires [that] civilian courts, at the very least, hesitate long before entertaining a suit to tamper with the established relationship between enlisted

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<sup>95</sup> *The Invisible War*, <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/invisible-war/film.html>.

<sup>96</sup> US Circuit Court Opinion, No. 12-1065.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

military personnel and their superior officers...that relationship is at the heart [of the military's structure]."<sup>100</sup>

In *Feres v. United States*, 1950, the Supreme Court ruled "[T]he Government is not liable under the Federal Tort Claims Act for injuries to servicemen where the injuries arise out of or are in the course of activity incident to service."<sup>101</sup> The Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) provides a limited waiver of the United States' immunity from suit, allowing claims for damages:

for injury or loss of property, or personal injury or death caused by the negligent or wrongful act or omission of any employee of the Government while acting within the scope of his office or employment, under circumstances where the United States, if a private person, would be liable to the claimant in accordance with the law of the place where the act or omission occurred."<sup>102</sup>

The ruling in *Feres v. United States*, 1950 is troubling because it requires a solid definition for what specifically constitutes an injury resulting from an "incidence of service." In his essay, "Service member's Rights Under the *Feres* Doctrine: Rethinking 'Incident to Service' Analysis," Thomas Gallagher notes that service members often have the "difficult burden of proving that [their] injury was not "incident to service."<sup>103</sup> Moreover, he asserts the ambiguity of the "incident to service" test, stating, "There is no universal definition of the phrase...[which leaves]

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Joseph J. Dawson, "In Support of the *Feres* Doctrine and a Better Definition of "Incident of Service," *St. John's Law Review*, Vol. 56, Issue 3, 2012, <http://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2283&context=lawreview>.

<sup>102</sup> The United States Department of Justice. Torts Branch, Federal Tort Claims Act Litigation Section, 2014, <http://www.justice.gov/civil/torts/ftcals/t-ftca.html>.

<sup>103</sup> Thomas Gallagher, "Servicemember's Rights Under the *Feres* Doctrine: Rethinking "Incident to Service" Analysis," *Villanova Law Review*, Vol. 33, Issue 175, <http://digitalcommons.law.villanova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2609&context=vlr>.

injured service members subject to diverse interpretations of this language.”<sup>104</sup> The United States Supreme Court applies a hands off approach when addressing military sex crimes, which is dangerous for a number of reasons. These actions and crimes create discord within the cohesiveness of military communities because they compromise trust between comrades and jeopardize security (both military and national).

Institutionally, the military promotes a rape culture through their requirement of hegemonic masculinity for its members. Additionally, rape culture is promoted and normalized through the inequality that is deeply embedded into military ritual and culture. Moreover, rape culture in the military is replicated and sustained through internal barriers of hierarchy and rank as well as inconsistencies in civilian law and the UCMJ.

#### **IV. Fraternities**

Much like the military, fraternities exist as an exclusive association within larger campus culture. Their tradition of secrecy as well as the insular nature of Greek letter organizations often results in a tension between the rules and expectations of their national organizations and those of the college. Although secrecy is pervasive in fraternities, they are largely visual organizations, and they are often the most visible during a student’s first few weeks at college. In her book, *Torn Togas: The Dark Side of Campus Greek Life*, Esther Wright argues “when new students arrive on campus, the Greek system often appears as the only social

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

network available. Fearing they will miss out on the “total college experience,” new students often feel pressured to join.”<sup>105</sup> Indeed, Greek organizations certainly are an extremely visible representation of the college experience. “Today, about four hundred thousand men and two hundred fifty thousand women are members of the Greek system. In the U.S. alone, 8.5 million college graduates have been members.”<sup>106</sup>

The prevalence of membership in fraternal organizations calls into question the collective identity that qualifies and characterizes affiliation. Wright contends that a need to belong characterizes some fraternity initiates willingness to assume the group identity. She explains that “initiates have an overwhelming need to understand how they fit in...once the initiates envision themselves as part of the Greek world, they feel dissonance if they believe something might deprive them of being part of the group.”<sup>107</sup> Hegemonic fraternal masculinity is similar to Belkin’s characterization of military masculinity that I analyze in section III. There is a definite emphasis placed on the dynamics of belonging that exist within the fraternity pledge process. Similar to cadets in military training, fraternity pledges are “broken down”—their weaknesses or shortcomings attributed to their feminine qualities or their perceived weakness. Fraternity collective identity is similar to military identity—both include a holistic subscription to collective identity and normative hegemonic masculinity. Additionally, I contend that the collective identity that qualifies membership in a fraternity goes far beyond the politics of “fitting in.”

