

ASK & TELL, JUST DON'T PERFORM:  
MILITARY DISCOURSES OF (IN)SECURITY AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

by

MAURIANNA GOODRICH SHELBOURN

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Approved by:

Major Professor  
Dr. Timothy R. Steffensmeier

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MAURIANNA GOODRICH SHELBOURN

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## Abstract

The military operates through a system of gender and sexuality hierarchies that privilege masculinity and heterosexuality as the ideal category of service member. This symbolic national institution is also conceptually tied to notions of citizenship.

For marginalized groups, gaining the ability to freely enlist in the military represents a benchmark toward achieving full and equal status as political subjects. Such has been the case for the mainstream lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights movement. For much of the past century, military discourses have aided in rhetorically constructing homosexual identities as pathological, deviant, and unfit to serve in the armed forces. A recent shift in this rhetoric from Department of Defense (DoD) officials, which contributed to a repeal of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, calls into question how changing discourses about gay and lesbian service members rhetorically construct queer citizenship.

To answer this question, theories of gender and sexuality performance, corporeal rhetoric, and critical security discourse inform an analysis of the *Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”*, a DoD document assessing potential risks to the military upon repeal. The analysis reveals that despite assertions made in the document that open service by gay men and lesbians poses minimal threat, this claim is ultimately grounded in the presumption that institutional hegemony adequately constrains performative possibilities for LGB identity articulation.

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## **Chapter 1 - Military Identities, Gender/Sexuality, and (In)Security**

During his 2010 State of the Union address, President Barack Obama's proposition to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy catapulted the discussion of homosexuals in the military once again to the forefront of public debate surrounding gay rights issues. Obama framed the issue as one of equal treatment under the law that is independent from who gay and lesbian service members are (Obama, 2010), essentially making the claim that the identity of gay and lesbian citizens should not prevent them from serving in the military. Throughout the following year, Congress held many hearings over the issue and the President commissioned a comprehensive report from the Department of Defense (DoD) regarding the potential impacts of a repeal of the policy. By the end of the calendar year, Congress had passed and the President had signed the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010 (DADTRA). However, the language of the bill specified that the repeal would not take place until after the Department of Defense had made all necessary regulatory preparations for repeal, and after the repeal was determined to be "consistent with the standards of military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, and recruiting and retention of the Armed Forces" (DADTRA, 2010). Over the next nine months, military officials reviewed research about the implementation of the repeal, made policy recommendations, and crafted training sessions for service personnel about expectations after the ban was officially lifted. On September 20, 2011, DADT was officially repealed, ending military discharges of lesbian and gay service members whose sexuality was publically revealed.

The Department of Defense claim that allowing open service would not significantly impact military operations and goals was primarily supported by a report which the Department commissioned to investigate the potential impacts of a repeal of the DADT policy. The overall findings of the military personnel working group assigned to complete the report were that repeal would likely have a minimal, if not negligible impact on troop cohesion and completion of military objectives. The report, along with testimonies from then Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, as well as then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mike Mullen marked a discursive shift for the armed forces in regard to gay and lesbian service members in the military. Namely,

the presence of openly gay men and lesbian troops was argued to no longer be a threat to aims of the U.S. military.

This argumentative turn, which was preceded by a century of policies, practices, and regulations that sought to protect the military from homosexuality, is most significant specifically because it is a turn in the discourses of security that address relations between sexuality and militarism. As international relations scholar and cultural critic David Campbell (1998) claims, security discourses are integral to the crafting of state identity and the policies it pursues in the name of that security. Furthermore, Gary Lehring (2003), who writes on the politics of sexuality and the state, argues that debates held within the military sphere about the (in)compatibility of homosexuality and military service have played a large role in constructing official accounts of gay and lesbian identity. Institutional discourse that recharacterizes security relations between lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) troops and the military apparatus warrants attention because this discourse is also doing the work of identity construction. Arguments made about the level of threat that LGB<sup>1</sup> open service poses to the armed forces rhetorically construct identities by articulating characteristics deemed relevant to formations of (in)security. Rhetoric addressing potential impacts of a repeal of DADT classifies corporeal performances as demonstrative of the (il)legitimacy of one's membership in the military and the state. This analysis is guided by the following question: How does the shift in the institutional security discourse about DADT and lesbian and gay service members alter rhetorically constructed identities for LGBTQ citizens?

Before discussing my analysis and the implications revealed through this research in subsequent chapters, the current chapter reviews the relevant literature in four sections. First, I trace the history of the military's discursive framing of homosexuality as a threat and explain how military service intersects with marginalized citizens' advancements toward political equality. Next, I explore how gender and sexual identities are integral to an analysis of

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<sup>1</sup> I use several different terms to refer to individuals who ascribe to non-normative gender and/or sexual identities. I make collective reference to gay men and lesbians when alluding to language used within U.S. military discourse. Because the repeal of DADT also permits open service for individuals who identify as bisexual, I use LGB to indicate those identities newly "speakable" post repeal. Following the logic of Chávez (2010), LGBT is used within the context of mainstream rights activism, because this is the term these organizations most frequently mobilize. LGBTQ is reserved for instances when I am addressing the spectrum of gender/sexuality identities and performances that have been historically constructed as deviant within U.S. culture.



militarized security discourse. The third section develops the contention that the concepts of security and identity are rhetorical tools that operate to construct disparate and hierarchical boundaries between self and other.

### **Military Sexualities and Discourses of (In)Security**

The U.S. military has been a key sphere in which institutional discourse about homosexuality orients gay bodies in particular ways with regard to their status as citizens. In this section, I review how the presence of homosexuality has been characterized as threatening to the military and the shifts in reasoning that have occurred within this discourse. I also argue that the DoD Report detailing possible impacts of repealing DADT continues this security discourse, although it arrives at different conclusions. Next, I discuss how participation in the military is argued to be an essential point of access for marginalized groups' attainment of both symbolic and material political equality. My aim is to justify why discourses of security are a relevant site of inquiry regarding how homosexual citizenship is constituted by the state.

The United States Armed Forces have an institutional history of regulating gender and sexuality within their ranks through security discourses, the implications of which serve to construct not only perceptions of appropriate behaviors, but also perceptions of appropriate identities. As early as World War I, the draft exerted a disciplinary function aimed at men whose masculinity was held suspect because they were identified as underemployed, unmarried, and/or lacking ambition (Canaday, 2009, p. 60). Men who avoided conscription were labeled "slackers," a term Gerald Shenk (2005) explains also began to encompass a general negligence toward fulfilling social obligations. He further notes that the term slacker was gender specific and its use implied a questioning of one's manhood, which "also made [men] morally suspect" (2005, p. 22). Men who became incorporated within valuable war efforts, such as military service, could then regain their masculine status as soldiers, demonstrating the military's moral claim and ability to socialize men into becoming more desirable citizens. Reinforcing a virtuous public image for enlisted men also required that military officials police any potentialities for lewd or perverse behavior, including sex acts between men (which were understood as an indicator of homosexuality; Canaday, 2009). Aiding in the punishment of sex acts between men was the codification in military law of sodomy as a felony in a 1919 revision of the Articles of War (Shilts, 1993, p. 15). Of particular note during this time was a scandal involving a covert

naval operation to root out homosexuals in the port town of Newport, Rhode Island. Authorized by then assistant secretary of the Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the operation's goal was to protect young sailors from "conditions of vice and depravity" (Morgan, 2002), to which they risked exposure. Campbell (1998) explains that this period of security discourse about the threat of homosexuality was frequently framed through "pathologies of sexual deviance" (p. 84). In other words, it called for the eradication of such deviance in order to cure model citizens from the threat of a pathological identity.

While early efforts to root out male homosexuals in the military became increasingly associated with pathological sexual behavior, the growing entrance of women into the military raised questions about how to clearly identify homosexuality, and stimulated a need for a broader definition to be created. With the initiation of a permanent status for female service members, the military became a more attractive option for women seeking job opportunities in lieu of marriage. This incentivized strides to rhetorically construct the appropriateness of the female soldier, especially in order to alleviate public concerns that women who wanted to be soldiers were either prostitutes or lesbians (Meyer, 1992). The threat of a woman's masculinization through the military "implied both women's potential power over men and their sexual independence from them" (p. 584). In response to such a threat, the appropriate femininity for women soldiers had to be institutionally constructed. Women whose gender performances contradicted these standards were frequently discharged from service. As one might imagine, this sparked new military methods for classifying homosexuality. Official concerns over the greater sexual privacy of women, as well as the relative ambiguity of that which constituted lesbian behaviors, led to a new set of rules that permitted soldiers to be discharged from service for having a tendency toward homosexuality (Canaday, 2009).

Rhetorical shifts from policymakers about the threat posed by homosexuals in the armed services wielded influence on the methods and categories used to identify individuals as members of this targeted group. A definition of homosexuality, expanded in scope from explicit partnered acts to incorporate a myriad of signs potentially indicative of a tendency, further enabled a militarized construction of gay and lesbian identity. Further, the broadening of the labeled danger from acts to tendencies suggests the beginnings of a move away from discourses of security centered on sex acts as deviant. The threat of homosexual tendency articulates a fear of the blurring of normalized boundaries of gender performance. Whereas the earliest screenings

for homosexuality among male draftees instructed examiners to look strictly for physical characteristics that feminized the male figure, by 1942 such regulations were written to include gender deviant mannerisms (Bérubé, 1990, pp. 13-19). It was through efforts by military officials to identify a tendency, that behaviors, physical appearance and build, manner of dress, and vocal qualities all began to be linked with one's sexuality (Canaday, 2009). Additionally, as Bérubé (1990) reveals, the presence of such tendencies in a military environment were also argued to negatively impact morale and the ability to fulfill one's duties (p. 20). Discursive statements attempting to craft homosexual identity may still be used to justify as threatening particular ways in which gays and lesbians may perform gender/sexual identity while participating in military service.

The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy implemented in 1993 as a compromise between full inclusion and continued exclusion of LGBTQ in the military occurred during a period when the justifications for the institutional ban were again shifting. As arguments relating to the pathological nature of homosexuality were increasingly questioned, a new wave of reasoning was created. Leiring (2003) notes, "the new explanations focused on how the presence of gay soldiers would affect their heterosexual counterparts" (p. 135). Probable threats articulated by the military included lower troop morale, higher infection rates for sexually transmitted diseases, and the potential discomfort that would be felt by heterosexual soldiers who may have to shower with or bed next to a member of the troop that was gay. Such justifications serve to create difference that constructs the homosexual citizen against those citizens upon whom the honor of military service is bestowed. Implementation of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, Leiring (2003) argues, also serves to reinforce an understanding of homosexual identity that legitimates silence, making homosexuality in the military "invisibilized" because it has been deemed a threat to the security of the nation.

Enloe's (1993) observations during the 1993 discussions of homosexuality and the military give us further reason to question how gender may better inform this context. The public debate held by those in the military and in government focused primarily on the problems and concerns of gay men outwardly serving, whereas gay women were not often represented as part of the issue (p. 93). For example, Professor Charles Moskos, who helped craft the DADT policy, makes the argument that to persuade men to put their lives at risk, requires an appeal to their masculinity. Moskos's reasoning follows that an open military would demasculinize combat and

devistate military effectiveness (Ray, 1993, p. 63). The arguments for the DADT policy are based on the threats to straight masculinity from the presence of known gay male bodies. However, Enloe (1993) further points out that this appears contrary to statistics showing that over the course of 1992, “women were more than twice as likely to be dismissed from active military duty on charges of homosexuality than were men” (p. 92). The picture painted by these observations suggests the complex mechanisms of articulation through which gender identity also functions to inform the ways discourses of security are crafted in America’s military institutions. Additionally, it serves as evidence that the prosecutions of lesbians related to the perceived threat that the appearance of masculine women pose to heteronormative military gender relations. In particular, lesbianism was construed as counter to women’s appropriate displays of national service, performed through domesticity and care-giving (Cloud, 2009, pp. 466-467). Service in the military led to questions about the extent to which such (masculinized) women could continue to fulfill their proper role as nurturers and wives for the state.

In 2010, when repeal of DADT was again being discussed, much of the DoD discourse about the policy was revealed in the *Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”* commissioned by President Obama. Significantly, the report does rhetorical work through the security discourse it establishes in relation to open service. It advocates specific future policy implementation practices to facilitate the repeal of DADT. The executive summary at the beginning of the report details that the working group’s mission included “assess[ing] the impact of repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell on military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, recruiting, retention, and family readiness” (DoD, p. 1). Given the unstated presumption that under the DADT policy the military was performing effectively in these areas, the document operates as an argumentative risk-assessment. It articulates the possible threats to military bodies that the repeal of DADT might instantiate, what practices might be best to respond to such threats, and, in so doing, creates new conditions of possibility for the construction of openly LGB identities in the military.

The report is informed through a variety of methods including a survey of active duty personnel (and their spouses), focus groups, face-to-face interviews of service members, evidence from other militaries and civilian service groups where lesbians and gay men serve openly, and the opinions of top military officials (DoD, pp. 1-2). Just as the Pentagon commissioned Rand Corporation study released in 1993 is used by critics as a document

containing administrative representations of the security and identity issues salient to homosexuality in the military (Canaday, 2009; Lehring, 2003), it is likely the Defense Department's recent report will continue to inform a variety of rhetorical practices involving gay military service in the early implementation era of repeal.

### ***Military Subjectivities and Political Citizenship***

How the role of citizenship is constructed for groups within society is a vital area for investigation because it suggests degrees of marginalization for particular political identities. Krebs (2006) argues, "The politics of citizenship are often so intense precisely because the stakes are so high – for both the distribution of material resources and the identity of the political community" (p. 22). As lesbians and gays continue to struggle for the rights of full citizenship, the way in which their participation in military service is regulated becomes important because historically, the capacity to serve in one's national armed forces is often an essential marker of full citizenship within the nation-state (Krebs, 2006). Indeed, many mainstream LGBT rights activists publically characterized the repeal of DADT as a significant step toward inclusion and equal treatment in other state-regulated cultural institutions such as marriage, family, and the workplace. Additionally, service in the military becomes important because it has also been understood as an elite realm of citizenship, implicating an elevated political status for its members (Brouwer, 2004; Krebs, 2006).

