

Technical Evaluation Report¹ HFM-363 Research Workshop

Understanding of Military Culture to Support Organizational Culture Change: Systems Approaches, Critical Analyses, and Innovative Research Methods

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ABSTRACT

The Technical Evaluation Report provides a summary of key themes and challenges addressed by defence, military and civilian researchers at the NATO HFM-363 workshop that was hosted at the Swedish Defence University, 10-12 May 2023. The workshop solicited 15 papers focused on understanding culture and culture change, with particular focus on critical analyses that contribute to eradicating harm experienced by military members, including sex- and gender-based violence, racism, ableism, and ageism. Priority research themes include: revealing and naming root causes, understanding and challenging resistance to change, analyzing component and sub-cultural relationships and impacts, integrating intersectionality, leveraging the power of participatory and qualitative research, and developing knowledge mobilisation strategy.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, many NATO military organizations have implemented initiatives and strategies to address systemic misconduct, in garrison and while deployed on multinational and culturally diverse operations, including harassment, bullying, discrimination, racism, extremist/hateful conduct and sexual assault. Within the context of these challenges, there is an increasing imperative to engage impacted communities in the conception and design of research, and to translate research knowledge into action in partnership with stakeholders for optimal impact. In support of NATO nations and partner military organizations, this NATO Research Workshop was established to provide the opportunity, across NATO and PfP nations, to share critical and innovative research approaches and insights to better understand the challenges and complexities inherent within military cultures and practices, including systemic barriers and opportunities for culture change.

1.1 Objectives and Scope

The workshop sought participation from leading academics and military experts to share and critically assess current scientific knowledge and conceptual frameworks for understanding military culture and culture change, with a view toward advancement of NATO and partner nations' knowledge and expertise.

¹ Appreciation is extended to Elin Berg, Ash Grover, and Krystal Thompson; the workshop notes which they provided made valuable contribution to the analysis presented in this TER.

Contributions from across social science disciplines were solicited to identify and explore:

- Dimensions of military culture, including, but not limited to, socialization, sub-cultures, rituals, lived experience of different military sub-groups and their intersectionalities, cohesion, leadership, and effects on operations;
- Interconnections between diversity, inclusion, equity, equal opportunity policies and organizational outcomes such as psychological safety, cohesion, personnel well-being, recruitment and retention, and operational effectiveness;
- Root causes and prevention of systemic misconduct, in garrison and multinational operations, in relation to gender, race, sexuality, ability, and colonialism;
- Innovative critical methodologies and best practices for research on military cultures, including critical theories, approaches, and frameworks that explore issues of gender, race, sexuality, ability, and colonialism;
- Barriers and opportunities for military culture change, including to strategies, policies, and practices; and,
- Knowledge mobilisation and knowledge transfer, including creative forms of dissemination.

2.0 THE WORKSHOP

Following general welcoming comments from the Swedish Defence University, the Canadian Armed Forces (virtual), and the NATO Collaborative Support Office (virtual), the Programme Committee Co-chairs and local hosts, Day one of the workshop opened with a keynote presentation by Dr. Victoria Basham.² Day two and day three of the workshop included 15 paper presentations from seven countries³ covering a wide range of culture-related considerations. Papers were organized for presentation across four thematic sessions:

- 1) Dimensions of Military Culture;
- 2) Innovative Critical Methodologies and Best Practices for Research on Military Culture;
- 3) Systemic Misconduct: Exploration of Root Causes, Healing, and Prevention; and,
- 4) Barriers and Opportunities for Military Culture Change.

Each session included opportunity for Q&A and discussion in plenary among participants⁴ and presenters, and in the cases of Sessions 1 and 4 the Q&A was followed by break-out sessions which facilitated smaller group discussion and explorations of key themes and challenges.

2.1 Presentation Summary

The presentations raised many questions regarding the nature of military cultures and their relationship to the cultures and societies within which they are embedded. Presenters shared a number of approaches to understanding how identities that are shaped within military culture and sub-cultures have an impact on aspirations for culture change and the well-being of its members. They were instructive in sharing different ways of framing, questioning, and interpreting culture and experiences within through discussion of several dimensions, systemic characteristics, and outcomes of military culture(s), including: service before self;

² See brief summary of Dr. Basham's presentation at Annex A.

³ Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom.

⁴ 29 participants represented nine countries: Belgium and Finland in addition to seven presenting countries.

warrior identity; leadership; teamwork; combat motivation and readiness; cohesion; professional socialization; social hierarchies; artefacts; boss texts; traditions and rituals, structural homogeneity; workplace interaction rituals; ritual density; emotional intensity; order giving tempo; masculinity; hegemony; performance orientation; precarious belonging and identities; the social construction of time, productivity and commitment; propensity to act; gender-based violence; component structures and communities; and digital influences on learning culture.

3.0 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The key themes identified and presented below are intended to both summarize persistent challenges that researchers face, as well as problematize those conceptual challenges and contradictions that are difficult to answer but are critically important to be aware of as the research community seeks meaningful contribution to culture change. While it is beyond the scope of this discussion to address each paper and the many important points raised by presenters and participants, a summary of each of the presentations with a focus on key points presented⁵ is presented at Appendix B. Reference to papers presented at the workshop are referenced in this discussion by author and workshop paper number (e.g., Okros, P1).

3.1 Revealing and Naming Root Causes

There are several key observations and questions that challenge culture change strategy in military organizations, not least of which is the importance of understanding culture if you hope to change it. There is broad consensus on the systemic influence of the gender-based legacy of masculinity on military culture, and the importance of shifting from agentic (ascribed masculine) dominance to greater balance across agentic and communal (ascribed feminine) proclivities. However, there is less consensus on which aspects of that legacy and its current impacts need to be the focus of inquiry and change, and how they can be complementary in contributing to culture change. In effect, there are outstanding questions regarding the extent to which enhanced, appropriate response to, and care for, harmed individuals, along with formal acknowledgement of communal imperatives, will reduce harm in the longer term or reinforce separation between vulnerability and communal aspirations, and military identities underscored by masculine culture.

The negative impacts of masculine culture and its associated warrior identities have become more evident in recent years through visibility and focus on harmful experiences and impacts resulting, for example, from sexual misconduct and gender-based violence (Wilson, P11), operational exposures, and analyses of institutional betrayal and culturogenic harm (Shields et al., P2). Focus on these experiences have yielded insight into the vulnerabilities of masculinity (Shields et al., P2; Whelan & Eichler, 2022), yet it is less clear how the creation of related knowledge from different disciplinary perspectives (e.g., medical, social science) offer complementary solutions, and to what extent these solutions contribute to better understanding of how to mitigate the impact of culture on individual harm; that is, how understanding of affected member experience can be understood across disciplinary perspectives and leveraged to promote culture change. For example, recognition, treatment, and research among men with PTSD (Shields et al., P2), and research on the experience of women affected by sexual misconduct (Imre-Millei, McKinnon & Tam-Seto, P8), has resulted in greater visibility of the harm to, and needs of, members. Yet, there can also be unintended impacts on members, without generating greater compassion within military culture (Wilson, P11). This problematizes the diagnosis-oriented model that dominates response to mental health, including PTSD. That is, diagnoses of PTSD and experience of sexual misconduct can contribute to further separation between vulnerability and harm, and who is a worthy member, rather than establishing vulnerability as integral to masculinity, military culture and belonging.

