NPS-AM-22-254

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The Role of Leadership in Corruption and Misconduct Scandals in the U.S. Military

June 2022

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Prepared for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93943

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The research presented in this report was supported by the Acquisition Research Program of the Department of Defense Management at the Naval Postgraduate School.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of leadership in three high-profile corruption and misconduct scandals—the Fat Leonard scandal, the murder of SPC Vanessa Guillén, and the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal—that occurred in the U.S. military over several decades. Additionally, the research delves into the culture of corrupt military commands and investigates patterns of leadership behavior that set the conditions for wrongdoing to occur. This way, the research goes beyond the often-cited "one bad apple" explanation examining organizational wrongdoing as a process. Using a qualitative research approach and utilizing an existing theoretical model, I categorize and evaluate publicly available data. The research findings illustrate that leaders' actions or inaction directly triggered corruption or misconduct in two out of three scandals; however, leadership was indirectly involved in the third case study. Organizational culture also had a normalizing effect attracting more severe transgression. Lastly, leaders were found mindful of misbehavior in all cases, tacitly or overtly authorized misconduct, and failed to cultivate an ethical organizational culture. These results show that systemic deficiencies and leadership failures continue afflicting DOD and articulate the need for more drastic policies. Based on the findings, recommendations for the DOD are provided and explained.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my advisor Dr. Paul Lester for his commitment and support throughout this research endeavor. His advice and knowledge were critical and helped me transform an idea into an actual research project.

Additionally, this research could not have been completed without the support of my wife, who has always encouraged and supported me throughout my studies.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my country Greece and the Hellenic Army for providing me the opportunity to study at the Naval Postgraduate School.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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LIST OF TABLES

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CID	Criminal Investigation Division
CO	Corrupt Organization
DOD	Department of Defense
GDMA	Glenn Defense Marine Asia
NCIS	Naval Criminal Investigative Service
OCI	Organization of Corrupt Individuals
SHARP	Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention
SPC	Specialist

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

Despite regulatory reforms, ethics training courses, and command emphasis by senior U.S. military leaders, high-profile corruption and misconduct cases continue to emerge (e.g., Fat Leonard, Marines United, the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén, and many others). These cases may suggest that the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) faces organizational culture problems that extend past the often-cited "one bad apple" explanation, and elected leaders in the United States have indicated as much (Grisales, 2021). As I explore here, after-action reports from these cases often point to the inaction of organizational leadership as a significant contributory factor in each case or, even worse, that leaders themselves were directly involved in wrongdoing. Thus, this research is motivated by the concerning trend of major corruption and misconduct cases that occurred in the DOD over several decades. Corruption and misconduct scandals blemish the U.S. military's reputation and call into question the DOD's ability to instill the required core values to its workforce. Further, corruption and misconduct cases distract the DOD from focusing on its core mission and erode the public's trust in the institution (Flatley & Tiron, 2021). In sum, not only can DOD do better in this area, but it must do better for the good of the institution, its military and civilian workforce, and the American people.

The leadership and organizational science literature clearly shows that leaders shape the culture of their organizations (Schein, 2004, p. 2). Likewise, strong empirical evidence from social learning and social cognitive theories supports that leaders role model behaviors that are adopted by followers (Bandura, 1977, 2002). Therefore, as just mentioned, the DOD needs to learn more about wrongdoing and how leaders influence their subordinates' moral behavior in order to prevent corruption and misconduct effectively.

The existing literature discusses the complexity of organizational corruption and misconduct and sheds light on how it initiates, propagates, and subsequently becomes embedded in the routines and culture of an organization (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Also,

the extant theoretical frameworks illustrate ways to approach and understand the problem of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Palmer, 2008; Palmer & Maher, 2006). According to Palmer (2008), collective misconduct refers to a group activity that is organized and sustained. Hence, the research recognizes the processual character of organizational contamination and investigates ways to approach it.

Moreover, a few studies have provided empirical evidence about the process model of collective corruption, a concept Ashforth and Anand (2003) introduced to analyze organizational wrongdoing. The thesis extends such knowledge by applying this theory in the military context. This endeavor can help examine the problem of corruption and misconduct in the U.S. military, discussing this issue as a process and exploring the role of leadership in three noteworthy corruption and misconduct cases. Specifically, this thesis focuses on the homicide of Specialist Vanessa Guillén at Fort Hood, Texas; the Navy's "Fat-Leonard" scandal; and the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners of war in the Abu Ghraib detainment facility. Beyond understanding the senior officers' influence on the facilitation of misconduct and the role of organizational culture in the continuation of wrongdoing, this thesis also documents the contextual commonalities shared in all three cases. This knowledge can help DOD identify critical focus points, design and implement effective policies, and reinforce its efforts to ensure a culture free from infectious leaders. The findings can also increase understanding of the process model of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003) by examining the theory's validity in a military context.

B. RESEARCH PURPOSE AND TARGET AUDIENCE

This study explores the role of leadership in corruption and misconduct by reviewing three large-scale corruption cases in DOD commands located in various geographical areas (Fort Hood, Japan, and Iraq) that occurred in the U.S. military over several decades. In addition, the research delves into the culture of the corrupted military commands, investigates the patterns and motives these cases involve, identifies the similarities as well as the unique characteristics they present, and reflects the impact of the findings on DOD for further exploration. Through the lens of an existing theoretical framework, this study aims to identify critical points in the cases that could enhance insight

into how wrongdoing could be halted before it spreads and becomes detrimental. Based on the research presented, DOD policymakers can better understand the initiating factors of corruption or misconduct to enact more effective policies in the future.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Three questions drive the research and define the scope of this thesis:

Primary Question

1. Within the contexts examined in this thesis, what role did leaders play (directly or indirectly) in corruption or misconduct?

Secondary Questions

2. What role did culture play in the institutionalization of corruption?
3. Across the three cases examined in this thesis, were there common patterns in leader behaviors that set the conditions for corruption or misconduct to occur?

D. METHODOLOGY

Using the model introduced by Ashforth and Anand (2003), this thesis explores the leaders' role in directly or indirectly influencing the institutionalization of corruption. The cultivated culture, a critical factor in the consolidation of wrongdoing, is also examined with the same framework. The study utilizes qualitative data from publicly available investigations, governmental reports, court press releases, newspaper/website articles, and peer-reviewed articles to obtain a comprehensive view of the cases under analysis. Specifically, the process model of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003) is used to organize the data into categories and help identify top-down, bottom-up, and horizontal connections, patterns, similarities, and unique characteristics of leader behaviors in the cases.

E. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

As mentioned earlier, the study aims to increase knowledge of the problem of corruption in the U.S. military in order to inform the DOD of potential corrective actions. In addition, the research contributes to the academic discussion of corruption by providing empirical evidence on the topic through the application of an existing theoretical model to military cases. The findings can promote the understanding of the dynamic role of leadership in corruption and culture and extend the application of the theory to the military context.

F. LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The study, which explores the role of leadership in influencing corruption or misconduct in military units, reviews three high-profile cases. Although limited in number, the cases under analysis are representative, and the research focuses on the leaders' actions or inactions and the culture inside these organizations. The study, therefore, does not attempt to make inferences and generalizations about the geographical areas where the scandals occurred. Still, the data extracted from investigations and publicly available information is useful to understand the role of contextual factors in permitting misconduct. Lastly, the research focuses on collective corruption and examines wrongdoing as a process (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Palmer, 2008; Palmer & Maher, 2006). That is, the study does not discuss corruption or misconduct by pointing to individuals' characteristics; rather, it examines wrongdoing at the organizational level.

G. ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The introduction has outlined the research background and the goals and significance of this study. Chapter II provides the literature review that supports this research and provides a better understanding of the complexity of corruption and misconduct, summarizes and evaluates the prevalent views on the topic, emphasizes the role of organizational culture, and explains the unique characteristics of military culture. Chapter III presents the methodology used to collect, organize, and evaluate the qualitative data. Chapter IV presents the study's findings and

recommendations for the DOD. Lastly, Chapter V summarizes conclusions, provides the answers to the research questions, and offers suggestions for future research.

H. SUMMARY

This chapter provided the background of corruption and misconduct in the U.S. military, introduced the purpose of the study and its significance, defined the research questions, methodology, and study contributions, and acknowledged its limitations. The next chapter provides the literature review. A synthesis of the existing knowledge on corruption and misconduct and a detailed explanation of the importance of culture and military culture connects the research background to the research questions of this study.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the theoretical background related to the concepts discussed in the present study. The primary purpose of the research is to examine the role of leaders in directly or indirectly influencing the establishment of corruption or misconduct in their units, to analyze the role of culture as a facilitator of wrongdoing, and finally, to identify patterns of leaders' behaviors presented in the cases. Thus, the literature review begins by defining corruption and misconduct. Then, different levels of analysis are outlined, and the dominant conceptual approaches to examining wrongdoing are summarized and explained. Subsequently, the process model of collective corruption is introduced and detailed (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Lastly, to align the literature review with the research questions, the significance of culture and leadership is articulated and enhanced with the military culture's unique characteristics.

B. CORRUPTION AND MISCONDUCT

The literature on organizational wrongdoing refers to corruption or misconduct to describe behaviors or actions that negatively affect the organizations and society. Nonetheless, each term is associated with specific attributes, and researchers use them to explain particular illegal activities. For example, corruption is specifically associated with incidents such as bribery, fraud, gambling, and forgery, whereas misconduct refers broadly to inappropriate or illegal behavior or conduct. The thesis uses both terms to encompass cases under both fields of study. In order for the reader to understand how these terms resemble or differ from each other, this section provides a thorough examination of their definitions.

Misconduct in this thesis is examined at the organizational level, although individual-level deviance should be accounted for in more comprehensive conclusions about organizational wrongdoing. Several researchers have defined the term. Vaughan (1999) defines organizational misconduct as "acts of omission or commission committed

by individuals or groups of individuals acting in their organizational roles who violate internal rules, laws, or administrative regulations on behalf of organizational goals" (p. 288). In this broad definition, the author differentiates misconduct from mistaken acts by adding the words "omission" and "commission" that drive the deviant conduct. Further, Greve and Palmer (2010) explore in their definition the line separating right from wrong and focus on the accountable entities determining this line. They state that misconduct is a "behavior in or by an organization that a social-control agent judges to transgress a line separating right from wrong; where such a line can separate legal, ethical, and socially responsible behavior from their antitheses" (p. 56). They continue by describing the social control agent "as an actor that represents a collectivity and that can impose sanctions on that collectivity's behalf" (p. 56). As such, drawing from these studies, we could say that organizational misconduct describes illegal-transgressive acts or behaviors realized when the individual or the organization passes the restrictive line enforced by social control agents.

On the other hand, corruption derives from the Latin word "corruptus" and means "decay, ugliness, depravity, dishonesty, can be bribed, immoral, deviation from purity" (Dinanti & Tarina, 2019, p. 34). Its detrimental effects have been known to humanity from ancient times, contaminating various civilizations from the early beginning of history (Campos & Pradhan, 2007, p. 2). Nowadays, it continues to afflict societies, erodes ethical standards, and its complexity makes confrontation efforts extremely challenging for governments.

Caiden (1988) argues that corruption means "something spoiled; something sound that has been made defective, debased and tainted; something that has been pushed off course into a worse or inferior form" (p. 7). The literature also points out that corruption refers to "misuse of power or office" (Gorta, 2013, p. 14). This conceptual uniqueness refers to misuse for either private or organizational gain. Bratsis (2003), in his article discussing political corruption, articulates the role of personal pursuits in undermining the public benefit. Likewise, Pinto et al. (2008) argue that corruption in an organization may result from corrupt individuals who benefit from their wrongful actions. Further, they mention that wrongdoing could be the outcome of corrupt organizations that aim to profit

illegally from their misdeeds. Hence, corruption can be associated with individual pursuits or organizations encouraging unethical behavior by their members.

Regardless of its particular drivers, corruption is not examined in isolation; instead, social forces judge its existence and effects. Chibnall and Saunders (1977) recognize the importance of the social environment in their definition and argue that corruption can be understood as "a negotiated classification of behaviour rather than as an inherent quality of behaviour" (p. 139). Similarly, Anand et al. (2004) explain corruption as the "misuse of an organizational position (or subunit) gain, where misuse, in turn, refers to departures from accepted societal norms" (p. 40). Therefore, it is evident that corruption refers to illegal and dishonest actions or behaviors where the actors behave immorally, and the social context qualifies the misuse.

From the preceding analysis, it appears that the terms corruption and misconduct could be used interchangeably at times depending on the context. Nevertheless, I contend that misconduct is a broader term than corruption, describing a wide spectrum of deviant behaviors. Corruption is focused mainly on personal or organizational gain derived from the abuse of power and authority. Misconduct describes improper conduct derived from the omission or commission of certain acts (Vaughan, 1999, p. 288) that trespass the line set by social control agents (Greve et al., 2010). Both have detrimental effects, and the actions to mitigate them point at the same individual and organizational aspects. Therefore, it is appropriate for the present study to discuss them in tandem.

C. INDIVIDUAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

The literature discusses corruption and misconduct by approaching the topic either from the individual or organizational standpoint. Although the individual level of analysis is more narrow, understanding the processes involved in this stage is critical to examining the consequences at the organizational level (Greve et al., 2010). More specifically, considering that corrupt organizations are in many cases the outcome of unscrupulous individuals, it is important to gain insight first into how and why people resort to immoral behavior.