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<sup>105</sup> Esther Wright, *Torn Togas: The Dark Side of Campus Greek Life*, (Minneapolis: Fairview Press), 3.

<sup>106</sup> Wright, 4.

<sup>107</sup> Wright, 20.

In order to understand fraternal collective identity, it is important to acknowledge the role of “groupthink” in creating such an identity. In fraternities, subscription to the ideologies of the larger group is almost guaranteed through hazing and the pledge period. Ritual is a treasured hallmark in the fraternal pledge process. The fraternity ritual is ostensibly what bonds brothers across the country together in organizational commonality and understanding. While formal fraternal ritual does indeed create a group identity that is often homogenous and limiting to members who do not possess normative masculinities, unofficial fraternity “traditions” allow for social hierarchy that favors normative hegemonic fraternal masculinity as the norm within the organization—a different kind of “groupthink.” In his book, *Wrongs of Passage, Fraternities, Sororities, Hazing, and Binge Drinking*, psychologist Hank Nuwer explains hazing as “an extraordinary activity that, when it occurs often enough, becomes perversely ordinary as those who engage in it grow desensitized to its inhumanity.”<sup>108</sup> Nuwer points to hazing as a ritualistic practice that “brings out people’s innate propensity for violence.”<sup>109</sup>

Ritualistic hazing characterizes the military as well, which, according to Nuwer’s scholarship, provides a partial explanation for exaggerated violence within the armed services. Another explanation is the nature of work in the military. Soldiers are expected to perform a job, and their job, in many cases, is to kill the “enemy.” Additionally, Nuwer offers psychological explanations for hazing as the vehicle for creating group identity by referencing psychologists Harold Kelley and

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<sup>108</sup> Hank Nuwer, *Wrongs of Passage: Fraternities, Sororities, Hazing, and Binge Drinking*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 31.

<sup>109</sup> Nuwer, 31.

John Thibaut's theory of social exchange. Kelley and Thibaut's theory asserts "that a reciprocal rule guides most human behavior—a person gives, and another returns something in kind, whether in lesser, equal, or greater measure."<sup>110</sup> In other words, prospective members (or pledges) of fraternities and the military believe that their objectification and the hazing that they face at the hands of members is worth the benefits that a strong brotherhood or a career in military service will provide them. Moreover, "there is also a feeling of privilege that goes along with hazing. Pledges rationalize that if they have to suffer and face difficult challenges to get into the group, they must be privileged, simply because they are capable of enduring such suffering."<sup>111</sup> Members of fraternities (and service members) swap "horror stories" about pledge periods and boot camp, and wear them as badges of honor—an indication of what they suffered in order to attain membership. Wright confirms this ideology of suffering, and the connection between fraternities and the military, when she states "it is out of the agonies of training that [soldiers] develop pride in having done what they believe many of their former friends could not have done and which they themselves never thought they could do."<sup>112</sup> After suffering and membership comes the need for revenge. Wright notes an ironic "shift from perpetrator to victim, from the 'in' crowd to the 'out.' Rather than retaliate against those who made them suffer, newly initiated brothers and sisters seek new victims for their revenge: the next pledge class [or incoming cadets]."<sup>113</sup> The shift from suffering to revenge indicates a dangerous cycle of membership and tradition that is

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<sup>110</sup> Nuwer, 37.

<sup>111</sup> Wright, 20.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Wright, 21.

synonymous with violence and degradation—both of which are often at the expense of women.