Scholars have argued that as a part of the state apparatus, the military is intimately tied to official constructions of identity for relevant political subjects found within and beyond its geographic borders (Canaday, 2009; Herbert, 1998; Krebs, 2006; Lehring, 2003). State regulations, including those that inform the subject's fitness or eligibility for military service, construct categorical boundaries that mark bodies with degrees of belongingness in relation to national and cultural institutions. State discourse, articulated through the official language of regulations, policies, and laws, gains authority over the identity of the citizen because it is imbued with "the most basic political power: the power to name, to classify" (Lehring, 2003, p. 16). Citizenship, as well as the specific ability to serve in the military, is defined through categories that separate desirable subjectivities from those deemed counterproductive or even harmful to national interests.

The link between military service and the rights of full citizenship has often been constructed through a rhetoric of sacrifice. Because the military contains an inherent link to wartime, the military, while at times divisive, can become a symbol of national unity (Krebs, 2006). A marginalized group's commitment to and sacrifices for the national war effort is reasoned as evidence for the necessity of equal political rights. Krebs (2006) notes that without the ability to make such a sacrifice, many politically disenfranchised groups throughout history have found it difficult to have their claims to the rights of full citizenship accepted by a general populous.

In addition to the sense of unity brought about by citizens' sacrifices toward wartime efforts, service in the military also becomes linked with the ultimate sacrifice of the body and blood for one's nation (Brouwer, 2004; Krebs, 2006). However, for gay and lesbian citizens, the mechanism of achieving the rights associated with full citizenship through military service has been somewhat complicated by the (in)visibility of their service. Butler (1997) characterizes the military as "a zone of partial citizenship, a domain in which selected features of citizenship are preserved, and others are suspended" (p. 103). Service in the military required LGBTQ personnel to sacrifice the ability to be open about their sexuality and/or gender. Often, the only public identity performances available are always aligned with heteronormative standards set forth by the armed forces. Such performances of heterosexuality also mark a corporeal sacrifice by LGBTQ service members, albeit one whose revelation more commonly resulted in dishonorable discharges than medals of honor.

Military service rhetorically signals one's willingness to relinquish both bodily security and the freedoms of civilian life. These sacrifices serve as a performance of civic virtue (Krebs, 2006), a desirable form of citizenship. Ostensibly, the soldier, marine, sailor, or airman risks body and life for the security of the nation. Official discourse that delineates how national security is performed and what subjects have the capacity to participate in its performance aligns military action with the hetero-masculine identities of service members. Gay and lesbian service members have historically been framed as a threat to operations of national defense, resulting in their separation from the armed forces.

## **Gendered and Sexualized Dimensions of Security Discourse**

The attainment of safety and security for citizens is widely considered an essential function of state performance. This creates a rhetorical need for state assurances of this security's existence. Just as an individual adopts practices that serve as rhetorical markers of the degree to which the self is protected, so too are actions at the institutional level within the state rhetorically crafted to demonstrate varying degrees of national security. With consideration to the ideological war being waged by the United States against acts of terrorism, questions about the country's relative safety emerge. Frequently for the state, the ways in which security is maintained involves distinct constructions of gender and sexuality. For example, performances of masculinity are discursively structured around acts of protection from outside threats. In order for security to effectively provided, performances of femininity, in turn, are situated through the supporting roles of mother/wife/prostitute. Militarized constructions of femininity and masculinity become particularly relevant for a nation such as the United States, with its vast military capacities and its current occupations of Middle Eastern nations (Howard & Prividera, 2006). During times of military conflict, fostering national ideologies, many of which are gendered, to support a robust and actively engaged defense becomes a useful rhetorical tool for government and military officials. Howard and Prividera (2006) argue there is a need for such inquiries from the communication studies discipline, "where the intersections of nationalism, patriarchy, and militarism have remained relatively unexplored" (p. 135). Thus, at a point in time when national attention is focused on issues of security, situating our gaze upon gendered performances that rhetorically ensure security as practiced by the military is useful for understanding the discursive space in which debates about open military service operate. Therefore, to support my claim that militarized notions of security are reliant on privileging particular performances of gender/sexuality, I first establish the theoretical lens through which I approach the concepts of gender and sexuality as performative practices of cultural discourse. I follow with a theoretical explanation of the hegemonic masculinity that undergirds militarism. Given the commonly voiced concerns that open service of gay men and lesbians would be counter to standards of military effectiveness, which are often grounded in perceptions of how they perform gender and sexuality, it is necessary to examine the established heteronormativity of military practices.

## *Gender and Sexuality as Co-Constructed Performances*

Masculine and feminine practices occur within broader historical and cultural contexts that inform how bodies engage in gender performances. These practices occur and are reproduced throughout disparate levels of society. Sexual practices, like other performances the body enacts, are also implicated within normative societal constructions of masculinity and femininity. That which is understood to be “correct” sexual behavior for men and women is further constrained by associations between sexual practice and “natural” processes of biological reproduction. This creates a dominant culture where heterosexuality is privileged because heterosexual intercourse is seen as the means by which the species is propagated. In her essay, *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence*, Adriane Rich (1980) problematizes the assumption that reproduction and sexual/romantic partnership are inextricably linked and argues for resistance against forms of institutionalized heterosexuality. Gender and sexual performances that enact Rich’s call for resistance can be construed as threatening to the security of the heterosocial order through which culturally dominant social interactions are regulated. As Butler (2010) notes, “one way in which this system of compulsory heterosexuality is reproduced and concealed is through the cultivation of bodies into discrete ‘sexes’ with ‘natural’ appearances and ‘natural’ heterosexual dispositions” (p. 424). Thus, for example, a woman’s femininity is managed appropriately if these gender practices remain in line with her presumed heterosexuality.

The relationship between gender and sexuality is not unidirectional. In other words, sexuality, as a performative act, also influences the construction of gender. For example, a man who is more sexually aggressive is identified with masculinizing gender labels, whereas a sexually passive man is characterized through feminizing labels. The performance of sexuality bears implications on perceptions of gender. Herbert (1998) explains, “In the broader society, sexuality, and the values and norms we apply to it, are used to confine people to prescribed gender roles. Such a mechanism also exists within occupations and institutions” (p. 15). Socially and institutionally, bodies are disciplined when they engage in practices that deviate from normative gender and sexual constructs.

The reliance on gender practices as constructs through which we interpret the social world originates primarily through vested political interests (Butler, 2010). In other words, because gender and sexuality are not understood to be inherent or immutable, their construction



as categories bearing general fixidity, and the qualities identified with these categories are a product of dominant culture. Institutions that structure society, like the military, have interests in crafting citizens' identities in specific ways, implicating gender and sexuality in the process. Within institutional policy can be found suggestions about how gender and sexuality should be enacted by the masses. Lehring (2003) posits, "the decisions of public policy help shape the values of a culture and are in turn shaped by them, creating *official* meaning and accepted understanding while granting legitimacy and recognition" (pp. 13-14, emphasis in original). It is through public policy that deviant gender and sexual practices may be disciplined on an institutional level, resulting in legal, political, and social ramifications.

### ***Gendered Performances in Military Culture***

Scholars who examine the military through a gendered approach reveal how its policies and practices are inextricably linked to gendered notions of performing security (Enloe, 1993; Grant, 1994; Tickner, 1992). This type of security is characterized by the presumption that its provision by the state requires a masculinized military, through which strength, aggression, and dominance are exhibited. Passivity or other displays of femininity, then, represent a threat to this discourse of security, or perhaps become evidence of insecurity. Enloe (1993) asserts the military's institutional culture has been "long dependent on masculinity, heterosexual masculinity" (p. 93). During periods of international conflict, the perceived value of a country's military forces generally rises, but is often reinforced by idealizing the hyper-masculinized functions of a soldier throughout various levels of society. The lack of equality between valuations of femininity and masculinity, which privileges the latter, can also raise the likelihood that a nation chooses a military action over a diplomatic option in the face of security threats. One early impact of this militarism is female voices begin to be silenced as "the politics of masculinity are made to seem 'natural'" (Enloe, 2004, p. 128) through the privileging of the military mindset. "Things start to become militarized when their legitimacy depends on their associations with military goals. When something becomes militarized, it appears to rise in value. Militarization is seductive" (Enloe, 2004, p. 145). Thus, notions of national security become militarized when its achievement depends on military action.

Issues associated with a nation's security become particularly prevalent and are imbued with greater importance during times of war. At these times, congruent with concerns for

security, “male and female characteristics become polarized; it is a gendering activity at a time when the discourse of militarism and masculinity permeates the whole fabric of society” (Tickner, 1992, p. 47). Grant (1994) provides an historical analysis linking the concepts of gender and national security, beginning with the 1950s and through the Cold War era. She asserts, “Marshaling a heightened national image of the feminine role was part of the process of legitimizing the military and cultural foundations of America’s superpower status” (p. 122). She further suggests that during times of demilitarization by the U.S., like that after WWII, requires a tightening of conceptualizations of femininity. For example, Watkins and Emerson (2000) juxtapose the way masculinity is symbolized in the action-adventure genre of U.S. cinema with that of the fashion industry. In the former, the authors assert the genre “transmits values that [not only] reinforce notions of male dominance but also animates discourses about national, racial, and military supremacy” (p. 162), whereas the later often displays “alternative, if not counter-hegemonic, notions of masculinity” (p. 162). The association between security and protection heighten traditional characterizations of the masculine soldier whose duty is to protect “women and children” through militaristic means, as opposed to a notion of security based on the demilitarization of nations and reduction of war armories.

The masculinity most aligned with the military and fulfillment of the soldier role reveals particular expectations about the sexuality of the soldier. The way a male troop’s sexuality is constructed goes further than the basic label of heterosexual. The masculinity expressed by the male soldier also affirms sexual prowess (Herbert, 1998). The coexistence of brothels and military bases is one method through which a soldier’s masculinity is asserted and reinforced. In this era, with threats of HIV contraction, some militaries and/or states have further institutionalized the brothel’s function by requiring and even funding regular examinations for the prostitutes who serve the soldiers (Enloe, 1993). For example, in response to the increasing rates of venereal disease (VD) among U.S. troops stationed in the Republic of Korea in the early 1970s, U.S. officials within the U.S.-Korea Joint Subcommittee on Civil-Military Relations emphasized the need to ramp up efforts aimed at registering prostitutes, requiring they receive regular VD examinations, and treating and quarantining them “from public circulation until such time as they are pronounced free from disease (Moon, 1997, pp. 78-79, 189). Across cultures and institutions, as well as within the United States military, displays of masculinized heterosexuality among soldiers are also sometimes enacted through rape (Barry, 1995). Enloe (1993) argues

whether the rape occurs between a soldier and a sex worker, an enemy civilian, or a fellow soldier, such an act is a specific expression of militarized masculine dominance.

### **Rhetorical Maintenance of Masculine Militarization**

The imagined social structure propagated by the armed forces is founded on a cultural privileging of masculine forms of militarization. Masculine performances of soldiering duties come to signal what it means to enact security. As such, it becomes important to discursively protect the identity boundaries of the ideal service member. It has been argued that militarization and masculinization mutually reinforce one another. However, scholars have also identified purposive rhetorical efforts by military leaders to preserve the stability of the heteronormative boundaries which encompass performing the model, security-providing soldier. Specifically, as women increasingly became integrated into the military, official rhetoric emphasized a perceived necessity to maintain a clear distinction between how male and female service members performed identity (Herbert, 1998; Meyer, 1992). Within the following section I highlight rhetorical efforts to frame the identity of female troops as congruent with the hierarchical privileging of the hetero-masculine soldier. Such efforts suggest that fears over the potentially destabilizing impact the repeal of DADT may have on heteronormative troop identity can also incite rhetorical strategies from defense officials aimed at stabilizing these identities. I next argue that the way in which security relations are ordered can be understood as a rhetorical process of identity construction. Finally, I detail how identity is represented corporeally through rhetorical inscription.

Women's increased participation in the military during WWII fostered public concern about the type of woman who would choose military service, often labeling such women as either prostitutes or lesbians (Meyer, 1992). The public's assignment of women to these "deviant" categories suggests a general belief that there was something wrong with women who chose to enter the masculine realm of the military. It also speaks to a public disapproval of women participating in performances of gender and sexuality that were more aligned with characteristics of men's perceived sexuality or were completely disassociated from men (prostitutes or lesbians, respectively). Women's masculine performances of their duties as service members were perceived as a threat to the logic of heteronormative masculinity upon which U.S. militarization is based (Herbert, 1998). The threat of a military woman's

masculinization thus required that appropriate femininity for women soldiers be fostered, both institutionally and discursively.

For example, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps obtained endorsements from religious leaders, emphasized the strong educational and social status of cadets, and maintained strict regulations over interactions between service men and women to rhetorically assuage concerns of promiscuity, while concurrently illustrating the delicate, feminine quality of cadets, as well as their sexual attractiveness to men in an effort to assuage concerns of lesbianism (Meyer, 1992). The division between the masculine soldier and the feminine soldier was, for a period, also institutionally reinforced through "old Navy and Marine Corps policies in which female recruits received makeup and etiquette training" (Herbert, 1998, p. 10). By maintaining aesthetic standards of traditional femininity for women despite greater emersion into military roles, officials hoped to preserve the masculinized (and heteronormative) performances of security through which the military operates.

In more recent decades, the woman soldier's femininity continues to be rhetorically managed within messages produced by the military and about military life. Herbert (1998) highlights an Army recruiting advertisement from the January 26, 1995 *Rolling Stone*, which, in addition to naming a variety of possible military occupations, reminds women recruits that the Army experience is not all "soldiering." In addition, "You'll also find yourself doing some very familiar things. Like getting into aerobics, going to the movies or just being with friends. The point is, *a woman in the Army is still a woman.*" (Herbert, 1998, p. 4). This advertisement argues that servicewomen actively ascribe to typical (read as: heteronormative) standards of gender and sexuality. It also seems to suggest that despite a woman's assigned occupational duties in the corps, she is additionally responsible for making visible her performance of femininity. Militarized expressions of gender and sexuality are also constructed for women soldiers, mothers of soldiers, and wives and girlfriends of soldiers (Enloe, 1993).

