

THE BUREAUCRATIC HARASSMENT OF U.S. SERVICEWOMEN

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Focusing on the U.S. military as a gendered and raced institution and using 33 in-depth interviews with U.S. servicewomen, this study identifies tactics and consequences of workplace harassment that occur through administrative channels, a phenomenon I label bureaucratic harassment. I identify bureaucratic harassment as a force by which some servicemen harass, intimidate, and control individual, as well as groups of, servicewomen through bureaucratic channels. Examples include issuing minor infractions with the intention of delaying or stopping promotions, threatening to withhold military benefits for reporting sexual abuse/harassment, and revoking servicewomen's qualifications in order to remove them from positions or units. The manipulation of administrative rules and regulations is made possible by the interplay between a gendered and raced organizational climate and bureaucratic features such as discretion, hierarchy, and the blending of work and personal life. I show that bureaucratic harassment has both raced and gendered implications. Ultimately, harassment that is enacted through bureaucratic means is often overlooked but carries distinct consequences for the professional careers and workplace experiences of the victims.

Keywords: *gender; race; military; workplace harassment; bureaucratic harassment*

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *I am grateful to the servicewomen who took the time and courage to participate in this study. I extend a special thank you to the three Marines who provided insight into the issues presented here. I thank Joanne Belknap, Janet Jacobs, Joya Misra, Amy Wilkins, Adriana Núñez, Andrew Gutierrez, Elizabeth Whalley, and my writing group for their thoughtful suggestions and encouragement on this article. I am grateful to Andrew Stinson for comments on multiple drafts of this article and the countless hours he dedicated to helping me think through these ideas. I also appreciatively acknowledge the anonymous reviewers at Gender & Society, Jo Reger, and Rachel Einwohner for their helpful feedback, and the Sociologists for Women in Society for awarding an earlier version of this article the 2016 Cheryl Allyn Miller early career award. This paper was supported by funding from the American Society of Criminology's Division on Women and Crime's Larry J. Siegel Fellowship, the Center to Advance Research and Training in the Social Sciences, and the Beverly Sears Grant at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Stephanie Bonnes, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, USA; email: Stephanie.bonnes@colorado.edu.*

GENDER & SOCIETY, Vol 31 No. 6, December, 2017 804–829

DOI: 10.1177/0891243217736006

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Although a significant employer of women and people of color, the U.S. military is composed primarily of white men, and its culture reflects standards of hegemonic, white, heteronormative masculinity (Moore 1991). Workplaces that predominantly employ men and have a dominance of male leadership have been associated with increased rates of sexual harassment (Firestone and Harris 2009; MacKinnon 1979). Harassment serves to further exclude women and to privilege men in these workspaces (Firestone and Harris 2009; Rosen, Knudson, and Fancher 2004; Rosen and Martin 1997). The military has been characterized as an “extremely gendered” (Sasson-Levy 2011) and masculine institution that values aggressiveness, dominance, physical strength, mental fortitude, bravery, control, and violence (Barrett 1996; Bayard de Volo and Hall 2015; Sasson-Levy 2003).

Gendered organization theory argues that “gender is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life” (Acker 1992, 567). Not only is the military a space dominated by men, but Bayard de Volo and Hall (2015) state that military education is structured around devaluing femininity, as well as promoting an aggressive, warrior masculinity. Additionally, stereotypes surrounding women of color are often used to inform workplace expectations and treatment of these women, who may already be hypervisible because of their race and gender (Collins 2000; Texeira 2002). These attitudes about race and gender become embedded in the military’s organizational and interactional structure. The current study examines how the gendered and raced context of the military shapes the ways in which the military bureaucracy is implemented.

The U.S. military struggles with creating a work environment that is receptive to women. Since the 1990s, several military sexual assault and harassment scandals have resulted in national media attention (e.g., the 1991 Navy Tailhook, the 1996 Army Aberdeen, the 2003 Air Force Academy, and the 2017 Marines United scandals). Media attention to these cases is reinforced by quantitative research showing high levels of sexual harassment of servicewomen (Antecol and Cobb-Clark 2001; Bostock and Daley 2007; Firestone and Harris 2009), as well as the high likelihood of attempted or completed rapes of servicewomen by other servicemembers (Sadler et al. 2003). Antecol and Cobb-Clark (2001) found that 71 percent of active duty women experienced some form of sexual harassment in the year they were surveyed. These findings indicate that servicewomen experience sexual harassment from their supervisors and peers at rates higher than women in the civilian workforce.

Prior research has identified several barriers to servicewomen's ability to report harassment, including unknown or unclear reporting protocol, problems with chain-of-command reporting, fear of undermining unit morale, and intentionally being misled about reporting policies (Jeffreys 2007; Sadler et al. 2003). Moreover, job-related threats such as being transferred, court-martialed, or discharged from the military can intimidate survivors of sexual abuse into not reporting (Jeffreys 2007). For example, servicemen have used "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) to deter sexual assault victims from reporting abuse and as a pretext for discharging women based on sexuality (Burks 2011). Half of the Army and Air Force servicemembers discharged under DADT were women, despite the fact that men comprise the majority of these branches (N. Welsh 2008). In spite of these documented practices, few studies have focused on the precise bureaucratic nature of these barriers to reporting and the professional and administrative harm they cause. The current study builds on this research by conceptualizing harassment enacted through bureaucratic and administrative channels as a distinct type that causes a unique form of professional harm.