Emphasizing the importance of identifying the root causes of the problem, Maya Eichler, Tammy George & Nancy Taber (P5) propose an anti-oppression framework that promises potential to challenge the seeming

⁵ Note that these summaries are not the abstracts that were submitted with papers prior to the workshop.

contradictions across paradigms focused on addressing harm and meaningful change within military culture. Their proposed framework names patriarchy, settler-colonialism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, and ableism as interlocking structures that can result in individual discriminatory actions and systemic inequalities. This framework seeks interrogation of power imbalances and intersectionality; and, deploys strategies, theories, and actions that challenge social and historical inequities and injustices that are systemic in institutions with policies and practices that allow certain groups to dominate other groups. This analysis challenges change strategy centered on the evolution of the warrior reinforcing that it is necessary to address the legacy of the root causes and intersecting structures as they have shaped military culture; and to problematize the root causes, norms, and standards that continue to privilege a specific warrior ideal of military membership; and, the hierarchy of service and injury with a related reproduction of harm that values masculinized combat over feminized support.

In response to critique highlighting the harmful influence of the masculine underpinnings of the warrior identity on military culture, for example, some militaries, including Canada, have responded by removing the language of the warrior from its ethos; however, as suggested by Eichler, George & Taber (P5), it is not clear what impact the elimination of the concept from formal doctrine might have. In spite of the damaging impacts of masculine warrior culture, the term “warrior” conveys powerful meaning within both military and popular culture, including among women and men. This raises questions regarding the extent to which the values underscoring warrior culture and the power of warrior identity, can survive using alternative language or shift in more damaging ways to support the identity of particular sub-cultural elements.

While it presents in multiple and complex ways, the problem essentially is harm to people as a result of both traumatic and seemingly isolated events as well as the insidious and pervasive impacts on the well-being and contributions of members during and after military service. The workshop activities were instrumental in highlighting overall, the multiple questions and challenges, including the possibilities for research to better understand the impacts of culture; identify and target the relatively elusive and pervasive influence on the problem; and to seek complementary insights and integrated solutions for the various dimensions of the problem to contribute to change solutions. The following discussions engage many related questions and challenges.

3.2 Resistance to Change

Identifying sites and sources of resistance change is a recurring theme in military culture change discussions (Davis et al., 2021), and as suggested by Alan Okros (P1), identifying sources of resistance, associated with military identities, will continue to be a challenge and a key to facilitating culture change. In this regard, he posits four important phenomena that shape, and will continue to shape resistance: 1) shift to greater reliance on the military for response to domestic challenges; 2) backlash against advances in gender equality to challenge hegemonic (masculine centric) systems; 3) UN and NATO priority for military forces in prevention and protection roles; and 4) increased use of automated systems and the role of hybrid warfare and cyberwarriors in the virtual battlespace. All of these shifts have potential impacts on defining the masculine, combat characteristics of the combat warrior (Okros, P1). Walter Callaghan (P12) further claims that the role of tradition and ritual is often overlooked as a source of resistance to military change strategy, and emphasizes that ritual plays an important role in connecting individuals to sub-groups, and subgroups to the institution; ritual also inherently resists change, and can reproduce systems of harm (Callaghan, P12). Callaghan emphasizes that anthropological research frameworks and paradigms are critical to better understanding these challenges.

Socially constructed myths and narratives which thrive within military culture, such as the construction of military exceptionalism within the military (e.g., “it’s them, not us” mythology) is another example of the ways in which organizational culture places boundaries on the need for change; that is, by underscoring the shortcomings of others, the culpability of the home organization or sub-culture is minimized. Further, discussion suggested that the existing gaps in understanding this resistance and how it works to sustain

cultural processes, may not be strictly accidental; whether conscious or unconscious, institutions make choices to repeatedly ask some questions and not to ask others. A dearth of particular types of knowledge, for example, can prevent the organization from self, critical examination and accountability regarding how its processes contribute to cultural challenges. This raises questions regarding the importance of research approaches to study subtle resistance, professional resistance, and especially that which is informal and invisible to many mainstream scientific paradigms and approaches.

3.2.1 Critical Theory, Language and the Institution

From the perspective of the military, the goal of culture change is to enhance operational effectiveness, a subjective concept that has been used in the past to justify the exclusion of women and 2SLGBTQI+⁶ members. Today, operational effectiveness is being used to support the inclusion of visible minorities, Indigenous people, and women in the military, as well as underscore damage to military effectiveness as a result of sexual misconduct. At the same time that such strategy calls for sexual misconduct and harms to stop, the concurrent focus on operational effectiveness and ensuring the commitment and performance of all members, risks undermining the need to focus on engaging with people who are experiencing harm and from engaging in disruptive communication and related activity that, from the perspective of the military, can risk broader alienation of its workforce. From a critical culture change perspective, this raises questions regarding the political will of the organization to empower meaningful change.

The anti-oppression framework (Eichler, George & Taber, P5) is particularly powerful in raising critical questions regarding the role of political will for meaningful change. Even as military organizations are enthusiastically willing to place priority and resources on the development of leadership and individual competency and awareness, they are much less likely to demonstrate the willingness or capacity to conceptually absorb, and the capability to implement, the amount of change required to meet anti-oppression objectives. Critical approaches to change reinforce the importance of naming structures and sources of oppression to generate meaningful change, and problematize, for example, the notion of “buy-in” through the use of language that might be more accessible and less offensive to leaders and members of the organizations upon which change is dependent. Notably, the notion of “buy-in”, while a term that is well-used and resonates with mainstream change practitioners, can create barriers to meaningful change. While “buy-in” privileges those who hold and control power, empowerment seeks more control for those typically marginalized from those communities that control power. These terms represent opposing frameworks for change. Organizational frameworks for change can privilege “buy-in”, with the assumption that those who “buy-in”, also have the authority, will and expertise within current structures and processes to facilitate empowerment and long-term meaningful change. It is worth asking how, and to what extent, “buy-in” risks privileging the role of top-down, leadership in change processes, and alternatively, why the organization is not prepared to take those risks.

Questions around language and naming the problem, also raises questions regarding: what needs to be done to protect and empower marginalized members; to what extent does the institution believe it needs to protect mainstream members in the midst of potential disruption to culture(s); and, given these arguably opposing objectives, to what extent do culture change initiatives become performative exercises. Not having to engage in dialogue considered to be challenging and uncomfortable, while others live with challenging and uncomfortable circumstances, can be considered a privilege. This raises further questions regarding whether by accident, ignorance, or design, the extent to which the barriers are fully understood, and if there is not sufficient political will to facilitate the capacities and capabilities required for deeper, meaningful change. This includes asking what are the research questions that need to be asked to better understand this resistance, and how can research be used to illustrate the potential of meaningful change.

⁶ Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and additional sexually and gender diverse (2SLGBTQI+) people. See <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/free-to-be-me/federal-2slgbtqi-plus-action-plan.html>.