The extant research on individual wrongdoing follows two main approaches. The primary approach assumes that individuals become involved in corruption or misconduct through rational decision making (Greve et al., 2010; Palmer, 2008; Palmer & Maher, 2006). Individuals, for example, proceed to unethical behavior after engaging in a cost-benefit analysis (Greve et al., 2010; March, 1994; Palmer, 2008; Palmer & Maher, 2006). Based on the pressure/opportunity model, this theory assumes people participate in wrongdoing after weighing the positives and negatives of their decisions (MacLean, 2008). Thus, people initially examine the benefits-rewards and consequences-penalties of their prospective actions and commit corrupt deeds if the pros outweigh the cons (Becker, 1968).

Additionally, the primary approach discusses how normative assessments affect decision making (Greve et al., 2010; March, 1994; Palmer, 2008; Palmer & Maher, 2006). The researchers contend that the individuals' norms, values, and beliefs operate as internal ratifiers if the immoral deeds are congruent with their standards. This way, individuals can proceed to misconduct, feeling justified despite their blatantly deviant behavior.

Another explanation that could be included in the rational engagement in corruption or misconduct involves the moral disengagement from wrongdoing (Bandura, 2002). In his article discussing the moral disengagement theory, the author illustrates strategies individuals or groups use to avoid self-regulatory mechanisms and justify their illegal behavior. This way, they utilize rational decision making to valorize unethical acts and feel upright and legitimate. However, these tactics emphasize the role of social interaction, which, combined with personal traits, can develop and sustain the perpetuation of wrongdoing in organizations. As such, contrary to the previous dominant theories, moral disengagement is affected both by individual predispositions and the social context.

On the other hand, the dominant approach is questioned by an alternative theory suggesting that individuals can act wrongfully without utilizing a cost-benefit weighting or deciding based on normative assessments (Greve & Palmer, 2010; Palmer, 2008; Palmer & Maher, 2006). The studies on this emerging theory assume that people can proceed unwittingly with wrongful actions (Greve & Palmer, 2010; Palmer, 2008; Palmer & Maher, 2006). In other words, it is believed that a creeping process leads people to extensive wrongdoing in the absence of previous positive dispositions. Factors that affect the

decision-making process and result in an unconscious engagement in corruption or misconduct include cognitive limitations, information constraints, and a gradual transition toward deviant behavior (Greve et al., 2010; Palmer & Maher, 2006).

Furthermore, the developing alternative theory articulates the significance of social context in shaping individuals' decisions and behaviors (Palmer, 2008; Palmer & Maher, 2006). As such, individuals make unconscious decisions affected by their social environment. The corruption or misconduct is then established and extended through small steps which build on the commitment to previous unethical actions.

D. RATIONALIZATION STRATEGIES

Individuals engage in wrongdoing by utilizing rationalization strategies to justify unethical behavior. Building on the prevailing social context, wrongdoers can present their actions as moral and rightful, dispelling their fears of feeling responsible for their immoral conduct (Anand et al., 2004). Besides, rationalization in its extreme form works as a stimulator for extensive and more severe wrongdoing (Zyglidopoulos et al., 2009), thus facilitating the perpetuation of illegal behavior.

The literature discusses several theories explaining this phenomenon. Researchers in the criminal behavior and psychosocial fields delineate the main views. For instance, Bandura (2002) and Sykes and Matza (1957) introduce moral disengagement and neutralization tactics, elaborating on self-serving justifications that shape individuals' behavior. Although the studies use different terminology, the suggested concepts overlap significantly (Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010).

In their study, Maruna and Copes (2005) summarize the neutralization theory and explain its contribution to the conceptualization of rationalization. They focus on rationalization strategies used by criminals. In doing so, they draw on the existing research and discuss Sykes & Matza's (1957) five techniques of neutralization: Denial of responsibility, Denial of injury, Denial of the victim, Condemnation of condemners, and Appeal to higher loyalties. Anand et al. (2004) have extended these tactics by adding the Metaphor of the ledger. Additionally, they intertwine the strategies with the social context

to explain how organizational corruption is established and sustained. Figure 1 depicts the extended rationalization strategies proposed by Anand et al. (2004) and elaborates their differences with examples.

Strategy	Description	Examples
Denial of responsibility	The actors engaged in corrupt behaviors perceive that they have no other choice than to participate in such activities.	*"What can I do? My arm is being twisted."* *"It is none of my business what the corporation does in overseas bribery."*
Denial of injury	The actors are convinced that no one is harmed by their actions; hence the actions are not really corrupt.	*"No one was really harmed."* *"It could have been worse."*
Denial of victim	The actors counter any blame for their actions by arguing that the violated party deserved whatever happened.	*"They deserved it."* *"They chose to participate."*
Social weighting	The actors assume two practices that moderate the salience of corrupt behaviors: 1. Condemn the condemner, 2. Selective social comparison.	*"You have no right to criticize us."* *"Others are worse than we are."*
Appeal to higher loyalties	The actors argue that their violation of norms is due to their attempt to realize a higher-order value.	*"We answered to a more important cause."* *"I would not report it because of my loyalty to my boss."*
Metaphor of the ledger	The actors rationalize that they are entitled to indulge in deviant behaviors because of their accrued credits (time and effort) in their jobs.	*"We've earned the right."* *"It's all right for me to use the Internet for personal reasons at work. After all I do work overtime."*

Figure 1. Rationalization strategies. Source: Anand et al. (2004).

Similarly, Bandura (2002), in his social-cognitive theory, discusses the importance of self-regulatory mechanisms and the techniques individuals use to disengage them. The concept of selective moral disengagement points at moral functions not activated unless the individual's ethics trigger the self-sanctioning system. The social environment in which wrongdoers operate significantly affects the self-regulatory mechanisms, permitting individuals to adopt different courses of action depending on the situation. Bandura (2002) introduces the following tactics that wrongdoers use to rationalize their deviant behaviors: Moral Justification, Euphemistic Labelling, Advantageous Comparison, Displacement of Responsibility, Diffusion of Responsibility, Disregard or Distortion of Consequences, Dehumanization, Attribution of blame. Figure 2 illustrates the mechanisms' definitions and categorizes them into various domains.

Domain	Mechanism	Description
(a) Reprehensible behavior	Moral justification	Detrimental behavior is portrayed as personally and socially acceptable, serving worthy purposes.
	Euphemistic labeling	Distorted language is used to present reprehensible behavior as respectable.
	Advantageous comparison	Actions are compared to each other, so that they show the advantage or negligible consequences.
(b) Agent's responsibility	Displacement of responsibility	Action is presented as stemming from authorities' dictates.
	Diffusion of responsibility	Reprehensible actions are attributed to group decisions, excluding personal responsibility.
(c) Detrimental effects	Disregard for or distortion of consequences	Evidence about hurting or harmful consequences is denied or minimized.
	Dehumanization	The victims are portrayed as sub-human objects, mindless savages, deprived of human qualities.
(d) Victim	Attribution of blame	The adversary or the circumstances are to blame for the actions. Punitive conduct is a response to a provocation.

Figure 2. Moral disengagement strategies. Source: Posada et al. (2018).

The research on the prevailing rationalization strategies just described indicates that the concepts discussed overlap (Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010) or extend knowledge about how individuals justify immoral behaviors. The studies also suggest that some techniques are used more frequently than others. These include euphemistic language (Anand et al., 2004) and denial of responsibility (Maruna & Copes, 2005). Needless to say, these strategies are not exercised in isolation, but the social context shapes the justification process. Indeed, Anand et al. (2004) recognize the interplay of rationalization and socialization that alleviates the individual's sense of guilt and allows immoral actions to seem reasonable and acceptable.

E. ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

The organizational level of analysis is based on the prevailing theories of individual wrongdoing and focuses mainly on collective corruption or misconduct (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Brief et al., 2001). The literature examines the role of leadership, climate, and the culture developed in organizations and how wrongdoing permeates them over time

(Ashforth et al., 2008; Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Schneider et al., 2013). The individual-level theories serve as inputs to understand how wrongdoing corrodes organizations (Greve et al., 2010; Palmer, 2008). That is to say, the cost-benefit and normative decision making help identify the causes of organizational corruption or misconduct, pointing at the corrupt motives of individuals. Indeed, the rational decision pros-cons calculations demonstrate the cognitive processes with which individuals fulfill their private interests at the organization's expense (Greve et al., 2010). The normative assessments contribute to disseminating the shared values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions that comprise the organization's culture (Greve et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the studies point to the interplay of rationalization and socialization that collaboratively forge corrupt routines and lead to the persistence of organizational wrongdoing (Anand et al., 2004; Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Individuals rationalize their unethical behavior and communicate misconduct through social interaction. This way, the social context facilitates an incremental engagement in wrongdoing that continually contaminates the organizational culture. Besides, according to Zyglidopoulos et al. (2009), excessive rationalizations can lead to more severe misconduct due to a dynamic and co-evolutionary interaction between immoral justifications and corrupt deeds. The authors demonstrate how over-rationalizations build on previous misconduct, leading to overcompensation and, subsequently, the escalation of wrongdoing.

Another conceptual approach suggests that corruption or misconduct is initiated by individual greed or malicious corporate pursuits. Pinto et al. (2008) explore these differences by introducing the Organization of Corrupt Individuals (OCI) and the Corrupt Organization (CO). Their study extends knowledge of corporate corruption by stating that it can serve either individual or organizational purposes. Also, it adds to the bad apples in bad barrels theory, implicitly noting that bad barrels can create the bad apples.

Finally, a common theme in the literature examines the role of leadership in authorizing corruption or misconduct (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Brief et al., 2001). Studies delineate how leaders influence their subordinates' behaviors and examine the leaders' role in initiating and institutionalizing organizational wrongdoing (Ashforth et al., 2008; Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Brief et al., 2001). Researchers also explore the detrimental

effects of less explicit and direct leadership involvement in wrongdoing. For example, laissez-faire leadership is assumed to be destructive for organizations, although leaders do not openly condone misbehavior (Einarsen et al., 2007).

Organizations, in their turn, recognizing the detrimental effects of wrongdoing, try to mitigate it by developing formal ethics control systems and procedures (Ashforth et al., 2008). The prevailing assumption is that proper systems and ethics assessments can address corruption or misconduct (Ashforth et al., 2008). Existing studies, however, indicate that formal organizational systems are relatively ineffective compared to informal social interactions (Hollinger & Clark, 1982). Hence, these systems serve mainly as a checklist, concealing deficiencies instead of establishing the urgency to adopt ethical values and behaviors (Ashforth et al., 2008).

F. TOWARDS A HOLISTIC VIEW OF WRONGDOING

As illustrated from the research on organizational wrongdoing, addressing corruption or misconduct remains a complex endeavor. Focusing only on the bad apples excludes the analysis of the dynamic processes and interactions that could explain and address the hidden nature of corruption (Gorta, 2013). Also, the focus on corrupt individual traits distracts attention from systemic deficiencies and cultural problems, leading to incomplete explanations and understanding of wrongdoing (Ashforth et al., 2008).

The dominant approach used to explain collective corruption or misconduct assumes rational decisions made by the wrongdoers. Indeed, the cost-benefit and normative assessments have been extensively utilized to understand organizational wrongdoing (Greve et al., 2010; Palmer & Maher, 2006). For example, McKendall and Wagner (1997) argue that corporate misconduct results from individual or group motive, opportunity, and choice. Still, they mention the importance of ethical climate as a contributor to effective controls that shape the choice and help prevent organizational wrongdoing.

Yet, this approach does not answer some critical questions. How do otherwise moral individuals become involved in wrongdoing (Ashforth & Anand, 2003)? How is corruption or misconduct perpetuated even after wrongdoers are moved from the

organization (Ashforth & Anand, 2003)? In order to answer these questions, the analysis requires a view of the dynamics between individual traits and organizational processes. The analysis must also depart from the assumption of totally rational decision-making and move toward discerning the interplay of conscious and unconscious cognitive processes.

G. THE PROCESS MODEL OF COLLECTIVE CORRUPTION

Brief et al. (2001) and Ashforth and Anand (2003) approached collective corruption as a process coordinated by the top management in an organization, embedded in the organizational culture, and communicated through socialization among the organization's members. Ashforth and Anand (2003) developed the process model of collective corruption to elaborate on the dynamic interaction of three pillars: institutionalization, rationalization, and socialization. The model helps explain how wrongdoing is normalized in organizations. Normalization is considered the process by which corruption or misconduct enters and contaminates the organizational structure and its members, and is subsequently imparted to new participants (Brief et al., 2001). Figure 3 depicts the three pillars of the model that collaboratively and interdependently foster a dynamic relationship sustaining wrongdoing infinitely.

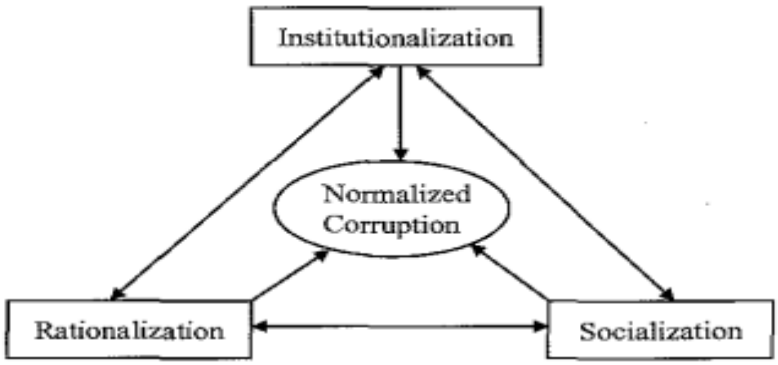

Figure 3. The pillars of normalization. Source: Ashforth and Anand (2003).

According to Ashforth and Anand (2003), the institutionalization of wrongdoing is achieved in three consecutive phases. During the first phase, a tolerant, ethical climate and inadequate or unethical leadership contribute to the initiation of corruption or misconduct.

