

#MeToo, Misconduct, and the Military: Identifying sexual violence as an insider threat – A case study of the Canadian Armed Forces

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***Abstract-** Sexual misconduct is identified as an ongoing culture problem within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), where policies like Operation Honour and the Path to Dignity and Respect have attempted to eliminate with some success. Furthermore, minimal literature exists that about workplace sexual violence as an insider threat to organizations. Considering that the CAF's ongoing sexual misconduct crisis has been partially attributed to the ongoing recruitment and retention shortage, I examine how the sexual misconduct scandal is an insider threat to the organization and thus, to Canada's national security. My research identifies that three variables: power dynamics, workplace culture, lack or inconsistencies in workplace sexual violence prevention programs, when contextualized through the toxic workplace culture and pathway to intended harm frameworks influence whether sexual violence will become an insider threat and the types of harms caused. The paper concludes with policy recommendations guided by *The Common Sense Guide to Mitigating Insider Threats*.*

Keywords: insider threat, military sexual violence, workplace sexual violence, sexual misconduct, path to intended harm, toxic workplace culture

Introduction

This research paper contributes to a growing literature body on military sexual violence by viewing workplace sexual violence as an insider threat to military organizations. In exploring this topic, I ask the following questions: First, how do perpetrators of sexual violence act as insider risks to military organizations? Second, how do victims of sexual violence become insider risks to military organizations if the organization inadequately or failed to address the issue? Finally, third,

how does the perception of failure in addressing workplace sexual violence by military service(wo)men create additional insider threats in relation to the first two questions?

Workplace sexual violence is often characterized as a subtype of workplace violence. It is often underreported and results in negative effects to an employee's mental, physical, and emotional well-being.¹ In comparison to civilian organizations, militaries exist in a liminal state where members' public and private lives are spent in the workplace vicinity. While limited to no literature exists that views sexual violence as an insider threat, there is a growing body of research examining how sexual violence is supported by the internal culture of a military organization. In bridging this gap, I first broaden my scope to initially explore common themes and variables found in pre-existing literature focused on workplace sexual violence. Second, I use the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and the ongoing sexual misconduct crisis as a case study to explore how sexual violence constitutes an insider threat to military organizations. After discussing the research findings, I then conclude with policy recommendations supplemented by Carnegie Mellon's *The Common Sense Guide to Mitigating Insider Threats* (CSG-MIT).¹ My overall analysis is supported by two theoretical frameworks: Cassidy's *pathway to intended harm* and Creech's *toxic workplace culture*.

Operationalized Concepts

Although current CAF policy uses separate definitions for sexual misconduct and sexual assault², I use the all-encompassing term *sexual violence* to describe the range of non-reported, reported, and criminally convicted acts of sexual violence. First used by Kelly in *The Continuum*

¹ Employment and Social Development Canada, "Harassment and sexual violence in the workplace", *Government of Canada*, March 2017. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/health-safety/reports/workplace-harassment-sexual-violence.html#h2.6>.

² Canadian Armed Forces will replace term "sexual misconduct" with "sexual assault", *Global News*, December 13, 2023, <https://globalnews.ca/video/10168509/canadian-armed-forces-will-replace-term-sexual-misconduct-with-sexual-assault>.

of *Sexual Violence*, the continuum of escalating harm framework remains popular in sexual violence research as it describes the unique range of behaviours, actions, and harms resulting in different traumas experienced by sexual violence victims.³ By extension, *workplace sexual violence* applies this definition to the range of non-reported, reported, and criminally convicted acts of sexual violence in the work organization.

Both *insider threat* and *insider risk* are operationalized using the definitions found in the CSG-MIT. Insider threat is the “the potential for an individual who has or had authorized access to an organization’s critical assets to use their access, either maliciously or unintentionally, to act in a way that could negatively affect the organization.” In addition, insider risk is, “the impact and likelihood associated with the realization of an insider threat”.⁴

Theoretical Frameworks

The pathway to intended harm suggests that insider threats will engage in escalatory behaviour, which will eventually culminate in an attack. Cassidy examines if pre-existing threat detectors programmed with relevant indicators could identify potential insider threats before their behaviour reaches a threshold to cause intentional harm to themselves and/or others.⁵ Furthermore, Cassidy stresses the importance of how a work environment can incentivize insider threats to act maliciously. Hostile work environments lead to economic loss, reduced employment productivity, low morale, lost work time, medical expenses, and increased expenses related to compensation, liability, and litigation.⁶

³ Liz Kelly, “The Continuum of Sexual Violence,” in *Women, Violence, and Social Control*, ed. Jalna Hanmer and Mary Maynard (London, UK: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1987), 48-9.