BUREAUCRACY, ORGANIZATIONS, AND HARASSMENT

The military as an organization has a clear hierarchy, with written rules and policies regulating recruitment, promotions, and job descriptions, and is premised on the notion of rational standardization; all of these are key components of Weber's (1947) "ideal type" of bureaucracy. Notably, the military has its own education system, legal system, police, lawyers, courts, and medical system that operate separately from civilian organizations (Turchik and Wilson 2010). Military policies and regulations are reinforced by a strict division of labor and chain of command, as well as by group punishments (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010). Therefore, the military is an exemplary place to examine the ways in which individuals interact with and experience bureaucratic structures. Some scholars argue that bureaucracy promotes equality by increasing transparency in job descriptions, performance evaluations, and organizational policy (e.g., Bielby 2000). Others claim that bureaucracy is conducive to harassment because rational logic and the appearance of equality conceal power relations and imbalances within organizations (e.g., Acker 2006; Putnam and Mumby 1993; Reskin 2000). This view holds that the hierarchal enforcement of rational logic rewards traditionally masculine displays such as

competition, control, and aggression (Ferguson 1984; Maier and Messerschmidt 1998; Martin 2001). Still others suggest that bureaucracy does not automatically align with hegemonic masculinity and the subordination of women (Martin 2013), nor is it inherently gendered (Britton 2000). These scholars argue that organizations themselves shape how bureaucracy is enacted and that some bureaucracies can be nondiscriminatory. Scholars examining inequality from an intersectional perspective argue that gender, race, class, sexuality, nationality, age, and other social locations all intersect and form a “matrix of domination” and should be understood in relation to one another rather than in isolation (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1992). Women’s experiences with and perceptions of workplace harassment are shaped by both organizational context and social location (Teixeira 2002; S. Welsh et al. 2006). Therefore, it is important to examine intersecting oppressions when exploring the workplace harassment experiences of women in a gendered and raced organization like the U.S. military (S. Welsh et al. 2006).

I build on these understandings of bureaucracy, organizations, and inequality by examining how individuals within bureaucratic institutions can mobilize power to cause harm. I focus on how social attitudes, beliefs, and hierarchies relating to gender and race become embedded in organizational structures leading to workplace inequality (Acker 2006; Britton 2000; Kanter 1977). While prior research has examined selective implementation of policies and discretion-based decision making on harassment (Bobbitt-Zeher 2011; Byron and Roscigno 2014; Tester 2008), my focus on the experiences of servicewomen draws attention to the administrative tactics and consequences of bureaucratic harassment. Specifically, I examine how policies and administrative processes are *misused* to harass servicewomen. I examine the interplay between bureaucracy, institutional policies, workplace culture, and harassment at both organizational and individual levels.

I conceptualize that harassment achieved through bureaucratic means is distinct in its tactics and consequences, and that it has a unique effect on the victim’s workplace environment and career because the harassment is facilitated and legitimized by the organization. Identifying this phenomenon as “bureaucratic harassment” makes these processes and tactics visible. I explore how bureaucracy can be an essential component of workplace harassment on both an organizational and individual level. I focus on the mechanisms that create opportunities for bureaucratic harassment in the military workplace, the tactics that are used, and the experiences and consequences of this treatment, along with their gendered and

raced implications. I find that within the U.S. military, features such as a strict hierarchy, high levels of discretion granted to those in positions of power, and workplace expectations that commanders regulate the personal lives of servicemembers create the conditions for bureaucratic harassment. The gendered and raced organizational context shapes these processes; in a context where white men predominate in supervisory positions, harassers are likely to be white men.

I define bureaucratic harassment as the purposeful manipulation of legitimate administrative policies and procedures, perpetrated by individuals who hold institutional power over others and used to undermine colleagues' professional experiences and careers. Bureaucratic harassment refers to both the specific actions of individuals who actively manipulate bureaucratic policies, as well as the organizational structure that enables harassment and protects perpetrators. I argue that knowledge of bureaucratic procedures and access to bureaucratic channels is a source of power that can be used to cause harm. This concept acknowledges the interplay between organizational context, the power that individuals derive from bureaucratic structures, and the ability to manipulate policies and rules to harass. Bureaucracy is central to this type of harassment as it is both the source of power and protection of the perpetrator *and* the tool that they use to harass co-workers or subordinates.

METHODS

To understand servicewomen's experiences from their own perspectives, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews. I used snowball sampling originating from initial contacts in the U.S. military to recruit the 33 servicewomen in my study, 21 of whom were active duty military; of the remaining 12, two were in the reserves and the rest had been discharged within the last 10 years. Regarding military division, my participants' affiliations were Air Force (10), Army (8), Marine Corps (11), and Navy (4). Seventeen of my participants were enlisted and 16 were officers (see Table 1 for participant demographics). Nationally, 97.9 percent of women in the military are enlisted and 2.1 percent are officers (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense 2015). Thus, my sample is over-representative of officers and reflects the snowball sampling method that began with three officers.

My sample is 6.1 percent Asian American ($n = 2$), 9.1 percent Black ($n = 3$), 15.2 percent Latina ($n = 5$), and 69.6 percent white ($n = 23$).

