

Gays in the U.S. Military: Reviewing the Research and Conceptualizing a Way Forward

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This article contributes to ongoing discussions related to the challenges and opportunities associated with the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the U.S. military. The article reviews research related to sexual orientation and military service and outlines a theory of the antecedents and outcomes of open integration of gays in the military environment. We discuss implications of this theory for future research in this area.

KEYWORDS gays, sexual orientation, military service, Don't Ask Don't Tell, DADT

Gay service personnel¹ have served honorably in the U.S. military in just about every major conflict and war dating back to the American Revolutionary War (Berube, 1990; Shilts, 1993). However, they have had to remain silent and even lie about their sexual orientation because exclusionary policies did not allow them to be open and honest about their sexual orientation (10 U.S.C. § 654). Gay service personnel were often discriminated against, systematically persecuted, and promptly separated from the military whenever their sexual orientation became public (Chauncey, 1989; Haggerty, 2003; Murphy, 1988; Shilts, 1993). This situation changed on December 22, 2010, when President Barack Obama signed the Don't

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Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010, which effectively eliminated all restrictions prohibiting gay individuals from serving openly in the U.S. military (HR 2965; S4023).

This article is intended to contribute to ongoing discussions related to the challenges and opportunities associated with the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the U.S. military. We review empirical research on sexual orientation and military service and outline a theory of the antecedents and outcomes of the participation and inclusion of gay service personnel within the military environment. The theory specifies individual, occupational-organizational, and societal factors that are posited to influence the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment (Estrada, 2012). The theory also specifies individual, group/unit, and organizational outcomes associated with the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of the proposed theory for future research involving the integration of gay service personnel within the military environment.

CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH ON GAYS IN THE U.S. MILITARY

Research on gay service personnel within the U.S. military is quite limited and narrowly focused on issues involving the acceptance of gay individuals; the compatibility of gay individuals with the organizational culture and values of the U.S. military; and the perceived impact that the integration of gay service personnel may have on unit cohesion, readiness, and effectiveness.

Acceptance of Gay Service Personnel

Issues concerning the acceptance of gay service personnel within the U.S. military have been addressed in a various public and military opinion polls (see Tables 1 and 2). Data from public opinion polls indicate that a majority of Americans are in favor of allowing gay individuals to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces (U.S. Department of Defense [DoD], 2010a; National Defense Research Institute [NDRI], 1993, 2010; Torres-Reyna & Shapiro, 2002; Yang, 1997). Examples can be gleaned from public opinion polls conducted by the Gallup Organization (1977–2001) showing that 50–70% of Americans believe that homosexuals should be hired for the armed forces (Torres-Reyna & Shapiro, 2002; Yang, 1997); and in public opinion polls conducted between 1994 and 2010 by the Pew Center for the People and the Press (2010) showing that 50–60% of Americans favor allowing gay and lesbians to serve openly in the U.S. military (Pew Center for the People and the Press, 2010). While it is clear that a majority of Americans appear to support gays in the military (see Table 1), support for gays in the military tends to be higher

TABLE 1 Public Opinion Polls on Gays in the Military

Source	Sample size	Survey question	Result
<i>ABC News/Washington Post</i> (1993)	549	Do you think homosexuals should or should not be allowed to serve in the military?	47% should, 47% should not
American National Election Studies (NES) (1993)	750	Do you think homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the United States Armed Forces, or don't you think so?	59% should, 36% should not
<i>CBS News/The New York Times</i> (1993)	1, 179	Do you favor or oppose permitting homosexuals to serve in the military?	42% favor, 48% oppose
Gallup (1993)	1, 011	Is [DADT] a plan you would support or oppose?	58% support, 37% oppose
<i>LA Times</i> (1993)	1, 474	Do you approve or disapprove of allowing openly homosexual men and women to serve in the armed forces of the United States?	41% approve, 52% disapprove
<i>NBC News/The Wall St. Journal</i> (1993)	751	Do you think homosexuals should or should not be hired for . . . the armed forces?	47% should, 43% should not
Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA) for <i>Newsweek</i> (1993)	1, 502	Do you favor or oppose permitting openly gays or lesbians to serve in the military?	43% favor, 49% oppose
Yankelovich Partners (1993)	750	Do you think homosexuals should or should not be able to serve in the armed forces?	48% should, 43% should not
Gallup (1994)	1, 800	Do you favor or oppose Bill Clinton's plan to allow gays and lesbians to serve in the United States military?	43% favor, 48% oppose
Princeton (1994)	1, 013 750	Is [DADT] a plan you would support or oppose? Do you think homosexuals should or should not be hired for . . . the armed forces?	60% support, 36% oppose 58% should, 35% should not
Yankelovich, Skelly, & White (1994)	800	Do you favor or oppose permitting openly gays or lesbians to serve in the military?	53% favor, 41% oppose
Gallup (1996)	1, 003	Do you think homosexuals should or should not be hired for . . . the armed forces?	65% should, 29% should not
NES (1996)	1, 534	Do you think homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the United States Armed Forces, or don't you think so?	66% should, 30% should not
<i>PSRA/Newsweek</i> (1998)	602	Please tell me if you think gays and lesbians should or should not be hired for . . . the armed forces?	66% should, 30% should not

(Continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Source	Sample size	Survey question	Result
Yankelovich, Skelly, & White (1998)	1, 036	Do you favor or oppose permitting openly gays or lesbians to serve in the military?	52% favor, 39% oppose
Gallup (1999)	1, 054	Do you think homosexuals should or should not be hired for . . . the armed forces?	70% should, 26% should not
ABC/WP (2000)	1, 007	Do you think homosexuals should or should not be allowed to serve in the military?	67% should, 29% should not
<i>PSRA/Newsweek</i> (2000)	803	Please tell me if you think gays and lesbians should or should not be hired for . . . the armed forces?	69% should, 25% should not
Gallup (2001)	1, 012	Should homosexuals be employed in . . . the armed forces?	72% should
<i>Fox News</i> (2003)	900	Do you favor or oppose . . . allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military?	64% favor, 25% oppose
Gallup (2003)	1, 014	Do you think homosexuals should or should not be hired for . . . the armed forces?	80% should
Gallup (2004)	1, 015	Do you favor or oppose allowing openly gay men and lesbian women to serve in the military?	63% favor
<i>Boston Globe</i> (2005)	760	Do you think gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly in the United States military?	79% yes, 18% no
Gallup (2005)	1, 005	Should homosexuals be hired for . . . the armed forces?	76% yes, 22% no
Pew Research Center (2006)	695	Please tell me whether you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose allowing gays to serve openly in the military.	60% favor, 32% oppose
CNN (2007)	1, 029	Do you favor or oppose the plan in which the U.S. military does not ask new recruits whether they are homosexual, but would still prohibit homosexuals from serving if they reveal their sexual orientation?	38% favor, 57% oppose
	1, 028	Do you think people who are openly gay or homosexual should or should not be allowed to serve in the U.S. military?	79% should, 18% should not

<i>Newsweek</i> (2007)	1, 001	Do you think gays and lesbians should or should NOT be able to serve openly in the military?	63% should, 28% should not
ABC/WP (2008)	1, 119	Do you think homosexuals who do NOT publicly disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military or not?	78% yes, 18% no
CNN (2008)	1, 013	Do you think homosexuals who DO publicly disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military or not?	75% yes, 22% no
<i>Newsweek</i> (2008)	1, 006	Do you think people who are openly gay or homosexual should or should not be allowed to serve in the U.S. military?	81% should, 17% should not
CNN (2009)	1, 014	Do you think there should or should NOT be gays and lesbians serving openly in the military? Do you favor or oppose the policy sometimes called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in which the U.S. military does not ask new recruits whether they are gay or lesbian, but prohibits gays and lesbians from serving in the military if they reveal their sexual orientation? Federal law currently prohibits openly gay men and women from serving in the military. Do you think this law should be repealed or not?	66% should, 29% should not 48% favor, 47% oppose
Democracy Corps (2009)	847	Do you favor or oppose allowing openly gay men and lesbian women to serve in the military?	55% yes, 35% no
Gallup (2009)	1, 015	Federal law currently prohibits openly gay men and women from serving in the military. Do you think this law should be repealed or not?	69% favor
Quinnipiac (2009)	2, 041	Federal law currently prohibits openly gay men and women from serving in the military. Do you think this law should be repealed or not?	56% yes, 37% no
ABC/WP (2010)	1, 004	Do you think homosexuals who do NOT publicly disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military or not?	83% yes, 15% no
CBS/ <i>The New York Times</i> (2010)	1, 084	Do you think homosexuals who DO publicly disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military or not? Do you favor or oppose homosexuals serving in the military?	75% yes, 24% no 59% favor, 29% oppose

(Continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Source	Sample size	Survey question	Result
CNN (2010)	1, 023	Should homosexuals be allowed to serve <i>openly</i> in the military?	44% favor, 42% oppose
<i>Fox News</i> (2010)	900	Do you favor or oppose permitting people who are openly gay or lesbian to serve in the military?	69% favor, 27% oppose
Gallup (2010)	1, 029	Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military?	61% favor, 30% oppose
McClatchy-Marist (2010)	810 adults	Do you favor or oppose allowing openly gay men and lesbian women to serve in the military	70% favor, 25% oppose
		Do you think the current Democratic Congress should repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, and allow gay men and women to serve openly in the military or do you think they should not repeal it so they continue to serve but not openly?	47% should repeal, 48% should not
NBC/WSJ (2010)	1, 000	Let me read you three statements about gay men and women serving in the military, and please tell me which one comes closest to your point of view.	50% favor allowing to serve, 38% favor under DADT policy, 10% oppose allowing to serve
Pew Research Center (2010)	1, 500	Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military?	59% favor, 24% oppose
Quinnipiac University (2010)	2, 424	Federal law currently prohibits openly gay men and women from serving in the military. Do you think this law should be repealed or not?	58% should be repealed, 34% should not be repealed
<i>CBS News</i> (2011)	1, 012	Should gays and lesbians be able to serve openly in the military?	68% favor, 22% oppose