Although women who serve in the armed forces can be viewed as breaking normative gender standards, their femininity is often carefully and institutionally constructed, still providing an evident contrast with masculine characterizations. Such a construction of the female soldier is also evident through media representations of the lives women lead as members of the armed forces. For example, Cohler (2006) examines a cover story in *Time* entitled, "When Mom Goes to War," outlining the story of a teenage girl and her parents, who are both in the U.S.

military. Although this military mom is a helicopter pilot, a job particularly associated with servicemen, other aspects of her identity maintain a sense of femininity and heteronormativity. As evidence, Cohler points to the wife and mother's insistence she will never outrank her husband as he concurrently affirms the superiority of his physicality. Even as women enter military jobs once reserved for men, outside the workplace, their heteronormative domesticity continues to be emphasized by military officials and mainstream media. Rhetorically, these messages serve to maintain the image of an elite class of servicemen who actively perform and ensure national security.

### ***Security as Identity Performance***

In response to criticisms launched by scholars like Enloe and Tickner about the militarization of the concept of security, the critical turn within security studies began understanding “security as a political performance.... emphasiz[ing] that security is in part a ‘speech act’” (Dalby, 2000, p. 4). In this way, as Dalby (2000) explains, security as a performative process becomes involved with “the ability to specify danger and mobilize a ‘we’ against a supposedly threatening ‘them’” (p. 7). (In)Security is not an inherent or stable fact that characterizes our relationship with other subjects in the world. Rather, security, and the discourses that name it, exists as a continually repeated practice by which conditions of (in)security are created. While this conceptualization is clearly applicable for investigations of international relations, it may also serve to inform various levels of social inquiry. In his 1998 essay exploring the concept of security as a “thick signifier,” Jef Huysmans provides such an opening, making an argument for the performative function of security. He notes that, “Rather than describing or picturing a condition, it organizes social relations into security relations.... It positions people in their relations to themselves, to nature and to other human beings within a particular discursive symbolic order” (as quoted in Dalby, 2000, p. 8). Discourses of security evolving from U.S. military cultural contexts can therefore be analyzed through many levels (e.g., international, national, institutional, community, familial, interpersonal) on which they are performed. For example, in his analysis of Congressional testimony addressing the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, Brouwer (2004) reveals methods of articulation that “analogize social and physical bodies” (p. 426) in performances of security discourses, which include troop morale and cohesion, standards of fitness for service, sexual harassment and assault, HIV infection through

sex acts or medical procedures, and creation of a space for the “homosexual lifestyle” within American socio-political fabric. Because the implications of homosexuality within the military can be rhetorically constructed as material effects on the security of various social and individual bodies, including on the secure preservation of the military itself, my critique examines how discourses of security are mobilized in relation to embodiments of gender and sexuality.

One’s involvement in performances of security are rhetorically informed through identification with particular subjectivities. As Burke (1969) explains, the rhetoric of identification necessarily implies a division with another (p. 22). Identity is a category of social order that functions rhetorically through individuals’ symbolic participation in making collective meanings (Branaman, 1994). Thus, particular identities are implicated as participants in state apparatuses of security when they are performed consubstantially with the forms through which security relations are ordered. As Cloud (2009) explains, identification is a dialectical process during which individuals may “construct their own identities by framing themselves in terms of their opposite in communication denigrating perceived enemies and threats” (p. 460). By labeling certain signifiers of identity performance as threatening, boundaries are constructed between enemies and allies of the state. These signifiers are manifest through corporeal performances of identification with particular positions within the social order.

### ***Identity as Inscription of Boundaries onto Bodies***

Campbell (1998) explains that it is through the representation of danger that “the boundaries of a state’s identity are secured” (p.3). In other words, identity is performatively constituted through the inscription of boundaries. Representations of danger emerge at the borders of identity because it is at these locations where boundaries may become destabilized (Campbell, 1998, p. 80). Further, the body serves as the surface onto which identity is inscribed. As Grosz (1993) elucidates, the inscriptive model of corporeal subjectivity is “concerned with the process by which the body is marked, scarred, transformed, and written upon or constructed [*sic*] by the various regimes of institutional, discursive, and nondiscursive power as a particular kind of body” (pp. 196-197). In this respect, bodies are not viewed as possessing immutable difference a priori; rather, bodies represent a site of potentiality whereby cultural identity is inscribed and practiced (McKerrow, 1998, p. 319). Recognition of the corporeal dimensions of

rhetoric, for which McKerrow (1998) argues, is a particularly helpful analytic for unpacking the boundaries of gender and sexual identity implicated in militarized security discourses.

Like other rhetorics of difference, the boundaries that classify gender, sex, and sexuality are a product of discursive practices. The repetition of these citational performances creates and reinforces materialized identity differences (Butler, 1993). Shannon Holland (2006) notes, “The mundane enactments of gender norms... become perceived as signifiers of a natural, unmediated, static sexual essence, an essence innate to the authentic self and represented by the material body” (p. 29). She further posits the historical culture of the military, as represented by “gendered/sexed bodies, makes possible the rigid disciplining of sexuality and gendered behavior” (p. 30) to favor performances of heterosexual masculinity. While the military has historically attempted to articulate gay identities through the materiality of the body, Butler (1997) points to a degree of detachment from the referent of homosexuality and performed acts. She argues:

The political benefits to be derived from this incommensurability between performativity and referentiality have to do with setting limits on authoritative constructions of homosexuality and keeping signifiers of ‘homosexuality,’ ‘gayness,’ or ‘queerness,’ as well as a host of related terms, alive for a future linguistic life. (p. 108)

Although sexual identity is represented as stable and naturalized, Butler’s caution against this state also evidences the importance of the mundane ways in which identity boundaries are performatively disrupted.

It is through discourses of security as a rhetorical tool that the military seeks to control the identity of the armed forces as a body that defends the nations via a masculinized militarism. Because enacting this form of securitization relies on identification with the heteronormative male soldier, the identities of women and gay men in the service have been framed in contradistinction to this ideal.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that official constructions of LGBTQ identities are influenced by the way in which military discourses of security rhetorically frame the threat of gay and lesbian service in the armed forces. Military claims about the dangers homosexuality

introduces to the corps have been characterized as spreading moral deviance, encouraging androgyny in established gender roles, and disrupting the unity needed to carry out missions. Further, the culture of invisibility surrounding gay and lesbian service members due to dishonorable discharge practices and the DADT policy historically denied these troops the ability to performatively demonstrate their corporeal sacrifices in the name of national security.

Gender and sexual practices are crucial to analyses of militarized security discourse. Performing heteronormative masculinity affirms the appropriate enactment of the role of soldier. Because constructions of gender and sexuality are performatively linked, deviance in either practice may be construed as a threat to military identity and thus disciplined. It is through the repetition of identity performance that the constructed relationship between gender/sexuality and militarism becomes culturally naturalized.

The methodological assumptions that are the focus of the next chapter are premised on the ways in which security discourse operates as a mechanism to define and separate the identity of the collective state from identities framed as antagonistic to the state. The construction of these hierarchical boundaries is informed through rhetoric that corporally inscribes particular bodies with markers of danger. For gay and lesbian service members this rhetorical inscription is often related to insecurity over the potential for gender/sexuality practices that may destabilize the form of heteronormative masculinity privileged by militarism.



## **Chapter 2 - Method of Analysis**

Congressional repeal of DADT was partially supported by the *Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,”* a document that exemplifies the DoD’s discursive shift in their identification of open military service as a threat to the stable operation of the armed forces. The document rhetorically contributes to a changing “sociology of knowledge” (Burke, 1969, p. 23) about sexual identification and military service. In other words, it functions epistemically by characterizing and classifying military sociality around issues of sexual identity and security in new ways. Therefore, the methodological lens I adopt to analyze the report is aimed at understanding how discourses of security construct threats against whom members of a community may identify. In this section, I outline this lens and how it animates my analysis of the DoD report on which my analysis is focused.

### **Critical Security Discourse Lens**

This analysis follows the critical approach mapped out by Campbell (1998) in his genealogy of the discourses of security found in U.S. foreign policy and the identities it secures for its subjects. The shift in discourses of security about openly gay men and lesbians in the military is well aligned with how Campbell conceptualizes the role of security in policy making. Campbell’s specific project is to identify how discourses of security mobilized within foreign policy rhetoric “[help] produce and reproduce the political identity” (1998, p. x) of the nation by articulating threats to the state. In other words, he examines how the discursive securitization of an issue creates boundaries between what is conceived within the realm of the domestic/self and what is conceived within the realm of foreign/other. Importantly, as Campbell argues, “states [and bodies] are never finished as entities; the tension between the demands of identity and the practices that constitute it can never be fully resolved, because the performative nature of identity can never be fully revealed” (1998, p. 12). Therefore, investigations into shifting security discourses of the state become essential to understanding how the state constructs political identity. Campbell’s theoretical framework for criticism, aptly assembles key rhetorical and political dimensions relevant to a reading of how the DoD assesses risks associated with a repeal of DADT and consequently, is fitting for my analysis.

The perspective Campbell (1998) outlines emerges from within a larger body of scholarship that, in the post-Cold War era, began arguing for a widening of what were considered legitimate objects of analyses for studies of security. This critical turn pushes back against realist and neorealist perspectives of security studies that emphasize a definition of security centered on military strategy between international state actors (Blanchard, 2003; Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998; Tickner, 1992). Whereas realist or neorealist analyses center on the survival and security of the state, critical security studies opens the possible loci for examination to include social, economic, and environmental sectors (Blanchard, 2003). While much of this debate has taken place within the field of interational relations, scholars also argue that the way security discourses operate to structure relations on the international scale is analogous to the domestic scale and even to the level of the household. Feminist scholars, in particular, argue that the masculinist logics of securitization practices transcend any one level of analysis (Enloe, 1993, 2000; Tickner, 1992; Young, 2003). Therefore, the work of Campbell and others who write from this perspective fits well with my purposes of analyzing how identity practices are constructed and instantiated as an issue of security within DoD rhetoric.

Also, as discussed in the previous chapter, this strain of security studies recognizes that security, as a signifier, does the work of ordering relations. Articulations of security produce the relational conditions of which they speak. Accordingly, security utterances are best understood by research into the situated contexts of their use, which Huysmans (1998) explains as a mediation of “life and death which implies a mixture of two interdependent forms of security—ontological security, which concerns the mediation of chaos and order, and daily security, which concerns the mediation of friends and enemies” (p. 229). Whether the threat identified is a “real” threat is of little consequence from a critical security discourse perspective because the act of the utterance introduces an existential threat into the context (Buzan et al., 1998). In this respect, the body becomes situated in a condition of immanent insecurity that requires a response; the identity of the body becomes securitized. As Campbell (1998) argues, the performative utterances of security let us assess how difference is inscribed onto bodies—whether the body being securitized is the body politic of the state, an institution like the military, or a flesh and blood body. His characterization of how we begin to understand the work of security discourses shares methodological assumptions with scholarly analyses of corporeal rhetoric, which Brouwer (2004) explains, seeks “to name and evaluate... cultural codes, social meanings, and institutional

influences, examining such issues as the authorization of certain bodies to speak, the conditions of such speech, and the value of such speech” (p. 414). For Campbell, the cultural and political context of a particular securitized issue, as well as how the discourse arranges bodies in relation to one another are necessary to identifying an events ontological and daily conditions of security.

Furthermore, Campbell’s (1998) methodological lens directly incorporates the concepts of identity and gender as effects of state security discourse. The conditions of ontological security produced through security discourse directly implicate identity, which he argues to be “an inescapable dimension of being” (1998, p. 9). Campbell recognizes the perceived stability of a body’s gender/sexual identity as a key ontological element of negotiating tensions between chaos and order. He adopts Judith Butler’s perspective of gender/sexuality as performatively fluid. However, as he argues bodies are culturally and institutionally disciplined to interpret these identity categories as fixed (Campbell, 1998, pp. 9-10). Therefore, when examining DoD discourse that identifies the possible risks of a repeal of DADT, Campbell’s work is particularly useful. He identifies several strategic moves of security discourse that operate in the drive toward constructions of stable identities: identification of threat, moralization of boundaries, practices of domestic and national security, and preservation of sovereign identity, which I elaborate below.

### ***Identification of threat.***

First, Campbell (1998) argues that what comes to be understood as dangerous is an interpretative process wherein “certain modes of representation crystallize around referents marked as dangers” (p. 2). Brouwer (2004) discusses this as a “rhetorical strategy of *incorporation* referring to the process by which the body is rendered salient and meaningful” (p. 414). In other words, a marauding body comes to be interpreted as such through the incorporation of certain inscribed practices identified as threatening. As these threatening practices become incorporated with a body, they become rhetorically significant to identifying certain bodies as dangerous. For example, Brouwer explains that some rhetoric against open military service incorporates homosexual bodies as threatening to the military corps because of the discomfort their bodies are argued to bring upon heterosexual service members. This discomfort is then linked to a disruption of cohesion and trust among bodies serving in close proximity together, and ultimately argued to be a danger to military effectiveness. In this case, a service member’s openness about his/her homosexuality is incorporated as rhetorically salient to

the risk other unincorporated would experience (2004, pp. 418-419). Thus, within discourses of security, bodies become incorporated when they are inscribed or marked with signifiers of danger or threat. These may arise from “activities of the other” or from “a fear of internal challenge” (Campbell, 1998, p. 196). This characterization from Campbell is particularly key to the subsequent analysis due to the gendered nature of the criticism. As has been suggested above, threatening bodies arising from locations internal to the body politic may be marked as dangerous specifically because of practices that blur the boundaries of identity. Therefore, in the analysis, I first identify when security is framed as an issue relative to gendered/sexed bodies.

### *Moralizing boundaries.*

Brouwer (2004) claims that the rhetorical incorporation of the body is a “re-locationing” from the abstraction of the self-body. The corporeal inscription of difference draws boundaries between self and other. In other words, the identification of certain bodies as dangerous marks them as differently performing identity, and hence, other. Campbell (1998) clarifies that identity is not simply the articulation of self in contradistinction to other. It also “results in a conception of divergent moral spaces” (p. 73). The drawing of these moral boundaries is informed by the threatening practices incorporated on the body. Subsequently, bodies labeled dangerous are understood to be so because of inscribed identity performances which are rhetorically constructed as deviant and thus a danger to those bodies performing identity appropriately. The discourse of security is inherently a hierarchical privileging of the sovereign self articulated in terms that imply not only us/them or domestic/foreign, but also superior/inferior. For example, Brouwer points to Congressional testimony given by a military colonel in the midst of the 1993 debates about homosexuality in the military. The colonel is explained to argue that permitting gay men and lesbians to serve openly is a threat to the values and thus the functioning of the corps. This argument exemplifies a logic that “cohesion depends upon...agreed-upon moral principles” (Brouwer, 2004, p. 423). The moralization of the boundaries between the (military) self and the (openly gay) other not only creates difference, but rests on a logic that such differences bear an incompatibility that threatens identity of the self and requires separation of the other. This tenet of Campbell’s approach calls for examination of the identity practices that construct hierarchical boundaries. These boundaries articulate a differentiation between bodies that appropriately perform the role of U.S. service member and bodies identified as deviant.