Research confirms that leaders serve as role models for their subordinates and, either openly or not, leaders' behavior may deliberately or inadvertently affect their employees' behavior (Baucus, 1994; Schein, 2004). Additionally, leaders are critical in authorizing wrongdoing because they approve corruption or misconduct through formal and direct ways such as transactional rewards or punishments (Brief et al., 2001) or tacit behaviors such as ignoring or overlooking corrupt deeds (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Ashforth and Anand (2003) argue that leaders influence or appear to authorize their subordinates to engage in wrongdoing normatively and habitually. The researchers also point at individual leaders' characteristics, such as inherent charisma, and discuss the organizational insulation that further increases leaders' influence and encourages misbehavior in organizations. Therefore, during this phase, the leaders' actions or inactions are assumed to play a vital role in institutionalizing wrongdoing.

In the second phase, previously exercised wrongdoing saved in the organization's memory is utilized and practiced routinely (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). It is claimed that organization members can proceed to more severe deeds by building on previous positive outcomes. This way, unethical practices increase, resulting in a shared acceptance of immoral conduct, further undermining the ethical climate. Subsequently, norms, values, and beliefs evolve and justify the corrupt routines that collectively shape a corrupted organizational culture or subculture (Ashforth & Anand, 2003).

In the third phase, the researchers point out that cultural contamination and the ongoing repetitive wrongdoing lead to routinizing corruption—that is, the normative assumptions developed to facilitate the corrupt routines lead to an unconscious engagement in unethical behavior, eliminating the need to dispute the established practices. As such, an organization's members cannot perceive the detrimental effects of their wrongful actions. Additionally, this process signifies how deeply wrongdoing is integrated within organizational structure and culture so that it emerges as a natural and legitimate choice for newcomers to engage in illegal behavior.

The model's second pillar comprises rationalization strategies individuals or groups utilize to justify their unethical behavior (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The authors explain that wrongdoers engage cognitive self-exonerating mechanisms to avoid the consequences

of their immoral behavior. Indeed, individuals or groups can present their actions as justifiable and legitimate by building on the organizational culture or subculture and socializing with their peers. The neutralization tactics (Sykes & Matza, 1957) or moral disengagement mechanisms (Bandura, 2002) elaborated earlier help justify and normalize such immoral conduct. This way, corruption or misconduct is encouraged and imparted to newcomers. Rationalization tactics are also assumed to serve as the transition path new members follow to become experienced corrupt members (Ashforth, 2000; Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Hence, the rationalization pillar serves as an internal construct authorizing and perpetuating otherwise illegal behavior.

The third pillar of the model articulates the power of socialization to impart corrupt attitudes to new organizational participants (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The researchers claim that socialization helps spread the organization's beliefs, values, and norms to new members. Moreover, it provides the opportunity to impart corrupt values reinforcing members' receptiveness to unethical behavior. Particular emphasis is given to the role social influence and the social cocoon play in perpetuating wrongdoing. The authors refer to social influence, indicating the importance of social interaction among organizational participants. They also discuss the social cocoon to demonstrate how group forces shape corrupt behaviors and articulate how socialization can dampen newcomers' objections to wrongdoing. As such, the authors contend that the organizational environment shapes the newcomers' behaviors and willingness to adopt a positive stance towards wrongdoing. This state is achieved gradually through their socializing in the organization, and eventually, despite newcomers not being accustomed to corruption or misconduct, they sustain wrongdoing in the organization.

Finally, Ashforth and Anand (2003) emphasize the mutually reinforcing relationship of these three pillars that collaboratively maintain corruption or misconduct. The authors suggest that in order to explain how wrongdoing permeates organizations over time, all three pillars are necessary. Further, they believe that explaining the normalization of corruption or misconduct in organizations requires focusing on systemic deficiencies rather than individual misbehavior.

It is noteworthy that by developing the process model of collective corruption, the authors bridge the dominant theory of rational decision making with the alternative approach that assumes an incremental and mindless engagement in wrongdoing. The model presupposes that the initiation of corruption or misconduct involves conscious decisions from top management. However, it shows that the organizational culture and socialization create circumstances that facilitate a mindless engagement in corruption or misconduct.

Palmer (2008) has explored the model and extended it in five ways. The researcher points at the model's assumptions and claims it can be enriched to become more thorough. His contribution adds to the concepts of mindless and boundedly rational engagement in wrongdoing and reveals alternative ways to approach the problem of collective corruption and misconduct. The proposed contributions of his study are presented in the following paragraphs.

First, the author believes that collective wrongdoing can originate as the outcome of boundedly rational and mindless decisions in addition to cost-benefit and normative assessments. It is suggested that bounded rationality describes cognitive constraints and information limitations that facilitate engagement in wrongdoing. Moreover, Palmer (2008) explains that rational and mindful decision making does not need to occur to initiate corruption or misconduct. This suggestion constitutes a significant difference from the process model of collective corruption, which assumes an entirely rational and mindful initiation of wrongdoing.

Additionally, the initiation of wrongdoing is not necessarily the outcome of top management's behavior; rather, it can be attributed to anybody in the organizational hierarchy. This way, the author contends that initiation of corruption or misconduct can be the product of anyone in the hierarchical structure and not necessarily a top-down process. The extended model confirms how passive forms of leadership, such as laissez-faire methods, allow the initiation of wrongdoing at lower organizational levels. This could happen by creating a perception of tacit approval of misbehavior, especially when leaders avoid making decisions or focus exclusively on organizational goals rather than the means to achieve them.

Furthermore, Palmer (2008) investigates additional organizational structures and social influence processes other than formal leadership authorization, subordinates' commitment, wrongdoing routinization, and labor division, which Ashforth and Anand (2003) mentioned in their model. Regarding the organizational structures, the author points to the significance of obtrusive controls, which provide explicit guidelines and are expressed in the formal rules communicated by top management. He also focuses on unobtrusive mechanisms related to job requirements and responsibilities, existing norms, information availability-handling, and technology that define implicit expectations for organizational participants. As for the social influence processes, Palmer (2008) first examines the reciprocity norm: the moral duty people have to pay back favors received from others. Second, he discusses the social proof (comparison) and liking-based compliance. Social comparison describes behaving and feeling according to the behavioral and emotional standards of the social environment, whereas liking-based compliance describes people's inclination to obey the demands of those they like. Lastly, the author states that how individuals define a situation—the response to environmental stimuli regarding their roles and expectations—constitutes another process that could contribute to wrongdoing. Hence, it is thoroughly explained how several other processes and structures could exist and operate in the proliferation and perpetuation of corruption or misconduct.

Contrary to the process model of collective corruption assumptions, Palmer (2008) states that wrongdoers mindlessly engaging in corruption or misconduct do not necessarily develop positive attitudes towards their unethical behavior. Still, contextual factors determine the possibility of doing that. The author focuses on the incomplete effectiveness of commitment processes and rationalization tactics that help individuals justify and embrace illegal behavior when dealing with a cognitive conflict due to their wrongful actions. In fact, Palmer (2008), drawing from Staw's (1976) research, claims that when contextual factors such as "volition, visibility, and irreversibility" (p. 125) are not present, the wrongdoers could not develop a positive inclination toward their corrupt deeds.

Finally, the author emphasizes the importance of social control agents in determining what constitutes wrongdoing. These entities can establish acceptable or

unacceptable behaviors by enforcing regulations, norms, and ethical standards (Greve et al., 2010). In other words, unless there is a clear line separating right from wrong, organizations cannot be assumed to be engaged in wrongdoing. Therefore, social control agents are assumed to be critical factors when investigating and explaining organizational wrongdoing.

H. LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

According to Schein (2004), "leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin" (p. 1). Research has thoroughly investigated their interplay and the significance of their relationship for the overall organizational health and effectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Resick et al., 2009; Schein, 2004). Specifically, it is emphasized that leaders create and manage the organizational culture, while culture determines the appropriate type of leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Schein, 2004).

Additionally, Schein (2004) elaborates that culture develops from the leader's beliefs, values, and assumptions that are enforced in the group and followed by its participants. As such, if the leader's behavior results in positive outcomes in terms of successful tasks and relationships, then the leader's attitudes get approved and shared among the group's members. According to this explanation, the author defined culture as:

> A pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 2004, p. 17)

A fundamental characteristic of the preceding definition is that culture is "shared." Nevertheless, researchers have disputed this attribute. Martin (2001), in his book, summarizes different definitions of organizational culture, illustrating and elaborating on this conflict. He argues that although contradictions exist, most explanations recognize that the "shared" trait of culture exists in subcultures formed from different groups in the organization. This consensus view is integrated into one out of three overall cultural

perspectives. Schneider et al. (2013) discuss and summarize the integrationist, fragmented, and differentiated views of culture. They argue that the integrationist perspective assumes culture is shared in the organization; the fragmented view involves ambiguity and accepts that culture is not necessarily shared; finally, the differentiated stance points to different meanings and assumptions developed in subcultures.

Another conceptual attribute of culture involves its unconscious and invisible nature (Schein, 2004, p. 8). This assertion is congruent with the author's definition of culture, pointing to "shared basic assumptions" among the group's members (p. 17). It also clarifies "the way we do things around here" definition of culture (Martin, 2006, p. 1). Schein (2004) recognizes three levels to illustrate culture's visible and invisible aspects. He argues that the first level is comprised of artifacts; that is, visible structural or processual characteristics the newcomer is exposed to that are readily observable but hard to understand. These include language, myths, rituals, clothing, and formal structural documents and processes. The second layer consists of the espoused values. These constitute the communicated core management values that do not necessarily convey the deeper meanings of behaviors in the organization. In the third level, the author delves into the least visible aspect of culture, the underlying assumptions. These reflect why an organization's members follow a particular type of behavior and communicate and react a certain way (Martins & Terblanche, 2003; Schein, 2004). Besides, as described previously, when the leader's beliefs, values, and assumptions lead to repeatedly successful outcomes, those attitudes tend to be adopted, shared, and reinforced in the organization (Schein, 2004). This understanding justifies how the underlying assumptions develop and form deeply ingrained and unquestionable cognitive patterns, thus explaining how things are done in the organization (Schneider et al., 2013).

The third characteristic of culture is its social power. The organizational culture is imparted to new members through socialization. In this regard, newcomers are exposed to organizationally held beliefs, values, assumptions, and acceptable behaviors communicated by long-time members (Martins & Terblanche, 2003; Schein, 2004). Indeed, social interaction and sharing of commonly held beliefs, values, and assumptions among organization members are traits of culture that explain why specific meanings and

behaviors manifest in the organization. The role of socialization is also emphasized in the set of standard frames developed and followed (Entman, 1993; MacLean, 2008). It is argued that members of an organization use frames to interpret their environment, assigning preferred labels to analyze, evaluate, and address situations. Therefore, frames developed in the organization are part of the culture existing in the basic assumptions and beliefs and imparted to newcomers through continuous social interaction.

Literature has exhaustively investigated the role of leaders in forming organizational culture. This reality is closely related to evidence that leaders affect the perception of ethical leadership in their organizations (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Treviño et al., 2000, 2003). Leaders must demonstrate that they are moral persons and managers to be perceived as ethical leaders (Treviño et al., 2000). The researchers contend that executives who possess virtuous traits and are moral individuals should also serve as ethical managers in order to build a reputation for ethical leadership. It is not enough for leaders to demonstrate personal morality. They also need to communicate their moral values to their subordinates. Therefore, if leaders ignore the critical coexistence of these two components, they could be considered "amoral or ethically neutral" (Treviño et al., 2000, p. 129, 2003).

Furthermore, leaders have several means to communicate their beliefs, values, and assumptions to organization members. Schein (2004, p. 246) suggests primary and secondary mechanisms. These mechanisms, depicted in Figure 4, represent how leaders carve out the organizational culture and forge their subordinates' ethical perceptions.

Primary Embedding Mechanisms

- What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis
- How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises
- How leaders allocate resources
- Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching
- How leaders allocate rewards and status
- How leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate

Secondary Articulation and Reinforcement Mechanisms

- Organizational design and structure
- Organizational systems and procedures
- Rites and rituals of the organization
- Design of physical space, facades, and buildings
- Stories about important events and people
- Formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters

Figure 4. Mechanisms to instill beliefs, values, and assumptions. Source: Schein (2004).

It is noteworthy that the primary means leaders use to instill their values in the organizational culture correspond significantly with the fundamental requirements Treviño et al. (2000) suggest for a moral manager: "role modeling through visible action, rewards and discipline, communicating about ethics and values" (p. 131). Therefore, how ethical leadership is perceived in the organization is the outcome of what leaders do or do not do formally and informally.

Research on leadership has also pointed to the importance of Bandura's (1977, 1986) social learning theory in determining perceptions of ethical leadership (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006). The authors suggest that leaders serve as role models who demonstrate attractiveness, credibility, and legitimacy, influencing their subordinates' perceptions directly or indirectly. Organization members observe and imitate leaders' behavior, give attention to what they communicate, and obey the rewards and punishment system they enforce. In addition, the researchers emphasize the indirect power of social learning as organization members take notice and react according to how others' behaviors are rewarded and disciplined.

Lastly, literature has bridged and documented the research on leadership and ethics, correlating different types of leadership with ethical leadership. Research indicates that

ethical leadership significantly overlaps with transformational or charismatic leadership and culture, and authentic and spiritual leadership. On the other hand, it has no relationship with transactional theory, except for the reward system reinforcing ethical conduct (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Toor & Ofori, 2009; Treviño et al., 2003). Most importantly, laissez-faire leadership, a passive form or absence of leadership, negatively correlates with ethical leadership (Toor & Ofori, 2009) or is even associated with destructive forms of leadership (Einarsen et al., 2007). Hence, the findings suggest that leaders' ethical traits and sustained behavior and actions, what they pay attention to and tolerate, how they react in situations, how they treat their subordinates, along with organizational goals and resources, are critical factors affecting the perception of ethical leadership.

I. UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF MILITARY CULTURE

Military organizations demonstrate significant differences compared to civilian organizations (Beder, 2012). These differences originate from the institutional character of military culture (Soeters, 1997; Wilson, 2008) and the unique attributes of military personnel, structure, rules, and mission (Redmond et al., 2015). According to Soeters et al. (2006), "military organizations represent a specific occupational culture which is relatively isolated from society" (p. 237). This culture consists of specific core values, and to enter the military society, enlisted soldiers and officers have to undergo a strict selection process that measures their mental and physical skills and limits. Research on military culture has focused mainly on the integrationist perspective (Winslow, 2000), which assumes that cultural beliefs, values, and norms are shared in the organization. However, the differentiation view has also been examined (Soeters et al., 2006). Under this dominant cultural view, the U.S. Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard) have established and emphasized their core values and mission, maintaining their distinguished cultural characteristics. Figure 5 depicts the five branches' core values and missions, which Redmond et al. (2015) illustrated in their article discussing the significance of military culture.

Branch	Founded	Service members	Mission	Core values
Army	June 14, 1775	Soldiers	Fight and win our Nation's war by providing prompt, sustained land dominance across the full range of military operations and spectrum of conflict in support of combatant commanders	Loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage
Air Force	September 18, 1947	Airmen	Fly, fight, and win…in air, space, and cyberspace	Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do
Navy	October 13, 1775	Sailors	Maintain, train and equip combat-ready Naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression and maintaining freedom of the seas	Honor, courage, and commitment
Marine Corps	November 10, 1775	Marines	Train, organize, and equip Marines for offensive amphibious employment and as a force in readiness	Honor, courage, and commitment
Coast Guard	August 4, 1790	Coast Guardsmen	Safeguard the Nation's maritime interests	Honor, respect, and devotion to duty

Figure 5. Core values and missions of the five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. Source: Redmond et al. (2015).

Except for the core values that shape the military culture, military organizations possess several other characteristics reinforcing their uniqueness compared to the civilian world. Military personnel wear uniforms that represent a visible difference from most employees in the private sector (Soeters et al., 2006). The uniform ensures consistency and indicates each member's rank, position, and authority (Redmond et al., 2015). Yet the most notable differences are evident in the structure, core activities, and rules governing military organizations. The military is based on a strict hierarchy that defines the relationship between leaders and their subordinates (Beder, 2012; Wong et al., 2003). Also, total commitment to the nation, dedication to the military unit, its mission, and fellow members (Fenell & Weinhold, 2003; Martin & McClure, 2000, p. 15), discipline, military rules and regulations, as well as the chain of command (Redmond et al., 2015), and continuous training to be prepared for action (Fenell, 2008) add to the unique features of military organizations and culture. All these characteristics secure and reinforce the primary purpose and existence of the military, which is the execution and administration of war (Dunivin, 1994; Redmond et al., 2015; Wong et al., 2003). When required, military officers and enlisted soldiers must demonstrate their commitment to the nation by risking their lives. Therefore, from this point of view, military organizations differ from private businesses significantly.

Furthermore, "leadership and the military are practically inseparable" (Wong et al., 2003, p. 657). Leaders have a significant effect and can change the military culture (Murray, 1999). The hierarchical structure that binds the relationships between the leaders and their subordinates differentiates authority in military organizations and the leaders' jurisdiction over their units. Moreover, leaders in the military, unlike managers in the corporate sector, make decisions regarding many people's lives or determining a nation's existence (Wong et al., 2003). Hence, military leadership under various circumstances has broad power and responsibility and could be labeled the cornerstone of military culture, determining military organizations' failure or success.

J. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the concepts most relevant to this study. Specifically, previous studies discussing corruption and misconduct were reviewed, and conceptual approaches to understanding the origins and perpetuation of wrongdoing were analyzed and evaluated. Critically important for the research questions is the examination of the roles of leadership and culture in military organizations. As such, dominant theories on organizational culture and leadership were summarized, and the unique characteristics of military culture were explored, further articulating the significance of culture and leadership in the military. The literature review has provided the theoretical basis for the cases under analysis. The following chapter explains the research methodology.

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III. METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the methodology utilized for the study. The research focuses on three large-scale corruption or misconduct cases—the Fat Leonard scandal, the Abu Ghraib prison detainees' mistreatment, and the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén at Fort Hood, Texas—that occurred in the DOD over several decades. In order to obtain a comprehensive view, qualitative data extracted from publicly available investigations, governmental reports, court press releases, newspaper/website articles, and peer-reviewed articles were perused and categorized in separate databases. More specifically, the following section describes the research reasoning process adopted throughout the data analysis. Subsequently, the philosophical worldview, research approach, and design are presented and explained. Then, the research technique is elaborated, and the sources—search terms used to build the databases—are discussed. The chapter concludes by analyzing the databases' formation and their contribution to answering the research questions.

B. RESEARCH REASONING PROCESS

According to Hyde (2000), researchers use two reasoning processes to create or test theories. Inductive reasoning leads to theory formation after observational data demonstrate generalizations in a specific examined instance. In contrast, deductive reasoning establishes a testing process, confirming or rejecting an existing theoretical concept under particular circumstances.

The research methodology used in this study follows a deductive reasoning approach principally. That is to say, each of the three case studies under analysis is evaluated against the assumptions of an existing theoretical model—the process model of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Therefore, this approach is deemed suitable as it establishes a formal process to test the theory and proceed with a consistent method of data analysis.

C. PHILOSOPHICAL WORLDVIEW

The postpositivist worldview (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) determines this research endeavor. The empirical data test the theoretical model's hypotheses in order to accept or reject its expectations. Although the data evaluation and categorization are subjective, the use of a deductive approach throughout the analysis enhances the validity and sureness of the findings. Furthermore, the rationale supporting the claims for the specific case studies does not intend to prove a perfect interpretation of the phenomena presented in the analysis; nevertheless, it helps substantiate patterns identified in the study.

D. RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

The research approach utilized in the study is qualitative. The complexity of the cases and the need to identify general themes related to institutionalized and perpetuated corruption or misconduct make this approach suitable for evaluating qualitative data and building relevant databases for analysis.

As already mentioned, the research design involves examining three large-scale case studies. A case study provides an in-depth understanding of the phenomena observed in a specific context. Further, it is an effective way to demonstrate the application of an existing theoretical model empirically.

E. RESEARCH TECHNIQUE

The "pattern matching" research technique is used to test the theoretical model's hypotheses (Sinkovics, 2018; Trochim, 1989). Trochim (1989) has created a framework of the method and summarized its steps, as shown in Figure 6:

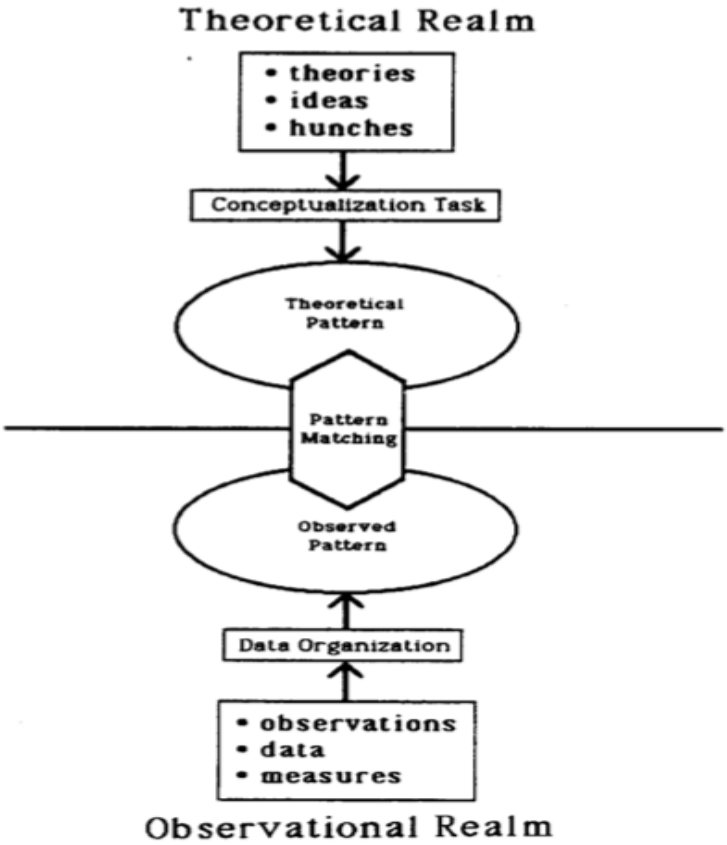

Figure 6. The pattern matching model. Source: Trochim (1989).

Pattern matching refers to the intersection of the theoretical and observational realms. The former consists of the following steps:

- Exposition of a theory to establish an explicit mental process based on formal or informal sources (Sinkovics, 2018; Trochim, 1989)
- Explanation of the theoretical hypotheses under examination and presentation of potential alternative theories that could describe the observed outcomes (Hyde, 2000; Sinkovics, 2018)
- Description of expected theoretical patterns

The latter involves a bottom-up stream of information. The observational realm represents the empirical field accepting or rejecting the theoretical propositions. The stages in this realm are as follows:

- Data collection, including documents, observations, notes, surveys, interviews, etc. (Sinkovics, 2018; Trochim, 1989)
- Data organization for analysis and interpretation purposes
- Identification of empirical patterns

After completing the steps involved in the two fields, the intersection of theoretical and empirical patterns demonstrates the validity of the tested theory or model. As such, the extent to which "pattern matching" is achieved helps researchers measure the practical application of an idea or theory in a specific context.

Following the technique just elaborated, this study investigates organizational wrongdoing by employing an existing theoretical model—the process model of collective corruption, pointing at the dynamics of three interdependent pillars: institutionalization, rationalization, and socialization (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). That is, the research, rather than focusing on individual attributes and predispositions, investigates the interaction of these three pillars that are collaboratively supposed to forge and normalize wrongdoing. Another critical aspect of the research involves applying the model in the military context, thus delimiting the analysis to the military units and geographic areas in which the scandals occurred.

Additionally, the model assumes that the institutionalization of wrongdoing is achieved over time, following three discrete phases leading to corrupt routines and systemic deficiencies (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). These phases, elaborated in the previous chapter, articulate the importance of leadership and culture in initiating and embedding corruption or misconduct inside the organization. Therefore, to answer the research questions, the data collected in the study focus mainly on the institutionalization pillar of the model while confirming or rejecting the synergistic impact of all three pillars.

The model's assumptions are the hypotheses of the study (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). In order to satisfy the research purpose, the following primary theoretical explanations are examined:

- The existence and synergistic interaction of the three model's pillars—institutionalization, rationalization, socialization (Ashforth & Anand, 2003)
- The initiation of wrongdoing as a rational and mindful leadership decision (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Palmer, 2008)—direct involvement of leadership in wrongdoing
- Cultural or subcultural norms, values, and beliefs help normalize misbehavior and support mindful engagement in wrongdoing (Ashforth & Anand, 2003)

Alternative explanations for the expected observations include:

- The absence of one or more of the model's pillars or unclear interaction between them
- The initiation of wrongdoing as a mindless and/or boundedly rational decision (Palmer, 2008)
- The initiation of corruption or misconduct anywhere in the organizational hierarchy (Palmer, 2008)—indirect involvement of leadership in wrongdoing
- The unclear or unsubstantiated role of culture in normalizing corruption or misconduct

As they emerge, the theoretical patterns describe contradicting or extending views of the model. For the model to be applicable, the existence and interdependence of the three pillars should be substantiated. The remaining hypotheses help investigate the role of leaders in the cases and the importance of culture in institutionalizing and perpetuating wrongdoing.

F. FORMATION AND MANIPULATION OF THE DATABASES

The databases developed for the study organized the data to allow for the identification of themes and the acceptance or rejection of the theoretical explanations. Data collection began with the author's access to publicly available investigations, governmental reports, court press releases, newspaper/website articles, and peer-reviewed articles for each case. Subsequently, upon reviewing the documents, their text was coded to identify connections with the theoretical explanations mentioned in the previous section. Then the data was extracted from the papers and used to populate the databases.

The coded text corresponding to a specific theoretical hypothesis was assigned accordingly, and the explicit or implicit concepts were recognized and documented. Lastly, in this first stage of the analysis, a rationale confirming or rejecting the existence and interdependence of the model's three pillars was provided. After examining each case in isolation, the study moved to the second stage of the analysis: evaluating the observed patterns, recognizing themes, and summarizing the findings. This step concluded the study by answering the research questions. A full accounting of the coding scheme used for this research is presented in Appendix A.

G. SOURCES AND SEARCH TERMS

The sources consulted to populate the databases are listed in Appendix B.

The search terms used to query internet pages are as follows:

- Fat Leonard scandal: "Fat Leonard," "Glenn Defense Marine Asia," "Fat Leonard scandal," "U.S. Navy 7th Fleet scandal."
- Abu Ghraib prisoners' abuse: "Iraq Prison Abuse Scandal," "Abu Ghraib torture scandal," "graphic photos Abu Ghraib prison," "Abu Ghraib Army investigation," "Abu Ghraib report."
- The murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén at Fort Hood, Texas: "Vanessa Guillén's murder," "killing of SPC Vanessa Guillén," "sexual harassment

of SPC Vanessa Guillén," "Fort Hood scandal," "Fort Hood independent report," "Fort Hood Army investigation."

H. SUMMARY

This chapter elaborated the methodology used for this research. A thorough explanation of the reasoning process, philosophical view, and the research approach, design, and technique adopted throughout the study set the formal research boundaries and concepts to investigate the case studies in a consistent and scientifically proven way. Additionally, how the databases were developed and utilized was explained, and the search terms used to collect evidence from the sources were summarized. The next chapter discusses the study's findings and provides recommendations based on the prevailing themes that came up from the research.