⁴ Carnegie Mellon, “Introduction”, in *The Common Sense Guide to Mitigating Insider Threats* (Carnegie Mellon University, 2022), 3.

⁵ Tracy Cassidy, “Technical Detection of Intended Violence: Workplace Violence as an Insider Threat,” *SEI Blog*, December 11, 2017, <https://insights.sei.cmu.edu/blog/technical-detection-of-intended-violence-workplace-violence-as-an-insider-threat/>.

⁶ *Ibid.*

In this case, *the pathway to intended sexual violence* applies this framework by using relevant indicators associated with workplace sexual violence to identify potential sexual violence perpetrators. When viewed as insider threats to an organization, sexual violence perpetrators cause intentional harm to others through their actions, and often these actions can be escalatory in nature, depending on unique factors, like internal culture and tolerance for inappropriate behaviour. Other literature pertaining to workplace sexual violence supports this inference, as it finds workplace cultures that are permissible towards sexual violence encourage perpetrators to continue their harmful behaviour without the risk of consequence. Victims of workplace sexual violence can also hold organizations liable for the actions of their employees, thereby incurring financial harm through compensation and civil litigation, or causing reputational harm if and when victims decide to go public about their experiences.⁷

Building on the role of a hostile work environment, *toxic workplace culture* is influenced by negative attitudes and “overt and passive forms of aggression designed to achieve goals”, leading to the “loss of power by targeted individuals”.⁸ Creech examines institutional structures that support abuses of power leading to workplace bullying and negative workplace dynamics, as exemplified through cases involving the American intelligence community (e.g. the CIA during Operation Iraqi Freedom). Creech notes that toxic workplace culture is supported when bystanders fail to take active roles in challenging the perpetrator and institutional structures (i.e. bystander effect).⁹ Although Creech does not explicitly identify workplace sexual violence as a type of toxic workplace behaviour, workplace sexual violence is symptomatic of a larger toxic workplace

⁷ Kathleen C. Basile et al., “National Prevalence of Sexual Violence by a Workplace-Related Perpetrator”, *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* 58, no. 2 (February 2020): 216-223. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2019.09.011.

⁸ Greta E. Creech, “‘Real’ Insider Threat: Toxic Workplace Behavior in the Intelligence Community,” *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 33, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 684. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2020.1789934>.

⁹ *Ibid.*

culture. It results in harms to individuals and the organization, and its prevalence continues to be supported through abuses of power.

Common Themes & Variables

This section expands on three common themes and variables identified from the literature review. I contextualize them as indicators that increase the risk and likelihood for workplace sexual violence. Of note, at least two variables – power dynamics and workplace culture – are influenced by intersectional factors, like gender and race. The variables are later accounted for in the policy recommendations.

Power Dynamics

Power dynamics in a given workplace influence the ability for victims to report their trauma to relevant management, human resource, and law enforcement authorities. Previous research identified that the degree of familiarity between victim and perpetrator plays a role if a victim chooses to report. For instance, victims were more likely to find and use reporting and support mechanisms from their colleagues if their attacker was external to the organization, but were less likely to utilize these same resources if their attacker was internal to the organization as a co-worker or occupying a management position.¹⁰ Formal reporting is also diminished if hostile power dynamics between management and the victim would threaten the victim's reputation should they choose to advance their case.¹¹

Gender influences how power dynamics can instigate or inhibit workplace sexual violence. Most research on workplace sexual violence examines power dynamics between male supervisors

¹⁰ Beth E. Schneider, "PUT UP AND SHUT UP: Workplace Sexual Assaults," *Gender & Society* 5, no. 4 (December 1991): 536-7, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124391005004006>.

¹¹ Krista Lynn Minnotte and Elizabeth M. Legerski, "Sexual Harassment in Contemporary Workplaces: Contextualizing Structural Vulnerabilities," *Sociology Compass* 13, no. 12 (December 2019): 3. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12755>.

and female subordinates, and how this power can normalize workplace sexual violence, which ultimately impacts victims from accessing formal reporting mechanisms. But this does not reflect current workplace realities. For instance, in male dominated organizations, women in leadership and supervisory positions may find their authority and experiences challenged or undermined on the basis of their gender. Therefore, they may experience sexual violence as a type of threat response from male coworkers and subordinate to traditional gender roles being challenged.¹² Unfortunately, women may view that they have to expect and tolerate these behaviours.¹³