TABLE 2 Military Opinion Polls on Gays in the Military

Source	Sample	Survey Question	Result
Healy (1993)	2,346 Enlisted Men/Women	How do you feel about lifting the ban on gays in the armed forces?	74% oppose 76% men/55% women
Miller (1994)	1943 Male Army Soldiers 1606 Female Army Soldiers	Gay and Lesbians should be allowed to enter and remain in the military.	75% men oppose 43% women oppose
U.S. Air Force Poll (Miller, 1994)	800 Enlisted Air Force Personnel	How do you feel about the current policy of separating known homosexuals or discharging people who state they are homosexuals?	67% support policy
Cleveland & Ohl (1994)	605 Naval Officers	Homosexuals should not be restricted from serving anywhere in the Navy.	75% favor restriction
Friery (1997)	298 Naval Officers	Homosexuals should not be restricted from serving anywhere in the Navy.	66% favor restriction
Estrada & Weiss (1999)	72 Marine Reservists	I feel that the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces should be lifted.	75% favor ban
Triangle Institute for Security Studies 1998–1999 (Miller & Williams, 2001)	2,901 Officers	Do you think gay men and lesbians should be allowed to serve in the military?	73% favor restrictions
Annenberg Public Policy Center (2004)	655 Service Personnel/Family Member on Active Duty from February—October 2004	Should gays and lesbians be allowed to serve openly in the military or shouldn't they be allowed to serve openly?	50% of active duty oppose Open Service 57% of Reserve/Guard opposed open service
Rodgers (2006)	545 U.S. Service Members	Do you agree or disagree with allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military?	37% oppose open service
McGarry (2010)	3,000 Active Duty Personnel	Do you favor or oppose allowing gays to serve openly in military?	51% oppose open service
Navy Postgraduate School (2010)	383 Naval Officers, 91 Marine Corps Officers	Gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly in our military.	40% of Navy officers disagree; 54% of Marine officers disagree
Vet Voice Foundation (2010)	510 Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans	Do you favor or oppose allowing openly gay men and lesbian women to serve in the military?	36% oppose

Note. Data compiled from Estrada, 2012.

when polls ask whether gays should be allowed to serve versus whether gays should be allowed to serve openly (DoD, 2010a; NDRI, 2010).

Data from military opinion polls on gays in the military is quite limited and not as methodologically sophisticated as those from public opinion polls (DoD, 2010a; Sinclair, 2009). Surveys conducted in the 1990s reveal that large percentages of military respondents expressed disapproval or opposition toward removing the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces (see Table 2). Illustrative examples of this finding can be observed in studies reported by Miller (1994) where 75% of male soldiers and 43% of female soldiers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that “gays and lesbians should be allowed to enter and remain in the military” (p. 70); Cleveland and Ohls (1994, p. 88) and Friery (1997, p. 74), where 60–70% of Naval officers disagreed/strongly disagreed that “homosexuals should not be restricted from serving anywhere in the Navy;” and Estrada and Weiss (1999), where 72% of Marine reservists disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement that “I feel that the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces should be lifted” (p. 89).

However, studies conducted in the 2000s reveal that 40–60% of military respondent’s disapprove or oppose allowing gays in the military as compared with 60–70% who expressed such views in the 1990s (see Table 2). Illustrative examples of this finding can be observed in studies conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center (2004), where 50% of active duty and 57% of Reserve and National Guard respondents thought gays and lesbians should not be allowed to serve openly; Zogby International (Rodgers, 2006) where 37% of military respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that gays and lesbians be allowed to serve openly in the military; and the *Military Times* (McGarry, 2010), where 51% of military respondents opposed or strongly opposed allowing gays to serve openly in the military. While it is important to acknowledge that none of these studies include data from large probability based samples that are representative of the U.S. military population (DoD, 2010a; Sinclair, 2009), the converging evidence does suggest that military opinion appears to be more tolerant today than it was in the 1990s (see Table 2).

Research on the correlates of military personnel’s attitudes toward gays in the military has shown that negative attitudes appear to be associated with certain demographic (e.g., gender, race and ethnicity, religious and political ideology, interpersonal contact) and military characteristics (e.g., rank, years of service, military occupation). Specifically, research shows that male military personnel tend to disapprove or oppose gays in the military to a greater extent than female military personnel (Healy, 1993; Miller, 1994; Moradi & Miller, 2010; Rodgers, 2006); that military personnel of White or Latino background tend to disapprove or oppose gays in the military to a greater extent than African Americans (Healy, 1993; Rodgers, 2006); that military personnel with more conservative political and religious views tend disapprove

or oppose gays in the military to a greater extent than those holding less conservative political and religious views (Estrada & Weiss, 1999; Moradi & Miller, 2010); that military personnel who have not had interpersonal contact with gay service personnel tend to disapprove or oppose gays in the military to a greater extent than military personnel with such interpersonal experiences (Estrada & Weiss, 1999; Moradi & Miller, 2010); that military personnel with more time in service as well as those with higher rank tend to disapprove or oppose gays in the military to a greater extent than individuals with less time in service and of lower rank (Moradi & Miller, 2010; Rodgers, 2006); and that military personnel in the combat arms tend to disapprove or oppose gays in the military to a greater extent than military personnel in either combat support, or combat service support (DoD, 2010a; Healy, 1993).

Compatibility of Gay Service Personnel

Concerns regarding the compatibility of gay individuals and military service have centered on issues involving personal privacy in berthing and billeting of service personnel; self-disclosure of sexual orientation among gay personnel; and perceived conflict with military and family values of the U.S. military institution.

PERSONAL PRIVACY

Privacy concerns are important when considering any policy affecting military personnel. However, personal privacy in the military is often subjugated to the needs of the military mission. A number of studies involving military respondents who served in a unit with a person who they believed (or knew) to be gay have found few, if any, problems concerning privacy violations involving gay service personnel (DoD, 2010a; McGarry, 2010; Moradi & Miller, 2010; NDRI, 2010; Rodgers, 2006). DoD's Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG) found that if the law was repealed, 29.4% military respondents said they would do nothing different when it came to showering, 11% would discuss behavioral expectations with gays service personnel, 25.8% would shower at a different time and 17.7% of military respondents would talk to a leader to see if they had other options (DoD, 2010a). The study also found that if military personnel were assigned to share a room, berth, or field tent with gay service member, 26.7% would do nothing, 24.3% would have a discussion about expectations, 2.4% would seek advice from others and 28.1% would talk to their leader and seek an alternative option (DoD, 2010a).