TABLE 1: Demographics of the Sample (N=33)

	<i>Air Force</i> (<i>n</i> = 10)	<i>Army</i> (<i>n</i> = 8)	<i>Marine Corps</i> (<i>n</i> = 11)	<i>Navy</i> (<i>n</i> = 4)
Personnel status				
Enlisted	1	6	7	3
Officer	9	2	4	1
Race				
Asian	0	1	1	0
Black	1	1	0	1
Latina	0	3	2	0
White	9	3	8	3
Military status				
Active duty	7	4	8	2
Reserves	0	2	0	0
Out of military	3	2	3	2
Marital status				
Single	3	2	7	3
Married	5	4	3	1
Divorced	2	2	1	0

Among women in the U.S. military, 4.8 percent are Asian American, 27.7 percent are Black, 13.3 percent are Latina, and 54.6 percent are white (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense 2015). The military distinguishes Hispanic/Latina as an ethnicity, not a race, asking individuals in each race whether they are Hispanic/Latina. My sample more closely resembles national statistics for the officer corps, where servicewomen who are officers are 6.6 percent Asian American, 15.2 percent Black, 6.5 percent Latina, and 67.2 percent white (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense 2015). To protect the anonymity of my participants, I use pseudonyms and identify them in the paper only by their military branch, race, rank, and, when they have given permission, by their Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).

While I intended for the interviews to cover experiences with harassment and sexual abuse, they were not limited to these issues. The interview guide was intentionally general so as to allow participants to raise issues they deemed important (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Several participants raised experiences with harassment when asked about their most “prominent memories from their military service.” Others discussed harassment when asked about their “worst memories from their military experiences” or when asked about a “least favorite colleague.” I did not

directly ask the participants about harassment experiences until the end of the interview, and only if they had not already brought up harassment. The themes reported in this article emerged inductively from the interview transcripts (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). After transcribing the interviews, I read and re-read the transcripts, looking for themes and linking previously disconnected observations (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995). To develop themes for analysis, I wrote analytic and integrative memos based on the emerging patterns (Charmaz 2006; Lofland et al. 2006).

The military cultivates a sense of “insiderness” among servicemembers as distinctive and separate from civilians (Woodward and Jenkins 2011). The “military vs. civilian” dichotomy is necessary to consider when researching servicemembers, as it frames the interactions that a civilian interviewer has with a military participant. For example, I could not rely on shared knowledge or experience to build rapport or direct questions (Higate and Cameron 2006). However, as an outsider, I was able to use the role of “acceptable incompetent” to probe and ask questions that military insiders probably could not ask (Lofland et al. 2006, 29), such as questions about aspects of military service that are taken for granted or taboo (Emerson 2001). Additionally, I did not have to avoid issues associated with outranking or being outranked by my participants, such as awkwardness, feeling forced to answer questions, and glossing (Higate and Cameron 2006).

BUREAUCRATIC HARASSMENT

More than one-third of the servicewomen I interviewed experienced bureaucratic harassment, including half of the women of color in my sample. This represents a significant portion of my participants, especially since I did not directly ask about this phenomenon during the interviews. As with many forms of workplace harassment, bureaucratic harassment is often motivated by racism or sexism, with the intention of limiting the victim’s professional career. Both the military culture and command structure reflect standards of white, heteronormative masculinity (Moore 1991). Across the military, Blacks comprise less than 4 percent of top officer positions, Hispanics comprise less than 3 percent, and women (in total) comprise less than 9 percent of these positions (Quester and Gilroy 2002). Therefore, the majority of servicewomen are being commanded by white men in a gendered and raced organizational context and are therefore at risk for experiencing bureaucratic harassment.

My research finds that organizational features such as hierarchy, discretion, and organizational expectations facilitate bureaucratic harassment.

First, I demonstrate how individuals in positions of power are able to use their authority to manipulate policies through discretionary implementation of rules, regulations, and evaluative procedures. Next, I outline how servicemen can mobilize social power based on race and gender to gain institutional influence over women of color regardless of rank. In this section, I demonstrate how women of color are vulnerable to bureaucratic harassment not only from commanders but also from their peers. I then discuss how bureaucratic harassment can be used to intimidate servicewomen out of reporting incidents with sexual harassment and abuse. Next, I examine how discretion and hierarchical power are intensified in an organizational setting where commanders are expected to give advice on and control the personal lives of those who work for them. Finally, I discuss the consequences of bureaucratic harassment for servicewomen's individual lives and then I address how it shapes the military collectively.

Hierarchy and Discretion

According to servicewomen, their commanders and military peers rely on the bureaucratic system, *and their power within it*, to pursue workplace harassment. For example, Angela, a white Navy pilot, stated that her commander often made negative comments about women, and when he came into her unit, he actively tried to ground her from flying and move her to a desk job. She said:

Well, you know I had heard that he obviously didn't [want women in the service], you know, he'd make jokes about how he thought women shouldn't be in the Navy and this and that, and I never took anything to it, and then slowly some of these things started happening. All a sudden I'm not getting put on flights, those things are occurring . . . and he's trying to pull my [flight] qual[ifications], you know, it just didn't add up.