Workplace Culture

Previous studies indicate that workplace culture acts as a conduit to whether an organization faces an increased risk for sexual violence. Tolerance is reported to be key whether workplace sexual violence is prevalent and the scale of the damage it can cause.¹⁴ Organizations with a higher tolerance towards workplace sexual violence tend to be male dominated, while organizations more intolerant towards workplace sexual violence tend to have more women in management roles and have more individuals who hold egalitarian views towards gender. The organizations in the latter category are also able to identify behaviours associated with workplace sexual violence.¹⁵ But organizations that fall in the former category are more likely to have

¹² Heather McLaughlin, Christopher Uggen, and Amy Blackstone, "Sexual Harassment, Workplace Authority, and the Paradox of Power", *American Sociological Review* 77, no.4 (2012): 625-647. doi: 10.1177/0003122412451728.

¹³ *Ibid.*; Elizabeth A. Armstrong, Miriam Gleckman-Krut, and Lanora Johnson, "Silence, Power, and Inequality: An Intersectional Approach to Sexual Violence", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 44 (2018): 99-122. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073117-041410>.

¹⁴ Louise F. Fitzgerald and Lilia M. Cortina, "Sexual Harassment in Work Organizations: A View from the 21st Century" in *APA Handbook of the Psychology of Women: Perspectives on Women's Private and Public Lives*, ed. S.L. Cook, A. Rutherford, C.B. Travis, J.W. White, W.S. Williams, K.F. Wyche (American Psychological Association 2008), 215-234.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Krista Lynn Minnotte and Elizabeth M. Legerski, "Sexual Harassment in Contemporary Workplaces: Contextualizing Structural Vulnerabilities," *Sociology Compass* 13, no. 12 (December 2019): 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12755>.

members – whether in supervisory roles or not – engage in “behaviour that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual (often women).”¹⁶

Workplace culture also plays a significant role in determining whether an organization will enact, highlight, and utilise sexual violence prevention policies. Based on the literature, organizations with formalized reporting mechanisms and an intolerance towards sexual violence are more likely to prevent or inhibit workplace sexual violence.¹⁷ However, other scholarship indicates that these organizations are also more likely to report other negative behaviours found in toxic workplace culture or indicative of wider workplace violence.¹⁸

Lack or Inconsistency in Sexual Violence Prevention Policies

An organization’s culture and how they ‘practice what they preach’ ultimately impacts the efficacy of their sexual violence prevention policies. Minnotte and Legerski note that formal reporting mechanisms are ineffective if victims feel their employer, management, and attacker will retaliate against them.¹⁹ This is reinforced in McLaughlin et al., who suggest that victims may face revictimization or incur other harms if the organization views them, rather than the perpetrator, as the sole threat as a means to protect their interests.²⁰ If victims report, they risk financial security – often from the loss of employment, reduced opportunities for career advancement, and the cost of civil litigation – but by not reporting, victims can continue to be harmed mentally, socially, and physically by their attacker, unsympathetic colleagues, and the organization. Oftentimes, victims

¹⁶ McLaughlin, Uggen, and Blackstone, “Sexual Harassment, Workplace Authority, and the Paradox of Power”, 641-2.

¹⁷ Fitzgerald and Cortina. “Sexual Harassment in Work Organizations”, 219.

¹⁸ Jodie L. Hertzog, David Wright, and Debra Beat, “There’s a Policy for That: A Comparison of the Organizational Culture of Workplaces Reporting Incidents of Sexual Harassment,” *Behaviour and Social Issues* 17 (2008): 169-181.

¹⁹ Minnotte and Legerski, “Sexual Harassment in Contemporary Workplaces”, 3-4.

²⁰ McLaughlin, Uggen, and Blackstone, “Sexual Harassment, Workplace Authority, and the Paradox of Power”, 642.

need to consider if the benefits of reporting their attack or experiences will outweigh the potential risks to their person and livelihood.²¹

The literature indicates that organizations are incentivized to combat workplace sexual violence by enacting prevention policies, as the cost of litigation and settlement can incur severe financial risk and penalty.²² However, workplace sexual violence is dependent on the following factors: first, organizations must proactively enforce these policies, alongside increasing transparency and accessibility of formal reporting mechanisms. Second, continuous education to employees and management about organizational policy and workplace sexual violence can reduce and possibly eliminate its prevalence. Third, organizations must take complaints and reports seriously. This includes enacting stringent penalties and adopting a strict intolerance for egregious behaviour.²³ Of note, these recommendations reflect those found in the CSG-MIT.ⁱⁱ

The Canadian Armed Forces: Sexual Misconduct and Scandal

I use the CAF as a case study to explore how the sexual violence may contribute to insider threats in military organizations, contextualizing the discussion using the variables identified in the previous section. I use research from Nancy Taber and other scholars examining gendered violence within the CAF to frame how the previously identified themes and variables interplay in a military context. I also review Operation HONOUR, the CAF's former sexual violence prevention initiative.