DISCLOSURE OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Until recently, U.S. law required that sexual orientation and sexual behavior remain a personal and private matter within the military environment (10

U.S.C. § 654). When an individual's sexual orientation or behavior became public, the law required the military services to separate individuals because homosexuality was presumed to create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion of the U.S. military (Aspin, 1995; Otjen et al., 1993). This prohibition notwithstanding, it is clear that the sexual orientation and sexual behavior of gay service personnel, at times, became public with little (if any) risks to the functioning or performance of military units (DoD, 2010a; NDRI, 2010). In fact, the CRWG found that "when Service members had the actual experience of serving with someone they believe to be gay, in general, unit performance was not affected negatively" (DoD, 2010a, p.4). Moreover, the CRWG found that when the repeal of the law would be implemented, only 15% of gay service personnel indicated that they would mainly be open about their orientation with other service personnel in their units (DoD, 2010a; NDRI, 2010).

MILITARY AND FAMILY VALUES

Military institutions differ from civilian institutions in many respects, not the least of which involve the culture and its accompanying rules, customs, values, and traditions (Otjen et al., 1993). Military culture is characterized by the organized use of legitimate violence (Janowitz, 1971); bureaucratic control (Elron, Shamir, & Ben Ari, 1999); task oriented missions (Dunivin, 1994); a professional ethos that places high regard on discipline, obedience, courage, trust, self-sacrifice, and emphasizes the primacy of the group over the individual (Collins, 1998; Hillen, 1999; Townshend, 1993); and a masculine-warrior image that identifies and extols military service in terms of masculine norms (Dunivin, 1994). Although these organizational culture differences do matter, it is important to note that gay individuals who volunteer for military service are likely to do so with the understanding that the military, like the rest of society, has yet to come to terms with how to successfully manage the integration of gay individuals in the workplace. Moreover, openly gay service personnel, like their heterosexual counterparts, are likely to adapt their behaviors in order to minimize the potential for negative effects for themselves or their unit and perform their duties within the confines of the military culture (Belkin & Ember-Herbert, 2002; Goffman, 1963; Herek, 1993; Herek & Belkin, 2005; NDRI, 2010; Shawyer, 1987, 1995). With regard to family concerns, evidence from recent surveys of military spouses suggests that removal of the ban on gays in the military would have no impact on family readiness (77.2%), nor affect participation in military social events (72%), deployment support activities (76.4%), or family support programs (75.1%; Westat, 2010). Moreover, 43% of spouses did not think any special activities or communications would be necessary to prepare or assist spouses in understanding the new policy if the ban on gays in the military was removed. In fact, 44% of service members and 63% of spouses indicated

that if they lived on base with a gay or lesbian service member and partner as neighbors they would get to know the gay or lesbian service member like any other neighbor (DoD, 2010a; Westat, 2010).

Perceived Impact of Gay Service Personnel

Concerns regarding the perceived impact of integrating gay service personnel have centered on issues involving unit cohesion, military readiness, and unit effectiveness (DoD, 2010a; Otjen et al., 1993).

UNIT COHESION

U.S. military policies note that performance and effectiveness in combat is influenced by a wide variety of factors (DoD, 1992; NDRI, 2010). However, high combat effectiveness is premised on “a synergistic mix that can be best expressed as the product of unit cohesion and readiness” (Otjen et al., 1993, p. 162). Cohesion reflects the “bonding together of members of a unit in such a way as to sustain their will and commitment to each other, their unit, and the mission” (Johns et al., 1984, p. ix). Research indicates that unit cohesion can influence both individual and group performance (see Table 3; Beal et al., 2003; Chicchio & Essiembre, 2009; Mullen & Cooper, 1994). However, other research suggests that there are structural (e.g., size, proximity, interdependence, interpersonal contact) and situational (e.g., leadership style, command climate, threat or challenge conditions) factors that may play a larger role in understanding the complex relationships among cohesion, effectiveness, and performance than either sexual orientation, or sexual behavior of gay service personnel (Beal et al., 2005; Chicchio & Essiembre, 2009; Estrada, 2012; Mullen & Cooper, 1994; NDRI, 1993, 2010). In fact, the DoD’s CRWG found that large percentages of military personnel reported that removal of the ban on gays in the military would have a positive, a mixed, or no effect on aspects of task cohesion (70–76%), and social cohesion (67–78%; DoD, 2010a).

MILITARY READINESS

Readiness refers to the ability of forces or units to deliver the outputs for which they were designed, including the ability to deploy and employ without unacceptable delays, to provide capabilities required by the combatant commander, and to fight and meet the demands of the National Military Strategy (DoD, 2012). Military readiness is influenced by many factors that include organizational, training, and equipment-related variables. Among organizational variables, recruitment, retention, and medical wellbeing figure most prominently in discussions involving the inclusion of openly gay service personnel (Otjen et al., 1993). With regard to recruitment and retention, it

TABLE 3 Summary of Meta-Analytical Findings Involving Cohesion and Performance

Source	Overall cohesion	Task	Social	Group identity
Evans & Dion (1991)	.419	—	—	—
Gully, Whitney, & Devine (1995)	.199	—	—	—
Individual performance	.228	—	—	—
Group performance	.317	—	—	—
Mullen & Copper (1994)	.	—	—	—
Experimental studies	.223	.428	.271	.403
Correlational studies	.252	.249	-.132	.084
Oliver, Harman, Hoover, Hayes, & Pandhi (1999)				
Individual performance ^a	.196	—	—	—
Group performance ^a	.400	—	—	—
Individual performance ^b	.310	—	—	—
Group performance ^b	.331	—	—	—
Beal, Cohen, Burke & McLendon (2003)	.	.278	.199	.261
Behavioral performance	.301	.302	.315	—
Outcome performance	.168	.273	.139	—
Effectiveness	.175	.232	.148	—
Efficiency	.310	.343	.284	—
Chiochio & Essiembre (2009)	—	—	—	—
Behavioral performance	—	.359	.485	—
Outcome performance	—	.346	.201	—

Notes. All correlation coefficients are corrected for attenuation and sample size.