Nuwer asserts “the ritual wherein an ‘unworthy’ initiate becomes a fully initiated member can be broken down into three stages—those of separation, liminality, and reincorporation. The three stages apply whether the initiation takes place among [service members in the military] or in fraternities.”<sup>114</sup> The first stage, separation, hinges on the repeated and continual assertion that there is an inherent difference between the initiates and the more senior members of the organization. Once the initiates become members, the politics of separation continue through the assertion of difference between members and non-members. There is a superiority in separation that fosters a hierarchy which favors members (and normative ideals of membership, like hegemonic fraternal masculinity) over those who are unaffiliated or affiliated with a different fraternal organization. Liminality occurs during Hell Week or throughout the pledge period. “Pledges experience insecurity, knowing that a significant ritual symbolizing their leaving of pledgeship is about to take place, and realizing that completing the arduous trial will be necessary if they are to become the equal of initiated members who themselves once triumphed by surviving their own Hell Weeks.”<sup>115</sup> The liminal space is where pledges begin to adapt to the pledge period and even the Hell Week. They are often demeaned and degraded. However, many pledges accept this behavior as a part of the process. During the period of liminality, pledges are neither here nor there—they are too close to becoming fully initiated members to quit and too indoctrinated with the

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<sup>114</sup> Nuwer, 55.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

facets of the group identity to return to who they were prior to pledging. Finally, during the reincorporation period, “exhausted, battered pledges are welcomed [to the brotherhood] with handshakes, hugs, [and] libations... After members bring the initiates to the point of rage or tears, they release them into the company of their fellow pledges [and brothers], who console one another.”<sup>116</sup> The period of reincorporation is especially crucial in the creation of groupthink or group identity. During reincorporation, the very men that subjected them to the terror and arduous tasks during Hell Week bring the pledges into the group. This dynamic creates an imposed camaraderie and companionship among brothers because of their shared experiences as pledges. Additionally, this dynamic sets up the initiated brothers as the sole means of support for the pledges, isolating them from seeking guidance or comfort outside of the fraternity.

Many fraternal rituals occur in spite of or at the expense of women and femininity. Moreover, the lasting implications of the collective identity that is created during the pledge and boot camp rituals carries over to influence members’ assumption of hegemonic masculine identities. Instances of sexism and sexual harassment are extremely prevalent in fraternities. First, as I mention earlier, the existence of fraternities as a gendered space validates the implication that manhood—free from female influence—is a hallmark worth preserving. Moreover, pledges and cadets are constantly feminized and degraded as a result of their femininity or perceived weakness. Pledge masters constantly refer to pledges as “little girls,” “pussies,” or “weak.” In an environment where weakness is so closely

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<sup>116</sup> Nuwer, 55-56.

associated with femininity and womanhood, attitudes towards women are also misogynistic and often violent. I contend that violent ideologies expressed among many fraternity members are, in part, a result of an organizational normalization of rape culture. Additionally, this normalization occurs when hegemonic masculinity is required as an organization's only acceptable expression of manhood. Rape culture is sustained and replicated in fraternities through ritual and "tradition," which members hold as an emblem of membership and the establishment of brotherhood.

## **V. Conclusion:**

Male-only spaces remain crucial in the formation of normative manhood. Women work, learn, and interact with and beside men (though in disproportionately smaller numbers and with much smaller salaries) in spaces and institutions that were formerly reserved for men only. Although women are integrated into larger spaces of former exclusion, socially, there is still an imperative to preserve niche spaces—the military and fraternities—as sites of male-only bonding, homosociality, and normative manhood. Historically, these spaces served to cultivate a specific kind of manhood—hegemonic masculinity—that was prescribed as the norm. Contemporarily, these spaces still work to preserve a hegemonic masculine ideal, while also serving as a tool of exclusivity, separating men from the female integration of preserved sites of manhood and refuting perceived hallmarks of femininity—weakness and queerness—that threaten hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity normalizes and justifies violent ideologies and actions against women while also fueling rape culture. Misogynistic behaviors and conversations, which were once contained to seemingly private spaces like frat houses and barracks, are now documented and disseminated more publically on social media and the Internet. Technology affords the broader public the opportunity to see first hand the kinds of aggressive ideologies that are cultivated in male-only and male dominated spaces—ideologies that work to subjugate women and femininity and promote hegemonic masculinity as normative and a qualifier for membership and acceptance.