#MeToo & Sexual Violence Scandals

A recent series of high-profile scandals about workplace sexual violence in the CAF renewed public scrutiny about the CAF's ability to not only effectively combat sexual violence in

²¹ Armstrong et al., "Silence, Power and Inequality", 108.; Hertzog et al., "There's a Policy for That", 171.

²² Hertzog et al., "There's a Policy for That", 169.

²³ *Ibid.*, 172.; Fitzgerald and Cortina, "Sexual Harassment in Work Organizations", 219.

the organizationⁱⁱⁱ, but also highlighted longstanding problems within their organizational culture. In 2021, thirteen CAF senior officers – retired and active duty – were under investigation for allegedly committing acts of sexual violence. Officers included the former Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) General (ret'd) Jonathan Vance, who pled guilty to obstruction of justice in an investigation of alleged sexual misconduct involving one female subordinate and another unidentified woman. Vance's successor, Admiral Art McDonald was fired from his position after a female subordinate alleged in a complaint to military police that McDonald sexually assaulted her. Another officer, Lieutenant-Commander Robert Waller, previously stationed in the Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff's office, was charged with five counts of sexual assault under the *Criminal Code*.²⁴

When the #MeToo movement – a social movement highlighting the “magnitude of sexual violence” in our society²⁵ – reached the CAF, victims and advocates not only spoke out against systemic failures to protect survivors, but also against the culture that tolerated sexual violence in the first place. Many spoke about retaliatory behaviour initiated by male colleagues and leadership, which some have noted prevented them from using formal reporting mechanisms.²⁶ Action taken against perpetrators and the organization varied, some servicewomen spoke about their experiences on social media, and others initiated costly class action lawsuits against the Government of Canada.²⁷ Reacting to public pressure and outrage, the Government of Canada

²⁴ Ashley Burke and Murray Brewster, “A military in crisis: Here are the senior leaders embroiled in sexual misconduct cases”, *CBC News*, October 21, 2024. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/sexual-misconduct-military-senior-leaders-dnd-caf-1.6218683>.

²⁵ “History & Inception”, *me too*, n.d., <https://metoomvmt.org/get-to-know-us/history-inception/>.

²⁶ David Pugliese, “Canadian military’s ‘Me Too’ moment being played out on social media”, *Ottawa Citizen*, March 26, 2021. <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/canadian-militarys-me-too-moment-being-played-out-on-social-media>.; Kelly S. Thompson, “What the Canadian military’s sexual-misconduct apology means to me”, *The Globe and Mail*, December 21, 2021. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-what-the-canadian-militarys-sexual-misconduct-apology-means-to-me/>.

²⁷ Pugliese, “Canadian military’s ‘Me Too’ moment being played out on social media.”

initiated an external review into sexual misconduct in the military, presided over by former Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour.²⁸

Hierarchical Power Dynamics & Toxic (Hyper)Masculinity

The CAF's institutional culture emphasizes conformity, hierarchy, and obedience that is "embedded in the ideology of the [masculine heterosexual] warrior identity/narrative".²⁹ The military places an emphasis on traditional gender roles that imagine women to be subordinate to and dependent on their male protectors. Men are viewed as more capable physically and emotionally to engage in wars over their female counterparts. The ideal soldier then, is someone who can successfully embody these distorted gendered norms.³⁰ Taber writes that those who cannot embody or 'become' the idealized soldier – namely women and non-conforming men – are "positioned as an enemies within... detrimental to the mission", consistently othered because they are viewed as incapable of conforming to the institution's culture.³¹ Sexual violence within the CAF may therefore have a role in 'correcting' non-conforming individuals. Still, sexual violence marginalizes women and non-conforming men, and efforts to correct institutional sexually deviant behaviour remains limited as many who experience may be reluctant to report, since this can be perceived by others as a form of feminine weakness.³²

These extraordinary gender roles are reinforced as institutional cultural norms when they are perpetuated through the chain of command. For example, the chain of command influences

²⁸ "How the #MeToo movement could shape the new review of military sexual misconduct", *CBC Radio*, April 30, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-april-30-2021-1.6008671/how-the-metoo-movement-could-shape-the-new-review-of-military-sexual-misconduct-1.6009270>.