^aCorrelations are weighted by number of participants.

^bCorrelations are weighted by number of groups.

— correlations not reported.

has been argued that youth's propensity to enlist in the military would be lowered because the military image would be tarnished and that significant numbers of service members would not re-enlist if openly gay individuals were allowed to serve in the military (Otjen et al., 1993). Although the logic of this rationale appears straightforward, research shows that there are a host of different variables, besides sexual orientation, that influence the process of recruiting and retaining qualified personnel (e.g., academic background, socioeconomic status, social and political attitudes; Faris, 1984; Griffith, 2005; Hosek et al., 1989; Kleycamp, 2006; Moore, 2002; NDRI, 1993, 2010; National Research Council, 2003; Stewart & Firestone, 1992; Warner & Asch, 1995). In fact, the CRWG found that a 60% majority of military respondents indicated that their career plans would not change if restrictions on gays in the military were repealed; 11% would consider leaving sooner than planned; and 13% would definitely leave sooner than planned (DoD, 2010a).

With regard to medical wellbeing, recent advances in the testing, treatment, and prevention of illness have improved considerably, enabling the military to exercise significant control over the medical wellbeing of the

force. New recruits undergo extensive medical screens to assess their suitability for service, and service members receive routine physicals, and medical treatment periodically, as well as before and after a deployment (DoD, 2010a). For example, service personnel are tested for HIV at least every two years, on the advice of a doctor, or upon request (DoD, 2010a; NDRI, 2010). The efficacy of these procedures led the Surgeons General of the Army, Navy, and Air Force to conclude that medical procedures to prevent the spread of HIV and secure the blood supply of the military were sufficient to protect the health of the force (DoD, 2010a).

UNIT EFFECTIVENESS

A unit's effectiveness reflects its ability to accomplish assigned tasks or missions and is determined by structural and situational factors that may be internal or external to the unit (DoD, 2010a, 2010b). It has been argued that the presence of openly gay service personnel could affect cohesion by straining social relations among unit members, which in turn would impair a unit's ability to accomplish tasks or missions, that is, unit effectiveness; and that the presence of openly gay service personnel could affect retention of military personnel by affecting military personnel's decision to remain in the military, leading to personnel shortfalls that would in turn impair a unit's ability to accomplish tasks or missions, that is, unit effectiveness. These concerns notwithstanding, research points to other factors, besides sexual orientation, that are far more important in fostering cohesion and retention among military personnel (see preceding section on cohesion and retention). According to the CRWG, large percentages of military respondents (50–80%) indicated that the presence of openly gay service personnel would not uniformly impact unit effectiveness (DoD 2010a).

To summarize, data from both public and military opinion polls indicate that large percentages of Americans now favor allowing gay individuals to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces (DoD, 2010a; NDRI, 1993, 2010; Torres-Reyna & Shapiro, 2002; Yang, 1997). Research on the correlates of these attitudes points to the importance of demographic (e.g., gender, race or ethnicity, religious and political ideology, interpersonal contact) and military characteristics (e.g., rank, years of service, military occupation) as predictors of military personnel's acceptance of gay service personnel within the military environment. Research also demonstrates that while disclosure of sexual orientation has been prohibited by law (10 U.S.C. § 654), sexual orientation or behavior of gay service personnel, at times, became public with little (if any) risks to the personal privacy of military personnel (DoD, 2010a; McGarry, 2010; Moradi & Miller, 2010; NDRI, 2010; Rodgers, 2006), their personal values and the values of the military institution (DoD, 2010a; NDRI, 2010), or the cohesiveness, readiness, and combat effectiveness of military units (DoD, 2010a; NDRI, 2010).

A FRAMEWORK FOR INTEGRATING OPENLY GAY SERVICE PERSONNEL IN THE U.S. MILITARY

We have learned a great deal about the challenges and opportunities associated with the inclusion of openly gay service personnel in the U.S. military in the past three decades (DoD, 2010a, 2010b; NDRI, 1993, 2010; Westat, 2010). However, much of this research has been guided by pragmatic concerns related to the acceptance, compatibility, and perceived impact that openly gay individuals may have on the U.S. military (DoD, 2010a; NDRI, 1993, 2010; Otjen et al., 1993). Given recent changes in U.S. law, it is critical to develop conceptual frameworks to inform efforts to implement Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010 and ensure the successful integration of openly gay service personnel within the military environment. Accordingly, we propose a theoretical framework of the antecedents and outcomes of participation and inclusion of gay service personnel within the military environment. Our theory incorporates individual, occupational-organizational and societal antecedents proposed by Estrada (2012). Additionally, we specify individual, group or unit, and organizational outcomes associated with the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment. Figure 1 displays the proposed theoretical framework of antecedents and outcomes of participation and inclusion of gay service personnel within the U.S. military.