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IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research findings, summarizes common patterns identified among the case studies, and provides recommendations. Specifically, the following section lays out the observed patterns that emerged in the databases, compares them with the primary and alternative theoretical explanations that were presented in the previous chapter, and elaborates on the validity of the process model of collective corruption for each case (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Subsequently, common themes emerging from the cases are reviewed and evaluated. Based on this analysis, the chapter presents conclusions about the role of leadership and culture within the context of the case studies and discusses their implications for the DOD. Finally, recommendations for the DOD are provided and explained.

B. FINDINGS

The findings analyzed in this section are derived from separate databases developed to support the research for each case study. Text extracted from publicly available investigations, governmental reports, court press releases, newspaper/website articles, and peer-reviewed articles was coded and categorized according to relevant phases and pillars of the process model of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The institutionalization pillar of the model was enhanced with propositions from Palmer (2008), extending the model and making it more comprehensive. This method was followed consistently for all three case studies examined in this thesis. Additional information about the databases' formation and manipulation is provided in Appendix A. The databases accompanying this research project are provided as supplemental files; the resources used to populate them are listed in Appendix B.

1. The Fat Leonard Scandal

This corruption scandal took its name from the overweight Malaysian defense contractor Francis Leonard, whose company Glenn Defense Marine Asia (GDMA) defrauded the United States for over 25 years. GDMA provided husbanding services to the U.S. Navy 7th fleet in the Pacific region, including waste removal, refueling, food, water, protection, and other port visit requirements. In 2013, the fraud scheme was revealed, stunning the public and creating concerns about the ethos of the U.S. Navy and its ability to embrace its core values. The investigation has not yet been completed, but as of this writing, it has resulted in the prosecution of 34 U.S. Navy officials and GDMA executives, 28 of whom pled guilty (Ziezulewicz, 2022).

In order to examine this case, press releases issued by the Department of Justice and website articles were utilized and populated the database. In some instances, the evidence extracted from the sources pertained to more than one phase or pillar of the theoretical model and was coded accordingly. The following subsections summarize the observed patterns that emerged after the text was categorized.

a. Institutionalization Pillar

The institutionalization pillar of the model consists of three consecutive phases (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The first phase attributes the initiation of wrongdoing to leadership decisions given a permissive organizational environment and lax regulatory controls. The data validate this theoretical explanation. Only four out of the 31 sources examined in the database describe misdeeds committed by non-commissioned officers (Department of Justice, 2016a, 2018b, 2020; Watson, 2017). In those sources, the positions held by those Navy officials entailed the execution of critical contracting activities.

Moreover, the fraud scheme implicates disproportionally more Navy commissioned officers who colluded with Francis Leonard by inflating invoices, directing ships at specific ports controlled by GDMA, providing classified information, and influencing contract awards and Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) investigations (Department of Justice, 2014, 2015a, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d, 2016f, 2016g, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017e, 2017f, 2021b; Standifer, 2017).

The database also demonstrates the mindful, consistent, willful, purposeful, and thoroughly unconscionable decision making of the Navy leaders who betrayed their oath to uphold the Constitution. Themes proving their intentional engagement in corrupt actions include fear tactics and efforts to disguise their illegal conduct, the repetition of wrongdoing and negotiation of benefits (cash, prostitutes, etc.), the denial of any relationship with Francis Leonard despite evidence to the contrary, and attempts to destroy evidence when prosecuted (Department of Justice, 2014, 2015a, 2016a, 2016f, 2016g, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d, 2017e, 2017g, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2019, 2020, 2021a, 2021b; Standifer, 2017; Watson, 2017). These themes also emerge and substantiate the wrongdoers' rational (cost-benefit) cognitive capacity. In return for cash, prostitutes, luxurious hotels, lavish meals, gifts, and travel, they provided Francis Leonard and GDMA with classified ship schedules, inflated invoices, information about competitors, and influence to obstruct government investigations (Department of Justice, 2014, 2015a, 2015c, 2016a, 2016c, 2016d, 2016e, 2016g, 2016h, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d, 2017f, 2017g, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2019, 2020, 2021a, 2021b; Fuentes, 2021; Standifer, 2017; Watson, 2017). These practices occurred regularly, and regulatory controls proved ineffective to halt wrongdoing. Hence, what emerges is that the U.S. Navy leaders played a critical role in this large-scale scandal, role-modeling misbehavior and disabling the audit and control systems.

The second phase of the institutionalization pillar discusses how corruption permeates the organizational structure and memory (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). According to the authors, in this phase, cultural or subcultural shared assumptions promote wrongdoing and help normalize immoral deeds. The data support this theoretical assumption. Themes in the database describing the attributes of deviant subcultures formed by wrongdoers include self-interest, individual greed, self-temptation, collusion, secrecy, and deceit (Department of Justice, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2016d, 2017d, 2019; Fuentes, 2021). Other norms supported by the sources, potentially playing a critical role in the proliferation and perpetuation of wrongdoing, are related to indications of toxic masculinity and dehumanization, as well as arguments about the role of careerism, the

ingrained hesitancy, fearfulness, and discouragement to speak out and question superiors' deeds (Department of Justice, 2017a; Grazier & Hempowicz, 2016; Standifer, 2017).

In the third phase, the model points to the routinization of wrongdoing leading to normative and mechanical engagement in unethical activities (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). This phase includes immoral patterns that became deeply entrenched among the Navy officials due to the repetition of wrongdoing. Corrupt routines identified in the database involve the unquestionable advance of GDMA's interests through inflating invoices, providing classified ship schedules, steering ships to selected ports, receiving cash and travel expenses, participating in luxury events, residing in hotel suites, dining in expensive restaurants, and accepting gifts and the services of prostitutes (Department of Justice, 2015a, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016c, 2016d, 2016e, 2016g, 2016h, 2017a, 2017d, 2017f, 2017g, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2020, 2021a, 2021b; Watson, 2017). The assumption is that these practices were taken for granted over time in this geographic area, explaining why otherwise ethical and respected senior leaders got involved in the scandal.

b. Rationalization Pillar

Euphemistic labeling and diffusion of responsibility are the prevailing moral disengagement mechanisms identified in the database (Bandura, 2002). The corrupt officers used several nicknames such as "the cool kids," "wolf pack," "priest," "Tsunami Bob," "the Band of Brothers," "the Brotherhood," "the familia," "the Lion King's Harem" to either inject inappropriate humor about their illegal activities or conceal their identities (Department of Justice, 2017c, 2017d, 2019; Standifer, 2017). The collective nature of most of these nicknames also served to diffuse responsibility among the conspirators and negate self-regulatory mechanisms. Besides, it helped reframe the illegal character of their actions and present themselves as hand-picked group members with solid bonds and specific roles. Other moral disengagement mechanisms (Bandura, 2002) that emerged from the data analysis include the distortion of consequences as illustrated by a defendant's statement about Fat Leonard and dehumanization as inferred from dismissive comments some officers made about prostitutes (Department of Justice, 2017a; LaGrone, 2019; Standifer, 2017).

c. *Socialization Pillar*

The socialization pillar is well-substantiated in the database (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). It provides a good understanding of how otherwise ethical officers adapted to illegal behaviors and gradually became involved in the fraud scheme. The observed patterns include efforts by corrupt officers to override dissenters' opposition, quelling them by intimidation, rewarding recruits with luxurious dinners, or otherwise influencing critical decisions in favor of GDMA (Department of Justice, 2016d, 2017b, 2017c, 2018b, 2021b; Standifer, 2017). The power of social interaction and the dynamics of the social cocoon are also verified in situations involving officers' wives and close relatives (Department of Justice, 2015a, 2016b, 2016e; Standifer, 2017). The corrupt network expanded, making them recipients of lavish gifts from GDMA. These thousands of dollars in gifts helped Francis Leonard build stronger bonds with his informants and ensure trust and compliance.

d. *Interdependence of the Model's Pillars*

From the preceding analysis, all of the model's pillars are clearly present (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Their interdependence and, therefore, the validity of the model are substantiated in the following rationale. Indeed, the institutionalization pillar of the model describes the initiators' state of mind and cognitive capacity. Investigators confirmed that U.S. Navy officers (leadership) played a critical role in initiating and role-modeling wrongdoing. Their mindful and persistent actions were documented in the previous paragraphs and evident in the database.

Additionally, their rational cost-benefit decision making indicates that the officers involved in the scandal committed corrupt deeds mainly out of self-interest, greed, and self-temptation motives (Department of Justice, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2016d, 2017d, 2019; Fuentes, 2021). Subsequently, corruption infiltrated the organizational culture, and shared assumptions sustained and valorized misconduct. It is also worth noting that norms inherent in the navy culture, such as masculinity, careerism, fearfulness, and hesitancy to speak out about leaders' actions, are assumed to have been essential to leaving unethical behaviors unchecked for almost 25 years (Department of Justice, 2017a; Grazier & Hempowicz, 2016; Standifer, 2017). As such, the routinization of corruption arose as a logical

consequence. Corrupt routines included inflating invoices, providing classified ship schedules, steering ships to selected ports, receiving cash and travel expenses, participating in luxury events, residing in hotel suites, dining in expensive restaurants, and accepting gifts and the services of prostitutes (Department of Justice, 2015a, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016c, 2016d, 2016e, 2016g, 2016h, 2017a, 2017d, 2017f, 2017g, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2020, 2021a, 2021b; Watson, 2017). The corrupt officers rationalized these deviant behaviors by applying specific moral disengagement mechanisms. Euphemistic labeling, diffusion of responsibility, distortion of consequences, and dehumanization lessened their ethical objections (Bandura, 2002). The third pillar—socialization—was also critical in perpetuating corruption. Social influence relaxed newcomers' objections and promoted the corrupt network. The cognitive dissonance was diffused through social interaction in an unethical environment, and lavish gifts (rewards) or intimidation (punishments) induced the Navy officers to accept and perpetuate wrongdoing.

In summary, the observed patterns adhered to all the primary theoretical explanations. Also, the described rationale could explain how corruption evolved and became normalized over time in that geographic area and in the U.S. Navy units involved in the case. This scandal, which occurred before the other two cases examined in this study, revealed that leaders were directly involved in wrongdoing. Hence, it is valuable to examine the accountability of leadership further under different circumstances and contexts, especially given that the Fat Leonard criminal cases are ongoing as of this writing. The next section turns to the Abu Ghraib case, applying the process model of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003) to examine leadership's involvement during wartime.

2. The Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal

The Abu Ghraib scandal occurred in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, an existing detainee facility in Abu Ghraib, Iraq, was repurposed and used to hold and interrogate alleged suspects and insurgents. The 800th Military Police (MP) and the 205th Military Intelligence (MI) Brigades were responsible for running the

facility and executing security and intelligence operations (Fay, 2004; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004).

In April 2004, photographs of detainees' abuse by members of the MP and MI Brigades were broadcast by CBS News during the program "60 Minutes II," capturing the world's attention (Leung, 2004). These pictures drew the international community's condemnation of such cruel and humiliating torture. Additionally, the unauthorized practices used in the Abu Ghraib prison triggered several U.S. Army investigations of collective misconduct, leadership failures, and systemic deficiencies that could explain the magnitude of the delinquency exhibited by Brigade members and the inhumane treatment suffered by Iraqi inmates (Fay, 2004; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). Although various researchers have discussed political intervention and the authorization of abuse in Iraq, the evaluation of these perspectives is out of the scope of this study and is not examined. Instead, this research focuses on the proximal causes and contributory factors that led to the abuse within the organizations operating the prison.

In order to build the database for this case, text from U.S. Army investigations, as well as newspaper and journal articles, was extracted and coded accordingly. The observed patterns that emerged after the analysis are explained in the following subsections.

a. Institutionalization Pillar

The analysis reveals that the initiation of wrongdoing resulted from the enlisted soldiers' moral deprivation, which was fortified by leadership failures. A small group of MP soldiers, MI personnel, and civilians (defense contractors) committed the majority of the incidents of unauthorized and heinous torture. The database provides evidence of collective wrongdoing among MP, MI personnel, and civilians during detainees' interrogations (Apel, 2014; Danchev, 2008; Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007; Hurley, 2021; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). Moreover, it substantiates that misconduct gradually escalated from "fear-up" and degrading procedures to more severe, humiliating methods of torture, including sodomizing and raping detainees or even beating them to death (Apel, 2014; Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007; Taguba, 2004). Although nakedness and sleep deprivation were used extensively to "soften up" detainees (Fay, 2004), these tactics evolved. For example, a

detainee was held unconscious during an interrogation after being hit with a chair, kicked, and choked (Fay, 2004). Other instances involved male and female detainees who were forced to pose nude in front of the guards and perform improper sexual acts (Hersh, 2007).

The role of leaders who either overlooked the abuse or exercised poor judgment in critical situations is also assumed determinative for the scandal. More specifically, themes proving leadership's responsibility include inadequate guidance, resources, personnel, and equipment; inconsistent training; lack of oversight and communication of the Geneva Conventions to subordinates; unspecified roles and responsibilities; confusing policy memos; tolerance for indiscipline; problematic commanders' and soldiers' backgrounds; poor morale; complacency; lack of standard operating procedures; and ignorance of early indications and lessons learned from previous investigations (Fay, 2004; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). Hence, what emerges from the investigation is that U.S. Army leaders involved in the scandal significantly affected the initiation of wrongdoing because they failed to discipline perpetrators and prevent abuse; however, extreme abuse resulted from a few morally depraved subordinates who betrayed the U.S. Army's core values.