Although Angela recognized that this instance of bureaucratic harassment is motivated by sexism, her account focused on the bureaucratic dimension of the harassment. When her commander could not persuade her to move to the desk job by grounding her from flights, he resorted to the administrative system to build a case against her. Angela went on to say that after she would not voluntarily transfer, she failed an exam where only two of her answers were marked as incorrect, and she then was prohibited from retaking the exam by her commander despite a

protocol where anyone failing an exam can and should retake it within 90 days. She continued:

And then they tried to take my qualifications away from me, and I told them they couldn't do that because they didn't follow the procedure for allowing me to retake the test in 90 days. So, my master chief took me into his office and he told me repeatedly that I needed to convert and change my rate. Even though I had a Bachelor's degree in Aeronautics and I had over 3,000 flight hours, he wanted to convert me to PS, which is the equivalent of someone who works in an office and does accounting.

Subsequently, Angela was reprimanded for not retaking the exam in the 90-day time period. The commander in this situation relied on the bureaucratic and discretionary power granted to him by the military to damage Angela's military career.

Angela's experience reveals how the misuse of bureaucratic policies can be facilitated by a hierarchal power structure where power in decision making is based on rank. In the military, individuals with higher rank are afforded greater respect, responsibility, and power, as well as greater discretion in evaluations and policy implementation. Additionally, those with higher rank have more experience with bureaucratic rules and regulations. This can enable commanders to manipulate existing policies and exploit the fact that many servicemembers might not be familiar with the rules and/or might be hesitant to question their superiors. Additionally, unlike in contexts where an employer's discretionary firing of pregnant women (Byron and Roscigno 2014) or a landlord's discretion in evictions (Tester 2008) may be used to demonstrate harassment and build a case against perpetrators, a commanding officer's discretion is a protected aspect of military operations and considered essential to military effectiveness.

Angela's commander's expressed reluctance to work with women is not an isolated incident; rather, it is indicative of attitudes shared by many servicemen and supported by the military's masculinist environment (Vogt et al. 2007). Altogether, the military provides the culture, structure, and tools that servicemen can use to control and damage servicewomen's careers. In Angela's case, because her commander was in charge of setting the flight schedule for her unit, administering and evaluating tests required for certification, and recommending transfers, his unchecked manipulation of the rules, regulations, and evaluative procedures allowed him to achieve the goal of getting Angela out of his unit. Because of this bureaucratic harassment, Angela terminated her Navy career and left feeling like the military "is not a place for women."

Race, Power, and Hierarchy

Another tactic used to bureaucratically harass servicewomen is to issue a series of administrative sanctions for small or nonexistent “infractions.” For example, Joanna, a Latina Army officer, submitted a leave request for one of her soldiers to a colleague who tracked personnel movements in the unit:

So, my senior enlisted guy requested leave, I approve it, then my battalion commander has to approve it. So, I forward it to the Captain [who tracks personnel happenings in the unit] and this motherfucker denied it. He has no authority to do that. So, I fight him on it, fight for my enlisted guy’s leave. So, he turns around and gives ME a “counseling statement.” It said I was disrespecting a superior officer. He is the SAME RANK as me. . . . And he says my attitude is detrimental to unit morale and he has no other option but to recommend a dishonorable discharge.

While the counseling statement filed by her peer had little bearing on Joanna’s career because he was not her commanding officer and did not outrank her (in fact, a superior officer discarded it), her peer tried to establish a paper trail documenting that she was not a competent leader. Despite their equal rank, this white male captain attempted to mobilize the social power derived from his race and gender to exert bureaucratic power over Joanna in the workplace. By citing Joanna’s “attitude” in the infraction, he used tropes surrounding women of color as quick to anger and unprofessional (García-López 2008). Notably, only Black and Latina women in my sample reported that their “attitudes” were cited in infractions or performance reviews, demonstrating the gendered racism that motivates bureaucratic harassment in these cases (Texeira 2002). Collins (2000) argues that the controlling images that support oppressive systems are highly adaptive and can be invoked to oppress, discriminate against, or disempower women of color. Based on these tropes, specific actions or statements by women of color are more likely to be interpreted negatively by others.

Similarly, another serviceman of her same rank attempted to establish a paper trail against Joanna, claiming she was overweight even though she recently gave birth. She said:

I need to have a pregnancy profile in place. So, a pregnancy profile involves having an Army doctor signing an Army piece of paper saying that I had a baby. What the hell is wrong with our regular doctor saying this? Well I guess the Army doctor is special (laughing) so they want me to take

time out of my civilian day . . . not paying me . . . and have me go to an Army doctor . . . so that they don't have to have me take a PT [physical training/test] for six months after I give birth. But since there's no pregnancy profile in place I am now subject to these regulations. And I am like, "Well, are you going to send me to the doctor?" And he said, "No." Well then, fucking fine! So, then he put an administrative flag on me to say that I am a fat soldier.

Even though this officer was the same rank and did not have any authority over her, Joanna was forced to spend a significant amount of time responding to the administrative flag and trying to get it removed from her record. Joanna's experience also highlights the micro-processes of harassment that emerge when military standards and policies are based on male bodies (Furia 2010) that exclude pregnancy, further casting women as inappropriate members of the military. By targeting her postpartum body as problematic and using this to administratively punish her, her colleague invoked the stereotype that mothers are not ideal workers (Byron and Roscigno 2014; Ridgeway and Correll 2004).