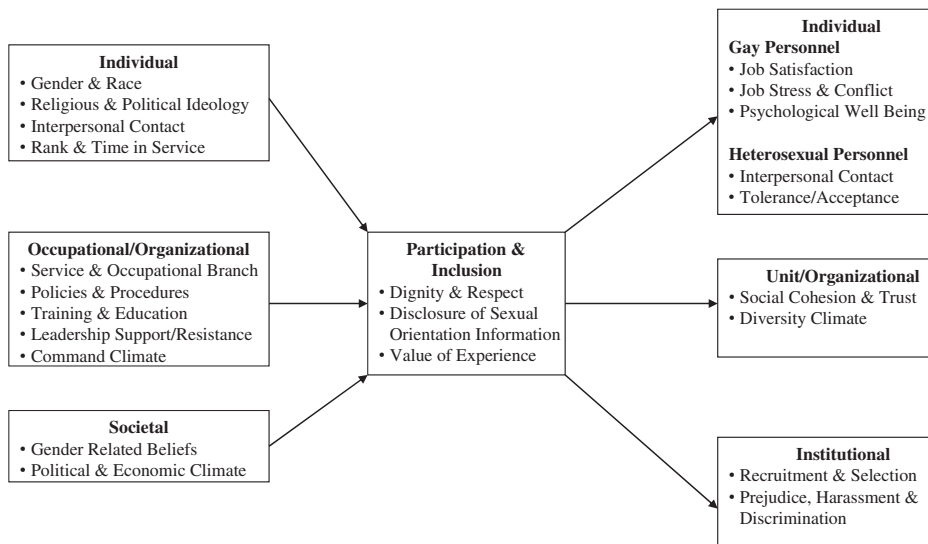


FIGURE 1 Antecedents and consequences of participants and inclusion of openly gay service personnel in the U.S. military.

Antecedents of Participation and Inclusion

Three classes of variables are posited to play a role in the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the U.S. military (see Figure 1). Individual variables include demographic background, religious and political ideology, interpersonal contact experiences, and military characteristics. Occupational and organizational variables include service and occupational branch, policies and procedures, training and education, leadership support or resistance, and command climate. Societal variables include gender-related beliefs and political and economic climate.

INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES

Past research shows that less tolerance of gays in the military tends to be expressed by male individuals of White or Latino backgrounds (Healy, 1993; Miller, 1994; Moradi & Miller, 2010; Rodgers, 2006), as well as among individuals espousing conservative political and religious views (Estrada & Weiss, 1999; Moradi & Miller, 2010) and those with limited interpersonal contact with gay service personnel (DoD, 2010a; Estrada & Weiss, 1999; Moradi & Miller, 2010). Other research also shows that less tolerance for gays in the military tends to be expressed by military personnel with more time in service as well as those of higher rank (Moradi & Miller, 2010; Rodgers, 2006). Accordingly, Estrada (2012) proposed that:

Proposition 1: Gender, ethnicity, religious and political views as well as interpersonal contact with gay service personnel will influence the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel.

Proposition 2: Rank and time in service will influence the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel.

OCCUPATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL VARIABLES

Past research shows that less tolerance of gays in the military tends to be expressed by service members from the Marine Corps and Army as compared with individuals from the Navy or Air Force (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2004; DoD, 2010a; Healy, 1993; McGarry, 2010; Rodgers, 2006; Westat, 2010); and among military personnel in the combat arms (DoD, 2010a; Healy, 1993; Westat, 2010). Accordingly, Estrada (2012) proposed that:

Proposition 3: Service and occupational branch will influence the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel.

Previous research has noted the importance of having clear policies and procedures as well as proper training and education for the successful

integration of openly gay service personnel in the U.S. military (DoD, 2010a, 2010b; Estrada & Laurence, 2009; NDRI, 1993, 2010; Zellman, 1996). Accordingly, Estrada (2012) proposed that:

Proposition 4: Organizational policies and procedures as well as training and education will influence the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel.

Research suggests that gay service personnel consider many factors before deciding to disclose their sexual orientation to other military personnel (DoD, 2010a; NDRI, 2010). These factors include perceived organizational, supervisory, and peer support—that is, leadership support or resistance (Chrobot-Mason, Button, & DiClementi, 2001; Driscoll et al., 1996; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007); as well as the command's climate for diversity (Claire, Beatty, & Maclean, 2005). Accordingly, Estrada (2012) proposed that:

Proposition 5: Leadership support or resistance and command climate will influence the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel.

CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL VARIABLES

Research shows that individuals (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1999; Spence & Hahn, 1997; Twenge, 1997) and societies (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Glick et al., 2000; Hofstede, 2001; Schwartz, 1994) differ in their tolerance of violations for proscribed behaviors of men and women. Estrada (2012) suggested that individuals with more traditional gender role beliefs may be less likely to tolerate behaviors that violate these norms, and be more likely to enforce sanctions against individuals who violate these norms (e.g., Pryor, Giedd, & Williams, 1995; Pryor & Whalen, 1997). For example, heterosexual service personnel with more traditional gender-related beliefs may view openly gay service personnel as violating societal gender norms, and, thus, be motivated to enforce sanctions against gay personnel to address perceived violations. The enforcement of sanctions by heterosexual service personnel could therefore influence the participation and inclusion of gay service personnel within the military environment. Accordingly, Estrada (2012) proposed that:

Proposition 6: Gender-related beliefs will influence the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel.