The bottom line, asserted in workshop discussion, is the moral obligation to ensure that every citizen has a right to serve without harm from within; however, it is not as clear whether that conviction is enough to influence substantive and lasting change as it competes with human resource justifications such as the imperative of recruiting sufficient numbers to fill vacant positions, largely based on operational effectiveness. Noting that military culture(s) are not static and are conditioned to survive, it is also important to understand and reveal how military culture *does* adapt to change, but in ways that do not always align with formally communicated change objectives. For example, as illustrated by the analysis of Norwegian military response to three disparate challenges, including response to experience of sexual misconduct and to operational errors resulting in damage to equipment, the military cultural tendency is to “press on” in spite of lack of sufficient knowledge, procedures, and resources, further shaping cultural inclinations, not to support change, but to temper the desire for change and make sure that change is diverted in the “right” direction as determined by those making those decisions to “press on” (Ekhaugen, Haaland & Selstad, P13). Response and interpretation to change imperatives, for example, can also result in positioning marginalized members as the scapegoats of change; that is the cause for disruption of cultures. Regardless, it is clear that tools, narratives and vocabulary are needed mechanisms for change, but exactly what those tools look like is dependent upon the frameworks and assumptions that will guide change.

3.2.2 Sites for Change

Many countries have responded to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, and the related UNSCRs that comprise the Women Peace and Security agenda, including the development of plans to implement related provisions within their military organizations. Based on the premise that the WPS agenda represents a cluster of norms for guiding appropriate behaviors, Chiarra Ruffa and Annick Wibben (P10) propose investigation to build on available, yet limited, scholarship that suggests that the implementation of associated norms can: be contested and non-linear; mutually reinforce local-global dynamics; and underscore the importance of norm entrepreneurs. This initiative, to better understand how WPS norms “travel”, underscores important considerations for culture change; that is, while focusing on WPS, this research highlights the importance of better understanding the mechanisms that both resist and enhance opportunities for change.

The experiences and vulnerability of individuals in liminal states and spaces, as they transition in, around within, and out of the military presents another potential opportunity to understand both opportunities and barriers to change. Individuals transition in and out of subcultures that have unique social hierarchies, underscored by assumptions about elitism and the importance of positional and social power. In her exploration of experiences in the context of a military learning institution, Vanessa Brown (P15) highlights the various social hierarchies at play that reflect the larger military organization. Her analysis of lived experience in a professional military educational setting for mid-career officers, which arguably represents a liminal space, revealed the way in which military members actively (re)constructed military identity and culture in their daily activities in the learning environment; notably the ways in which military identity was (re)constructed impacted across identities in different ways. The experience of new members as they move through early entry training and education phases and assignment to their first military unit has typically been investigated as experiences of socialization. Approaches which combine understandings of liminal experience have potential to contribute to fuller understanding of the impacts of military culture on these members, including opportunities and barriers for change.

3.3 One Defence Team

Increasingly culture change objectives in defence context include aspirations for one integrated defence team, which includes both civilian and military members (Goldenberg and Febbraro, P3), as well as strategies for the integration of Regular and Reserve forces to meet military objectives (Connelly, P4). In each case, there are implications for relationships at the individual and workplace level. Regarding the former, Irina Goldenberg and Angela Febbraro (P3) point to concerns regarding equity among military and

civilian members, and Vincent Connelly's analysis (P4) of Regular/Reserve force relationships notes the Regular force derogation of part-time Reservists as "civilians in uniform". Arguably, such outcomes are influenced by the structures and strategies for how different components and their members contribute to military and defence objectives. In her critique of culture as a focus for social problem solutions, Samantha Cromptvoets claims that in spite of culture change efforts focused on sexual misconduct and gender integration, it was a change to the Australian Defence Act in 2015 that represented the most significant attempt to achieve a total force in the ADF's history. The Act was changed to allow part-time service in the Regular Force, in a way that had not been allowed in the military since the 1903 Act. This limitation impacted women's availability to serve as well as resistance among Regulars toward part-time Reservists. According to Cromptvoets, "this wasn't about reducing the liability to serve but rather establishing the flexibility to serve in different and valued ways." (Cromptvoets, 2021, n.p.). This example raises multiple considerations regarding the questions that need to be asked about culture change and relationships among military and civilian, Regular and Reserve Military components of the military and defence organizations, including how structures and legislation impact workplace relationships and outcomes.

It is further worth considering the extent to which the function and roles of civilians and military members in defence might change and influence culture in the foreseeable future, including how shifts in this domain have the potential to influence broader diversity in defence. More specific to the culture change questions of the workshop, this begs the question, for example, of whether greater integration of civilians, including Veterans, and equity deserving groups across military functions might influence the entrenchment of traditional military values (e.g., masculinity) within sub-cultures or alternatively, contribute positive civilian influence to the greater equality that is aspired to in defence organizations. Similarly, given the persistence of military cultural influences to date, to what extent will shifts in structure and mandates across components of the military, including those suggested by Okros (P1), impact roles, affiliations, identities, and workplace relationships; by extension what are the impacts of policy and structure in shaping cultural response to change, and in particular transformation to meet public expectations. This discussion suggests that analysis of the structures and legislation that both constrain and enable Regular, Reserve and civilian participation in defence has potential to provide insight to culture change.

3.4 Intersectionality

Intersectional theory is a vital tool for understanding inequities as outcomes of "intersections of different social locations, power relations, and experiences" (Hankivsky, 2014: 2). It has particular relevance to culture change as it is explicitly oriented toward transformation, building coalitions among different groups, and working towards social justice", as well as particular relevance to researchers and policy makers as it underscores the importance of considering one's "own social position, role, and power" when applying an intersectional approach (Hankivsky, 2014: 3; Richer et al., P7). Although unique from organizational policy and program targeting equity, diversity and inclusion within the military, there are synergies engaged to differing degrees across military organizations. Also, as noted within the context of addressing ethnic intolerance in multinational operational environments, equity, diversity, and inclusion strategy has implications both within and external to military and defence cultures (Waruszynski, P9). Given its relevance to equity, diversity and inclusion; transformation; research and policy; military cultures; and international security contexts, intersectionality is an essential concept for culture change.

Understanding and addressing racism is one among multiple objectives of many military equity, diversity and inclusion programs. As racism is the primary focus of critical race theory it contributes unique power to understanding racialized experience; notwithstanding, intersectionality provides important insights into understanding race inequality, and importantly as it intersects, as noted above, with social locations, power relations and individual experiences. Intersectionality recognizes that people can experience privilege and oppression simultaneously, and these experiences are further understood depending on situation and context, including one's social position, role, and power (Hankivsky, 2014). The concept of "whiteness" and related systems of privilege are central to understanding experiences of discrimination and racism, yet related

analysis in military context is limited. Researchers need to continuously examine their own role in reinforcing assumptions regarding marginalization, privilege and their connection to whiteness. When considering equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging from research perspectives, it is relevant to critically examine applications of the concepts of inclusion and belonging as they raise questions, for example, regarding the objectives for inclusion and belonging within existing dominant white systems. In other words, inclusion and belonging can suggest that the goal is for equity deserving members to be included with, to belong to, the culture of the dominant white centre, rather than being empowered to contribute to the transformation of a culture that harms. This signals the risk that the concept of intersectionality becomes co-opted as an accommodation tool to address multiple individual intersections and accommodations, rather than a conceptual tool to support interrogation of the institutionalization of norms within white dominated colonial systems.