### ***Practicing domestic security and national security.***

The labeling of a danger calls for a responding performance of security assurance in order to protect or preserve the identity of the body politic. The way in which a threat is defined or classified informs the type of security practice that is fitting. The articulation of the deviant practices of the other, as well as the resultant disciplinary response both informs and incentivizes performances that maintain stability of corporeal identity. The policing of domestic or social security emerges from threats framed through criminalizing language, whereas national security is performed from threats that call for a militarized response (Campbell, 1998). In other words, dangers arising from inside the community are disciplined through discourses and practices that criminalize the threat, while dangers external to the community are denied entry and influence through militaristic securitization practices. It is in identifying how the rhetorics of danger are mobilized toward practices of ensuring security that makes the critical move toward an analysis of the logic of articulation called for by Greene (1998). For Greene, this move opens critiques to examinations of “how rhetorical practices create the conditions of possibility for a governing apparatus to judge and program reality” (1998, p. 22). For example, one might examine how state interests are served by rhetorics that articulate marriage with heterosexual unions, while other forms of family and coupling are constructed as threatening to the commonsense form in the status quo. The repetition of security performances is a process whereby the order of a political body is constituted. It is indeed these practices of security that operate to “instantiate the subjectivity it purports to serve” (Campbell, 1998, p. 199). Given this relationship, the critic must look beyond the representation of the other and provide analysis regarding whom the policies and practices of security are articulating as the protected. This involves identifying what response is implicated to protect against labeled threats and whose bodies are implicated in performing that response.

### ***Preservation of sovereign identity.***

In order to maintain identity stability, security discourses operate through the three rhetorical moves discussed above to ultimately construct locations for articulated dangers that operate to preserve the sovereign body through the identification of difference in the other. (Campbell, 1998). The body politic will continually be engaged in practices of security because doing so is necessary for the maintenance and ultimately the existence of its identity. As

Campbell (1998) explains, in order to secure anything, what is being secured must be identified (p. 199). Shifts in discourses of security consequently change those practices necessary to protect the state as subject. Campbell argues that through the repetition of these performances identity is continually constructed and preserved. Thus, for this project the institutionally desired performances of securitization reveal how military identity is framed as consubstantial to constructed threats.

### **Comprehensive Review**

On March 2, 2010, Defense Secretary Robert Gates (2010) issued a memorandum for Department and Pentagon officials ordering a review be conducted on the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. It required the creation of recommended implementation procedures if the President's goal to repeal the policy was achieved. The subsequent *Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"* (Department of Defense [DoD], 2010) is a 266-page document. It details the findings of the working group charged with its construction. The report was released just eighteen days before the Senate voted, on December 18, 2010, for a repeal of the policy, which had already passed the House of Representatives.

The purpose of the report, as the co-chairs of the working group explain, was not to assess whether or not a repeal of DADT should be implemented, but rather what would be the possible impacts were implementation to be mandated (DoD, 2010, p. 17). The memorandum by Secretary Gates instructs the working group on seven objectives: assess possible impacts to military readiness and effectiveness, unit cohesion, family readiness, recruiting, and retention and recommend any actions that should be taken to mitigate these impacts; determine leadership and training procedures for new policies; discuss any changes needed upon repeal to existing rules and regulations; suggest any necessary changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice; develop methods of assessing impacts to military effectiveness during implementation of repeal; and evaluate relevant ongoing legislative, as well as judicial proceedings (Gates, 2010). The report was informed by a "systematic engagement of the force" through various survey mechanisms. Scholarly research, in addition to the experiences from already integrated foreign service organizations and domestic enforcement agencies also informed the conclusions of the report (DoD, 2010). While the authors of the report emphasize that the report should not be

viewed as a referendum of service members' views on the policy. However, much of the justification provided within the analysis are grounded in service member opinions, attitudes, and behaviors toward open service.

The text, analyzed in the next chapter, articulates multiple ways the bodies of openly gay or lesbian service members have been argued to pose a threat to the identity and security of the armed forces. Many of these arguments are briefly outlined in the executive summary that opens the document. Inclusion of certain identified risks within the executive summary also suggests the significance of the securitized issue, given the attention paid to it in the overview. Therefore the primary areas of my analysis are drawn from issues highlighted within this summary.

Another particularly key area of the document that informs my analysis is the "What We Heard" section of the report (DoD, 2010, pp. 49-56). This section is structured around arguments supporting and negating the DADT policy that were assembled from conversations members of the working group held with service members through open forums, focus groups, and through online mechanisms of communication like a message inbox in which service members could anonymously post their concerns. Within this section of the report, concerns about the welfare of the military are grouped into categorical themes. While the working group authors are responsible for the rhetoric that classifies each theme identified (e.g., "Unwanted Advances," "Standards of Conduct," "Health Issues"), quotations from service members are employed to illustrate the range of discourse about each issue presented as a potential threat. For my purposes in the analysis, these quotations are particularly useful when reading for the how certain practices of identity become rhetorically positioned on particular sides of moralized and hierarchical boundaries that order social relations.

The final section of the report that becomes a focus of my analysis is the section which outlines the working group's recommendations for practices that respond to primary areas of concern identified in the executive summary and articulated throughout the document. These recommendations are useful for my application of the final rhetorical move within Campbell's (1998) methodology. The recommended securitization measures permit a reading of the identity inscriptions implicated within these practices. Furthermore, the rationale provided by the working group for each of the highlighted recommendations makes room for my discussion within the analysis of how deviant and threatening corporeal performances are being disciplined within the response to preserve sovereign identity.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I explained the critical security discourse lens that guides my reading of the DoD report and the subsequent analysis in the next chapter. Campbell (1998) argues that discourses of security are inherently linked to the formation and preservation of the body politic. His methodology, which emerges from critical security studies scholarship, purports that security, as a conceptual analytic, must be widened to allow for investigations into how state identity relies on how issues become securitized. He examines three interdependent rhetorical strategies employed within security discourse mobilized to preserve desired communal identities. First, others are identified as dangerous by classifying particular qualities of corporeally inscribed performance as threatening. Second, this difference between the self and other are cast in morally heirarchical terms. Finally, practices that maintain the sovereign identity of the body politic are called for through the disciplining of dangerous bodies. Using the stratigies Campbell identifies through this lens, I now turn to examine how the DoD Report warrants projected conditions of (in)security for the military in a post-repeal environment.



## **Chapter 3 - Securing Practices of Military Identifications from the Threat of Open Service**

Over the course of 2010 the stability of DADT as a standing policy seemed to continually be in flux. Obama's proclamation during his State of the Union Address marked the beginning of a year during which the First and Ninth Circuit U.S. Courts of Appeals heard debates over the legality of the policy; an amendment to repeal the policy was added to the National Defense Authorization Act readily passed the House, and continued to be stalled for a vote in the Senate; and the Defense Department was undergoing the research and construction of the *Report of the Comprehensive Review* (DoD, 2010, pp. 26-28). And, while the legal, ethical, and moral issues surrounding DADT were being deliberated within Federal institutions and reported on by the media, the U.S. military continued operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Consequently, concerns about the timing of implementing the repeal emerged within risk-averse discourses. As one service member surmised, "this is not the time for us to make huge changes in the military. We are at war and our men and women overseas do not need any more distractions. This issue should be addressed at the appropriate time" (DoD, 2010, p. 53). Despite such sentiments, the report concluded that implementation could take place under the circumstances, with the qualification that recommendations for implementation were to be followed (DoD, 2010, p. 7).

The historical and, I argue, current focus on maintaining secure military identities is highlighted within the discussion of past regulatory provisions surrounding military service by homosexual citizens. As the report details in the background section, separation from the armed forces for reasons of homosexuality or homosexual acts has, since 1981, been based on the logic that the presence of homosexuality inflicted consequences that were counter to mission accomplishment. This justification was a shift from the previous logic that held homosexuals to be unfit for military service. A result of this rhetorical shift was an increased concern for the capability of the armed forces to carry out its primary mission—the ensured security of the citizenry—were homosexuals to be present and visible. Thus, any engagements with homosexuality became tied discursively to the welfare of the military corps. In this section of the report, the discourse of homosexuality as a threat to a secure and capable corps is not negated, but simply used as descriptive explanation for extant reticence about gay military service. Given

that this rationale is presented as the most recent iteration of how officials conceptualize gay military service, and that it also comes to bear on primary questions investigated by the working group (i.e. military readiness, unit cohesion, unit effectiveness), attention must be paid to how this line of reasoning continues to work rhetorically to characterize the military service of gays and lesbians. While homosexuality as a broad category of identity is argued within this report to no longer be incompatible with military service, conclusions about a service members' (in)compatibility with the corps remain reliant on how identity comes to be performed.

My analysis within this chapter demonstrates this conclusion through examination of the *Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"* as representative of discourses of (in)security that address risks associated with repeal. The analysis is divided into three sections, which coincide with articulated threats to the culture, institution, and corporealities of the military. Perceived cultural threats to dominant forms of morality and religiosity establish attitudes toward practices identified with homosexuality that are "deviant" and thus a risk to maintaining an effective military. Open service is also argued to bring instability within a unit's ability to carry out its missions, thereby impacting the operative success of larger military goals. Finally, the presence of gay and lesbian bodies is articulated by some to be a threat to service members' good health and their expectations of privacy. Within each of these conveyed areas of risk, I analyze how measures of securitization endorsed by the working group are argued to mitigate threats and stabilize expectations. The rhetorical moves that inform my reading of the text are grounded in Campbell's (1998) methodology discussed in the previous chapter. Within each section, I look to how threatening practices become rhetorically incorporated with particular bodies and how these cultural, institutional or corporeal bodies are then discursively positioned within hierarchical boundaries of identification. Next, I evaluate how the text's recommended practices of identity securitization instantiate the preservation of particular sovereign performances of military identification. The practices that secure military identities also privilege particular forms of homosexual identity performance.

### **Homosexuality as Threat to a Culture of Religious Morality**

Objections to the acceptance and equal treatment of LGB persons are frequently grounded in moralistic claims, depicting such identified persons as aberrations to the creation of

a virtuous social order. Such logics render homosexuality a cultural danger to a community's ability to sustain practices of righteousness in daily and spiritual life. In this way, ritualized performances of seemingly stable moral identities are viewed to be at risk. Within the context of a possible repeal of DADT, the report develops concerns vocalized by devout populations within the military. Although the potential threat to religious practices was not an explicit area of risk assessment assigned by Secretary Gates, it is addressed in detail in the executive summary of the report, the section discussing service member views on repeal, and the recommendations for implementation. Subsequently, much of the analysis in this section is derived from these portions of the report. What follows is an examination of how the sanctioning of open service comes to represent a threat to the religious practices of military personnel and how this fear is rhetorically assuaged by endorsements within the report that defend the sovereignty of existing practices of religiosity.

### ***Coming Out Imperils Hegemonic Religiosity***

The DoD report caveats that morally and religiously motivated concerns about the repeal of DADT are qualitatively distinct from other fears related to the institutional acceptance of open service more generally (DoD, 2010, p. 5). As such, the discussions of the risk assessment regarding a potential loss of religious freedom upon repeal are afforded their own sections throughout the document. The authors of the report identify how the repeal of DADT is believed to pose a moralistic threat to culturally imbedded identities. They discuss extant arguments that the repeal represents a restriction on individuals' ability to express and practice their religious faith and requires individuals (and the military itself) to change their beliefs that homosexuality is immoral or sinful (DoD, 2010, pp. 11-12). Within these sections of the report, it becomes clear that what is truly of concern is how the interactions of gay bodies and the bodies of individuals with religious opposition to homosexuality will be ordered in a post-repeal world. The working group reports:

We heard a large number of Service members raise religious and moral objections to homosexuality or to serving alongside someone who is gay. Some feared repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell might limit their individual freedom of expression and free exercise of religion, or require them to change their personal

beliefs about the morality of homosexuality. (DoD, 2010, pp. 11-12)

The anticipation of a shift in how such interactions would be practiced signals a lack of cultural security for those whose religious identification is constructed in contradistinction to homosexuality. Discursively, the repeal of DADT becomes a threat to the stability of foundational religious beliefs that inform how certain individuals practice identity.

The boundaries between those responsible for introducing the threat and those whose moral stability is being threatened receive clear delineation within the report. The causes of the envisaged instability to religious standards are identified as service members who would openly identify as other than heterosexual, as well as those who would permit a range of sexual identities to be voiced upon the repeal of DADT. Several quotations used in the report to illustrate typical moral or religious concerns about the possibility of repeal, also suggest a necessary division between the sources of danger and the individuals whose righteously-couched identity is at risk. For example, one service member and attendee of a focus group is quoted to assert, “some people like myself have a problem if they come out. You can’t question my morals, you can’t make me stay” (DoD, 2010, p. 51). Another service member, writing to an online inbox set up by the working group claims, “homosexuality is morally offensive. Like adultery, and drug use, I can not tolerate homosexuality. I will not work side by side with someone that is an adulterer, a drug addict, or a homosexual” (DoD, 2010, p. 52). Not only are these quoted individuals forthright about their desire to separate themselves from environments where gays and lesbians are visibly present, they both imply that it is a certain type of homosexual who compels their secession. In both examples, homosexuality is rhetorically framed as a doing of identity (e.g., coming out, choosing to engage in various types of “sinful” behavior), rather than simply being an identity. The threat becomes performative and incorporates these markers with gay bodies. Additionally, the first quotation also indicates that anyone expecting service members who take religious issue with homosexuality to work alongside openly gay and lesbian military personnel is also placing moral identities in peril. Both openly gay individuals and anyone who would allow for objectors to engage in behavior that compromises their morals become deviants to a standard that privileges adherence to pious religiosity.