²⁹ Nancy Taber, "The Canadian Armed Forces: battling between Operation HONOUR and Operation Hop on Her", *Critical Military Studies* 6, no.1 (2020): 22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2017.1411117>; Nancy Taber, "After Deschamps: men, masculinities, and the CAF", *Journal of Military, Veteran, and Family Health* 3, no. 1 (2018): 101. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh.2017-0005>.

³⁰ Taber, "battling between Operation HONOUR and Operation Hop on Her", 22.; Taber, "After Deschamps", 104.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Taber, "After Deschamps", 101.

how servicemembers diagnosed with PTSD from combat or other types of violence become routinely ostracized and shunned by their peers for showing weakness.³³ In terms of workplace sexual violence, the chain of command can and has continued to “move the problem and not [deal] with the harassment”.³⁴ It should be noted that the chain of command also has the ability to ensure the CAF takes sexual violence prevention seriously through proactive approaches in intervening and stopping harassment, discrimination, and other negative behaviours.³⁵

Inconsistent Policy Application: Operation HONOUR

Until March 2021, Operation HONOUR was the CAF’s “mission” to address sexual misconduct in the ranks, aiming to create an “inclusive and respectful work environment that embodies principles and core values of the profession of arms”.³⁶ Operation HONOUR was guided alongside the *Path to Dignity and Respect: The CAF Sexual Misconduct Response Strategy (The Path)*, the CAF’s culture change strategy for sexual violence prevention.³⁷ Operation HONOUR prioritized the following: it aimed to improve supports for CAF members who have been victimized or affected by sexual violence; it focused on modifying harmful behaviours; and finally, it placed an increased focus on accountability in leadership to drive institutional change.³⁸ *The Path* expanded on efforts already undertaken by Operation HONOUR by introducing prevention-based approaches and a performance measurement framework to measure the efficacy for sexual violence prevention policies and wider culture change.³⁹

³³ *Ibid.*, 104.

³⁴ Taber, “battling between Operation HONOUR and Operation Hop on Her”, 33.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁶ Department of National Defence, “About Operation HONOUR”, *Government of Canada*, August 11, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/conflict-misconduct/sexual-misconduct/about-operation-honour.html>.

³⁷ Department of National Defence, “About the Path to Dignity and Respect”, *Government of Canada*, September 23, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/conflict-misconduct/sexual-misconduct/about-operation-honour/the-path-to-dignity-and-respect.html>.

³⁸ Department of National Defence, “About Operation HONOUR”.

³⁹ Department of National Defence, “About the Path to Dignity and Respect”.

The fourth and final progress report indicated that Operation HONOUR was successful on the following: it highlighted a greater awareness about institutional sexual violence and the need to eliminate it; it expanded the CAF's ability to assist and advice victims through implementing the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre and other awareness training efforts; amended service and release policies for sexual violence victims; expedite and improve investigations and prosecution for sexual misconduct cases; among others.⁴⁰ However, noted failures included: delayed development and implementation of an updated policy on sexual misconduct; lack of effective communication between leadership and CAF members on Operation HONOUR; and a need to reflect on experiences and lessons learned during the Operation's longevity.⁴¹

Operation HONOUR was nicknamed Operation 'Hop-on-Her' by cadets and servicemembers respectively stationed at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston and National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa. The nickname's play on words not only suggests acts of sexual violence, but this nonchalant attitude displayed by CAF members indicate a lack of seriousness or a degree of resistance against sexual violence prevention.⁴² Callaghan notes that this 'wilful blindness' often interplayed with suspicion or resistance to Operation HONOUR's policy aims. In particular, this has and can be reinforced by the CAF's internal hypermasculine culture.⁴³ Overall, this type of resistance indicates that Operation HONOUR failed or lacked the ability to not only effectively communicate policy aims, but also failed to reinforce consequences

⁴⁰ Department of National Defence, "Part 4 – Operation HONOUR – What Worked and What Did Not", *Government of Canada*, March 23, 2023. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/sexual-misbehaviour/progress-report-four/part-four.html>.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² "Operation Honour dubbed 'Hop on her' by soldiers mocking military's plan to crack down on sexual misconduct", *National Post*, October 26, 2015, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/operation-honour-dubbed-hop-on-her-by-soldiers-mocking-militarys-plan-to-crack-down-on-sexual-misconduct>.