While the language of critical frameworks, including critical race theory, that inform intersectionality (e.g., white privilege), can be uncomfortable for many, it also mitigates the risk of “willful blindness” when the most important challenges to change have not been identified or accepted by the institution. Even as change seeks space for different perspectives, for some, the use of disruptive language presents risk of reinforcing “us” and “them” dichotomies; that is, creating or exacerbating polarization. This can be understood, at least in part, as a co-option of intersectionality by institutions as a tool for reinforcing assumptions regarding the primacy of homogenous military identities to support teamwork and operational effectiveness; identities which tolerate representation of difference within structures designed for dominant, both current and historical, conditions and membership.

Supporting research is limited; however, it is also important to consider the ways in which age and ageism is related to military culture and how it operates to support cultural concepts and narratives of fitness, assumptions about ableism, and is often used to justify bad behavior through assumptions that culture change is inevitable as the “old dinosaurs” move on. This further points to the complexity of relationships among ageism, gender, expertise (and perceptions of it), and its relationship to rank and power in the military. As noted by Victoria Basham in her keynote address, change strategies that rely on the influx of new generations will fail as there are “young dinosaurs” ready to accept and reinforce traditional military culture. Yet, many new recruits are young, malleable, and optimistic about their future in the military. This underscores the critical role of those who train and contribute to the socialization of new members, and as noted earlier, as they travel through liminal spaces.

3.4 Paradigms and Methodologies

Regardless of the motivations and barriers to change, in addressing the imperatives driving culture change, including sexual misconduct, harassment and discrimination, it is critical to understand the theoretical roots of gender and racial oppression and the intersecting impacts within military culture. This includes gaining understanding of the harm that has resulted from response in the past, and to recognize the emotional cost for some to participate in research. Recognizing that experience of harm can be concealed and protected from view, it is incumbent upon researchers to ensure the inclusion of trauma-informed approaches to all research design and implementation (Imre-Millei, McKinnon & Tam-Seto, P8). The participation of women and men in research studies, including within the context of other relevant identities (e.g., rank, Regular/Reserve, military civilian), is also important to highlight. Presentation of disaggregated data is the tip of the iceberg when considering intersectional experience, yet persistent visibility of available data is essential in framing interpretations of both discrete research studies and the research landscape overall, including the extent to which data and subsequent analyses are informed by women and men, and where data are available, relevant intersectional identities. Studies are often limited in terms of access to data for analyses and interpretations of experience based on race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, 2SLGBTQI+ identities, and ableism, for example, in military context. This underscores the importance of alternative approaches to research as discussed below.

3.4.1. Participatory Action Research

The presentation of a participatory action research (PAR) project, targeting greater gender inclusion, in the Netherlands provided an example of how PAR can be an impactful model for change (Spijkers et al., P6). PAR research can be designed to disrupt a range of marginalized experiences by identifying sources of fear and discomfort with change and providing opportunity for dialogue to explore the dynamics of language, related concepts, and practice within group contexts. From this perspective, change work does not focus on getting “buy-in”, but on meeting people where they are to introduce and guide change driven by participant engagement at local levels. PAR further represents potential to work with top-down approaches that risk misalignment with the experience of members. Given its access to everyday experience, it is critical to determine how PAR can be exploited within defence and military context to facilitate the contribution of lived experience with the development and engagement of culture change policy and process more broadly. Arguably, PAR could accommodate spaces for generative conflict and related dialogue to transparently engage uncomfortable experiences and critical explanatory and exploratory concepts; such dialogue space can act as an important enabler of change (Baker et al., 2016; Eichler & Wiebe, 2019; Maroist & Clermone-Dion, 2022). The challenge, however, is that PAR requires significant participant commitment and leadership endorsement, more than some are prepared to give, and does present barriers that need to be carefully considered within research design, including the mitigation of harm for those who may not be experiencing safe space for dialogue and sharing experience within their workplace (Spijkers et al., P6).

3.4.2 Ways of Knowing

As underscored by Richer et al. (P7), research focused on the lived experience of all DT members represents a critical entry point to understanding organizational culture and mechanisms of culture change, and in doing so it is important to explore alternative, innovative cultural perspectives, research methodologies, philosophical paradigms, and ways of knowing that go beyond mainstream individualistic, positivist approaches. For example, Isabelle Richer (P7) noted Indigenous methodologies and storytelling as a powerful example of alternative research approaches with the potential to create space for the emergence of new knowledge through lived experience and different “ways of knowing” (Richer et al., P7); such approaches also hold potential to contribute to understanding of not only how individuals negotiate structures and relationships (Richer et al., P7), but to identify how assumptions such as merit and equality are undermined within structures and processes (Castilla & Benard, 2018). From a generic perspective, “ways of knowing” can be understood to be comprised of intuition, authority, rationalism, empiricism, and the scientific method (Jhangiani, Cuttler & Leighton, 2019). However, different ways of knowing also take into account that knowledge perspectives are subjective, constructed through lived experience, and shaped by historical and cultural influences (Richer et al., P7; Belenky et al., 1986). As underscored by Indigenous scholar Margaret Kovach (2021), Indigenous approaches to research engage Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, ways of knowing and learning, and lived experiences situated within Indigenous cultures, which are in conversation with unique values, ethics, and axiology. Indigenous values that require particular attention when conducting research include reciprocity, community, respect, relevance, and contributions (Government of Canada, 2022 adapted in Reid, Greaves & Kirby, 2017).

3.4.3 Alternative Approaches and Paradigms

As research seeks to support understanding of military culture and culture change researchers need to continuously push methodological boundaries to address those areas traditional methodologies have not been able to address. This includes methodologies, such as institutional ethnography, with potential to understand how institutional ideology creates and reinforces social relationships of power (Taber, 2010). In doing so, Richer et al. (P7) suggest anti-oppressive perspectives, critical social theories, prioritizing intersectional analyses of complex inequalities, methodological approaches adapted to the complexity of the phenomenon, transformational methodology, and mixed methods. Critical military studies further offer a particular focus for asking new questions about gender and its relationship to military institutions. Victoria Basham and

Sarah Bulmer suggest that a CMS approach further challenges feminists to interrogate the limits of established feminist concepts such as ‘militarised masculinity’; that is, as feminists continue to recognize the way that gender relations are constituted is contextual and intersectional, and broadly salient across geographical space, time and different communities, it is also important to continue to ask new questions about the relationship between feminism and the military (Basham & Bulmer, 2017).

The adoption of paradigms of relevance to the lived experience of those participants/partners that researchers seek to empower, along with related methodologies, has the potential to facilitate greater visibility of the endemic practices that allow dominant structures to create, reinforce, and re-create processes and relationships that advantage dominant ways of knowing (Belenky et al., 1986; Richer et al., P7) just as they neutralize, limit, and harm others - all while claiming and demonstrating equality at face value. The adoption of research approaches through critical frameworks, PAR, and lived experience lens also present potential for contribution to change through the establishment of meaningful relationships with those communities which research seeks to understand and empower (Richer et al., P7). In doing so, researchers will need to continuously self-reflect on their conduct and relationships with research partners and stakeholders (Richer et al., P7), and adopt approaches, including where warranted multi-method, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research designs, to address the complexity of the research question(s); that is, to explore and engage approaches that will respond to difficult questions through potentially transformational approaches that facilitate the voice and empowerment of marginalized experience.