Notably, only women of color in my sample were victims of harassment from those who did not outrank them (understood as "contra-power harassment"). This demonstrates how in a white masculine institution, social power based on race and gender can be translated into bureaucratic power (McKinney 1992; Rospenda, Richman, and Nawyn 1998). This makes women of color, regardless of rank, particularly vulnerable to bureaucratic harassment from servicemen, especially given their underrepresentation in the officer corps (Burk and Espinoza 2012).

Discouraging Reporting

Another aspect of how bureaucratic harassment may be used to undermine women in the workplace involves servicemen manipulating policies to prevent women from reporting abuse. For example, Samantha, a white enlisted Marine, met significant resistance when she tried to report sexual harassment from her supervisor. Her Gunnery Sergeant frequently sexually harassed her and the other women in her unit: "He would drop pencils near his desk and ask the females to bend over and pick them up." This same man also aggressively grabbed her in the barracks where he was drinking with women ranked lower than him, violating the military policy against fraternization between members of different ranks. Recalling this experience, she stated, "I used to wrestle in high school and he came up when I was in a room by myself and he, like, grabbed me [saying], 'I

heard you're a wrestler, let's wrestle.'" Samantha tried to report the issue, despite being discouraged from doing so by several leaders in her unit. Ultimately, her major coerced her into not reporting the harassment through administrative means:

They told me they would cancel all of my leave for Christmas if they had to investigate. It was clear that this was a threat. I was asked, "Do [you] really want to ruin this man's career? If we have to go forward, we will have to cancel your leave." I ended up just dropping it.

The major's position of power in the military hierarchy gave him the ability to grant and take away leave without documenting a reason. Since the reason for canceling leave would not be revealed on documentation, Samantha could not prove it was related to her attempt to report harassment. This enabled her superior to misuse the bureaucratic system to keep her from reporting sexual abuse. His threat to take away an earned benefit negatively affected Samantha's professional life. After suffering from the harassment and assault she experienced, she grew anxious of the further harm that she would suffer from losing her leave:

At that point I was so upset I just wanted to get out of there and go home for Christmas. The thought of losing that Christmas leave—I mean all I wanted to do was go home and get out of there. So yeah, we dropped it.

Samantha not only experienced sexual harassment, but she was subjected to further harassment under the bureaucratic system and, ultimately, she was denied access to official reporting channels for sexual abuse. In effect, Samantha's major prioritized the career of her harasser over her own. In this way, bureaucratic harassment can protect perpetrators and silence victims of sexual abuse, further alienating servicewomen from the institution.

Organizational Expectations

The potential misuse of discretionary power in military bureaucracy is exacerbated by the way professional and personal life is blended in the organization and the resulting expectations for commanders. Commanders are expected to care for everyone in their unit, both professionally and personally, and to give advice to servicemembers about non-job related issues, behaviors, and actions. Commanders also have the ability to make rules about behavior in nonwork settings that, like laws, have severe

consequences if broken. For example, a Military Protective Order (MPO) operates like a temporary restraining order in the civilian world (Tozer 2011). In domestic violence situations, an MPO is a short-term order that prohibits a servicemember from having contact with the victim, requires him or her to stay away from the victim's home, or even forces him or her to move into the barracks (Tozer 2011). Unlike a temporary restraining order in the civilian world, there is no court hearing required to issue an MPO, meaning that commanders may issue MPOs whenever they find it appropriate. Commanders' level of discretion and ability to issue directives with near-legal standing is a significant aspect of military bureaucracy.

This blending of work and nonwork space, and the blurring of professional and personal oversight by commanders, creates more opportunity for harassment, including the manipulation of evaluation procedures. Commanders are routinely required to complete performance reviews for individuals in their units. These reports assess qualities regarding character (e.g., courage, effectiveness under stress, initiative), leadership (e.g., leading and ensuring the well-being of subordinates), and intellect (e.g., decision-making ability and judgment) (Marine Corps 2012) and are highly vulnerable to the commander's opinion and discretion. Additionally, commanders can take into account non-work related factors when completing evaluations. Maura's experiences reveal how formal military policies and informal expectations can blur the line between work and personal life when a commander's discretion results in administrative consequences for intimate choices. Maura, a white enlisted member of the Air Force, said:

His voice would change when speaking to me; it would go up a bit and was mocking-like. There were also . . . like, many little comments he made. And then I got engaged and the EPRs [Enlisted Performance Reports] he gave me were damning. I hadn't done anything but excellent work. I worked over 40 hours a week. It was the sort of things I got assigned to. . . . Like he would say, "I need you to go to base liquor store for our picnic next week." Things you don't ask a military person to do. There were other enlisted people who didn't outrank me and never got handed any of those jobs. But they were all male. The attitude he had and the damning EPR . . . he gave me scores that were one off from what I needed to be promoted. It would take me forever to make rank at that point with those scores. He was mad at me because I was leaving and marrying an officer and he saw me as traitor for marrying an officer as an enlisted . . . you know, and he was an enlisted.