⁴³ Walter Callaghan, "Missing the Point: A Critical Reflection on Operation HONOUR and Reactions to Military Sexual Misconduct by Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces", *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice*, 41, no. 2 (2020): 72-87. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1076201ar>.

for servicemembers who resisted or refused to take Operation HONOUR seriously. Even after the operation's conclusion, its overall efficacy remains questionable, given that between 2016 to 2022, the rate of sexual violence in the CAF increased by 1.6%.⁴⁴

Discussion

Applying the *path to intended harm* framework shows that the CAF's internal hypermasculine culture creates a hostile work environment. Taber writes that “[militarized hypermasculinity] is expressed through a sexualized culture”⁴⁵, where there are also relevant behavioural and environmental factors that can increase the risk for sexual violence. For instance, these factors include an unhealthy drinking culture^{iv} and hazing or initiation rituals. Taber indicates that these behaviours or actions are meant for servicemembers to “prove their masculinity”, but those who do not conform are more at risk to experience sexual violence.⁴⁶

The *toxic workplace culture* framework positions that these behaviours are designed to achieve a purpose – which is to reinforce masculine driven power dynamics and take away victims' agency. *Toxic workplace culture* also emphasizes the roles bystanders can play in supporting a harmful workplace environment. Callaghan's research investigates whether bystanders will intervene or continue to enable sexual violence perpetrators, finding that servicemembers skeptical of Operation HONOUR will engage in a series of behaviours ranging from questioning the victim's veracity and character, violently objectifying the victims, and rape myths. It is important to note that these behaviours are influenced by toxic masculinity, informed by modern and old-fashioned forms of sexism.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Adam Cotter and Marta Burczykca, “Sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces”, 2022, *Statistics Canada*, December 5, 2023, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-603-x/85-603-x2023001-eng.htm>.

⁴⁵ Taber, “After Deschamps”, 103.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Callaghan, “Missing the Point”, 80.

By holding the CAF – and by extension the Government of Canada – accountable for failing to address the sexual misconduct crisis, victims have incurred significant harms against the organization. This includes financial harms resulting from civil litigation, the creation of new programs to support victims of sexual violence, and reputational harm from press coverage of victim experiences, which have lowered public opinion about the CAF. Harms also extend beyond financial and reputational – the CAF faces other organizational harms including a loss of personnel. Indeed, CDS General Wayne Eyre (ret'd) suggested that the ongoing “sexual misconduct crisis’ is partially responsible for the CAF’s recruitment and retention shortage.⁴⁸ While it is disheartening that victims should have to resort to significant means for the CAF to recognize and compensate for these harms, these harms should not be viewed negatively as this increased public awareness about a significant problem in the organization, resulting in the creation of new prevention and support programs. Furthermore, victims would have not needed to resort to causing financial and reputational damage had the organization dealt with perpetrators accordingly.

Failing to view sexual violence as an insider threat and act accordingly to address the problem ultimately impacts Canada’s national security. In the ongoing international security climate, the CAF and the Government of Canada is under immense pressure to meet international obligations. Climate change is also increasingly affecting the duration, frequency, and intensity of CAF operations, which places further strain on the organization’s ability ensure Canada’s safety

⁴⁸ Paul Haber, “Sexual abuse in the military: Soldiers speak of systemic problems in a “toxic culture,””, *CTV News*, November 6, 2021, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/w5/sexual-abuse-in-the-military-soldiers-speak-of-systemic-problems-in-a-toxic-culture-1.5654309>.

and security.⁴⁹ Therefore, in the following section, I suggest a few policy recommendations drawing upon relevant practices from the CSG-MIT.

Policy Recommendations:

(1) Beginning with the Hiring Process, Monitor and Respond to Suspicious or Disruptive Behaviour

This practice indicates that organizations need to be proactive in identifying insider threats during the hiring process. This includes conducting relevant background checks on all potential recruits, training supervisors to recognize and respond to members displaying inappropriate or concerning behaviour, training all members and potential members on security policy, investigating complaints of disruptive or concerning behaviour from employees, and treating threats, boasts, and implications of malicious acts as concerning behaviour.⁵⁰ These are all actions that organizations can take to reduce insider risk from entering the organization.

To join the CAF, recruits must pass a security screening, obtain a reliability status check, and take an aptitude and personality assessment test. These assessments already determine if an individual in question is suitable to join the CAF based on their personality, job availability, and determine whether an individual poses a threat to the organization, such as interactions with police and/or criminal history.⁵¹ To prevent potential sexual violence perpetrators from entering the organization, recruiters and security screening personnel should examine an individual's online history, associations, and look at other behavioural indicators to determine if a recruit is likely to instigate sexual violence. Individuals can and should be eliminated from the recruitment process

⁴⁹ Department of National Defence, "Impact of Climate Change on CAF Operations", *Government of Canada*, August 22, 2023, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/proactive-disclosure/secd-april-24-2023/impact-climate-change.html>.