The importance of conducting research in accordance with ethical guidelines including protection of participants, respect for the value of human dignity, and free and informed consent is not new, yet it is worth emphasizing that these practices are essential for creating and maintaining the trust of research participants in the research process (Richer et al., P7). The alternative approaches to research, such as those discussed here, further suggest heightened interdependency and shifting power relationships between researchers and research participants, thereby placing a particular premium on respect and trust. Notwithstanding the potential for these research applications to contribute to change, to be successful they require expertise in qualitative research design, implementation and analysis. Collaborations across research and stakeholder communities to facilitate the development of research strategy and design, implementation, analysis and reporting, and leveraging of research results are also important to consider in optimizing research power to support culture change.

3.4.4 Conceptualizing Culture

Multiple experiences and phenomena have been identified as contributors and consequences of military culture, and related discussion often places considerable emphasis on the imperatives of getting to root causes and challenging hegemonic structure. This raises questions regarding how approaches to research conceptualize culture, and how that conceptualization includes or interrogates structure, legislation and other supporting mechanisms. Research and analyses often speak to culture and culture change without providing any insight into the assumptions that are shaping their cultural analysis. Yet, there are hundreds of ways to define, and consequently, shape research design to understand culture. By way of a few examples:

- paradigms, such as the anti-oppression framework (Eichler, George & Taber, P5), emphasize power and draw from post-modern, postcolonial and conflict theories to challenge to hegemonic systems and how culture treats those at the margins (Baldwin et al., 2006);
- inter-group frameworks draw from social identity theory to understand how group memberships are created and in-group and out-groups are maintained (Baldwin et al., 2006);
- process frameworks pay particular attention to social construction, sense making, adaptation, dominating/structuring power, and transmitting way of life (Baldwin et al., 2006); and,
- institutional approaches are interested in understanding the regulative, normative, and cultural-

cognitive behaviours influenced by institutional contexts, and which provide meaning and stability for the organization and its members (Scott, 2014).

While it is likely that in many cases, hybrid approaches are being applied, as a minimum, in moving shared understanding of analysis of culture change in defence and military context, it is useful to be clear on these assumptions. In her analysis of response to social challenges in the Australian Defence Force, Samantha Crompvoets claims that structure is the scaffolding that holds culture in place, and that changing these structures will yield more change effect, than changes to culture (Crompvoets, 2021). By culture, Crompvoets is not referring to “hierarchical, organisational or functional charts that illustrate roles and ranks, but rather the legislation, policies, standard operating procedures, remuneration models, performance management frameworks, and sometimes even the physical locations of buildings and/or parts of an organisation” (Crompvoets, 2021, n.p.). Culture, she argues, can explain ‘whole-of-organisation’ phenomenon, but cannot explain variation across the organization. Arguably, such variation is what discussions throughout this workshop assume to be sub-cultural phenomena. Regardless, this underscores the importance of being clear on what we are seeking to understand and how that will facilitate contribution of research to culture change objectives in military organisations.

In seeking full understanding of military culture, it is also important to acknowledge and understand the social and political space considered in research conceptualization. In spite of our increasingly digitized and virtual worlds, research that addresses this context is limited. Through analysis that explored the advantages and disadvantages of digitization on organisational, social, and change efficiencies within the context of the Bundeswehr, Martin Elbe and Gregor Richter (P14) established an evidence-based relationship between digitization and the transformation of organisational culture towards a learning culture. It is further relevant to consider the national frameworks within which military culture operates. Notably, while the boundaries between the military and society, and between our face-to-face and virtual worlds have become increasingly permeable in recent decades, a re-examination of the concept of the military as a “total institution” is important in understanding the impacts and relationships between the military, the national government and society. This includes analysis to understand the role of political ideology and the role of social media as it influences members and military response to culture change, including across components and sub-cultures of the military at individual, group, sub-cultural, and broader cultural representation. Regardless of the extent to which the military is bounded by civilian political direction and oversight, the military is a political agent in that it actively contributes to the creation and re-creation of national values through multiple levels and types of engagement. This further underscores the importance of considering the historical role of the military in building a colonial nation, and the relationship to current and future nation-building and military culture change (Davis, 2022).

4.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The workshop engaged participants with several themes and challenges, including: tensions between individual change and structural change, and how these intersect; the importance of explorations and asking questions, but also taking actions and making recommendations; learning from “living in the cracks”, holding onto tensions, accepting and embracing nuance and multitudes of experience; the value of accepting, even seeking moments of discomfort to engage in most critical and transformative learning; the importance of reflecting on why we feel the reaction we do and then learning from our reactions; recognizing that those in bodies “out of place” need to be listened to and placed at the forefront; and knowing that harm doesn’t come from asking difficult questions, but comes when we refuse to ask these questions.⁷

⁷ Adapted from summary provided by HFM 363 Co-lead, Nancy Taber

4.1 Key Themes

The knowledge shared through presentations and candid discussion were valuable in raising many important points across multiple dimensions of culture and its impacts to contribute to response to these questions. In summary, the themes presented below are notable in terms of their priorities and importance to military research contributions to culture change, and in most cases, the depth and breadth of related challenges and opportunities that were raised throughout the workshop. It is worth emphasizing that while knowledge mobilisation is a key consideration for leveraging research contribution to culture change identified by the programme committee, it received limited attention throughout the workshop. Consequently, it is identified below, along with other themes, as an important consideration for defence and military research going forward:

- Revealing and naming the problem: Understand the relationship and impacts between naming and addressing harm, protecting the organisation, and negotiating cultural contradictions between harm and vulnerability, and military culture.
- Resistance to change: Identify and understand institutional resistance and barriers to change, including the role of military mandate and impact on warrior identity, the role of rituals and traditions, barriers to engaging with critical theory and language, and the role of socialization and liminal experience in contributing to change.
- One Defence Team: Understand relationships and impacts across organisational and component structures (e.g., Regular/Reserve; military/civilian) on cultural relationships and phenomena.
- Intersectionality: Develop comprehensive knowledge of theoretical foundations and the responsibility of researchers to facilitate robust integration of related considerations into research conceptualisation, analysis, and reporting.
- Paradigms and Methodologies: Leverage the power of critical, transformational qualitative methodologies, access lived experience to better understand impacts of institutional systems on individual experience; critically examine assumptions and implications related to the military as an isolated, “total institution”, its relationships within government and society, including through virtual relationships.
- Knowledge Mobilisation: Develop strategies for comprehensive, inclusive approaches to knowledge creation and re-creation that engage internal and external stakeholders, including unique member communities, marginalized members, policy, program, research, and leadership communities.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The contributions to this workshop provided a unique opportunity to engage the analysis and experience of researchers internal and external to defence, as well as analysis of military culture conducted by civilian and military analysts. Given the scope of concepts and challenges that were engaged, the following activities are recommended to exploit the integration of knowledge that emerged as a result of the workshop:

- External journal publication presenting a comprehensive thematic analysis, with a view toward wide access to defence internal and external research communities;
- A NATO Lecture Series addressing key themes, contributions and challenges of culture change research.