Claims made by service members about anticipated impacts of the DADT repeal also reveal rhetorical identifications that operate to specify types of bodies that require sanctuary from the consequences of open service. One service member characterizes an implication of repeal as, “only a matter of time before the military censors the religious expression of its chaplains and marginalizes denominations that teach what the Bible says about homosexual behavior” (DoD, 2010, p. 52). Acknowledged to be at risk within this quotation are persons espousing a Christian faith and in particular persons serving as military chaplains. Interestingly however, the view expressed by this service member also includes only certain forms of Christian practice to be in jeopardy. Although lacking a qualitative explanation of the Bible’s teachings on homosexuality, because of the negatively valenced attitude toward repeal, one is given to assume this service member interprets the Biblical stance on homosexuality as a sinful practice. Furthermore, the quotation seems to maintain that there is an absolute perspective on homosexuality as read through Biblical texts. This constructs identifications of risk for those Christians who strictly interpret religious doctrine. The quotation above is the only one chosen for inclusion in the report by the working group that addresses military chaplains specifically. However, the report does indicate that a risk assessment was conducted regarding the potential loss of chaplains, were their various and respective “ecclesiastical endorsing agencies” (DoD, 2010, p. 135) to withdraw their endorsements in the event of a repeal. Attentiveness to potential losses in religious leadership signal the importance placed on sustaining chaplains’ roles within military units in a post-repeal environment.

Another service member protests the repeal on moral grounds by asking, “How can you attend a family meeting and have two guys holding hands there? What do you tell your kids?” (DoD, 2010, p. 56). This quotation frames those being threatened as service members who identify themselves as supporting what might be colloquially referenced as “traditional family values.” The claim inferred from this statement is that to permit the open service of gays and lesbians is to introduce volatility within the family unit as well as to the cultural forms by which family is identified. Finally, the characterization of a child seeing two men holding hands as an incomprehensible phenomenon rhetorically reinforces the inherent separation for the antagonistically framed groups. It maintains that even to engage in an explanation that forces acknowledgement of the LGBTQ community as a visible and relevant social group poses risk to the identity of family.

### *Practicing Securitization through (In)Equality*

Overall, the report primarily attributes the risk of religious and moral insecurity upon repeal of DADT to the cultural clash between stakeholders with conservative, Christian-structured values and stakeholders identified as performing signifiers of LGBTQ identities. In response to the dimensions of this threat, several direct responses are offered by the working group in addition to other suggested mechanisms of implementation of the repeal that are discursively embedded in other sections of the report. First, the report seems to respond to concerns articulated about repeal representing an attack on the freedom to express moral beliefs by initially asserting that in an era of open service, the identity of service members who have religiously-based opposition to homosexuality will not be constrained. As part of the repeal implementation strategy, the working group asserts, “Included, also, should be a message to those who are opposed to ‘open’ service on well-founded moral or religious grounds that their views and beliefs are not rejected, and that leaders have not turned their back on them” (DoD, 2010, p. 10). Further, it is argued that personnel will not be expected to change their religious beliefs, but instead simply practice the respectful treatment of others, regardless of different viewpoints. Similarly, the proposed solution to the risk of losing military chaplains involves messages that emphasize no change to the previously established duties for chaplains. Namely, that they are to expected to administer care to all who seek it, but are/will not be required to serve in a religious or other capacity at ceremonies (e.g., same-sex marriages) if their participation in such ceremonies would involve performing a action that violates their practices of faith. Because, as the working group claims, these messages maintain current expectations for service members and chaplains, a change in practice is not implicated. This reasoning is grounded within the characterization of America’s military as already capable of respectful daily interactions within its diverse population, “including those who believe that abortion is murder and those who do not, and those who believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and those who do not—and those who have no religious convictions at all” (DoD, 2010, p. 135). This claim does little to illustrate the actual conditions of diversity within the armed forces. Instead, it chiefly reinforces the binary boundaries already mapped out through the production of this (in)security discourse. Arguably, it also is indicative of a hierarchy that privileges identification with conservative Christian values, given that the dichotomy is established by contrasting nouns affiliated with such values to those that depart from Christian values.

Other sections of the report also seem to reflect recommendations for securitization practices that reinforce a similar hierarchical privileging of the culture of the religious majority within the military. This is pointedly evident in sections discussing policies of equal opportunity among branches of the armed forces. Again, as is frequently the case throughout the document, when recommendations that no additional policies should be enacted for an area thought to be at risk, this conclusion is premised by assertions that already operating mechanisms are sufficient to sustain a level of minimal threat. Specifically, they argue that rules and customs regarding appropriate treatment already establish expectations of fairness and respect for all and will continue to do so in a post-repeal world. This reasoning is expressly mobilized regarding discussion of equal opportunity (DoD, 2012, pp. 13-14; pp. 136-138). In the status quo pre-repeal, equal opportunity policies in the military identified “race, color, religion, sex, and national origin,” in addition to sexual harassment as protected classes with respect to practices of “unlawful discrimination” (DoD, 2010, p. 137). The report also explains that complaints not falling under these specified categories are dealt with through the standard chain of command.

However, the equal opportunity recommendations authored by the working group argue against including sexual orientation as an eligible class within these policies following a repeal of DADT. Rather, it is asserted that the best practice to minimize tumult is for gay and lesbian service members to follow the chain of command when seeking resolution of discrimination or other problems that may arise involving their identified sexual orientation. Their reasoning for continued exclusion of sexual orientation within the language of these policies is based on the maintenance of equality.

We believe that doing so [including sexual orientation] could produce a sense, rightly or wrongly, that gay men and lesbians are being elevated to a special status as a “protected class” and will receive special treatment. In a new environment in which gay and lesbian Service members can be open about their sexual orientation, we believe they will be accepted more readily if the military community understands that they are simply being permitted equal footing with everyone else. (DoD, 2010, pp. 13-14)

First it is necessary to briefly problematize the insinuation that the statutory protection of gay and lesbian service members from discrimination and harassment in a military environment, in practice, might overly privilege them as a class. And furthermore, the claim that discrimination grievances brought forth by gay and lesbian personnel through the chain of command will be functionally equivalent to grievances brought forth through equal opportunity mechanisms afforded protected classes is weak. This is particularly the case when considering evidence elsewhere in the report that older generations within the service, in general, hold a more negative view of the implementation of open service (DoD, 2010, p. 59). Nonetheless, what is most noteworthy about the justification provided by the working group is the preservation of a more elite, protected status for religiously motivated discrimination in relation to discrimination motivated by sexual orientation. This is because discrimination based on one's identified religion is classified as unlawful, while discrimination based on one's identified sexual orientation remains separated from a classification as unlawful. The working group suggests that it is necessary to "disabuse Service members of any notion that, with repeal, gay and lesbian Service members will be afforded some type of special treatment" (DoD, 2010, p. 10). The institutional protection by the state of certain identities marks them with a higher status. Additionally, the report reveals the contention that, "repeal would *not* mean that the military is being used as a social experiment" (DoD, 2010, p. 84). This claim further emphasizes that repeal will not result in a restructuring of social hierarchies that traditionally privilege identifications with Christianity over identifications as LGBTQ. The securitization measures endorsed—against that which is discursively perceived to destabilize service members' ability to perform identifications with culturally hegemonic, conservative Christian morality—require policy that maintain the practice of hierarchical boundaries separating, rather than equalizing, LGB military personnel.

### **Open Service Versus Institutionalized Masculinity**

Of primary concern to the potential repeal of DADT, was how the military would be affected at the institutional, or operational level. Given that during the period of this risk assessment the military had been engaged in a war on two fronts for almost a decade, whether the service could manage such a shift in personnel policy was a prominent area of concern that necessitated a cogent and clearly argued response. As was the case in 1993, a primary category of assessment included in the report was military effectiveness. In the report, the working group



authors explain that a significant subcomponent for evaluating a broad, overarching concept like military effectiveness involves determining risk at the unit level of the institutional structure (DoD, 2010, p. 97). If the various units are fulfilling their duties effectively, it can be reasoned that military functionality is high. Therefore, my questions guiding this section of analysis are chiefly focused on the articulation and evaluation of threats at the unit level. In this section I examine in what ways a repeal of DADT is rhetorically linked to unit (in)security and how performances of gender/sexuality are discursively operating to inform particular practices aimed at preserving unit functionality. The analysis discusses two areas central to these questions. The first involves worries over deterioration in standards of conduct more generally, in other words, the concerns articulated that in an era of open service gay and lesbian troops would negatively impact institutional regulations addressing appropriate forms of interaction and self-presentation. Second, I analyze concerns specific to units assigned with combat roles. The ability for fighting units to adapt to open service and maintain battle effectiveness was represented as a particularly salient issue in security discourses. Thus, it becomes key to understanding the securitization practices endorsed by the working group aimed at ensuring unit, and subsequently, military effectiveness.

### ***Adherence by Gay Men and Lesbians to Standards of Conduct***

In effect, the scope of risks assessed in much of the report itself is a response to the question of timing. The service member quoted at the beginning of the chapter frames his/her concern with timing as an issue that involves increasing the amount of distractions deployed service members could experience. Similarly, the working group's reasoning behind the conclusion that the timing of a potential repeal is not unmanageable is based on a prediction of only minimal, and likely short-term disruption to the force (DoD, 2010, p. 119). The language of distraction or disruption to the force, particularly those deployed to combat zones, seems to suggest the presumption that were repeal to take effect, the sudden visibility of gay and lesbian troops would result in straight service members' inability to adequately perform their duties in the field. Essentially then, the broader concern implied here is that open service could create disturbances to the standards of conduct that discipline the behavior of service members. Exemplifying this concern within the report, a service member is noted to state, "A small part of the military will come out and affect the entire military. Good order and discipline will be

affected by this” (DoD, 2010, p. 53). This possible introduction of volatility to military conduct becomes explicitly identified as a threat. Furthermore, the working group clearly concurs with this assessment because, as explained within the report, “in the profession of arms, adherence to military policy and standards of conduct is essential to unit effectiveness, readiness, and cohesion” (DoD, 2010, p. 10). Given this assertion, it becomes important to understand the reasoning mapped out by the working group that justifies their conclusion that the risk to military standards of conduct upon repeal of DADT is low.

A primary component of establishing why standards of conduct can be maintained in the case of open service is revealed through a process of identifying inappropriate forms of conduct, which, it is argued, are likely to occur only rarely (DoD, 2010, p. 5). Often it has been behaviors recognized as contrary, even damaging to proper standards of conduct that, by popular opinion, were feared would be rampant and pervasive following a repeal of DADT. Some argued that a repeal could provoke public displays of same-sex affection and gender deviant behavior by gay and lesbian service members. Therefore, the threat to standards of conduct is framed as a conflict between service members who performatively affirm these normative practices and those who pose a threat to military effectiveness by deviating from them.

One section of the report illustrates service member concerns regarding the chance that repeal would lead gay men and lesbians to feel they had been given permission for unruly and unsettling conduct, one highlighted quotation from a service members bluntly avers, “They should just sustain the standard. I don’t like flamboyant queers.” This is immediately followed by an additional quotation in which another service member states, “Flamboyant behavior by any members should not be allowed or tolerated” (DoD, 2010, p. 54). As with many of the concerns over conduct in an environment of open service, the behaviors described as deviant are identity markers most typically associated with overtly feminine-performing gay *men*, while concerns about the impact of lesbian performances often remain unaddressed. The working group explains that, “repeatedly, we heard Service members express the view that ‘open’ homosexuality would lead to widespread and overt displays of effeminacy among men” (DoD, 2010, p. 5). The identification between problematic service member conduct and flamboyancy in these quotations, along with others throughout the document (DoD, 2010, pp. 6, 10, 11, 21, 53, 55, 96, 102, 122, 124), infers that desires to maintain a militarized masculine imaginary among military members remain operative.

Given the stereotype-entrenched criticisms that allowing gay men and lesbians to be open about their sexuality could lead to “pink boas” being “authorized with uniforms” (DoD, 2010, p. 53), the authors of the report mobilize gay voices to reassure those with concerns that this would not be the case and that extreme disruptions to standards of conduct are improbable. In fact, they argue, only a small minority of gay and lesbian troops would make the decision to come out completely (DoD, 2010, p. 123). A service member identified in the report as gay echoes these claims:

A lot of people think there is going to be this big “outing” and people flaunting their gayness, but they forget that we’re in the military. That stuff isn’t supposed to be done during duty hours regardless if you’re gay or straight. (DoD, 2010, p. 5)

This service member makes the case that the feared misperceptions of open service and the realities of open service are performatively quite different. Whereas the constructed discourse of the former develops an image of a gay pride parade within the fortress of the corps, the service member warrants being a part of the military as the reason why the perceived ruckus is incongruous with the form of a post-repeal force. Performing service member is privileged above this certain manner of politically performing gay identity. Furthermore, the second part of the quotation functions as a reminder that the military is an environment of disciplined identity practices. Another quotation from a gay service member in this section more clearly explicates the consequences of performing open service with too great of deviance from the norm, “If it is repealed, everyone will look around their spaces to see if anyone speaks up. They’ll hear crickets for a while. A few flamboyant guys and tough girls will join to rock the boat and make a scene. Their actions and bad choices will probably get them kicked out” (DoD, 2010, p. 6). Again this emphasizes that the successful gay service member is one whose occupational identity speaks louder than her/his sexual identity.

A distinct type of gay or lesbian is argued to be compatible with a workable implementation of the repeal. Using the gay service members’ statements as evidence, the report concludes that a majority “would continue to be private and discreet about their personal lives. This discretion would occur for reasons having nothing to do with the law, but everything to do with a desire to fit in, co-exist, and succeed in the military” (DoD, 2010, p. 5). Here, gay service members are given authority to speak, but their voices serve primarily as assurance that within

the military environment, standards of social relations continue to discipline identity performances to align with non-disruptive, heterosocial expectations.