Colleges and the military are working more pointedly and publicly to address specific institutional instances of violence as well as the cultural norms which promote and normalize violent behavior. In response to a violently misogynistic email sent over a campus fraternity's list serv, concerned faculty members at The College of William & Mary organized an event—"Think Outside the Box: A Teach-In"—featuring speakers who presented on topics like rape culture, sexism, and institutional gender bias within the college and national communities. Lt. Col. James Kimbrough, an ROTC leader and military science instructor at the College, gave a presentation at the Teach-In entitled "Attacking the Rape Culture: The Army's Efforts." In his presentation, Lt. Col. Kimbrough asserted that the military still wasn't "getting it right"<sup>117</sup> when it comes to confronting explicit systems of gendered inequality that result in rape culture and acts of sexual assault within the military.

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<sup>117</sup> Lt. Col. James Kimbrough, "Attacking the Rape Culture: The Army's Efforts," *Think Outside the Box: A Teach-In*, February 2014.

Indeed, both colleges and the military are struggling to “get it right” when addressing rape culture and violence in their ranks and on their campuses. In the March 28, 2014 edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, journalist Libby Sander asserts that instances of sexual assault, partnered with grossly inadequate responses, have driven “Congress, federal agencies, the White House, and [survivors] of assault [to call for] new, more-effective policies, but also for a broad change in institutional culture.”<sup>118</sup> Although calls for increased support and resources for survivors have historically dominated the conversation surrounding sexual assault in both institutions, current efforts within both college administrations and the military focus on a shift in response as well as prevention efforts. Sander writes, “in the two settings, survivors make similar claims: being brushed off, discouraged from reporting incidents, or subjected to an investigative and disciplinary process that is ineffective, inconsistent, harsh...[activists say that colleges and the military should] try harder to prevent sexual assault...[and] protect and support [survivors when assault occurs].”<sup>119</sup>

The push towards sexual assault prevention and a more comprehensive response focuses largely on institutional barriers to reporting, the legal process, and survivor support. Systematic scrutiny has “brought changes in both worlds. [In the military,] under the newest defense-reauthorization law...military lawyers will run the hearings to determine if there’s enough evidence for a court-martial...and

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<sup>118</sup> Libby Sander, “Two Worlds, One Problem,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 28, 2014, A29.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

commanders will no longer be able to overturn findings of guilt.”<sup>120</sup> Similarly, the Federal Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act went into effect in March 2014. This act mandates that colleges offer prevention programs, and follow up on incidents of violence. “College and military leaders, alike, have given [sexual assault and violence] a high priority, declaring that the repercussions of sexual violence—undermining the educational experience and weakening the military’s effectiveness—interfere with their respective missions.”<sup>121</sup>

Is high priority enough? In an era where women are more integrated in many aspects of society, why are we still working on “getting it right” when confronting male-perpetrated violence and sanctioned violent systems, organizations, and actions against women? Why are misogynistic ideologies at the core of fraternal organizations, and why are men so focused on “saving the sluts?”<sup>122</sup> Despite federal and legal initiatives calling for a broader approach to prevention, fraternities and the military still culturally condone violence in the very fibers of their traditions, rituals, and history. Taking action against sexual assault because it interrupts institutional goals is not enough. This approach takes a much-needed step towards addressing institutional violence, but it does not consider sexual violence and the rape culture that often accompanies it as a systematic injustice and threat to humanity.

Preventing and responding to specific instances of sexual assault is simply not enough. Colleges and the military have to conduct and enforce a cultural change

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Van Luling, “This Fraternity’s...Vomit.”

that involves addressing and eliminating components of institutional tradition that are a danger to women and feminine identities. A shift in culture requires an investigation into the organization's secretive rituals and practices that qualify membership as well as the membership and recruitment process as a whole. Moreover, fraternities and the military must become places that are safe and affirming for women and femininity rather than merely being tolerant. Creating a visible female presence—specifically in the military—is not enough. Institutional barriers to full female safety and inclusion (violent jodies, lack of adequate resources for trauma survivors, etc) must be evaluated and shaped to meet the needs of *all* members of the military. Colleges, on the other hand, should question the ways in which fraternity culture dictates collegiate culture as a whole. Moreover, colleges must work to dismantle the dangerous requirement of hegemonic masculinity that exists throughout the fraternal membership experience. This approach includes mandatory preventative programming that tackles ideologies of inequality that are systematically embedded within both fraternities and the military. Moreover, a holistic approach to violence prevention and response incorporates strategies for undoing rape culture alongside rape itself which ensures a safer environment for all members rather than one population of men.

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