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APPENDIX A: Keynote Summary

Keynote Presentation: Professor Victoria Basham, Cardiff University (UK), Adaptive Forces? How does Military Culture Inhibit, Manage, and Engender Organisational Change?

Drawing on some 20 years of experience as an external investigator conducting social science research on the armed forces Basham raised several key themes of relevance to the workshop objectives. According to Basham, her observations and critiques of the military have often been met with suspicion by the military; her approaches to research were considered to be too questioning, too qualitative, and too uninformed. Her outsider insights, often rooted in gender and related frameworks, challenged insider commitments to loyalty, and the very culture(s) that claim priority in establishing the essential foundations for cohesive relationships and operational effectiveness. Through their absence within military culture, Basham's presentation highlighted several important criteria for military reflection in seeking positive change: willingness to critically revisit longstanding assumptions regarding operational effectiveness, universality of service, and the warrior ideal; orientation to continuous engagement and validation of member concerns; acceptance of the possibilities of experimentation and failure within an institution that is focused on life versus death; and challenging assumptions regarding generational change as the "old dinosaurs" move on. "Young dinosaurs", suggests Basham, are attracted to military service because it provides an opportunity to live in a world where they can benefit from conservative values while continuing to reinforce limited sex, gender, and racial identities. In closing, she highlighted the importance of identifying tools for engendering culture change, in particular within an institution that has nurtured obedience, control, and the perceived stability of the status quo over empowerment of members seeking change. Professor Basham's insights strongly support the role of critical qualitative research, supported by interdisciplinary perspectives and approaches, as important strategy for centering the voices of those working to achieve change. The keynote was effective in raising several key considerations to take forward to ensuing discussions within the workshop.

APPENDIX B: Presentation Summaries

P1: Alan Okros (Canada)

Contested Military Identities

Identity challenges today and in the foreseeable future, according to Okros, are centred on four emergent challenges for the military: 1) shift away from the military as a last resort for domestic roles to increasing expectation for military response to domestic challenges; 2) backlash against successes in advancing gender equality to challenge hegemonic (masculine centric) systems; 3) continued extension of UN and NATO priority for military forces in prevention, and more recently protection, roles; and 4) increased use of automated systems and recognition that hybrid warfare is characterized by information warfare/control of the narrative in the battlespace by cyberwarriors, and increasing removal of the warrior from the killing zone, ultimately replacing the defining characteristic of the combat warrior. Okros contends that those most likely to be represented within this logic of resistance are those who have succeeded or are on their way to success within existing paradigms. This raises important questions regarding the extent to which there are, and where, safe spaces for dialogue and negotiation of change, who ultimately controls or is excluded from the dialogue, and the extent to which solutions might be similar to approaches used in other organisational contexts.

P2: Duncan M Shields (presenter), Jesse Frender, Paul Nakhla and David R. Khul (Canada)

Culturogenic Harm: Unintended Impacts of Military Acculturation.

Through the conduct and analysis of 102 interviews, 75 with medically releasing/ed military members and Veterans and 27 with health and transition support managers, the research team captured experiences of participants from recruitment through to release. The research team conducted a critical analysis of the cultural and organisational narratives through which personnel give meaning to, and cope with, their military experiences. The study identifies three emerging themes – performance culture, precarious belonging, and culturogenic harm – that contribute to disrupted recovery environments, lay the groundwork for systemic misconduct, and ultimately undermine aspirations for culture change. The analysis claims that “change requires engagement and leadership from the ‘culture keepers’...those at the top of the hegemonic hierarchy who act as ‘permission givers’ for others to follow a new blueprint of masculinity”. Shields presentation is particularly powerful in highlighting the fragility of masculinity, why it needs to be reinforced, and the role of the military as a powerful contributor to the socialization of masculinity. Shields further asks the following question: In a military performance culture, where everyone’s belonging is *strategically precarious*, how does the organisation engage effectively in “embracing, celebrating, and integrating the rich dimension of diversity within each individual”?

P3: Irina Goldenberg (presenter) & Angela Febbraro

Military-Civilian Personnel Integration and Collaboration in Defence Organisations: Insights and Recommendations from NATO HFM Research Task Group 226.

Topline data indicates that civilians comprise between 5.4 percent (Belgium) to 34.7 percent (Estonia) of defence personnel across 11 NATO nations that participated in this RTG. Based on the results of the administration of a Military-Civilian Personnel Survey, administered in each of the participating nations, the RTG found that overall military and civilian personnel reported good working relationships.

Notwithstanding, civilian participants expressed challenges regarding the impact of working in defence on their work and careers. Results further suggested that both military and civilian personnel benefit from unique and complementary roles, diverse perspectives and ways of thinking, and the stability offered by civilian personnel amidst military rotation cycles. With a view toward equitable treatment amidst unique workforce cultures, recommendations include: transparency and communication to dispel myths regarding divergent benefits; promotion of both unique military and civilian, and super-ordinate defence identities; leadership emphasis on personnel integration and collaboration as well as in personnel strategies and policies; and early and consistent training to enhance management of all personnel, workplace continuity and knowledge management within defence establishments and on international operations. This presentation raises further questions regarding the overall representation and influence of military Veterans and career defence civilians on the military and civilian sub-cultures within defence, including the extent to which, and under what circumstances unique civilian identities and sub-cultures live across defence organisations.

P4: Vincent Connelly (United Kingdom)

Marginalized Gains: The British Regular Army and the British Army Reserve since 2003.

The UK, like many nations in NATO, has aspired to move toward a “whole force” or “total force” model that includes a mix of full- and part-time military and civilian personnel. This includes, through successive UK defence reviews, greater need for the part-time Reserve to be integrated with the full-time Regular Army, to support mass fighting power. Noting that there has always been tension between the two components, Connelly suggests that the culture and identity of the various sub-components of the Army, supported by workforce rituals, ritual density, uniformity of attention, structural homogeneity, emotional intensity, and high tempo order giving, are more prone to marginalize than integrate part-time personnel. This is reinforced through Connelly’s analysis which claims that “The Regular Army is a strongly bounded organisation. Reservists are seen as civilians in uniform.” Drawing from interviews with Regulars and Reservists, surveys, and other research, Connelly examines the recent use of Army Reservists and the likelihood of more successful integration in the future. In spite of evidence that Reserves are more cost effective and as the threat of mass warfare and deterrence increases in Europe, Connelly suggests that it is likely that the Regular Army will use the current contexts to attempt to justify more Regulars and less Reserves. While raising practical questions regarding the future of the UK Army Reserve, Connelly’s analysis begs further questions regarding the nature and impacts of sub-culture across the UK Army Reserve.