Further support is provided for this argument within the report's discussion of a review on foreign military experiences with the integration of openly serving gay and lesbian troops in their forces. This section explains that when bans on homosexual service were lifted in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, expectations were that "noticeable numbers of gay men and lesbians would reveal their sexual orientation to fellow military personnel after the policy change" (DoD, 2010, p. 91). However, the observed reality after bans were lifted was that very few gay or lesbian service members made the choice to reveal their sexual orientation. Consequently, the revelation that these countries' militaries encountered a lack of incidents is used as evidence to conclude that lifting bans on homosexual service generally has little overall impact. What is not made explicit in the working group's reasoning is that their conclusion is likely contingent on gay men and lesbians choosing not to performatively identify their sexuality as divergent from a presumed heterosexuality given the military environment of disciplined conduct. In general, the working group's repeated claims that many gay and lesbian service members will choose either not to come out or will be discrete about to whom they disclose their sexuality are grounded by the empiricism of the support provided. In other words, on the basis of other institutions' integration experiences or testimony from U.S. active duty gay men and lesbians, the working group draws the arguably reasonable conclusion that few comings out will take place. While the report does not explicitly frame this prediction as positive or negative, it is mobilized as indicative of the working group's overarching claim that repeal of DADT is less of a threat than many originally feared. The underwhelming anticipated percentage of gay and lesbian troops who would reveal their sexuality upon repeal becomes rhetorically constructed as a benefit to implementation.

The report itself serves as public reassurance that the type of openly homosexual citizen who would become a member of the military corps is fueled by "patriotic desire to serve and defend the Nation" and not by the desire "to use the military for social experimentation" (DoD, 2010, p. 6), reiterating for the collective audience that the structure of social relations in the military is not truly subject to change were a repeal to occur. The report valorizes gay soldiers to the degree that they demonstrate a talent for mimetic heterosocial performances, while arguing that any impulses to deviate will continue to be disincentivized and devalued among the corps.

### *Assimilation by Performing Warrior*

The report's characterization of results from the quantitative survey of service member attitudes about the impacts of repeal also demonstrates support for the claim that allowing gay and lesbian troops to serve openly would not lead to a significant disruption of unit effectiveness due to diminished standards of conduct adherence. Although some questions asked within the survey reveal a plurality of service members who report negative or very negative perceptions about the effects of the presence of an openly gay man or lesbian woman in their unit, others do not. It is the situational or environmental discrepancies within the wording of the survey questions that are relevant to this justification. For example, questions that place service members in minimally intense, everyday environments result in higher percentages of troops predicting negative effects were there an openly gay member in the unit. Alternatively, when survey questions more specifically emphasize danger or conflict in the hypothetical situations posed—which would necessitate the enactment of one's combative capabilities—greater unit effectiveness is predicted (DoD, 2010, pp. 65-66).<sup>2</sup> In other words, when circumstances mandate performing “warfighter” (DoD, 2010, p. 126), fewer service members anticipate that an openly identified gay troop in their unit would harm mission directives. Rhetorically, what is evoked in this logic is that when the performance of warfighter is the most salient and visible marker of identity, there seems to be less corporeal space onto which signifiers of performing gay can conceptually be mapped. While this initially may seem counter-intuitive, the working group contends that the predicted “difference in these two environments reflects that, in a combat situation, the warfighter appreciates that differences with those within his unit become less important than defeating the common enemy” (DoD, 2010, p. 7). Therefore, during combat, what becomes most relevant for identifications as an American warfighter are those signifiers of identity that distinguish publicly constructed enemies of the state from less threatening Western bodies, minimizing the significance of immanent gay bodies.

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<sup>2</sup> The wording of these survey questions all began with the premise, “If Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell is repealed and you are working with a Service member in your immediate unit who has said he or she is gay or lesbian, how, if at all, would it affect your immediate unit’s effectiveness at completing its mission...” (DoD, 2010, p. 66). Everyday environments were prompted using language like “...on a day-to-day basis” or “...in a field environment or out at sea” (DoD, 2010, p. 66). Higher threatening environments were prompted using language like “...when a crisis or negative event happens that affects your immediate unit” or “...in an intense combat situation” (DoD, 2010, p. 66).

The importance of being able to successfully display acts associated with combat is also highlighted as a theme within the service members' voiced opinions about possible consequences of repeal. The section is framed with the heading, "I don't care as long as he can fight" (DoD, 2010, p. 57). While noting the obvious gendered implications, what is also telling about this tagline is that it stresses the accomplishment of occupational tasks relevant to combat environments. Although some jobs in the military directly incorporate fighting skills, there are certainly many others in which such abilities are not necessary to carry out commanders' directives. The decision to sectionally highlight a gay service member's ability to fight as a standard for belongingness again suggests a particularized corporeal performance by the bodies of gay men in the military in order to be perceived as non-threatening. Thus, a boundary is created, in which male bodies that can/will practice a militarized masculinity are privileged.

Because the discursive ordering of desirable identity performances within an institution like the military is informed by practices of securitization, service members whose images are most closely tied with providing defense hold an elite status. Troops within units that engage in physical combat operations serve as especially representative embodiments of how security is achieved via militaristic means. Within the working group's risk assessment, the opinions of these service members are given special significance. For instance, in response to the acknowledgement that 30% of service members surveyed—and 40-60% of members in combat units surveyed—predicted negative consequences of repealing DADT, the authors of the executive summary assert, "Any personnel policy change for which a group [of] that size predicts negative consequences must be approached with caution" (DoD, 2010, p. 4). The possible hazards the repeal could instantiate within Marine and other special combat units is argued to be particularly salient not only based on quantitative percentage, but more subtly, perhaps due the perceived size of their contribution to military operations. Members of elite warfighting units are given a heightened authority to voice their opinions about the threats of a repeal of DADT to the corps. The concerns expressed by these overtly militarized, masculine, and hence, privileged service members highlight the salience of corporeal practices that signify identifications as warfighter.

The rhetorical privileging of service members whose military identity is performed within the boundaries denoting warfighter is additionally shown through reports of statistical data that reveals a considerable majority of troops in Marine or combat arms units (i.e., 73%

Army Combat Arms; 75% Marine Corps; 80% Marine Combat Arms) do not believe they have ever served with an individual in their immediate unit who has been homosexual (DoD, 2010, p. 76). The working group uses this data to justify their reasoning that it is because service members in the Marines or Army combat arms units have little occupational interaction with gay men and lesbians that they have characteristically negative predictions about the impacts of repeal. Further, I suggest, given that the statistics are based on members' perceptions of sexual identities in their combat arms units, the explanation that might be gleaned from these numbers is not necessarily that few gay service members are present in combat units. Rather, more specifically, it may indicate that gay troops who are present are able to pass as straight due to their adeptness at performing warfighter. There are also certainly some gay Marines and members of Army combat units who are open about their sexuality. However, regardless of whether these warfighters outwardly label themselves as gay or straight—or simply do not voice a labeled sexuality, the contingent factor of their inclusion within the boundaries of this elite class of service military member instead of becoming otherized is the performance of a masculine military identity. For example, a service member identified as a special operations warfighter is quoted, expounding that, “We have a gay guy [in the unit]. He’s big, he’s mean, and he kills lots of bad guys. No one cared that he was gay” (DoD, 2010, p. 6, p. 126). Thus, gay men in the armed forces capable of performing like the gay warfighter described above, pose no threat to the established hierarchical boundaries that privilege militarized, masculine performances of identity.

When openly gay troops are inscribed with manifestations of big, mean, and lethal, the threat of repealing DADT is reasoned by the working group to be essentially a non-issue, wanting of little institutional change in securitization practices to stabilize the order of gendered/sexualized relations. Evidence like the quotation above functions as support for the working group's broader claim that there is minimal risk to established standards of conduct in the case of repeal. As is argued in the report, there is “a misperception that a gay man does not ‘fit’ the image of a good warfighter—a misperception that is almost completely erased when a gay Service member is allowed to prove himself alongside fellow warfighters” (DoD, 2010, p. 126). By shifting the burden of securitization away from the institution, which responds to threats via policy and regulation changes, this argument suggests that the inherent expectation of militarized, masculine identities is stable enough that nothing more is needed administratively.

However, it then becomes the burden of each gay service member to sufficiently meet institutionalized standards of conduct, performatively substantiating the claim he can, in fact, be decorated with the medals of a warfighter (instead of boas).

### **Confirmed Homosexuality and the Presence of Threat**

In addition to the cultural and institutional insecurity that was predicted to result from repealing DADT, other security-based discourses articulate a corporeal threat to the bodies of straight service members when placed in the presence of gay bodies. As the authors of the report explain, while service members recognize that there are gay and lesbian troops serving under the DADT policy, the reality of open service is represented to trigger an affective and corporeal sense of insecurity. In other words, knowing someone is gay is viewed as more of a threat than suspecting someone might be gay. Thus, two issues emerge as relevant to concerns over the presence of identified gay bodies in the presence of straight bodies: HIV serostatus and privacy.

#### ***Signifying Boundaries of Serostatus***

Often the discourse surrounding the bodies of gay men and bodies with a positive HIV serostatus are represented as mutually exclusive to one another (Groves & Parsons, 2006; Shilts, 1993, p. 499). Brouwer (2004) notes that this discourse was specifically present during Congressional hearings held in 1993, resulting in fears over gay men's military service because it was understood to represent a threat to the military's blood supply. Furthermore, as Brouwer contends, open service by gay men also is constructed as a risk to trust and cohesion within warfighting units due to perceptions of the battlefield as a place where blood is imagined to flow freely. Thus, the risk of HIV contraction (and gay men's service) is construed as a threat to the military corps because it turns once healthy (straight) bodies into corpses (2004, pp. 425-426). The quotations highlighted within the report by the working group to illustrate concerns over health threats in a post-repeal era demonstrate similar discursive forms.

First, voices of service members construct representations of gay bodies as infected and infectious, which places normalized straight bodies at risk. For example, one quoted service member posits, "I think homosexual sex leads to diseases. There's always a chance of getting what someone has" (DoD, 2010, p. 54). The service member's claim seems to imply that it is not necessarily being a homosexual that makes actual the diseased body, but rather practicing homosexuality, which here is identified through the intercourse of bodies. Additionally, the



service member provides no presumption that straight bodies are protected from infection when interacting with a gay body. Other service members mobilize the imagery of the battlefield to represent the threat gay bodies pose to the military blood supply. A quoted service member questions, “If you are in an infantry company in a fire fight, and you have an open homosexual who gets wounded, who is going to want to treat him for the fear of HIV and other stuff” (DoD, 2010, p. 54). Several tensions are at play within the discursive articulation of this threat. The articulated circumstances of HIV infection implicate warfighters being at greater corporeal risk, raising the perception of overall threat to the military should DADT be repealed. Moreover, it is the known label of homosexuality that instantiates actions to secure healthy bodies from the perceived risk of infection. The service member evokes the contention that to know a body as gay is to be aware of the threat to one’s own body. The resulting implication in a battlefield environment is the solicitation of a responding practice to ensure the security of one’s own corporeal fluids. In other words, it requires disassociation from and removal of that which poses a threat of disease. A barrier between pure and infected blood is drawn to protect the corps from the risk of contagion.

Interestingly, and given the conclusion of the 1993 DoD working group that concerns related to HIV were a significant risk to open service (DoD, 2010, p. 112), the working group provides only a minimal rationale through which they justify their conclusion that repealing DADT in 2010 would have nominal effects on the safety and security of military bodies and the corps in general. Other justifications of proscribed securitization measures within the report clearly identify how recommendations to change or maintain policy status quo are related to aims of correcting misperceptions and easing fears among service members. However, the working group simply backs their recommendation for no adjustment to current regulatory practices of HIV testing and the policy of non-deployment given an HIV positive serostatus with the authority of military Surgeons General endorsements. To justify their assessment of minimal risk to the military blood supply, the working group’s sole rhetorical strategy is to leverage current medical knowledge regarding the likelihood of HIV infection. I contend that the absence of any additional rationale by the authors of the working group is perhaps due to the concurrent absence of any explicitly articulated signifiers of a positive serostatus beyond identification of a body as gay. In other words, as heard within the views of service members, immanent risk of HIV infection is only perceived to be present when in conjunction with becoming aware of the

presence of a gay body, regardless of how that body is performing sexuality. Under these circumstances, the working group lacks a way to construct an argument minimizing the risk of HIV infection to particular methods of public sexual identity practices.

### ***Insecurity through Invasions of Privacy***

Arguments against open service are often made by referencing service members' general lack of privacy within military environments and conjuring images of vulnerable straight bodies showering with gay or lesbian bodies. The presumed threat illustrated under these circumstances is that straight service members risk exposure to unwanted sexual advances. Like the risk of HIV infection, the perceived obstacles regarding bathing and berthing arrangements were also frequently mobilized during the debates about open service in 1993. As such, scholars have already noted that much of this argumentation relies on a presumption of gay bodies as sexually undisciplined (Brouwer, 2004; Lehring, 2003). The authors of the report acknowledge that the assertion that gay men and lesbian women would inevitably make sexual advances towards straight service members while in close quarters is seen as particularly offensive for some. However, they also argue that given the sheer number of service members who expresses such concerns it necessitated discussion. Service member quotations used to qualify viewpoints about privacy risks indeed reveal a presumption about lack of discipline. One respondent notes, "I do not want to shower or sleep in the same room as a woman who is homosexual. I would feel uncomfortable changing and sleeping as I would if it was a man in the room" (DoD, 2010, p. 50). In another example, a service member is quoted, claiming, "Tell him if he hits on me I will kick his - -!" (DoD, 2010, p. 51). This chosen quotation in particular suggests an irrational lack of sexual discipline on the part of gay bodies because to not discipline flirtatious behavior is to incur bodily harm. Additionally, it hearkens back to the establishment of boundaries discussed above that pit heterosexual, male, warfighting bodies against gay male bodies characterized through performances that flaunt their homosexuality.