Maura's commander treated her differently from men and made derogatory comments to her, which themselves are examples of workplace harassment. However, upon finding out that she was engaged to the Marine Corps officer she was dating, he then turned to the administrative system and exploited his power within the military bureaucracy to cause her professional harm. Dating between enlisted and officer ranks is known as "fraternization" and is prohibited in the military. In this case, the commander should have reported Maura's fiancé for fraternization, as this offense is only levied against the higher-ranking individual. However, instead of reporting an officer who outranks him, the commander chose to address the violation by giving Maura low marks on her performance review. Here, again, discretion abets the commander's punishment, allowing him to give her a low score without documenting the reason. Maura, in turn, cannot prove it was due to her dating choices and cannot fight the score. When commanders' discretionary power over bureaucratic policies and procedures intersects with expectations about behavior in nonwork settings, it empowers them to control and penalize non-work related actions, such as Maura's personal choice of who to marry.

Normalizing Harassment

Some servicewomen accept this type of discretionary punishment as appropriate. For example, when I spoke about this instance with another servicemember, a white, Marine Corps officer, she said, "He probably ranked her low on judgment as dating an officer is considered bad judgment and absolutely deserves some sort of punishment from the commander."

This servicemember did not see anything wrong with punishing Maura for marrying an officer. Although fraternization rules exist to protect lower-ranking individuals from being exploited by higher-ranking individuals, she still supported the punishment of the lower-ranking servicemember. Similar to young women who normalize sexual harassment and abuse (Hlavka 2014), this demonstrates that there are instances of bureaucratic harassment that are accepted and normalized. Within an environment that privileges masculinity, some servicewomen may accept as normal, and even participate in, sexist practices that discriminate against women.

Thus, examples of bureaucratic harassment in the U.S. military include purposefully manipulating policies to revoke qualifications, citing servicewomen for small infractions to build a negative paper trail, or using discretionary authority to prevent servicewomen from reporting

experiences with other forms of harassment and abuse. The military's bureaucratic structure allows and facilitates this form of harassment. Unchecked access to discretionary policies and complete authority in how to run their units, including writing performance reviews and approving benefits, gives commanders extraordinary power in the military workplace. This power can be mobilized to do harm to servicewomen, especially given the expectation that commanders may regulate servicemembers' personal as well as professional decisions. In this way, bureaucratic harassment disrupts servicewomen's professional lives and carries distinct consequences, which I discuss below.

Personal Consequences

Bureaucratic harassment is experienced at a personal and organizational level and, even if ultimately unsuccessful, negatively affects the victim and leaves her open for further abuse. For example, when Maura received a negative review after getting engaged to an officer, she stated, "It would take me forever to make rank at that point with those scores." Being kept at a lower rank makes her ineligible for trainings, positions, or opportunities reserved for servicemembers at the next rank as well as keeps her at a lower pay-grade. A negative counseling statement, such as the one Joanna's coworker filed, can have a similar effect. Furthermore, when an individual is slow to make the next rank, she is seen as being a weak servicemember, and this can be used to separate her from the military. Losing one's earned qualifications, as Angela was threatened with, can dislodge one's path within her military occupational specialty, result in a transfer or being removed from a unit entirely, and render her training useless in the civilian world. Therefore, the original administrative strike can have multiple negative consequences.

Perpetrators of bureaucratic harassment use legitimate military procedures and processes to harass their subordinates or peers. The use of these legitimate channels often includes documentation that is detrimental to victims' careers, meaning that women spend a significant amount of time trying to respond to, recover from, or remove an administrative strike. Some women must attend classes or workshops in response to the cited infraction. The perceived legitimacy of the harassment may make servicewomen feel as though they do not belong in the military. Some servicewomen silence their experiences to maintain their military careers, ensure postservice benefits, or demonstrate that women do belong in the military.

Bureaucratic harassment also has consequences outside of the military career. For example, June, an Asian American enlisted member of the

Marine Corps, had a fairly positive experience in the Marine Corps. Upon deciding to enroll in college, and therefore not to re-enlist, she requested to leave the military early so she could start the fall semester on time. This is a fairly common request with established procedures that June followed. She recalled:

I turned in all my papers and I turn in my package to the Marine Corps and then my officer says, "If you ask again I'm going to kick you out with an admin discharge, other than honorable." And so I had like three and a half years of good service, no bad conduct marks, you know, I had good conduct marks, and I just said, "Okay," and waited and then I got out with an honorable discharge.

As a result, June stayed in the military through her contract, starting school a semester late and losing her opportunity to play soccer at an institution that recruited her to do so. These consequences, she weighed, were better than what she would have faced receiving an "other than an honorable" discharge. Forcing a servicewoman to leave the military through an administrative separation, especially if listed as "other than honorable," would not only end her military career but also revoke all postservice benefits and negatively affect civilian employment opportunities. In June's case, this is particularly salient, as an honorable discharge is necessary to receive veteran's funding for her education.

The effects of bureaucratic harassment may follow individuals into their postservice lives in other ways, too. Monique, a Black enlisted member of the Navy, described her experience of attempted rape during her service, providing a poignant example:

He tried to rape me. I ended up running out the car and just getting away from him and catching the little shuttle and going back to my barracks. I remember I was like, "Forget this." I had this number from my therapist and I said, "I'm very depressed I want to hurt myself." They took me to a mental hospital and I was there for like a week with crazy people. Like crazy people who were detoxing from drugs. I reported it, what happened . . . I did undisclosed reporting so only my commander knew. . . . Come to find out, I reported it, they investigated it, and it was his word against mine and of course because I was technically crazy, they didn't believe me. . . . Then when I went to get out of the Navy, I got this code that said I have a personality disorder.