P5: Maya Eichler, Tammy George & Nancy Taber (Canada)

How an anti-oppression framework can transform military cultures: Learning from the Canadian context. The presentation described a framework that draws on diverse critical perspectives and international lessons learned, with a view toward determining the root causes of problematic military culture and to generate practical insights to contribute to the transformation of Canadian military culture. The framework names patriarchy, settler-colonialism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, and ableism as interlocking structures that can result in individual discriminatory actions and systemic inequalities; interrogates power imbalances and intersectionality; and, deploys strategies, theories, and actions that challenge social and historical inequities and injustices that are systemic in institutions with policies and practices that allow certain groups to dominate other groups. Their analysis challenges change strategy centered on the evolution of the warrior reinforcing that it is necessary to address the legacy of the root causes and intersecting structures as they have shaped the CAF’s culture; and to problematize the root causes, norms, and standards that continue to privilege a specific warrior ideal of military membership; and, the hierarchy of service and injury with a related reproduction of harm that values masculinized combat over feminized support. The anti-oppression framework is particularly powerful in placing priority on understanding structures of oppression and what

needs to change through the lens of the lived experiences of marginalized and equity deserving members.

P6: Amber Spijkers (presenter), Anke Snoek, A.C. Molewijk & Eva van Baarle (Netherlands)

“I don’t want to be the icon of the feminist wave”: Participatory action research as a means to improve psychological safety and the position of women in the Netherlands Armed Forces: Promise or peril?

The presentation described an action research project aimed at improving women’s social inclusion and psychological safety across nine locations of the Netherlands Armed Forces (NAF). The evaluation of initiatives developed by NAF personnel was discussed, based on observations, notes from meetings, focus group and individual interviews. Resulting themes include tendency for performance and behaviours of women to be “under a magnifying glass,” organisational blind spot regarding women’s experiences, and negative impacts on women resulting from a counterproductive ‘code of conduct culture’ which seeks to protect women, places them in the spotlight, and diminishes spontaneous contact with colleagues. In response to initiatives for greater social inclusion for women, personnel responded in numerous ways: denied that the initiative was needed; preferred to keep related efforts under the radar; played gatekeeping roles; were hesitant to engage; or became increasingly motivated to address social inclusion. Clearly noted in the title of this presentation, even when change objectives seek greater inclusion for women, they are reluctant to be the face of change. This underscores the importance of the pre-conditions identified to support change: awareness and acknowledgement of women’s experiences; a safe space for dialogue and joint ownership; top-down support, trust and mandate; and, structural implementation. This presentation illustrated how research, when appropriately resourced, can make direct contribution to change in the workplace, and importantly provide impactful complement to top-down directed change.

P7: Isabelle Richer (presenter), Angela Febbraro, Victoria Tait-Signal & Justin Wright (Canada)

Understanding military culture through the lens of lived experience: State of knowledge, innovative methodologies and future research.

Based on recent analysis in Canadian military context, this presentation speaks to the state of knowledge on defence team members’ lived experience of systemic misconduct, provides critical review of methodological approaches used to explore and examine lived experience, and describes conceptual frameworks to better understand military culture through the lens of lived experience. The presentation also addresses the importance of adopting cultural perspectives, research methodologies, philosophical paradigms, and ways of knowing to support a more robust understanding of the complexities of military cultures and sub-cultural dynamics. For instance, flexible and emergent research designs using multi-methodological, inter-disciplinary, and multi-theoretical approaches are described as counter-hegemonic forms of inquiry respecting the complexity underlying socio-cultural dynamics, oppressive systems, and lived experience of marginalized individuals. Similarly, the presentation underscored that critical and anti-oppressive approaches including intersectional analyses and critical race, feminist, anti-colonial, and queer theories hold potential to alternatively shape research approaches focusing on lived experience and Defence cultures.

P8: Bibi Imre-Millei, Margaret McKinnon (presenters) & Linna Tam-Seto (Canada)

Institutional support after military sexual trauma: The experience of Canadian women servicemembers This presentation opened with a brief overview of military sexual trauma in Canada based on a Statistics Canada survey administered in 2018 to members of the Regular and Reserve forces of the Canadian Armed Forces. The research study itself explored individual experiences of military sexual trauma, experienced during military service, among 19 women Veterans of the CAF; this included experience with military health services, and internal reporting and response mechanisms. Particular focus was placed on research outcomes suggesting that affected women would benefit from opportunities for access to external support services, peer led groups and programs, innovative interventions such as trauma-informed and trauma-sensitive yoga; military competency, as it relates to MST and military sexual misconduct, was identified as an important competency among all service providers. The presentation also included an overview of the Canadian MST Community of Practice contributions to trauma informed sexual misconduct for CAF leaders (Believe, Empower, Support, Together (BEST), in partnership with Veterans who have experienced MST. Authors noted limitations of the study include generalizability based on limited inclusion across sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, rank, occupation, geographic location, and age. The presentation highlighted the importance of trauma informed approaches to research, response and leadership engagement with those who have experienced MST.

P9: Barbara Waruszynski (Canada)

Military diversity in multinational defence environments: From ethnic tolerance to inclusion

The presentation identified the key objectives of the six-nation RTG including: the examination of factors attributed to ethnic intolerance, and the identification of factors that will bridge cultural differences and encourage greater inter-cultural understanding and inclusion across NATO and other multinational military environments. This initiative resulted in the development of a framework on the factors that impact ethnic intolerance, a proposed conceptual model on ethnic inclusion, recommendations related to those factors that promote ethnic inclusion and hinder ethnic intolerance, and identification of evidenced-based educational programs to contribute to more diverse and inclusive organisational defence cultures. The resulting conceptual model, proposed to enable greater ethnic inclusion considers six key enablers: human interoperability; shared knowledge, skills, expertise & abilities; mental health & well-being; multinational military cultures; shared communications & situational awareness; and operational and organisational effectiveness. Recommendations include examination of NATO's diversity and inclusion programme and action plan; review of recruitment, retention, and promotion policies to prevent ethnic and racial barriers; identify approaches to apply coaching and mentoring programs focused on education related to ethnic and racial injustices; and engagement of equity and inclusion experts to examine systemic racism and best practices for inclusive culture. This presentation raised important considerations regarding how researchers and research paradigms conceptualize inclusion and belonging within organisations, and how such conceptualizations can influence change strategy.

P10: Chiara Ruffa & Annick Wibben (Sweden)

Trajectories of Women Peace and Security as a norm: How has it traveled in the military sphere?

The presentation briefly described how many countries have responded to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, and the related UNSCRs that comprise the Women Peace and Security agenda, including the development of plans to implement related provisions within their military organisations. Based on the premise that the WPS agenda represents a cluster of norms for guiding appropriate behaviors, the proposed

investigation will build on available, yet limited, scholarship that suggests that the implementation of associated norms can: be contested and non-linear; mutually reinforce local-global dynamics; and underscore the importance of norm entrepreneurs. While there are indicators that norms translate into action through mechanisms such as WPS National Action Plans, socialization, experiences of officers in international operations, and bottom-up adaptations, questions remain regarding how this happens within the contexts of UN, NATO, and country action plans. Further, as noted in the presentation, we have limited knowledge regarding how WPS norms travel with and are translated within the context of other norms, and the extent to which the WPS agenda may be co-opted and militarized, for example, within priorities supporting operational effectiveness. The presentation proposes analysis of the role of key leaders in Swedish context in both promulgating and interpreting norms, while exploring trajectories of norm travel within related processes of modernization and nation branding. Through the example of the WPS agenda, this proposal adds an important consideration to the discussion regarding culture change; that is, the importance of seeking better understanding of how the mechanisms and barriers of change ultimately live, die or are (re)negotiated within pre-existing norms.