Furthermore, the data substantiate the mindful engagement of wrongdoers (Apel, 2014; Danchev, 2008; Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007; Hurley, 2021; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). The analysis does not reveal any incidence of mindless misconduct. Both individually or after MI personnel's requests, MP soldiers and defense contractors committed physical and mental abuse. The database demonstrates that the perpetrators were aware of their transgressions, which were against their training, the Geneva Conventions, and the Army doctrine.

As for the wrongdoers' cognitive capacity, the database confirms rational (normative) and boundedly rational decisions (Apel, 2014; Danchev, 2008; Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007; Hurley, 2021; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). In this case, rational decision making refers to the acknowledged unauthorized interrogation techniques and extreme forms of humiliation, dehumanization, and sexual abuse (Apel, 2014; Danchev, 2008; Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). As elaborated later, the rational/normative authorization of wrongdoing was supported by existing and emerging cultural norms, values, and beliefs.

In contrast, boundedly rational decision patterns involve confusing policy memos, inadequate guidance or corrections never ordered from leaders regarding applying the Geneva Conventions, the use of dogs, the removal of clothing, and the application of sleep deprivation techniques (Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). These sources also support the assumption that the lack of standard operating procedures and misinterpretations due to leaders' inaction significantly contributed to the perceived authorization of wrongdoing.

In the second phase of the theoretical model, culture is assumed to play a critical role in normalizing misbehavior (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The analysis reveals existing and emerging themes of norms, values, and beliefs (Apel, 2014; Danchev, 2008; Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). Observed preconditions that facilitated the extreme abuse committed in Abu Ghraib include poor organizational morale and insecurity, pressure to obtain intelligence, and tolerated indiscipline (Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). For instance, poor quality of life and undermanning significantly affected soldiers' confidence and effectiveness, setting the basis for improper behavior (Fay, 2004; Taguba, 2004). Yet, the perceived moral depravity of those soldiers involved in wrongdoing can also be assumed to have contributed to circumstances permitting more severe misconduct (Apel, 2014; Fay, 2004).

On the other hand, the soldiers' emerging shared assumptions may have also helped misconduct settle into the organizational memory and structure. These shared assumptions fueled the ingrained resentment rooted in the 9/11 events that manifested in extreme humiliation, dehumanization, brutality, torture, and barbarism against the detainees (Apel, 2014; Fay, 2004; Taguba, 2004). This author believes that these assumptions evolved gradually and justified even more cruel behaviors such as sexual abuse, rape, and sodomy (Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007). Lastly, the data indicate that religious hatred and racial bias could have played a role in the torture and some of the brutal techniques used in the interrogations (Apel, 2014).

The third phase of institutionalizing misconduct pertains to corrupt routines consolidated over time in the Abu Ghraib prison (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Patterns include physical and mental abuse (e.g., verbal humiliation, nakedness, handcuffing,

intimidation, sleep and sensory deprivation, unauthorized isolation) and heinous sexual assaults (e.g., rape, sodomy, forced masturbation, sexual positioning, and tortures) (Fay, 2004; Taguba, 2004). Moreover, all these degrading and inhumane cruelties were photographed or videotaped, depicting the proud wrongdoers posing beside helpless inmates (Apel, 2014).

b. Rationalization Pillar

Displacement of responsibility and euphemistic labeling were wrongdoers' most frequent rationalization strategies (Bandura, 2002). The former includes statements of MP soldiers who justified their misconduct, shifting their accountability to MI personnel requests or leadership's authorization (Apel, 2014; Fay, 2004; Taguba, 2004). The latter involves soft-sanctioned language used for abusive interrogation techniques (Fay, 2004; Taguba, 2004). Other rationalization techniques (Bandura, 2002; Sykes & Matza, 1957) that emerged from the analysis include the diffusion of responsibility between MP and MI soldiers, moral justification of the cruelties attributed to national interests, and dehumanization/denial of the victim justified by the notion that detainees deserved to be punished for their actions (Apel, 2014; Fay, 2004; Hurley, 2021; Taguba, 2004).

c. Socialization Pillar

Socialization promoting misconduct occurred in the context of wartime and thus alleviated the soldiers' feelings of guilt and overrode any objections by the participants. As such, the corrupt culture's immoral values, norms, and beliefs were communicated more easily through social interaction among wrongdoers. The data show how abuse intensified and evolved in the extreme forms of torture and sexual assaults committed by a group of soldiers (Apel, 2014; Danchev, 2008; Fay, 2004; Taguba, 2004). MI personnel requested, encouraged, and rewarded MP soldiers' misconduct (Fay, 2004; Taguba, 2004). For example, MI staff praised Corporal Graner, one of the convicted MP guards, for his efforts to make the detainees provide intelligence (Taguba, 2004).

Moreover, MI personnel, defense contractors, and MP soldiers collectively agreed and committed extreme physical and psychological torture (Danchev, 2008; Fay, 2004). Incremental steps to more severe wrongdoing can also be traced to the leadership's

interaction with Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officers, setting the circumstances for unauthorized interrogation techniques (Fay, 2004). The data illustrate these efforts to encourage misconduct higher in the hierarchy.

d. Interdependence of the Model's Pillars

The analysis strongly suggests that all three pillars of the process model of collective corruption are present (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Also, their interdependence is elaborated in the following rationale. The institutionalization pillar demonstrates how misbehavior was legitimized in this case, entered the organizational structure and culture, and manifested in corrupt routines. Leadership indirectly authorized wrongdoing, either overlooking the abuse or failing to act when required (Fay, 2004; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). In their turn, exploiting permissive circumstances, immoral soldiers cultivated a corrupt subculture by communicating and implementing unauthorized techniques that blatantly violated the Geneva Conventions and U.S. Army doctrine. Their mindful, and persistent involvement in the torture is illustrated in the published photographs and the extreme aggression committed against Iraqi inmates (Apel, 2014; Leung, 2004).

Additionally, despite several confusing policy memos mentioned in the investigations that could justify some less severe misconduct, the most heinous abuses were decided rationally (Fay, 2004; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). The normative nature of misbehavior was interrelated with cultural norms, values, and beliefs that either existed or evolved to normalize transgressions. Inherent moral depravity, pressure, poor morale, insecurity, and indiscipline fed resentment, humiliation, torture, dehumanization, barbarism, and sexual assault (Apel, 2014; Danchev, 2008; Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007; Taguba, 2004). As abusive interrogation techniques were left unchecked, they were repeatedly committed, resulting in corrupt routines. These daily practices included physical and mental torture as well as various forms of sexual abuse (Fay, 2004; Taguba, 2004). The wartime context helped wrongdoers justify their evil deeds by utilizing moral disengagement mechanisms (Bandura, 2002; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Moral justification, displacement-diffusion of responsibility, euphemistic labeling, and dehumanization-denial of the victim helped soldiers reframe and excuse cruelties.

Finally, socialization significantly contributed to the proliferation and perpetuation of wrongdoing. MI, MP soldiers, and civilians collectively sustained and escalated misconduct. Rewards, pressure, cooperation, and mutual agreement regarding brutal practices signify the role of social interaction and the social cocoon in ensuring conformity and collusion (Apel, 2014; Danchev, 2008; Fay, 2004; Taguba, 2004). Further, they contributed to the descent into extreme humiliation and sexual abuse, although these acts were going conspicuously against any law and the core military values.

In summary, two main theoretical assumptions are confirmed, and two alternative theoretical explanations hold true in the case. These are as follows:

- The existence and synergistic interaction of the model's three pillars—institutionalization, rationalization, socialization (Ashforth & Anand, 2003)— confirm the primary theoretical explanation.

- Existing or emerging cultural or subcultural norms, values, and beliefs helped valorize misbehavior and support mindful engagement in wrongdoing (Ashforth & Anand, 2003)—confirming the primary theoretical explanation.

- The initiation of wrongdoing as a boundedly rational decision (Palmer, 2008)—confirms an alternative theoretical explanation. It was identified in several less severe cases of humiliation that finally escalated into rational decision-making, including extreme dehumanization and sexual assault.

- The initiation of corruption or misconduct anywhere in the organizational hierarchy (Palmer, 2008) confirms an alternative theoretical explanation. As elaborated previously, both the leaders' failures and subordinates' moral depravity contributed to the scandal. However, MI, MP soldiers, and defense contractors initiated and committed the most heinous crimes in the prison.

This case substantiates the indirect involvement of leadership in initiating wrongdoing, ignoring, or otherwise authorizing misconduct. Despite the abuse occurring

in wartime and without their direct involvement in the wrongdoing, the leaders were fundamentally responsible for their subordinates' misbehavior. This pattern is further investigated in the last case examined in this thesis. The murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén in 2020 at Fort Hood, Texas, presents another opportunity to delve further into systems and roles to understand why corruption and misconduct scandals continue blemishing the DOD's reputation.

3. The Specialist Vanessa Guillén Murder Scandal

The disappearance and killing of Specialist Vanessa Guillén on April 22, 2020, at Fort Hood, Texas, by a fellow soldier, illustrated that systemic problems still hinder the DOD's efforts to ensure inclusion and equal treatment of its enlisted members. Army and independent investigations examined the role of leadership, climate, and culture at the base, unveiling chronic issues that significantly contributed to the tragedy (Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020).

More importantly, these investigations underscored that despite DOD's insistence on ethical training and core values, sexual harassment and assault continue to blemish the military reputation and undermine critical steps in providing a safe environment for enlisted women. Further, they articulated the need for more drastic policies to ensure an overall proactive instead of reactive posture.

In order to examine this case, publicly available investigations and newspaper articles were utilized and populated the database. The following subsections elaborate on the observed patterns that emerged after data analysis.

a. Institutionalization Pillar

The preponderance of evidence attributes significant responsibility for initiating misconduct to leadership's negligence and complacency (Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020). The main themes of leadership failures identified in these investigations include a lack of emphasis on the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program, rendering it a distant second priority behind operational readiness; the inability to communicate the role of the SHARP program to subordinates; lack of commitment and

accountability in preventing, reporting, and dealing with allegations of sexual harassment/ assault; staffing, training, and resourcing deficiencies in the SHARP program and in the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division (CID); disregard for the safety and security of soldiers; failure to address reported problems or leaders who were themselves the perpetrators; the failure to create an ethical climate intolerant of sexual harassment/assault; inability to set and emphasize goals to prevent crimes; lack of guidance on how to deal with unspecified absenteeism of soldiers; inability to ensure the confidentiality of reports; failure to act when required or to discipline those accountable.

Moreover, although Specialist Robinson, a fellow soldier, murdered Specialist Guillén, leaders failed to mitigate the sexual harassment risk long before this tragedy occurred (Swecker et al., 2020). For example, leaders knew or should have known that sexual harassment/assault was a problem at the base (Swecker et al., 2020). However, they did not utilize existing policies and systems (e.g., the SHARP program) to address these issues and protect their subordinates. As such, leaders in the lower echelons, emulating their senior leaders, ignored complaints of female soldiers (Swecker et al., 2020). Additionally, either they themselves (e.g., an NCO sexually harassed SPC Vanessa Guillén) or subordinates exploiting the inaction and complacency of senior leadership escalated the wrongdoing, which resulted in the murder of Specialist Guillén (Martinez, 2020, 2021; Thayer, 2021a, 2021b).

Further, the database provides evidence about the mindful engagement of leaders in wrongdoing (Baldor, 2021; Martinez, 2021; Mulcahy & Platoff, 2020; Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020; Thayer, 2021a, 2021b). For example, soldiers' interviews and other findings in the consulted sources indicate that leaders were aware of sexual harassment/ assault risk since 2014 but disregarded complaints of mistreatment (Swecker et al., 2020). According to the authors, senior leaders were aware of high crime/death rates, allegations of sexual harassment, and problematic unit leaders but failed to act appropriately. Therefore, this author contends that leaders consciously ignored these issues, staying complacent and pursuing operational goals at the expense of their subordinates' safety.

As for the wrongdoers' cognitive capacity, the database confirms rational cost/ benefit and normative decisions/acts (Martinez, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020; Thayer,

2021a). The cost-benefit decisions refer to under-resourced or insufficiently trained SHARP personnel (cost) as being a second priority behind operational goals (benefit) (Swecker et al., 2020). Also, they could include the lenient treatment of NCOs accused of sexual assaults, if those NCOs were essential for the mission, to the detriment of abused female soldiers (Swecker et al., 2020). On the other hand, normative decision making describes various incidents. These include, for example, the NCO who sexually harassed Specialist Vanessa Guillén, sexual comments from one of Guillén's unit leaders, and inappropriate behavior directed at Guillén in front of her fellow soldiers (Martinez, 2021; Thayer, 2021a).

The second phase of the institutionalization pillar is evidenced in how sexual abuse of female soldiers was normalized by a corrupt culture that left wrongdoers unchecked (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The data demonstrates a widespread perception of leadership's negligence and complacency, ignorance of the SHARP program, disregard for female soldiers' concerns, and even the leaders' apathy in the face of blatant sexual harassment complaints (Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020). Also, female soldiers' interviews substantiate that the ingrained masculinity of the military profession significantly affected why females were disrespected (Swecker et al., 2020). For example, in Fort Hood, female soldiers were often ridiculed by male soldiers after speaking up about their concerns (Swecker et al., 2020). These preconditions resulted in poor organizational morale, insecurity, fear of retaliation, lack of trust in leadership, distrust for the SHARP program, and the lack of confidentiality and unsatisfactory outcome of the reports (Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020). Finally, evidence from these investigations supports perceived equal opportunity and inclusion deficiencies that contributed to unequal and discriminatory treatment experienced by female soldiers.