Although the working group alludes to general opinions that a repeal of DADT would require up to four separate facilities for housing and bathing purposes, their own recommendations are that current arrangements not be changed. They argue that articulated concerns about the potential for predatory behavior of gay and lesbian troops is based on imagined stereotypes formed through a lack of lived experience being in the presence of gay

bodies under these circumstances. As evidence for this claim, they make a comparison to survey results demonstrating that 50% of service members believe they have already shared bathroom facilities with someone they believed to be gay or lesbian (DoD, 2010, p. 12) and that if DADT were to be repealed, were they assigned to the same bathroom facilities as someone they believed to be gay or lesbian 30% would take no action while another 25% would use these facilities at alternate times (DoD, 2010, p. 67). The assumption made within this comparison is that those service members who believe they have already shared bathroom facilities with a gay or lesbian service member make up a large percentage of the responses in a post-repeal environment indicated above. Therefore, the working group reasons that when service member opinions are based on actual experiences rather than imagined fears, many no longer perceive a threat. Furthermore, for those who would still feel discomfort, many indicate a willingness to make individual adjustments to mitigate the discomfort they feel. However, a flaw exists in this line of reasoning. Whereas a majority of survey questions asking service members about the effects of DADT repeal rely on a dependent variable use the wording, “with a service member in your immediate unit who has said he or she is gay or lesbian” (DoD, 2010, pp. 197-207, p. 226), those that inquire about housing or bathroom facilities employ the wording, “with someone you believe to be a gay or lesbian Service member” (DoD, 2010, pp. 227-229). Therefore, in these latter circumstances, the questions are still couched in perceptions based off performative signifiers, not, as is argued by the working group to be important, based on actual knowledge regarding whether another service member is gay or lesbian. Significantly then, more weight may be given to the working group’s justification that concludes the discussion in this section of the assessment, “As one gay former Service member told us, to fit in, co-exist, and conform to social norms, gay men have learned to avoid making heterosexuals feel uncomfortable or threatened in these situations” (DoD, 2010, p. 13). Argumentatively, this makes the working group’s rationale for why status quo practices need not change in the event of a repeal of DADT again contingent on performances from gay and lesbian bodies. Allowing open service in the military will assuredly lead to greater certainty about the identity of some service members’ sexuality. But, the assumption that having certain knowledge that a fellow service member is gay or lesbian heightens feelings of insecurity seems faulty. Instead the sense of (in)security felt by straight service members is argued to be reliant on the continuation of gay and lesbian service members’ adherence to expectations of heterosocial performance. In other words, as the working

group affirms, no further securitization practices are needed in contexts where the performative boundaries of identity do not divert from heterosocially acceptable forms. The possible risks articulated as immanent to these intimate environments is always already mitigated by an inherent disciplining of bodies that demands preservation of the practices of sociality aligned with heterosexual performances of identity.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined the construction of discourses of (in)security regarding the impacts of a possible repeal of DADT. When this policy was put in place in 1993, many of the issues discussed above were argued to be a significant threat to the effectiveness of the military and the security of the bodies therein. Many of the conclusions made within the 2010 risk assessment however, are a reversal of previous official stances related to open service. Indeed in response to several articulated threats the working group concluded that no additional action was needed to maintain security and operational effectiveness in the case of repeal. While the report repeatedly makes an argument that the military is highly capable of adapting to an era of open service, the rhetoric suggests it is specifically gay and lesbian service members who have and would continue to demonstrate their ability to performatively adapt to expectations within hegemonic environments.

The articulation of how a repeal of DADT would threaten the military on cultural, institutional, and corporeal levels constructed hierarchical boundaries between the threatened and the threatening. As identified by the working group and through opinions voiced by service members open service was feared to result in a loss of security for dominant practices of morality and religiosity, as well as for the established standards of conduct that regulate social and professional interactions among personnel. Furthermore, concerns were voiced regarding the ability for military units, and warfighting units in particular, to remain cohesive enough to effectively carry out ordered operations, if there were an openly gay or lesbian member of the unit. Gay and lesbian service members were also argued to pose a threat to the health and desired privacy of service members.

Primarily, the working group concluded that many of the policies and practices of the military were sufficient to ensure a secure and stable force and that repeal would likely bring about an equalization of service members, which, after a minor period of adjustment, would pose

no long-term complications or distractions from military missions. However, my analysis demonstrates that the rhetoric on which these conclusions are based is reliant on the inherency of hegemonic forms within the institution that privilege practices identified with militarized masculinity. Although gay and lesbian bodies may legally be permitted to be open about their sexual identity in a military environment post-repeal, the report ultimately insinuates that in order to fit-in and succeed, gay and lesbian performances of identity must continue to be disciplined towards assimilation within heterosocial and militarized practices. Rhetorically, gay and lesbian bodies are only argued to be appropriate within a military environment when inscribed through corporeal rhetorics of heterosociality. In the end, the argument constructed by the DoD about the predicted impacts of a repeal of DADT reaffirm the logics of militarized masculinity on which the armed forces are structured.

## **Chapter 4 - Sustaining Challenges to Boundaries of Assimilated Gender/Sexuality Performances**

I have argued that the DoD constructs the outcome of a repeal of DADT as contingent on the assimilationist desires of LGB service members. Inherent within the DoD report is the rhetoric that LGB bodies must engage in heterosocial performances of identity in order to be accepted within a military environment and for successful implementation of integration to occur. Gary Lehring (2003) posits,

Greater tolerance does not come through proving to straights that lesbians and gay men are kinder and gentler versions of heterosexuals. The acceptance of lesbians and gay men will not occur... because they can be just like the rest of U.S. society. (p. 180)

Indeed, aims for political belongingness sought through performances of assimilation fail to deconstruct those identities deemed by the hegemon as deviant in the first place. Undoubtedly, individuals afforded political and legal equality by the state enjoy material benefits from this status. Such aims are a prominent goal of mainstream LGBT rights activism. However, in the process of acquiring equal rights, it is important to also remain critical of the ways this rhetoric draws boundaries that promote new forms of exclusion and hierarchy.

The report commissioned by the DoD assesses the risk of open service by LGB members of the military in regard to already existing standards of readiness, effectiveness, and cohesion. The evaluation is based on projections about the degree to which the visibility of gay bodies within the armed forces might change operative social structures that inform performances of soldier. In this way, the threat gay and lesbian service members pose is derived from their potential to make unstable cultural, institutional, and corporeal militarized identities. I have aimed to demonstrate that the rationale through which the report argues that repeal of DADT does not create significant threat is grounded in demonstrating the preservation of military hegemony through performative adaptations by gay and lesbian service members. Namely, it is argued that LGB service members are already made to perform from positions of heteronormativity and will continue to do so. The DoD's rhetoric maintains a privileging of

traditional moral and religious values, heteromale standards of militarized conduct, and immanent corporeal performances based on a presumed heterosexuality.

While DoD's justifications for the feasibility of open military service remain politically problematic, it still marks a shift in official discourse about homosexual identity. Discourses of security that once held that openly identified lesbians and gay men violated the boundary of what constitutes a good citizen have been rearticulated and an appropriate form of gay citizenship has emerged from official military rhetoric. As other military policies (e.g., spousal benefits, joint assignment requests, base housing) are reexamined during the early era of repeal this shift in discourse is also likely to significantly inform these evaluations. If arguments for the expansion of these programs to include the families of gay and lesbian service members maintain a construction of homosexual identity as citizens seeking inclusion within, not disruption of, heterosexual institutions, this barrier to state allocated benefits may also shift.

The change in official discourses of (in)security surrounding representations of homosexuality within the military, and the value mainstream LGBT organizations place on military inclusion as a springboard to attaining full and equal rights for LGBT individuals motivated this analysis in which I examined how the DoD's discursive shift rhetorically altered constructions of lesbian and gay citizens' identities. In this chapter, I review pertinent elements of my analysis that inform my conclusions, before suggesting implications for gender/sexuality politics of identity, and its intersections with security and rhetoric.

### **Rhetorically Embracing Homosexual Citizenship**

*The Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"* rhetorically constructs the conditions that secure normative identity boundaries in the nation's military. I have attempted to demonstrate that this text does so by articulating the identity of LGB citizenship with militarized heteronormativity. In so doing, queer performances of identity that do not fit this state constructed form continue to be framed as a destabilizing threat. Therefore, the naming of (in)securities to the political identity of the state (and its "good" citizens), advances a heteronormative, domesticated ordering of relations between the citizen and the state, and between forms of identity performed in the public and private spheres. The report, in other words, links security to adherence with heteronormative, hegemonic identity practices. The individual service members participating in this system, then,

are expected to corporeally inscribe their performances of identity in ways that affirm one's gender normative, militarized masculinity or femininity (i.e., preserve standards of conduct). Through these performances, the dominant, militarized culture of the state protects its seemingly naturalized, authorial status. In my analysis, this was revealed through the ways in which the rhetoric of the DoD identifies threats, constructs hierarchical boundaries, and endorses practices of securitization on cultural, institutional, and corporeal levels, which I qualify below.

The report's evaluation of moral objections to open service clearly establishes the culture of the military as an historically religious body, and, given the attention to the potential loss of military chaplains, one that continues to value the moral and religious guidance of service members. The working group's decision to address open service in relation to opposition from conservative Christians seems to speak more to the perceived pervasiveness of this group of citizens, rather than their inclusion as a variable in the construct of military effectiveness. Most pertinent to this section of the analysis was the working group's assertion that sexuality need not be included under provisions wherein religion is already placed as a protected class for equal opportunity programs. When compared with justifications in other sections of the report, the working group's concern that gay and lesbian service members might be viewed as receiving special privileges seems to align with the general rhetorical stance developed in the report. To deny inclusion of sexual orientation as a protective class serves as a foil to contain any risk of conflict arising from queer service members who lack adequate assimilation performances. The "equal opportunity" afforded gay and lesbian service members by permitting them to be open about their sexual identity following a repeal of DADT does not subvert the extant inequities of hegemonic sociality.

In response to concerns voiced about a degradation to institutional standards of conduct, the working group makes the argument that lesbians and gay men in the military desire belongingness in a military environment and join out of a patriotic desire to serve one's country, not to advance a social agenda. Lesbian and gay men who perform a privileging of occupational identity over sexual identity become rhetorically incorporated into military identity. It is articulated desire to identify, first and foremost as U.S. service member that makes clear those who threaten the system: queers performing queer. The assertion within the report, that most concerns about standards of conduct and warfighting are based off stereotypes, is also illuminating in furthering this cleavage between performing gay *service member* and performing



*gay* service member. The report argues, such stereotypes do not match the reality of the gay and lesbian members of the corps. The argument constructed, in other words, is that it is unfair to judge well-behaved gay and lesbian service members based on disruptive gay men and lesbians who make overtly public their sexuality performances; hegemonic performing gay men and lesbians (i.e., those belonging to the military) deserve the chance to prove how well they can be/are assimilated into sovereign state identity.

The arguments made by the working group in regards to the corporeal threats placed on straight bodies when in the immanent presence of known gay bodies also remaps belongingness within hierarchical boundaries separating the sovereignty of state identity from individuals identified as antagonizers. Here, worries lie in the articulated performances of gay bodies such as promiscuity, which are analogized to a lack of discipline, thereby justifying separation from the service. Because HIV positive serostatuses are stereotypically associated with promiscuous gay men, their bodies in particular are located in this discourse. However, the rules disallowing deployment or initial entry into the military when one tests positive for HIV, as well as the report's overall rhetoric make doubly evident that the vast majority of gay bodies in the military are not these risk-incorporated bodies. As the bodies of gay men and lesbians in the military are increasingly characterized throughout the report through signifiers of heteronormativity, it becomes reasonable to imagine that service members who are gay or lesbian, who successfully perform belongingness to the military also value the monogamy of traditional family structures. It can additionally be assumed that lesbians and gay men in the military who are married or in civil unions/domestic partnerships are further disincentivized from engaging in any of the undisciplined/promiscuous acts that risk seroconversion or threaten straight bodies' berthing or bathing situations. Primarily, the risks associated with the known presence of gay bodies become disassociated with how gay militarized bodies are claimed to actually perform sexual identity.

The key discursive movements revealed in my analysis signal particular rhetorically constructed identities for LGBTQ citizens. Most significantly, DoD rhetoric clearly and consistently operates to create a coded boundary between gay men and lesbians who are acceptable in the military—and who do not pose a threat to the stability of the culture, institution, and member bodies—and those whose performances of identity remain coded as suspect. This shift of (in)security discourse in the military renders an identity of homosexuality amenable to military service and consequently, to the rights and benefits of full citizenship. The modes

though which this form of citizenship is practiced, as identified in my analysis of DoD rhetoric, could perhaps best be summarized by what Lisa Duggan (2002) coined “the new homonormativity.” In her essay, she describes this type of sexual politics by explaining that it “does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption” (p. 179). In other words, she argues that a politics of homonormativity instantiates a redrawing of public/private boundaries, that privatizes issues of gay politics in exchange for greater access to the capitalist economy. The military’s rhetoric places a value on a homosexual identity that performs such a politics and posits that it merits belongingness within the state institution. Gay and lesbian citizens who adopt a homonormative politics are positioned within discourses of (in)security as inherently unthreatening to the system because they perform a desire for assimilation. It is a militarization of LGBTQ identity.

### **Implications**

Several implications stem from this analysis. First, corporeal prioritization of occupational identity motivated by a politics of homonormativity domesticates and redraws hierarchical boundaries of sexuality. Second, I explore the seeming invisibility of lesbians-as-threat evidenced by the working group’s discourse. Third, I consider how these identity discourses intersect with security and rhetorical studies.

### ***Domestication of Sexual Identity Politics***

The conclusion that the military’s particular disciplined brand of open service is not a threat to hegemonic identities supports a rhetoric of the domestication of sexual identities. Achter (2010) explains that domestication refers to both the embodied location in which a subject is discursively positioned, as well as a rhetorical strategy to construct representations of consensus. In the first vein, it is the performance of sexual identity that is domesticated. In other words, sexual identity becomes privatized through the privileging of performing occupational identity over sexual identity. The report’s emphasis on the masculinity of gay warfighters militarizes their public social relations. The degree to which these troops may also be inscribed with signifiers of a gay identity are masked within the sphere of combat. The relationships that define their private lives are to be just that: private. This constructs an expectation that

performances identified with homosexuality may be acceptable as long as they remain domesticated, or expressed within the private sphere. Alternatively, within the publically visible realm, good citizens are shaped through articulations of hegemonic American values that uphold heterosexual identity performance. Second, the representational inclusion of LGB service members brought about by repeal helps to facilitate the other function of domestication, which Achter refers to as a “rhetoric of control” (2010, p. 48) that quiets grounds for dissent of military actions. Here, domestication functions rhetorically to elicit public support for the repeal of the policy and for the military’s continued engagements overseas. The report works to illustrate a post-repeal world in which gay troops maintain a sense of professionalism and commitment to their work, which is given added value because it is the work of national securitization. Furthermore, post-repeal, the claim can be made that the military is an institution of greater equality. For many Americans who supported repeal by 2010, this characterization reaffirms the integrity of the military and the dedication of its homonormative personnel, facilitating domestic support for the institution and furthering the operations of hegemony.