⁵⁰ Carnegie Mellon, *The Common Sense Guide to Mitigating Insider Threats* (Carnegie Mellon University 2022), 39 – 43.

⁵¹ Canadian Armed Forces, "Joining the Canadian Armed Forces", *Government of Canada*, n.d., <https://forces.ca/en/how-to-join/#st>.

if they present concerning indicators before they are accepted, during Basic Military Qualifications, and before they are sworn in as new servicemembers.

In 2018, the Government of Canada released the *National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence*, in response to increasing radicalization towards violent extremism. The strategy identified several factors that would incentivize an individual towards radicalization, including: social networks, including peers, family members, and online communities; grievances, notably towards perceived injustices; vulnerabilities; seeking a sense of belonging in a community; and a predisposed inclination towards violence.⁵² These factors are particularly influenced by gender dynamics, where the strategy notes that “violent extremist and terrorist organizations deliberately exploit gender norms and dynamics to recruit and maintain membership.”⁵³ For instance, in *Canada at the Forefront: Tackling Women, Peace, and Cybersecurity*, Hannah Bacon positions that misogynistic ideologies pose a threat to Canadian security, and ultimately argues that expressing misogynistic beliefs in online groups and platforms should be a relevant threat indicator for police services.⁵⁴ This potential practice could be extended into military recruitment, and these indicators can be monitored during security clearance renewals or updates.

(2) Clearly Document and Consistently Enforce Administrative Controls

Improperly communicated or inconsistent security policies increases the risk for harmful insider actions. To reduce the risk, organizations should have clear, consistent security policies. The organization should regularly communicate security policies to all personnel, and all personnel should undertake regular and consistent training about these policies. Additionally, these policies

⁵² Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, “National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence”, *Government of Canada* (2018). 8-9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Hannah Bacon, “Canada at the Forefront: Tackling Women, Peace, and Cybersecurity” (presentation, Conference of Defence Associations Institute’s Graduate Student Conference, Ottawa ON, May 9, 2024).

must define ‘acceptable workplace behaviour’ and the processes and procedures to address concerns and safety reports from members.⁵⁵ This practice is already reflected in the literature, which found that workplace sexual violence is more likely to occur if an organization has improperly communicated or inconsistently applied their security policies.

Much of Operation HONOUR was in line with practices found in the CSG-MIT. Operation HONOUR took a direct approach towards combatting sexual violence by increasing awareness training to all CAF members front-line personnel handling sexual violence cases (e.g. military police, judge advocate general officers, medical staff) on sexual violence and its impacts, evaluated and assessed previous and existing sexual misconduct-related training and educational content, improving on reporting mechanisms, and finally increasing victim support services.⁵⁶ However, as discussed in the case study Operation HONOUR’s policy goals were improperly communicated and applied within the organization. The indictment of senior members in a sexual misconduct scandal implies that these prevention policies do not apply to all CAF members – particularly those with the most power. Furthermore, the use of ‘Operation Hop-on-Her’ by members at the Royal Military College of Canada and at National Defence Headquarters also implies a lack of seriousness to address a significant problem impacting members in the organization. If sanctions and punishment for inappropriate behaviour was applied consistently and equally despite rank, Operation HONOUR could have been more successful.

The following recommendations from the Arbour Report are focused on strengthening existing reporting mechanisms and ensuring that policies, procedures, and sanctions are applied equally to all members. Recommendations #2 (sexual assault as a standalone term referencing the *Criminal Code*); #3 (adopting the definition of ‘harassment’ from the *Canada Labour Code*); #5

⁵⁵ Carnegie Mellon, *The Common Sense Guide to Mitigating Insider Threats*, 34-37.

⁵⁶ Department of National Defence, “Part 4 – Operation HONOUR – What Worked and What Did Not”.

(civilian courts and law enforcement have exclusive authority in prosecuting *Criminal Code* sexual offences); #10 (sexual misconduct grievances should be prioritized as the IA and FA levels, when possible outside of the grievor's chain of command); #27 (implement all recommendations related to sexual offences and harassment found in the Deschamps Report); #31 (taking into account misconduct, including sexual offences, when a candidate is considered for promotion); #37 (reviewing universality of service to ensure that women and sexual misconduct victims are treated fairly within the organization); and #48 (appointing an external monitor to oversee the implementation of all recommendations found in the Arbour Report).⁵⁷ If these recommendations are successfully implemented, this can improve the reporting process for victims and protect the organization from additional financial, reputational, and personnel risks.^v