The third phase of institutionalizing misconduct—the routinization of wrongdoing—describes corrupt routines that result from repeatedly undisciplined behaviors and become habitual (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The data reveal that perpetrators consistently mistreated female soldiers, as indicated by high rates of sexual harassment at Fort Hood through the years (Swecker et al., 2020). Moreover, interviews of

enlisted members included in the investigation show that sexual harassment and aggressive confrontation of female soldiers were routines that leaders failed to stop.

b. Rationalization Pillar

Disregarding consequences is the most frequent moral disengagement mechanism identified in the data (Bandura, 2002). Leaders were mainly focused on the mission and ignored or minimized the detrimental effects of their negligence (Baldor, 2021; Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020; Thayer, 2021b). This failure counted against sexual harassment incidents and their soldiers' safety and well-being. Another one of Bandura's (2002) moral disengagement mechanisms illustrated by the data, in this case, is the dehumanization of victims. It is assumed from several female soldiers' statements included in the independent investigation (Swecker et al., 2020). For example, according to the findings, some NCOs regarded women in the military as entertaining "sexual objects" that should be treated according to males' preferences.

c. Socialization Pillar

Likewise, the socialization pillar of the model is well-substantiated by the data and explains why female soldiers' complaints were ignored or never reported. Through socialization, leaders were enabled to ignore the degradation of female soldiers and failed to discipline those responsible for sexual abuse (Baldor, 2021). The observed patterns include incidents of NCOs or other male soldiers ridiculing courageous women who complained about sexual harassment, the biased confrontation of female soldiers, the collective ignorance of sexual harassment incidents by leaders of all echelons, and the sustainment of a climate conducive to sexual harassment/assault and that discouraged reporting (Baldor, 2021; Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020). Consequently, female soldiers were forced to operate in survival mode within a social cocoon of masculinity, avoided reporting abuse out of fear of reprisal, had a lack of trust in their leaders, and were pessimistic about the confidentiality and handling of their reports.

d. Interdependence of the Model's Pillars

The preceding analysis substantiates that all three pillars of the process model of collective corruption are present in this case (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Their interdependence is illustrated via the following rationale: the institutionalization pillar delineates how wrongdoing was authorized, embedded in the organizational structure and culture, and over time, formed corrupt routines. Leadership tacitly condoned misconduct, failing to act when required, and overlooking the SHARP program that could halt sexual abuse (Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020). Leaders' inaction created permissive circumstances, cultivating a corrupt culture that tolerated masculinity and sexual harassment/assault of female soldiers. Additionally, leaders were aware of wrongdoing, as illustrated by the high crime/death rates at Fort Hood and the ongoing sexual harassment/assault issues they failed to resolve (Swecker et al., 2020). Their decision making was clearly rational, considering that sexual harassment/assault is a known problem in the military and one that calls for continuous engagement and drastic measures. Still, leaders ignored this issue, either sacrificing resources and attention to the SHARP program in favor of operational objectives or consciously disregarding the illegal behaviors of other leaders and soldiers at lower levels of command (Baldor, 2021; Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020; Thayer, 2021b). This oppressive atmosphere against female soldiers characterized the culture at Fort Hood, resulting in underreporting of sexual abuse due to fear of retaliation, mistrust of leaders, lack of confidentiality, and uncertain outcomes of reports (Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020). The unchecked perpetrators routinely mistreated female soldiers and drowned out their allegations (Swecker et al., 2020). Leaders rationalized their own irresponsibility, disregarding the consequences of their actions (Bandura, 2002) and focusing only on highly visible operational goals (Murray, 2021). Consequently, because they were unhindered, the perpetrators mistreated and sexually harassed/assaulted female soldiers, degrading or dehumanizing them. Finally, the social interaction in a male-dominated environment significantly contributed to insecurity and fear among females. The murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén was not the outcome of some bad barrels' misconduct but the result of a sustained process of collective ignorance of female soldiers' concerns.

In summary, the observed patterns satisfied all the primary theoretical explanations. Also, the preceding rationale could explain how misconduct was gradually normalized in Fort Hood, resulting in the homicide of Specialist Vanessa Guillén.

C. COMMON PATTERNS AND IMPLICATIONS

The analysis of each case study through the lens of the process model of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003) provided significant insight into the role of leadership and culture in the military units involved in the corruption or misconduct scandals examined in this thesis. Further, it revealed a subjective evaluation of how wrongdoing was normalized and escalated over time under different circumstances. The research now focuses on the intersection between the observed and theoretical realms (Trochim, 1989). The following table aggregates the findings for each case study and illustrates the commonalities between the empirical and theoretical patterns.

Table 1. Pattern Matching Summary

Pattern Matching[a]			Observations		
			Case Study		
			The Fat Leonard Scandal	The Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal	The SPC Vanessa Guillén Murder Scandal
Theoretical explanations	Primary	The existence and synergistic interaction of all three model's pillars—institutionalization, rationalization, socialization[b]	x	x	x
		The initiation of wrongdoing as a rational and mindful leadership decision[b, c]—direct involvement of leadership in wrongdoing	x		x
		Cultural or subcultural norms, values, and beliefs help normalize misbehavior and support mindful engagement in wrongdoing[b, c]	x	x	x
	Alternative	The absence of one or more of the model's pillars or unclear interaction between them			
		The initiation of wrongdoing as a mindless and/or boundedly rational decision[c]		x	
		The initiation of corruption or misconduct anywhere in the organizational hierarchy[c]—indirect involvement of leadership in wrongdoing		x	
		The unclear or unsubstantiated role of culture in normalizing corruption or misconduct			

[a] The Pattern Matching Model (Trochim, 1989)

[b] The Process Model of Collective Corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003)

[c] The Extended Process Model of Collective Corruption (Palmer, 2008)

As illustrated in the table, the process model of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003) is valid for all three cases. Yet, one out of three case studies failed to confirm

all primary theoretical explanations. The Abu Ghraib prison scandal analysis verified two alternative theoretical explanations that coincide with the propositions Palmer (2008) introduced for the extended version of the model. Therefore, although the research did not reveal a complete pattern matching, the primary theoretical explanations were entirely satisfied in two out of three case studies.

Additionally, among the confirmed theoretical propositions, several other patterns among the cases emerge. Leaders, both directly (in the Fat Leonard case and in the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén) and indirectly (in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal), affected the initiation of wrongdoing. More importantly, leaders in all three cases analyzed previously knew or should have known that misconduct occurred in their units but either failed to act or were themselves the perpetrators.

Another critical finding pertains to the clearly rational decision making of wrongdoers involved in two out of the three cases (the Fat Leonard case and the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén). This author concludes that leaders were the initiators of wrongdoing in these two scandals. They decided to follow the wrong path despite having complete information and discrete options (moral/immoral). Even in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, leaders failed to ensure clear lines of conduct for their subordinates; though, as elaborated previously, most of the heinous crimes did not initiate from boundedly rational decisions but blatantly inhumane and unacceptable behaviors.

Finally, cultural and subcultural norms, values, and beliefs that normalized wrongdoing were identified in all three cases. As the literature has demonstrated, leaders shape the culture of their organizations (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Schein, 2004). Therefore, this author contends that the shared assumptions identified in the case studies correlate with the leaders' behaviors. Indeed, the analysis revealed that leaders either modeled unethical behavior (the Fat Leonard case) or failed to pay attention to or discipline their subordinates who acted unethically (the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén). These permissive circumstances allowed corruption or misconduct to enter the military units and eventually form corrupt organizational cultures/subcultures.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study, which focuses on the process by which corruption or misconduct becomes consolidated in military units, has demonstrated that blaming only some bad apples is not a prudent way of dealing with wrongdoing. Instead, bad barrels (i.e., systemic problems) should be considered thoroughly to avoid such embarrassing scandals ever happening again. Although DOD has consistently articulated the ethos and character of its enlisted members, it can still take more steps to improve. Critical focus points based on the research findings for further evaluation by the DOD are as follows:

1. Develop the Moral Person (Leader/Soldier) from Day 1

The analysis showed that military leaders or their subordinates initiated corruption or misconduct. These military professionals entered the military and were trained to protect the United States against its enemies. Also, they likely espoused the military (U.S. Army, U.S. Navy) core values. They performed contracting activities (e.g., the Fat Leonard scandal) or were charged with detention duties executing the war against terrorists (e.g., the Abu Ghraib prison scandal). They were even the trustees of the DOD's efforts to ensure inclusion and a culture free of sexual harassment/assault (e.g., the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén). However, they failed to perform according to their training and education. Does that mean ethics training courses may be ineffective? Perhaps, but not likely. From this author's perspective, the problem is not in the training itself but in its implementation in the field. Training must align with daily practice, and enlisted members should understand the importance of acting morally or the consequences of following the wrong path. For example, the analysis of the case involving the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén showed that leaders failed to discipline NCOs or soldiers for sexual harassment/assault incidents (Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020). Per the independent investigation of the case, these leaders were also aware of the high risk of sexual abuse at Fort Hood, Texas (Swecker et al., 2020). Despite this concern, leaders neglected sexual harassment/assault and ignored or downplayed the potential consequences of their inaction. Clearly, mission accomplishment came first, and the safety of subordinates was a distant second priority (Swecker et al., 2020). Hence, it is recommended that DOD focus on

ensuring the moral character of its enlisted members before training them for executing the mission; it should be instilled that mission accomplishment and the well-being of soldiers are valued equally.

2. Create a Zero-tolerance Culture for Corruption and Misconduct

Following the previous recommendation, organizational culture is another critical area for addressing corruption or misconduct. The process model of collective corruption used to analyze this thesis's case studies illustrated that culture normalized wrongdoing (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Further, culture had a magnifying effect on more severe misbehavior. For example, in the Fat Leonard scandal, self-interest and greed gradually evolved, drawing collective wrongdoing and compromising national security (Fuentes, 2021; Standifer, 2017). In the recent case of the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén, perpetrators who sexually harassed female soldiers did so within a permissive culture that tolerated unethical behaviors (Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020). As such, the escalation of wrongdoing that resulted in the homicide of Guillén by a fellow soldier developed in a context that allowed this to happen.

Leaders are fundamentally responsible for ensuring a zero-tolerance culture for corruption and misconduct. The literature has presented mechanisms by which leaders' values are embedded in the organizational culture (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Schein, 2004). Aside from leaders being themselves moral persons, leaders must cultivate a healthy culture that requires regularly communicating ethical standards to subordinates (Treviño et al., 2000). Hence, leaders should focus on interacting more with their soldiers, listening to their concerns, and making ethics a part of their everyday agenda. This way, a healthy culture could better recognize and discard the bad apples from the system.

3. Hold Leaders Accountable

The murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén revealed that formal systems and policies (i.e., the SHARP program) sometimes might not provide the desired outcomes due to structural flaws (Swecker et al., 2020). Further, the same investigation showed that continuous leadership commitment is required for systems to be effective. Guillén's homicide at Fort Hood resulted from both systemic deficiencies and leaders' failures.

However, from this author's point of view, the human factor is comparatively more important than structurally perfect systems. That is, although the SHARP program had structural defects, if leaders had embraced its value, the program would have been effective. Therefore, in order to avoid similar situations in the future, leaders should be trained and held accountable for how they handle the implementation of DOD systems and policies. Leader accountability would ensure that early indications of corruption or misconduct would not be ignored, and systemic issues would be timely reported and resolved. Finally, perpetrators must be disciplined before wrongdoing can infiltrate the organizational culture and become entrenched.

4. Enhance Whistleblower Protection

Finally, another barrier to wrongdoing involves encouraging and protecting whistleblowers. Although those who dare to report misbehavior may deal with reprisal, current policies should be enhanced to incentivize reporting and discipline those who retaliate against whistleblowers. Additionally, military culture is not inherently friendly to whistleblowing, and this should change. For example, at Fort Hood, Texas, female soldiers did not report sexual harassment for fear of retaliation by male soldiers or their leaders (Murray, 2021; Swecker et al., 2020). When leaders consistently fail to ensure equal treatment of their subordinates or ignore misconduct, victims and witnesses should not only be able to blow the whistle as a last resort, they should feel safe in doing so. Hence, DOD should ensure its members do not hesitate to speak up when needed, and it should also establish channels to filter complaints timely and comprehensively.

E. SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research findings, summarized the observed patterns, compared them with the theoretical explanations, and elaborated on the validity of the process model of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Finally, based on the analysis and the implications of common patterns among the case studies, recommendations for the DOD were provided. The next chapter concludes the thesis by presenting the answers to the research questions and identifying areas for further research.

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V. CONCLUSION AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A. SUMMARY

This study utilized Ashforth and Anand's (2003) theoretical model to assess the role of leadership and culture in three large-scale corruption and misconduct scandals that occurred in the U.S. military over several decades. Common patterns among these cases were identified and evaluated. As such, this thesis has enhanced insight into the issues requiring further attention by DOD policymakers.

More specifically, the research findings revealed that although DOD has made steps to prevent wrongdoing and ensure the ethical conduct of its members, systemic deficiencies and leadership failures continue to blemish its reputation. Furthermore, the process by which corruption or misconduct consolidated in the military units examined in this thesis signaled a need for more stringent policies. Emphasizing the human factor, organizational culture, leaders' accountability, and whistleblower protection could ensure the move towards a more proactive posture.

B. ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis focused on three research questions. The answers to these questions are presented as follows:

1. Within the Contexts Examined in This Thesis, What Role Did Leaders Play (Directly or Indirectly) in Corruption or Misconduct?

The role leaders played in corruption or misconduct scandals discussed in this thesis was examined through the lens of the process model of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The analysis of three high-profile cases proved that leaders, directly and indirectly, affected the initiation of wrongdoing in their units. More specifically, it was concluded that leaders' actions or inactions directly triggered corruption or misconduct in two out of three scandals (the Fat Leonard scandal and the murder of Specialist Vanessa

Guillén). Yet, as elaborated in the Abu Ghraib prison case-study analysis, leadership was indirectly involved in the most heinous crimes committed against the prison's detainees.