### ***Shifts in Hierarchies of Performing Sexuality***

Historically, the military has identified homosexuality as something that is incompatible with the decidedly heterosexual environment of the armed forces. This official position constructed hierarchical boundaries privileging heterosexuality over other ways of identifying and performing gender/sexuality. However, the institution’s rhetorical turn, redefining the types of performances of sexuality that pose a risk to military effectiveness, operates to restructure these hierarchical boundaries. The shift articulates a division that places greater value on and makes virtuous normative forms of sexuality, while non-normative displays of gender/sexuality remain constructed as deviant. Simply identifying as LGB becomes insufficient grounds to warrant discipline; the issue instead develops into how one’s sexuality informs a performative politics. The military’s discourse legitimizes a politics of homonormativity within LGBTQ communities.

The military’s turn toward acceptance of LGB who perform a homonormative identity politics structures a divide between mainstream LGBT and queer activist communities by privileging the former. Homonormativity, as a guiding logic of mainstream gay politics is aimed at achieving equality and inclusion within the political, economic, and social institutions that

structure American society. Mainstream gay rights organizations' primary political mobilization strategies target statutory measures of inclusion, believing them to be especially salient for achieving sexuality and gender equality. Their activism centers on calls for marriage, family, and workplace rights.

Queer scholars have objected to the development of the type of politics within the mainstream gay rights movement that focus on the attainment of equal rights, primarily articulating concerns with the assimilationist rhetoric that accompanies it (Chávez, 2010; Cohen, 1997; Lehring, 2003). As the working group's analysis makes clear, the performances of gay and lesbian service members are always already disciplined within the institution, whether the service member is open about his/her sexuality or not. While individuals who can/will perform sexuality within acceptable heteronormative boundaries thereby receive the privileges that accompany these assimilationist practices, such inclusion does little or nothing to challenge the borders that continue to exclude certain members of civil society from the political conversation.

In essence, as the homonormative politics of mainstream LGBT organizations becomes increasingly privileged among institutional discourses, the visibility of these bodies and the perspectives they voice come to represent the salient issues facing the larger LGBTQ identified community. Furthermore, the institutional and legal equality achieved via the rhetoric of mainstream activism operates as a form of tokenism, making invisible the inequities experienced by those who remain marginalized. Cloud (1996) explains that rhetorics of tokenism should not be viewed as "signs that a democratic compromise has been achieved, but that a few token voices are allowed to speak within the 'permissible range of disagreement'" (p. 119). Mainstream LGBT activists represent a discourse that characterizes repeal of DADT as a step toward full governmental recognition and acceptance of sexual diversity. However, the performative constraints emergent within DoD rhetoric lead more accurately to acceptance of stable sexual identities disassociated from the complexities of multiple identifications. Therefore, voices of queer activists who seek to draw attention to the "instability of sexual categories and sexual subjects" (Cohen, 1997, p. 439) remain a threat. Additionally, the tokenism of a homonormative politics creates a unitary category of sexual identity and ignores the ways in which race, class, gender, and sexual identity operate together within hegemonic systems. A homonormative politics problematically condones an erasure of discourses of difference, suggesting instead notions of stable LGB identity categories that are becoming increasingly

politically enfranchised. Butler (1993) argues, “as much as ‘outness’ is to be affirmed, these same notions must become subject to a critique of the exclusionary operations of their own production” (p. 227). In contradistinction, a queer politics seeks to restructure systems of domination in ways that are informed through multiple and different lived experiences of subjectivity.

### ***The Obfuscated Precariousness of Lesbianism***

The report’s discourses of (in)security largely reflect concerns with the open service of gay men. Admittedly, my analysis perhaps over-represents the frequency with which performances signifying lesbianism are evoked as a threat in proportion to performances signifying gay male identity. By which I mean all the quotations that specifically refer to the presence of gay women are included in the previous chapter, whereas not all the concerns articulated about gay men are mobilized to support the analysis. Whether the disproportionate attention to discourses of (in)security specific to gay men, compared with lesbians in the military is the product of the working group’s construction of the report, or is reflective of the frequency with which concerns were voiced among service members is unclear. What is clear within the report is that gay men are uniquely articulated as a threat and gay women are not. Yet, even in latter years of DADT, women were discharged for violation of the policy at rates double their proportional representation in each of the branches of the military (Embser-Herbert, 2007, pp. 46-47). Enloe (1993) points to this contradiction when she asserts, “the military *acts* as if lesbians are the chief threat to its culture, whereas military and civilian policymakers *talk* as if lesbians aren’t an issue and gay men are the threat” (p. 93). The DoD discourse of (in)security seems to maintain this inconsistency.

Primary explanations given for why women were more frequently juridically disciplined under DADT point to efforts to keep secure the military’s mechanisms of masculinity-based identifications. For example, women’s entry and continued presence in a masculine field of work can be construed as threatening to men’s identities, thereby calling for redressive action to maintain hierarchical gender/sexual relations. During DADT, accusations and prosecutions for lesbianism aimed at high-achieving, ambitious female service members were one mechanism through which the securitization of this hierarchy operated (Canaday, 2009; Embser-Herbert, 2007). Others point to how the military’s particular brand of masculinity instantiates a structure

of relations in which men's sexual dominance over women requires affirmation (Enloe, 1993; Lehring, 2003). From this perspective, any woman who refuses a soldier's sexual conquest—often then deemed to be a lesbian—becomes a menace to maintaining this imaginary.

However, there seems to be less general discussion about motivations behind military officials' general silence regarding the proportional discrepancy in discharge rates. Lehring (2003), for one, attributes it to a "cultural oversight of women, a virtual inattention to the sexuality of women" (pp. 127-128). But it may be the case that attention is paid differently to the sexuality of women in the military because women's performances of gender/sexuality are differently implicated in the preservation of militarized masculinity. In other words, the bodies of women have a peculiar relationship to rhetorics of sexuality that "support a military culture that nurtures misogyny and homophobia" (Enloe, 1993, p. 172). To draw attention to this relationship is to risk the security of this culture of militarized masculinity, which is informing the corporeal practices through which we understand national security to be achieved.

The preservation of these particularly problematic practices of national security is salient to sovereign military cultural identity, and thus becomes institutionally desirable to maintain. Some evidence of the institutional drive to mask women's relationship to these rhetorics of sexuality is also indicated through the military's inattention to addressing its endemic problem of rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment. The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Organization (SARPO), charged with oversight of related DoD policies, reported that for fiscal year 2010 an estimated 19,000 sexual assaults occurred in the military, 13.5% of which were reported (Service Women's Action Network [SWAN], 2012). The DADT policy is believed to have contributed to the substantial amount of incidents that were unreported (Stalsburg, 2011). Because of the military's history of investigating a woman for lesbianism when she would bring forward a complaint about sexual harassment, many service women opt not to report incidents (Embser-Herbert, 2007, pp. 46-47). Although data is not yet available that allows for comparison of reported versus estimated annual sexual assaults for periods post-repeal, and while there are many and varied reasons why an individual may choose not to report, it is possible that this gap may begin to shrink due to an increase in reporting of incidents. A rise in the reporting of, and hence, the visibility toward these effects of a militarized masculine culture could perhaps increase pressure to publically recognize this gendered/sexualized hierarchy as a flaw in the system. In other words, what I am suggesting is that the disparate discursive attention given

lesbian subjectivities within the structure of military relations is prone to shift within the post-repeal era. And, that in this era, the broader opportunities for lesbian service members, as well as women in general, to give voice to various experiences of these subject positions—including those related to sexual assault and violence, may open conditions of possibility for chipping away the hegemony of the institutional culture of militarized masculinity.

### ***Intersections of Security, Gender/Sexuality and Rhetorical Studies***

The rhetorics of identification mobilized within the DoD's risk assessment of a repeal of DADT are bound with the concepts of how individuals ought to perform citizenship. But methods of identification through the trope of what makes a good citizen have been argued to be problematic in several ways. Practices of good citizenship are discursively structured around hierarchical boundaries that mark whose bodies are valuable to the state. Rhetorics of identification as good citizen, that purport a move from a position of marginalization within this hierarchical system, enforce assimilation into already dominant political systems. Although revealing the operative mechanisms of such systems is a fundamental part of critical scholarship, Michel de Certeau (1984) contends that, "this elucidation of the apparatus by itself has the disadvantage of *not seeing* practices which are heterogeneous to it and which it represses or thinks it represses" (p. 41). His project in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, while acknowledging the rhetorical strategies used by dominant institutions to "explic[ate] the formal rules of action and the operations that differentiate them," (p. xx) is to examine how the mundane, fleeting performances of rhetorical tactics operate immanently as "victories of the 'weak' over the 'strong'" (p. xix). It is therefore necessary for rhetorical scholars in general, and for further research regarding LGBTQ subjectivities within the military to also investigate modes of identification operating through everyday tactical affirmations of difference within a system of assimilatory performances.

In American society the identification of who counts as a (good) citizen is contingent on a conceptualization of that which demonstrates virtue (Krebs, 2006, p. 190). One conceptualization of citizen virtue in the report was constructed through voiced concerns that articulated repeal as threatening to a military culture based on Christian morality. As Chávez (2010) identifies, such conservative religious rhetoric is often employed by touting the virtue of traditional family values (pp. 139-140). Through this frame, lesbians and gay men are argued to

be incompatible with practices of traditional family values and thus should not receive institutional affirmation from the state, especially since the state should protect and keep stable the virtues identified with citizenship. However, the working group mobilized the virtue of citizenship by identifying the desire to perform patriotism on the part of gay and lesbian service members. In this way, gay men and lesbians may attain virtue through practices that support and uphold national institutions (e.g., the military, the family), a rhetoric based on identification by way of assimilation.

The link between performing good citizen and military service also constructs hierarchies of gender/sexuality in discourses of virtue. Militarized citizenship is based on a logic of identification in which men fulfill their role as good citizens through practices within public sectors of the state that protect and provide for the welfare of the nation (Herbert, 1998). Women are, in turn, positioned as domesticated, disarmed bodies, lacking agency to secure themselves from threats (Tickner, 1992). Granted, everyday performances of gender/sexuality within various levels of ordered relations evidence degrees of maneuverability between these boundaries. But, the working group's suggested mechanisms of institutional securitization continue to point to hierarchical privileging between masculine/feminine, public/domestic, protector/victim binaries that structure social relations. Furthermore, corporeal performances that radically permeate these relational boundaries are constructed as in need of discipline within discourses that align civic virtue with militarized citizenship. Consequently for many LGBTQ identified persons, achieving institutional acceptance manifests through a politics of homonormativity.

The securitization of a sector creates a privileging of particular issues over others. Because security discourses are understood to be speech acts, a subject's securitization instantiates its primacy and salience. For example, the discourses of security surrounding the repeal of the DADT policy prioritize military strength and effectiveness as a valuable trait of national identity. Additionally, as a sector gets securitized, a "key issue is for whom security becomes a consideration in relation to whom" (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998, p. 18). This characteristic of the process of securitization makes further salient the boundaries between heteronormative and queer performances in relation to military security. The urgency implicit in issues articulated through security discourses also discourages an open and public debate about redressive action. Therefore, securitization is inevitably a hegemonic process that maintains structural forms of identity hierarchy in the social order.



Political incorporation through assimilative rhetorical identification practices preserves subject positions of domination and marginalization between subjects. And, although the report instantiates a politics of homonormativity for LGBTQ communities, the confirmations by the working group and the quoted service members that gay bodies effectively (and gender normatively) perform the duties of military service also represents a corporeal “disjoin[ing of] homosexuality from the figures by which it is conveyed in dominant discourse” (Butler, 1997, p. 125). In other words, the report’s rhetoric places some gay and lesbian bodies in uniform, successfully performing soldier, which opens a discursive space wherein the referent of homosexuality begins to deconstruct. Given the dialectical relationship between corporeal performance and discursive performativity, the embodied performance of LGB identified soldier expands—through disruption, the “conventionalized forms of expression” (Strine, 1998, p. 315) for LGB performativity.

However, while acknowledging the potentiality for discursive destabilization of LGB performativity, I do not wish, within this critical rhetorical project to wander so far into a critique of freedom as to be “unfettered by predetermined notions of what ‘should be’” (McKerrow, 1989, p. 100). The particular rhetorical context of the DoD’s report represents an apposite instance for affirmation of Ono and Sloop’s (1992) argument in support of telos driven practices of critical rhetorical analysis. That is, when rhetorical deconstructions of identity occur through modes of identification that still operate to stigmatize the less “privileged members of marginal groups” (Cohen, 1997, p. 443) critical rhetoricians ought to sustain a telos toward a non-normative politics. Endorsing practices of textual destabilization in order to provide greater discursive maneuverability for some at the expense of others is problematic because it hinders efforts to build coalitions across experiences of marginalization. Resistances against hegemony must be grounded in embodied performances to avoid reifying discourses of hierarchy. This calls for research of texts that reveal how identification might operate within affirmations of difference. For example, Chávez (2010) traces how LGBTQ and immigrant rights organizations develop rhetorics of “differential belonging” through alternative (read: non-assimilationist) modes of identification that challenge imaginaries of citizenship by creating other affective and relational logics of solidarity. Such a project, may begin to expose rhetorical tactics that challenge the drive of dominant relational discourses toward hegemonic incorporations of queer subjects.

### *Conclusion*

The LGBTQ community and activist organizations amply lauded the repeal of DADT as a step toward greater recognition and equal inclusion in American political institutions. Undeniably, the new era of open service makes possible a military environment in which LGB service members are afforded more room to maneuver performances of sexuality. Nevertheless, this opening of institutionalized space was officially constructed through rhetorics that encourage a politics of homonormativity. Such political practices of identity reinstitute a divide between normative and non-normative gender and sexual performances. Furthermore, homonormative incorporation into military structures does little to challenge the inherency of identity performances informed by an imaginary of militarized masculinity. Scholars and activists alike should maintain a critical perspective on equal rights discourse that appeals to processes of hegemonic identification while looking for ways to build coalitions through rhetorics embracing difference.

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