Sexual Orientation and Military Service: Prospects for Organizational and Individual Change in the United States

Gregory Herek
University of California, Davis
and
Aaron Belkin
University of California, Santa Barbara

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The question of whether gay men and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly in the military has sparked some of the most emotionally charged public policy debates in the United States in the past two decades. Whereas most Western industrialized societies have made provisions for allowing gay people to serve with varying degrees of openness (e.g., Belkin & Levitt, 2001; Belkin & McNichol, 2001; Gade, Segal, & Johnson, 1996), the United States has not. Consequently, discussion in the U.S. has focused primarily on whether allowing openly gay and lesbian personnel to serve would undermine the military's ability to accomplish its mission and, to a lesser extent, how a policy change might be implemented.

This chapter addresses the issue of sexual orientation and military service. To provide a context for considering current policies, we begin with an historical overview of how homosexuality has been understood in the United States and its armed forces. We then discuss and critique contemporary rationales for excluding gay men and lesbians from the military, focusing on the issues of unit cohesion and privacy. Next, we discuss social psychological issues relevant to the organizational and individual changes that might follow from eliminating the ban on gay and lesbian personnel. We conclude the chapter by offering suggestions for future research directions.

The Historical Context of Modern Military Policies Toward Homosexuality

Whereas homosexual and heterosexual behaviors are ubiquitous among human societies, modern notions of homosexuality and heterosexuality, and indeed the very concept of sexual orientation, have developed only since the latter part of the 19th century. It is not surprising, then, that religious and secular authorities traditionally sought to regulate sexual *behaviors* rather than *identities* or *orientations*. For much of the history of the United States, laws prescribed penalties for various forms of nonprocreative and extramarital sex (including homosexual acts) which were referred to collectively as sodomy. Many of the early American colonies, for example, enacted stiff criminal penalties for sodomy (which the statutes often described only in Latin or with oblique phrases such as "the unmentionable vice" or "wickedness not to be named"), and the purview of these laws included homosexual conduct. Men were executed for sodomy in colonial Virginia in 1624 and in New Haven and New Netherland (later to become New York) in 1646 (Katz, 1976). In 1778, Lieutenant Gotthold Frederick Enslin became the first soldier to be drummed out of the Continental Army for sodomy (Katz, 1976). Except for a brief period when the New Haven colony penalized "women lying with women," sodomy laws in the American colonies applied exclusively to acts initiated by men – whether with another man, a woman, a girl, a boy, or an animal. The colonial laws gave rise to sodomy statutes throughout the states in the 1700s and 1800s, some of which survived into the twenty-first century.[1]

The U.S. military did not maintain regulations concerning sodomy until the 1917 revision of the Articles of War. Two years later, in 1919, one of the earliest recorded controversies surrounding homosexual conduct in the military occurred in Newport, Rhode Island, where U.S. sailors and male civilians were tried on charges connected with homosexual activity (Chauncey, 1989; Haggerty, 2003; Murphy, 1988). The Newport investigation may have led the military to adopt its earliest unofficial rationale for excluding homosexuals, which primarily reflected an attempt to punish sexual activity between men rather than declarations of sexual orientation. Although infrequent, the record of sodomy cases between 1919 and 1932 suggests a belief by military leaders that homosexual behavior tended to destroy good morals and had a detrimental effect on the functioning of the unit (Haggerty, 2003).

The Newport scandal occurred at a time when society's understanding of sexuality was undergoing a profound change. By the end of the 19th century, medicine and psychiatry had begun to compete successfully with religion and the law for jurisdiction over sexuality. As a consequence, discourse about homosexuality expanded beyond the realms of sin and crime to include pathology. This historical shift was generally considered progressive at the time because a sick person was less blameful than a sinner or criminal. It was also around this time that the modern notions of "the homosexual" and "the heterosexual," that is, the idea that individuals could be defined in terms of their sexual attractions and behaviors, began to emerge in medical discourse.

[1] A brief *amicus curiae* submitted by historians to the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003) provides an excellent history of sodomy laws in the United States. It is available on the Web at *http://supreme.lp.findlaw.com/ supreme_court/briefs/02-102/02-102.mer.ami .hist.pdf*.

From the outset, homosexuality was defined in opposition to normalcy. Indeed, Karl Maria Benkert, the Hungarian writer widely credited with coining the term *homosexual* in 1869, originally contrasted it to *normalsexual*. *Heterosexual* did not emerge until later as the preferred term for describing sexual attraction to and behavior with the other sex (Dynes, 1985). Even within medicine and psychiatry, however, homosexuality was not universally viewed as a pathology in the early 20th century. Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1900) described it as a degenerative sickness in his *Psychopathia Sexualis*, but Havelock Ellis (1901) urged that homosexuality be considered a normal variant of human behavior, like left-handedness. Sigmund Freud (1905/1953) believed that homosexuality represented a less than optimal outcome for psychosexual development, but nevertheless asserted in a now famous 1935 letter that "it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness" (Freud, 1951, p. 786).