Additionally, leaders knew or should have known that wrongdoing occurred in their units but either failed to act or were themselves the perpetrators (Fay, 2004; Jones, 2004; Standifer, 2017; Swecker et al., 2020; Taguba, 2004; Thayer, 2021a). Notably, in the cases where leaders were directly involved in wrongdoing (i.e., the Fat Leonard scandal and the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén), they rationally decided to proceed with corruption or misconduct. Hence, although they had complete information and discrete options (moral/immoral), leaders consciously followed the wrong path.

In the case of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, although the leaders themselves did not commit the crimes against the prisoners, they overlooked misconduct and exercised poor judgment when required to act (Fay, 2004; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). Thus, they tacitly authorized wrongdoing and permitted its escalation.

2. What Role Did Culture Play in the Institutionalization of Corruption?

The theoretical model that was used to support the findings assumes that cultural or subcultural values, beliefs, and norms help normalize and rationalize wrongdoing (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Indeed, this theory was verified in all three cases examined in this thesis. Culture had a magnifying effect, fueling more severe wrongdoing by the perpetrators. The research has also revealed that either existing or emerging shared assumptions facilitated transgressions.

In the case of the Fat Leonard scandal, the findings proved that corrupt values, norms, and beliefs were critical to leaving wrongdoing unchecked for over 25 years (Department of Justice, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2016d, 2017a, 2017d, 2019; Fuentes, 2021; Grazier & Hempowicz, 2016; Standifer, 2017). In the Abu Ghraib prison case, shared assumptions helped misconduct settle into the organizational memory and structure, normalizing brutal crimes against detainees. The analysis revealed that MP and MI personnel normalized their deviance by drawing on subcultural norms (Apel, 2014; Danchev, 2008; Fay, 2004; Hersh, 2007; Jones, 2004; Taguba, 2004). Finally, as recently as 2020, leaders at a U.S.-based military installation forged a culture that alleviated guilt

and permitted sexual harassment/assault to be committed against female soldiers (Swecker et al., 2020).

3. Across the Three Cases Examined in This Thesis, Were There Common Patterns in Leader Behaviors that Set the Conditions for Corruption or Misconduct to Occur?

In all case studies examined in this thesis, it was concluded that leaders were aware of wrongdoing. However, they either consciously modeled corrupt behavior or failed to discipline perpetrators (Fay, 2004; Fuentes, 2021; Jones, 2004; Murray, 2021; Standifer, 2017; Swecker et al., 2020; Taguba, 2004; Watson, 2017). Moreover, leaders in two out of the three cases (the Abu Ghraib prison scandal and the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén) tacitly authorized wrongdoing either by exercising poor judgment or by ignoring early indications of transgression (Fay, 2004; Jones, 2004; Swecker et al., 2020; Taguba, 2004). This conclusion confirms that laissez-faire leadership is as detrimental as the blatantly illegal conduct by leaders involved in the Fat Leonard scandal. Finally, the leaders across the three cases examined in this thesis failed to cultivate an organizational culture resistant to wrongdoing (Danchev, 2008; Department of Justice, 2019; Grazier & Hempowicz, 2016; Swecker et al., 2020; Taguba, 2004). The data utilized in the analysis substantiated that shared assumptions normalized corruption and misconduct. Consequently, the system could not halt misbehavior early because leaders did not ensure adequate controls to prevent wrongdoing from proliferating and escalating (e.g., rewards, punishments, resources, communication).

C. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study has examined the validity of the process model of collective corruption as it applied to three representative case studies (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). It investigated the role of leadership and culture and revealed common patterns among the cases. Although the research has not attempted to generalize the theory's validity, future studies could enhance the soundness of the aforementioned theoretical model by integrating the findings of other high-profile scandals.

Another area for further research could include collecting and analyzing classified information about the cases examined in this thesis. Research including additional documents that are not publicly available could strengthen the findings or reveal other aspects not discussed in this study. Notably, the investigation of one of the cases examined in this thesis—the Fat Leonard scandal—has not yet been completed. Therefore, this case should be revisited once the investigation and subsequent prosecutions have been completed.

Finally, by integrating other case studies into the analysis, researchers could investigate the common leadership styles that are more likely to set the conditions for corruption or misconduct to occur. This way, leadership types that are more likely to nurture wrongdoing could be identified and provide lessons learned for training purposes.

APPENDIX A. CODING SCHEME

In order to test the theoretical explanations mentioned in the methodology section of this study, it was necessary to develop and consistently use a coding scheme to manipulate text extracted from publicly available investigations, government reports, court press releases, newspaper/website articles, and peer-reviewed articles. For that reason, excerpts from documents were subjectively sorted according to the phases and pillars of the process model of collective corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003), and relevant information was coded in boldface type. The following paragraphs provide a thorough accounting of the coding strategy used for the research.

The institutionalization pillar of the model consists of three phases (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The first phase involves the initial corrupt decision/act. This stage attributes significant responsibility to leadership in initiating wrongdoing, given a lax ethical environment. However, the theoretical hypotheses require examining the initiation of misconduct lower in the hierarchy. This assumption coincides with one of the propositions Palmer (2008) introduced for the extended model of collective corruption. As such, in this analysis stage, the involved actors and wrongful actions/decisions are recognized and coded accordingly. Determining the initiator of wrongdoing occurs after subjectively weighing the frequency and relative importance of decisions or acts involved in each case.

Subsequently, following the assumptions of the extended model by Palmer (2008), the database is designed to extract data reflecting the initiator's state of mind (mindful/ mindless) and cognitive capacity (rational/boundedly rational). A mindful state of mind is considered purposeful, intentional, conscious, and persistent in nature, whereas a mindless decision/act implies an inattentive, unconscious, and unwitting involvement in wrongdoing. Additionally, rational decision making refers to a thorough analysis based on complete information and discrete options (moral/immoral), while bounded rationality deals with information constraints and uncertainty about the available courses of action. Finally, in this step, cost-benefit or normative motives are identified and documented.

The second phase of the model discusses how wrongdoing permeates the organizational structure and memory (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). In this phase, shared assumptions in the culture or subculture enable wrongdoing to proliferate and help normalize immoral deeds. Thus, in this step, the database is designed to extract from the text any existing or emerging norms, values, and beliefs that shape the culture or subculture of the organization/unit/group and normalize wrongdoing.

The routinization phase completes the institutionalization of corruption or misconduct in the organization (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). This step involves the power of corrupt routines established by the repetition of wrongful actions that are left unchecked. Also, it illustrates the prevalent patterns of misbehavior in the organization. Hence, the coded data can confirm or reject the existence of repetitive themes of wrongdoing.

The second pillar of the model assumes that rationalization mechanisms help wrongdoers justify their immoral actions and feel absolved from their responsibility (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). In this stage, utilizing the neutralization techniques of Sykes and Matza (1957) or Bandura's (2002) moral disengagement mechanisms, the coded data can be used to confirm the pillar's presence.

The third pillar of the model consists of socialization among organizational participants and concentrates on the power of social interaction and the social cocoon that help perpetuate wrongdoing (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The coded data can confirm or reject the role of socialization. This step includes the examination of rewards, punishments, coercion, intimidation, and any efforts to override or inactivate newcomers' opposition to corruption or misconduct. Also, attention is given to the collective nature of wrongdoing contributing to the perpetuation of misbehavior.

Lastly, using the database of combined information from the previous steps, it is possible to establish a rationale supporting or dismissing the model's validity (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). For the model to be applicable, the pillars' interdependence should be rationally assumed by the data. Therefore, if the data cannot adequately prove the existence and interdependence of the model's three fundamental forces, the research would not confirm the theory's soundness for the specific cases under analysis.

APPENDIX B. SOURCES CONSULTED FOR DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

The following sources were consulted to build the databases that support Chapter IV of this study:

1. The Fat Leonard Scandal

Department of Justice. (2014, July 3). *Former U.S. Navy officer pleads guilty In international bribery scandal; Defendant admits overcharging the Navy by up to $2.5 million for port services in Japan* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/former-us-navy-officer-pleads-guilty-international-bribery-scandal-defendant-admits

Department of Justice. (2015a, January 6). *Navy commander pleads guilty to accepting cash and prostitutes in international bribery scheme* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/navy-commander-pleads-guilty-accepting-cash-and-prostitutes-international-bribery

Department of Justice. (2015b, January 15). *Malaysian defense contractor Leonard Francis pleads guilty to corruption conspiracy involving "scores" of Navy officials; A Navy Captain – the highest ranking so far—admits he was one of them* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/malaysian-defense-contractor-leonard-francis-pleads-guilty-corruption-conspiracy

Department of Justice. (2015c, April 15). *U.S. Navy officer pleads guilty to selling classified ship schedules as part of expanding navy bribery probe* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/us-navy-officer-pleads-guilty-selling-classified-ship-schedules-part-expanding-navy

Department of Justice. (2016a, January 21). *U.S. Navy Petty officer sentenced to 27 months in prison for trading classified information for cash and iPads; He is the first to be sentenced in colossal international fraud and bribery scandal* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/us-navy-petty-officer-sentenced-27-months-prison-trading-classified-information-cash

Department of Justice. (2016b, January 28). *Navy commander pleads guilty to accepting cash and prostitutes in international bribery scheme* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/navy-commander-pleads-guilty-accepting-cash-and-prostitutes-international-bribery-0

Department of Justice. (2016c, January 29). *U.S. Navy officer sentenced to 40 months in prison for selling classified ship and submarine schedules as part of Navy bribery probe* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/us-navy-officer-sentenced-40-months-prison-selling-classified-ship-and-submarine

Department of Justice. (2016d, March 25). *Highest-ranking Navy official sentenced to 46 months in prison for accepting bribes from foreign defense contractor in massive bribery and fraud scheme* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/highest-ranking-navy-official-sentenced-46-months-prison-accepting-bribes-foreign

Department of Justice. (2016e, June 23). *Former supervisory contracting officer pleads guilty to accepting bribes from foreign defense contractor* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/former-supervisory-contracting-officer-pleads-guilty-accepting-bribes-foreign-defense

Department of Justice. (2016f, October 13). *Another Navy officer pleads guilty in expanding bribery and fraud investigation* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/another-navy-officer-pleads-guilty-expanding-bribery-and-fraud-investigation

Department of Justice. (2016g, October 14). *Former NCIS supervisory special agent sentenced to 12 years in prison for taking bribes from foreign defense contractor in massive fraud and corruption scandal* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/former-ncis-supervisory-special-agent-sentenced-12-years-prison-taking-bribes-foreign

Department of Justice. (2016h, November 15). *Former U.S. Naval Attaché in the Philippines pleads guilty to conspiracy to commit bribery in massive Navy corruption scandal* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/former-us-naval-attach-philippines-pleads-guilty-conspiracy-commit-bribery-massive-navy

Department of Justice. (2017a, January 12). *Navy's "supply officer of the year" sentenced to 30 months in expanding bribery and fraud investigation* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/navy-s-supply-officer-year-sentenced-30-months-expanding-bribery-and-fraud

Department of Justice. (2017b, February 16). *Navy commander charged as part of corrupt "brotherhood" that accepted luxury travel and prostitutes from foreign defense contractor* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/navy-commander-charged-part-corrupt-brotherhood-accepted-luxury-travel-and-prostitutes

Department of Justice. (2017c, March 14). *U.S. Navy Admiral plus eight officers indicted as part of corrupt team that worked together to trade Navy secrets for sex parties* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/us-navy-admiral-plus-eight-officers-indicted-part-corrupt-team-worked-together-trade

Department of Justice. (2017d, May 17). *U.S. Navy Admiral sentenced for lying to Feds about his relationship with foreign defense contractor in massive Navy bribery and fraud investigation* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/us-navy-admiral-sentenced-lying-feds-about-his-relationship-foreign-defense-contractor

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Department of Justice. (2017f, August 18). *Former Assistant Chief of Staff of the U.S. Navy's seventh fleet charged in massive Navy corruption scandal; pleads guilty to bribery conspiracy* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/former-assistant-chief-staff-us-navy-s-seventh-fleet-charged-massive-navy-corruption

Department of Justice. (2017g, September 12). *Former Deputy Chief of Staff at Special Operations Command, Pacific, sentenced for lying about his relationship with foreign defense contractor in massive Navy bribery investigation* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/former-deputy-chief-staff-special-operations-command-pacific-sentenced-lying-about-his

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Department of Justice. (2018c, October 19). *Former U.S. Navy commander sentenced for bribery conspiracy with foreign defense contractor in massive U.S. Navy corruption and fraud case* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/former-us-navy-sentenced-bribery-conspiracy-foreign-defense-contractor-massive-us-navy

Department of Justice. (2019, February 8). *Former U.S. Navy Captain sentenced in sweeping U.S. Navy corruption and fraud probe* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/former-us-navy-captain-sentenced-sweeping-us-navy-corruption-and-fraud-probe

Department of Justice. (2020, October 30). *Former U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer sentenced for bribery conspiracy with foreign defense contractor* [Press release]. https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/former-us-navy-chief-petty-officer-sentenced-bribery-conspiracy-foreign-defense

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3. The Specialist Vanessa Guillén Murder Scandal

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SUPPLEMENTALS

The findings and conclusions elaborated in Chapter IV of this study derive from three databases (Excel spreadsheets); one for each case study (i.e., the Fat Leonard scandal, the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, and the murder of Specialist Vanessa Guillén). The databases, which are structural facsimiles, utilize the assumptions of the process model of collective corruption and several assumptions discussed in the extended version of that model (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Palmer, 2008). More information about how the sources' text was categorized and coded is provided in Appendix A; the sources consulted to populate the databases are listed in Appendix B. For those interested in obtaining the supplemental files of the study, please contact the NPS library.

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