Estrada (2012) noted that the political and economic climate of the United States affects the armed forces in several ways. The U.S. military is

generally favored when the preponderance of elected officials tend to favor and pursue politically conservative policies. As an example, DoD Directives 1332.14 and 1332.30 were developed when the executive branch was occupied by a politically conservative administration, and passage of 10 USC § 654 occurred when the legislative branch was dominated by a politically conservative electorate. In contrast, repeal of 10 USC § 654 occurred when the executive and legislative branches of government were dominated by a politically liberal electorate. Accordingly, Estrada (2012) suggested that the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel may be affected by the political climate of the country. He proposed that:

Proposition 7: Political climate will influence the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel.

With regard to the economic climate, Estrada (2012) noted that past research indicated that the state of the civilian economy can influence the military's ability to recruit and retain individuals into military service (e.g., Asch & Warner, 1994; Faris, 1984; Goldberg, 2001; Hosek et al., 1989; Warner & Asch, 1995). During economically prosperous times, opportunities for employment are greater, and military recruitment is more difficult. Conversely, during economically impoverished times, less opportunities for employment exist, and the military has more opportunities to recruit qualified personnel from a larger pool of applicants. Accordingly, Estrada (2012) reasoned that the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel is likely to be affected by the economic climate of the country because higher numbers of individuals, to include gay individuals, may be motivated and qualified for military service during periods of economic scarcity. Estrada (2012) proposed that:

Proposition 8: Economic climate will influence the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel.

Participation and Inclusion of Openly Gay Service Personnel

Participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel can be manifested in many ways. However, we posit that an inclusive military environment is one in which openly gay service personnel a) are treated with dignity and respect; b) feel free to share information about their sexual orientation and their personal lives without fear of reprisals; and where c) their unique experiences, as members of a sexual minority group, are valued and leveraged to enhance both individual and unit functioning. From this perspective, greater participation of openly gay service personnel in work (e.g., special or high-visibility assignments) and non-work activities (e.g., attendance to social

events sponsored by their military chain of command) may be indicative of an inclusive military environment.

Outcomes of Participation and Inclusion

The participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the U.S. military is posited to influence three classes of variables including individual, unit or organizational, and institutional (see Figure 1). Individual variables include job-related as well as psychological and health outcomes for gay service personnel, and interpersonal contact and attitudinal variables for heterosexual personnel. Unit and organizational variables include social cohesion, trust, unit conflict, as well as command climate. Institutional variables include prejudice, harassment and discrimination, recruitment and selection, and cultural change.

INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES

The participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel is posited to influence individual level variables for both gay and heterosexual service personnel (see Figure 1). As noted above, inclusion of openly gay service personnel may be manifested in terms of dignity and respect, disclosure of sexual orientation, and value of sexual minority experiences. Past research suggests that disclosure of sexual orientation among gays in the workplace has been associated with improved interpersonal relations (Beals & Peplau, 2006; Collins & Miller, 1994), increased job satisfaction (Griffith & Hebl, 2002), better psychological health (Meyer, 2003; Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum, 2001); less conflict between work and family life (Day & Schoenrade, 1997). Accordingly, we posit that the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel (as evidenced by disclosure of sexual orientation information) is likely to yield positive job, health, and psychological outcomes for gay personnel. Therefore, we propose that:

Proposition 9: Increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment will influence job satisfaction, job stress and conflict, and psychological wellbeing of openly gay service personnel.

Participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel is also likely to increase opportunities for positive interpersonal contact experiences among gay and heterosexual service personnel. Past research shows that interpersonal contact with members of an outgroup is likely to bring about positive changes in attitudes and behaviors of ingroup members toward outgroup members (Pettigrew & Troop, 2006; Smith, Axelton, & Saucier,

2009). Accordingly, we propose that increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment may bring about increased tolerance and acceptance of gays in the military among heterosexual personnel over time (Estrada & Weiss, 1999; Herek, 1996; Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Moradi & Miller, 2010). Therefore, we propose that:

Proposition 10: Increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment will be associated with greater tolerance and acceptance of gays in the military among heterosexual service personnel.

UNIT OR ORGANIZATIONAL VARIABLES

We propose that increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment may have a number of positive unit and organizational effects to include cohesion, trust, and command climate for diversity (see Figure 1). Unit cohesion is thought to result from “controlled, interactive forces that lead to solidarity within military units [which] direct soldiers toward common goals—i.e., *task cohesion* . . . [and foster] commitment to [individuals]—i.e., *social or interpersonal cohesion* . . . and to the unit as a whole”—that is, group identity or pride and esprit de corps (emphasis added; Headquarters Department of the Army, 1986, p. 204). As noted previously, unit cohesion is important because it has been linked to group performance (e.g., Beal et al., 2003; Chicchio & Essiembre, 2009; Mullen & Cooper, 1994). Although military perspectives on the topic of gays in the military allude to a negative relationship between participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel and unit cohesion (Otjen et al., 1993), empirical evidence in support of this relationship is nonexistent. Thus, we propose an alternative viewpoint. Specifically, we suggest that the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel may have the potential to positively impact interpersonal relations (i.e., social cohesion) among unit members within the military environment. Empirical support for this proposition comes from research showing that mere exposure to target stimuli can, in and of itself, produce greater liking for a target (Bornstein, 1989; Harmon-Jones & Allen, 2001; Lee, 2001; Zajonc, 1968) and from research showing that interpersonal contact with members of an outgroup is likely to bring about positive changes in attitudes and behaviors of ingroup members toward outgroup members (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Troop, 2006, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). Based on this research, we reason that increased exposure and interpersonal contact with openly gay service personnel is likely to influence interpersonal relations among member of unit such that interpersonal bonds among openly gay and heterosexual member

of unit will be strengthened (i.e., social cohesion) and greater trust among unit members will result. Therefore, we propose that:

Proposition 11: Increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment will be associated with greater levels of social cohesion among unit members.