(3) Anticipate and Manage Negative Issues in the Work Environment

Extending on the previous practice, this practice emphasizes effective communication about security policies and practices to new organization members on their first day. Communication must include definitions on acceptable workplace behaviour and conflict resolution, among others. Communication must also include reinforcing active awareness about these policies and reinforce the severity of consequences should these policies be violated. Inconsistent policy application results in workplace animosity, increasing the risk for an insider attack. Additionally, when individuals become risks to the organization, policies should be in place for appropriate levels of intervention, ranging from warnings, additional training, or expulsion. Members should also be able to engage in reporting processes without fear of reprisal or repercussion.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Louise Arbour, "List of Recommendations", *Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces* (May 20, 2022). 309-316

⁵⁸ Carnegie Mellon, *The Common Sense Guide to Mitigating Insider Threats*, 45-47.

This practice is already reflected in the previous literature, where organizations with formalized reporting processes, strict adherence to workplace sexual violence prevention policies, and a strict intolerance to workplace sexual violence reduces the rates and risks of workplace sexual violence. In the CAF's case, the ongoing sexual misconduct crisis – where a significant number of senior officers were implicated in acts of sexual violence – suggests inconsistent policy applications and definitions on acceptable workplace behaviour. To prevent another scandal, remedies must involve communicating and applying clear and consistent consequences to perpetrators, whether enlisted or commissioned. Based on empirical surveys^{vi} conducted in the United States post-#MeToo, the results suggest that prevention policies with information-only or passive types of sexual harassment training is not enough to address all types of predatory, threatening, and physical conduct related to all forms of workplace sexual violence. It is therefore important that these dimensions be included in proactive forms of violence prevention training.⁵⁹

Conclusion

In conclusion, I sought to expand on sexual violence and insider threat literature by considering sexual violence as an insider threat to organizations. Using the CAF as a case study, it is evident that sexual violence acts as an insider threat in a myriad of ways. First, perpetrators are insider threats to organizational personnel, and the degree of their behaviour is influenced by workplace culture, power dynamics, and inconsistent application for policies focused on workplace sexual violence prevention. Second, victims of sexual violence become insider risks to organizations by way of reputational and financial harm. However, these harms can encourage organizations to adopt workplace sexual violence prevention policies and keep them accountable when they fail. Finally, when organizations fail to prevent workplace sexual violence, it reflects

⁵⁹ Basile et al., “National Prevalence of Sexual Violence by a Workplace-Related Perpetrator”, 222.

negatively on the organization's ability to recruit and retain personnel, meet organizational commitments, and deliver on policy goals.

Reflecting on the lessons learned from Operation HONOUR, although the CAF succeeded in increasing awareness and strengthening reporting mechanisms, resistance to Operation HONOUR was encouraged by the CAF's hypermasculine 'warrior' culture. Policy failures occurred because of inconsistent punishment for inappropriate behaviour between the chain of command. It can be further inferred that negative perception and skepticism about Operation HONOUR was influenced by sexual misconduct allegations against General Vance – who championed Operation HONOUR while serving as CDS. Consequently, eliminating sexual violence at its root is dependent on significant organizational culture change within the CAF. Nevertheless, this change is predicated on achieving smaller successes related to diversity, inclusion, and most importantly, sexual violence prevention.

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ⁱ The version used is the seventh edition, published in 2022.

ⁱⁱ Refer to: Best Practice 1: Develop a Formalized Insider Risk Management Program; Best Practice 4: Beginning with the Hiring Process, Monitor, and Respond to Suspicious or Disruptive Behaviour; Best Practice 5: Anticipate and Manage Negative Issues in the Workplace; and Best Practice 9: Incorporate Insider Threat Awareness Into Periodic Security Training for All Workforce Members.

ⁱⁱⁱ As of March 2024, the federal government introduced legislation to strip the military justice system of their authority to internally handle cases related to sexual offences as defined by the *Criminal Code*. Other noteworthy points include changes to the military justice appointment process.

^{iv} While the CAF’s drinking culture is not the focus of this paper, Taber and the Department of National Defence note that CAF members may use alcohol as a form of social acceptance within units, although this increases risks for violent assault and other criminal acts (e.g. driving under the influence).

^v In December 2022, Anita Anand, then Minister of National Defence, promised to implement all Arbour report recommendations. However, Justice Arbour and others share concerns that this commitment may fall to the wayside based on other government priorities or a change in government leadership.

^{vi} I emphasize that the deeply personal and traumatic nature of a sexually violent attack understandably results in limitations (e.g. self-selection bias and underreporting) for any empirical research methods on sexual violence, let alone workplace sexual violence.