It is clear Monique was suffering from the experience of an attempted rape. Yet, her institutionalization was used to question her creditability

and to dismiss her sexual assault case rather than as evidence that she had experienced trauma. Monique further explained that because she was marked as having a personality disorder, she was unable to receive medical benefits from the military. Monique's case is not unique; the Veteran Affairs Committee has accused the military of improper use of personality disorder diagnosis to medically separate servicemembers so that they do not have to pay for postservice medical benefits (Draper 2011). In these instances of bureaucratic harassment, experiences with other kinds of abuse can be used against victims to separate them from the military, as well as sever responsibility for postservice medical needs. Monique's experience points to an institution that prioritizes preserving its masculine culture over creating a workplace that is inclusive of women.

Scholars argue that the military shapes meaning both within the armed forces and the civilian world (Hale 2012; Sasson-Levy 2003). Civilians' respect, glorification, and adoration of the military (Belkin 2012) means that military categorizations and the outcomes of military legal or medical systems have significance in civilian spaces. For example, when hiring a veteran, civilian employers can request a form (DD-214) that documents an individual's record of service, including how that service ended. Victims of bureaucratic harassment who received any military punishment, cited misconduct, or other than honorable discharge will forever carry this with them on their record. Therefore, the stigma of being labeled by the military as having a personality disorder, like Monique, or being dishonorably discharged, as June could have been, carries additional weight when this information is readily available to civilian employers.

Collective Effects

Within a gendered institution, the active manipulation of bureaucratic rules, regulations, and policies can be used to protect the organization as a masculine space. Importantly, the gendered and raced context of the military shapes not only who is likely to be given power through rank and discretion, but it also determines the actions, behaviors, and individuals that are targeted through bureaucratic harassment. In addition to limiting individual women, bureaucratic harassment can be used to undermine groups of women or women in general. For example, under the combat exclusion policy (in place until December 2015), the U.S. military did not deploy women as members of combat units. However, women were routinely "attached" to combat infantry units. The subtle difference meant that women were not *technically* deployed into combat but were unofficially deployed into combat situations. The Female Engagement Team

(FET) was one model of all-women teams attached to infantry units in combat zones. Olivia, a white Marine Corps lieutenant who had been on two FET deployments, stated:

There was a major, he was like the operations officer—he used to be like—all the time he would say, “I don’t think women belong in the infantry.” You know, he would say things like, “It would be a disaster to have women in the infantry.”

This officer’s sexist views had a direct collective impact on Olivia’s team. She explained that originally, the FET had one lieutenant, an officer rank, in charge of four to five teams of enlisted marines attached to infantry units. The lieutenant was not attached with them to the infantry units but managed them from base. While in combat zones, each team was headed by a sergeant, an enlisted rank. Prior FETs recommended a lieutenant lead the teams on the ground because sergeants cannot make decisions during operations meetings where other team leaders are officers (e.g., lieutenants, captains, and majors), nor can they make financial decisions for their teams. Thus, attaching a lieutenant would give the women-only units more power.

Though this recommendation was set to take place in future deployments, the same major who made it clear that he did not think women belonged in the infantry ended up blocking this policy change, thereby limiting the FETs’ power in combat zones. Thus, the major’s decision limited deployment opportunities for women officers and made FETs dependent on officers from other exclusively male units in combat situations. This demonstrates how bureaucratic harassment can occur at the collective level through policies created to block the success of groups of servicewomen and preserve men’s dominance in combat decision-making. Olivia spoke out after discovering that the recommendation was blocked. She was subsequently the target of individual-level bureaucratic harassment:

I went into the CO’s [commanding officer’s] office and talked to her about it. I was the XO [executive officer] you know, so her second in command. She told me that this was the decision from the operations officer and that this was how it was going to be. I one hundred percent disagreed with this and let her and the major know it. I told them that this was undercutting our effectiveness and capabilities and that this course of action ensured that the FET teams would be limited and restricted in theater. . . . So anyway, then they called me into the office and basically . . . they just told me I would no

longer be going on the deployment. That's when they said, "You are mutinying," [and] they kicked me off.

In spite of her experience leading a prior FET deployment, Olivia was fired from her position as the executive officer and dismissed from the unit, just a week before they deployed. She explains:

I fought this policy because I felt like it was made for sexist reasons. This man had said so many times that he didn't think women should be in the infantry and that they weren't capable. The decision [not to attach lieutenants to each team] wasn't made to better the FET team or to help the mission or even to ensure the safety of my Marines.

Despite the clear gender implications of the major's decision to block this policy recommendation, Olivia's objection is interpreted as an act of rebellion rather than a legitimate attempt to enhance her team's effectiveness and expose a sexist action. The servicewoman commanding the FET team supported the major's decision to block the policy recommendation and to fire Olivia from the deployment. In effect, by punishing Olivia for voicing her concerns, Olivia's superiors reinforced the military's masculine command structure and sustained the prevailing sexism that limits women's opportunities and experiences in the U.S. military.