Proposition 12: Increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment will be associated with greater levels of trust among unit members.

Furthermore, we reason that increased exposure and interpersonal contact with openly gay service personnel may also lead to changes in the unit or organization's climate for diversity. Support for this proposition comes from research showing that mere exposure and interpersonal contact with members of an outgroup is likely to bring about positive changes in attitudes and behaviors of ingroup members toward outgroup members (e.g., Allport, 1954; Bornstein, 1989; Pettigrew & Troop, 2006, 2008; Zajonc, 1968) and from research showing that spending time with and self-disclosing to members of an outgroup can result in more positive perceptions toward other groups by members of the ingroup (Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011; Davies, Wright, & Aron, 2011; Pettigrew & Troop, 2006, 2008). Based on this research, we argue that increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel may lead heterosexual and openly gay service personnel alike to perceive that the unit or organization is more tolerant and or accepting of individuals from other socially recognized or legally protected groups (e.g., race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability; DoD, 2009). Therefore, we propose that:

Proposition 13: Increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment will be associated with more positive perceptions of the unit and organizational climate for diversity.

INSTITUTIONAL VARIABLES

We propose that increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment may influence recruitment and selection among gay applicants for military service and influence prejudice, harassment and discrimination toward gay service personnel (see Figure 1). Past research indicates that there are a wide range of factors that influence recruitment and selection of qualified applicants for military service (Faris, 1984; Griffith, 2005; Hosek et al., 1989; Kleycamp, 2006; Moore, 2002; NDRI, 1993, 2010; National Research Council, 2003; Stewart & Firestone, 1992; Warner & Asch, 1995). Although research indicates that educational

and economic factors play a significant role in both recruitment and selection of service personnel (Asch et al., 2010; Asch & Warner, 1994, Bicksler & Nolan, 2009; Goldberg, 2001; Kilburn & Klerman, 1999; Warner & Asch, 1995), we propose that the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel may also serve to positively influence these processes. Specifically, we argue that the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment may function to convey that the military environment is both tolerant and accepting of gay individuals within its ranks. As such, this may lead to increased propensity for military service among gay individuals who would ultimately be eligible for recruitment and selection into military service. Therefore, we propose that:

Proposition 14: Increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment will be associated with greater propensity for service among gay individuals and lead to higher recruitment and selection of gay individual for military service.

Additionally, increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment is also likely to be associated with lower instances of prejudice, harassment, and discrimination toward gays in the military. Research suggests that prejudice, harassment, and discriminatory behaviors are less likely to occur within work environments that are perceived to be intolerant of these behaviors (Chan et al., 2008; Estrada, 2012; Estrada & Harbke 2008; Estrada & Laurence, 2009; Hulin, 1993; Hulin et al., 1997; Willness et al., 2007). Other research also shows that gay individuals report higher levels of discrimination within work environments that lack policies and support systems to prevent such behaviors toward gays in the workplace (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Ragins & Cornwell, 2000; Ragins et al., 2007). Therefore, we posit that increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment is likely to signal to both gay and heterosexual personnel that prejudice, harassment, and discriminatory behaviors are not tolerated; that gay service personnel can feel free to report such behaviors when they occur; and that perpetrators will be punished for enacting such behaviors because they are contrary to good order and discipline required of the professional military. Therefore, we propose that

Proposition 15: Increased participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment will influence prejudice, harassment and discrimination toward gay service personnel.

This section outlined a conceptual framework of antecedents and outcomes of the participation and inclusion of openly gay individuals within

the military environment. Fifteen empirical propositions were derived and posited to explain the interrelationships among the variables contained within the proposed framework. The proposed framework is meant to inform ongoing discussion and help to guide future research related to the management, participation, and inclusion of gay service personnel within the U.S. military.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

We have learned about the many challenges and opportunities associated with the integration of openly gay service personnel within the military environment. However, it is important to note that much of what we know is guided by pragmatic concerns that are not necessarily informed by either relevant psychological theory or empirical research. Thus, there is a need for theoretically informed studies that incorporate relevant psychological research on this topic. Such approaches are particularly important since they can provide concrete guidance on how to manage the integration of openly gay individuals into the military environment. Such approaches can also inform the military's efforts to anticipate, prevent and curtail problems associated with the integration of openly gay service personnel within the military environment before they occur (e.g., Office of the Inspector General, 2000). The synthesis presented in the preceding section of this article represents an attempt to build a conceptual framework of antecedents and outcomes of participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the military environment. This framework represents but one approach by which to incorporate relevant empirical research to uncover factors influencing the integration of gays in the military. Other examples can be observed in the work of Estrada and Laurence (2009) who evaluated a heuristic framework that examined how training related to the DADT policy influenced participant's reactions, learning and cognitive outcomes and behavioral and organization outcomes; and Probst, Estrada, and Brown (2008), who developed a framework of prevention strategies used to address harassment, violence, and hate crimes in the workplace. While these examples are far from comprehensive, they provide exemplars on how to integrate relevant theory and empirical research to inform future studies on issues related to the integration of gays in the military. This article was intended to contribute to ongoing discussions on the participation and inclusion of openly gay service personnel within the U.S. military. It is hoped that the review of the scientific record serves to inform the military's efforts to implement the new policy and inform future research on the successful integration of openly gay service personnel within the U.S. military environment.

NOTE

1. We use the term “gay service personnel” to refer to lesbians, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals.

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