P11: Deanna Wilson (Canada)

Duty to Care: An exploration of compassionate leadership

The presentation, which was inspired by personal experience within the context of the Canadian military, was introduced with a brief, yet powerful testimony underscoring the potential for meaningful impact from this work. This was followed by a high-level description of a study which examined the extent to which compassionate leadership could be an approach to allow survivors, leaders, and organisations to heal from the wounds inflicted by gender-based violence (GBV) and support imperatives for culture change. The analysis was conducted using various literature and statistics focused on GBV and leadership styles, including methods and best practices from support groups and experts who work with and empower survivors. The research emphasizes that compassion is essential for the empowerment of survivors on their healing journey, and results further suggest that through coupling compassion with leadership, leaders need to find a balance of compassion and wisdom to ensure the needs of all can be heard and attended to. The presentation highlighted several models from the literature which describe how leaders can empower healing, the process of exercising compassion, a compassion leadership matrix, compassionate leadership practices, and the benefits of compassionate leadership for subordinates, leaders, and the organisation. As argued in the presentation, compassionate leaders can act as a compass to navigate individual experiences and institutional shifts supporting culture change. Finally, through engagement with strategies and behaviors for compassionate leaders, the discussion highlighted the importance of the practicalities of how to respond and support individuals who bring forward experience of GBV, and how compassionate leadership approaches can be integrated and prioritized within leadership development in defence and military organisations.

P12: Walter Callaghan (Canada)

The role of ritual and tradition in resisting culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces

The analysis shared in this presentation is developed within an anthropological framework which problematizes the impact of ritual and tradition within the context of culture change efforts in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). According to Callaghan, culture change efforts can result in one of three outcomes; that is, members and subgroups (i.e., regiments) of the organisation can either (1) adopt change efforts whole-heartedly, (2) adapt the ethos and desired culture in unexpected ways (both positively and negatively), or (3) resist these efforts at culture change. In its bid to change culture, Callaghan suggests that the CAF has

overlooked the role of tradition and ritual; just as ritual plays an important role in connecting individuals to subgroups, and subgroups to the institution, it also inherently resists change, and can reproduce systems of harm. Callaghan presented analysis of two key rituals gone wrong, to demonstrate how the often liminal and entangled elements of ritual and tradition play such a key role in what culture in the CAF is, and where moments of resistance to the desired culture change can occur. The presentation shared an example of resistance to participation in church parades in Army context, along with analysis of a fighter pilot call sign ritual that recently became visible to the Canadian public. The analysis of these cases illustrates practices that are counter to formal policy and culture change objectives, yet routinely practiced without interference until challenged. The presentation closed emphasizing that liminality of ritual requires direct observation, witnessing, and experiencing, and suggesting that to adequately capture what culture is, and by extension what needs to change, it is important to apply anthropological frameworks and methodologies.

P13: Lene Ekhaugen (presenter), Torunn Laugen Haaland & Erik Selstad (Norway)

Military innovation and resistance towards change? Well – what’s the emergency?

This presentation examines resistance to change through comparison of three cases: the direction of the Norwegian Armed Forces (NAF) for the handling of sexual misconduct cases; a turnover accident of a helicopter; and a collision between a frigate and a tanker. Using grounded theory and case comparison approaches, the research team conducted analysis of external reports that had been completed in each case; response to reports of sexual harassment 2020-2023 was conducted by Price-Waterhouse Coopers, and the accidents were investigated by the Norwegian Safety Investigation Authority. The external reports focused on topics such as organisation, procedures, regulations, and culture, including for example, inadequate procedures or regulations, and pulverized lines of responsibility. Based on further analysis of these cases, the presentation identified cultural limitations shared across cases, including a strong will to act in the NAF, prioritization on core over administrative functions, and slow responses typically due to lack of understanding. Finally, the presentation notes that significant distance between situational understanding at top and ground levels hinders organisational oversight, conceals deficiencies, and creates an organisation which encourages blind trust in own and others abilities. In closing, the presentation highlighted the cultural tendency to “press on” in spite of lack of sufficient knowledge, procedures, and resources, further shaping cultural inclinations, not to support change, but to temper the desire for change and make sure that change is diverted in the right direction.

P14: Martin Elbe (presenter) and Gregor Richter (Germany)

Digital culture and learning culture: An empirical analysis of cultural change in the German Armed Forces.

Noting that the concept of digital culture was introduced a few years ago to the German Armed Forces to support the process of digitization in the Bundeswehr, the presentation defined it as: “the way the members of the Bundeswehr deal with the requirements, opportunities and risks of digitization on the basis of common understanding. Part of this is the digital self-image, which describes the awareness of the changes that accompany digital transformation.” Although the digital culture in the armed forces is based on the traditional organisational culture, digitization requires accelerated learning processes of soldiers as well as civilian employees and the cultural change towards a new learning culture has to be mastered. This leads to the key question guiding the research: What are the requirements, opportunities and risks of digitization in relation to learning culture in military organisations? The presentation shared the results of data collected in 2020 through an online survey within the Bundeswehr (n=1.997). The analysis explored the advantages and disadvantages of digitization on organisational, social, and change efficiencies, as well as the relationship between digital mindsets and the digital environment across 10 categories: affirmative to action; affinity for

technology; agility; personal responsibility; risk joy; awareness of change; collaboration/networking; digital leadership; security awareness; and ethics. The presentation concluded that overall digitization is predominantly seen as a driver for the transformation of organisational culture towards a learning culture. This underscores the relevance of considering digital and virtual engagements with military culture.

P15: Vanessa Brown (Canada)

The ground truth: Lived experiences with culture and change in military education

Based on the theories, methods, and key findings of a sociological doctoral study of students enrolled in the Joint Command and Staff Programme at Canadian Forces College in the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 academic years, the presentation addressed three key questions: How are gender and culture perspectives integrated into curricula; does military culture shape the reception of gender and culture education; and can this learning facilitate culture change? The analysis draws on critical theories that seek to explain militarized masculinities, intersectionality, and military culture to focus on the root causes of problems with military culture and as highlighted in the context of military learning. Qualitative research included review of textual data (e.g., curriculum, learning outcomes); 24 in-depth interviews with students, staff and graduates in command and staff roles; focus groups with civilian and military students and staff (e.g. faculty, curriculum developers); and discourse analysis. The presentation highlighted the various social hierarchies at play within military education that reflect the larger military organisation. This has implications for the manifestation of different forms of oppression, in various ways, depending on the organisation, the sub-groups, and the individuals within. By attending to lived experience, the discussion further demonstrated that military members are not simply bystanders inserted into a predefined military identity and culture; instead, they actively (re)construct military identity and culture in their daily activities, including in the learning environment. In summary, the presentation highlighted three key outcomes: 1) the military requires significantly different change strategies than civilian defence organisations; 2) recognition of unique experiences of marginalization leads to nuanced collaboration, allyship, and teamwork; and 3) military members are key agents of change, not only within the institution, but societally. The presentation closed emphasizing that frequently, advocating for change comes with a price.