Olivia's experience demonstrates how one commander can employ bureaucratic and administrative policies at his discretion to limit the military experiences and success of both an individual woman and groups of women. In this way, individuals may continue to limit women's ability to serve in combat despite the military lifting its ban on women in combat in December 2015. This is notable given the Marine Corps commandant's recommendation that women in the Marine Corps should remain excluded from certain combat specialties, despite the Secretary of Defense's ruling that all military occupational specialties must integrate (Baldor 2015). Similarly, bureaucratic harassment can be used to continue military policies that have been repealed, such as Don't Ask Don't Tell (repealed in 2011) and the ban on transgender people (lifted for active-duty service-members in 2016 but recently targeted by the Trump administration). Thus, while certain forms of harassment and exclusion are no longer legal on paper, the intersection of bureaucratic discretion and workplace harassment can allow for the invisible continuation of these policies and perpetuate inequality on an organizational level.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the relationship between bureaucratic systems and workplace harassment by documenting how the purposeful misuse of organizational rules, regulations, and policies can negatively affect women, constituting a distinct form of harm. In the U.S military, bureaucratic harassment is a way for servicemen to degrade women's military experiences and damage servicewomen's professional lives. As more women move into combat units, they may experience increased resistance and harassment. Yet, despite rules and policies embedded within the military's bureaucratic structure to help mitigate or punish abuses, this same structure allows bureaucratic harassment to flourish. As a result, many servicewomen come to expect a level of harassment in their work lives, making them choose between "coping with it," or leaving the military all together—which 10 of the 33 women in my sample opted to do. The sum of this treatment causes many servicewomen to question their role in the military and ultimately reinforces the space as masculine. Knowing how women experience harassment in gendered bureaucratic workplaces and how access to harassment reporting procedures and policies can be resisted, obstructed, and blocked, is essential for changing these processes and supporting better integration of women into these workplaces.

Because the military claims to be an inclusive employer for women, people of color, and more recently, lesbian, gay, or bisexual individuals, victims of discriminatory treatment might not recognize certain experiences as emblematic of harassment. While many servicewomen in my sample experienced instances of harassment that were motivated by racism and/or sexism, several of them did not explain these experiences as gendered or raced. Instead, they specifically emphasized the administrative and bureaucratic aspects of their harassment. Sasson-Levy (2003) argues that women in extremely gendered institutions may not recognize sexism as such because doing so denies the harassers' ability to victimize them. Not seeing oneself as a victim of sexual and/or racial harassment, yet being able to describe in detail the administrative attacks and consequences they suffered, highlights the pervasiveness of gendered and raced institutions in controlling the careers and professional experiences of those working within them. Exploring the intersection of bureaucracy and workplace harassment reveals the problematic processes and components of gendered bureaucratic workplaces that can enable some employees to limit the careers of their colleagues.

Although the military offers a range of economic, education, health, and professional development benefits, access to these benefits come at

different costs based on one's social location. While this study focuses on the experiences of servicewomen, bureaucratic harassment also is likely enacted against men of color and to police sexuality. Exploring how men from various social locations experience bureaucratic harassment may reveal more about the gendered and raced dynamics of military employment. Furthermore, since gender is fluid (Barrett 1996; Martin 2003) and gendered meanings and discursive practices within organizations can change, it is important to identify and describe the specific tactics that can be used to harass through organizational power and policies.

Bureaucratic harassment is likely to occur in other workplaces that are hierarchal, where there is a high level of discretion afforded to those in positions of power, and where there is a blending of work and personal life. Other military and paramilitary organizations such as military academies, police departments, and correctional facilities, as well as other top-down bureaucratic organizations such as some academic institutions and large corporations, are likely places where employees experience this kind of treatment. While the military has a variety of rules and regulations that commanders can manipulate, bureaucratic harassment could also be present in organizations where there is little administrative oversight and few institutional rules. For example, small businesses and start-up companies that lack clear rules for hiring, firing, promotion, and reporting harassment could be susceptible. In such organizations, those with bureaucratic power could easily draft a rule to damage someone's professional experience and career. Additionally, work environments where there is an expectation to work long hours, conduct work in "out-of-office settings" (Morgan and Martin 2006), and to attend social events with coworkers could be vulnerable to bureaucratic harassment because interactions in these settings can have professional consequences. Even within organizations that have a formal human resources department and established policies for reporting discrimination and harassment, power based on rank, skill, or social category can be translated into bureaucratic power and protection, especially when work is organized in smaller autonomous units such as teams. When these particular bureaucratic features are influenced by an organizational context that supports sexism and racism, it is likely that men will be situated in places of power and have the ability to manipulate policies, rules, and regulations to undermine certain colleagues.

Feminist scholarship has explored how gender is embedded in work structures (Acker 2006; Britton 2000), and how race shapes the gendered workplace (García-López 2008; Teixeira 2002). Scholars also have

examined the use of policies to facilitate workplace inequality (Bobbitt-Zeher 2011). However, the particular ways in which individuals are able to use bureaucratic policies as a tool to harass within gendered and raced organizations has been understudied. This study identifies how servicemen are able to draw on institutional power derived from their rank and position, as well as social power based on gender and race, to have greater knowledge of and access to bureaucratic policies, which they can manipulate to cause harm. The documentation that may accompany this harassment serves as evidence against the *victim*—making harassment difficult to prove. The perceived legality of these actions lends legitimacy to the incidents of harassment, encourages victims' silence about their mistreatment, and increases women's frustration with employment in these workplaces. By identifying the unique form of harm that can be enacted through administrative channels as bureaucratic harassment, I aim to make visible a specific dimension of workplace harassment that damages the careers of victims, impedes the achievements of institutions, and preserves gender and racial inequality.

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