During the 1940s, however, American psychoanalysis – the dominant theoretical framework in psychiatry – broke with Freud. Sandor Rado (1940, 1949) rejected Freud's theory of innate bisexuality, arguing instead that humans are naturally heterosexual. When normal heterosexual outlet proves too threatening, he argued, homosexuality represents a "reparative" attempt to achieve sexual pleasure. Thus, Rado proposed that homosexuality is a phobic response to members of the other sex. His position, and other theoretical accounts that pathologized homosexuality, soon became dominant in American psychoanalysis (for a brief history, see Bayer, 1987).

They also became wedded to official U.S. military policies concerning homosexuality. Previously, homosexual behavior was classified as a criminal offense and subject to sanction but homosexual individuals were not officially barred from military service (Haggerty, 2003; Osburn, 1995). As it prepared for World War II, however, the military sought to exclude homosexual persons from its ranks, based on a medical rationale. Psychiatry's view of homosexuality as an indicator of psychopathology was introduced into the military and psychiatric screening became part of the induction process. In 1942, for example, revised Army mobilization regulations included for the first time a paragraph defining both the homosexual and the "normal" person and clarifying procedures for rejecting gay draftees (Bérubé, 1990; Meyer, 1996).

Despite official policy, the ranks of the armed forces included many gay men and lesbians during World War II. Some of them became aware of their homosexuality only after they joined the service. Others were gay or lesbian but, motivated by a desire to assist the war effort, successfully circumvented the screening process and enlisted. Still others were detected at induction but were nonetheless accepted for service in the early years of the war when the need for personnel was greatest. As expansion of the war required that all available personnel be utilized, screening procedures were further loosened (Bérubé, 1990; D'Emilio, 1983). During the War, some military physicians and social scientists noted that many homosexual soldiers functioned as effectively as their heterosexual counterparts (Loeser, 1945; Menninger, 1948). Representing a minority view that conflicted with official policy, however, their reports were not taken seriously by military officials and were largely ignored for decades (e.g., Bérubé, 1990).

When the need for recruits diminished in the war's waning years, antihomosexual policies were enforced with increasing vigilance and many gay and lesbian service members were discharged involuntarily in a series of witch hunts (Bérubé, 1990). Ironically, the mass courts martial and discharges helped to stimulate the development of lesbian and gay communities and the modern movement for gay rights. Because they were socially ostracized, often unable to secure employment, and ineligible for benefits under the GI Bill of Rights as a result of their undesirable discharge as a "sexual psychopath," men and women ejected from the military for homosexuality often chose not to return to their hometowns. Instead they stayed in the major port cities and centers of war industry — including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York — where many first encountered other gay people during the war and where many landed after separating from the military. Many homosexuals who had avoided detection or prosecution in the military made similar decisions upon discharge. Thus, large and fairly visible gay communities (complete with social and commercial institutions, such as bars) rapidly emerged in many American cities at the end of the war (D'Emilio, 1983).

In 1948 and 1953, Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues at Indiana University published their famous reports on sexual behavior in the human male (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948) and the human female (Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953). Based on approximately 18,000 interviews with people from all around the United States, Kinsey's findings that homosexual experiences were fairly common shocked a country that viewed homosexuality as a rare form of deviance whose practitioners were visibly different from "normal" people. It was also around this time that Ford and Beach (1951) published their book length comparative study documenting the existence of homosexual behavior in many nonhuman species and its acceptance in a large number of human cultures. The scholarship of the Kinsey group and Ford and Beach challenged widespread assumptions that homosexuality was practiced only by a small number of social misfits. Nevertheless, homosexuality was included in the first *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association in 1952.

After World War II, the U.S. military continued to prohibit same-sex sexual behavior in its ranks but increasingly viewed a homosexual orientation per se as undermining the military. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, acknowledging a homosexual orientation barred an individual from military service (Williams & Weinberg, 1971). In the 1970s, however, a new social movement emerged in the United States that pressed for civil rights for gay men and lesbians (Adam, 1995). That movement inspired many sectors of society to reevaluate longstanding assumptions about homosexuality. In 1973, informed by the weight of research evidence and changing societal norms, the American Psychiatric Association's Board of Directors voted to remove homosexuality as a diagnosis from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Bayer, 1987; Minton, 2002). The American Psychological Association (APA) endorsed the psychiatrists' actions and urged its members to work to eradicate the stigma historically associated with a homosexual orientation (Conger, 1975).

The military, however, did not eliminate its policy. Legal challenges to the military in the 1970s, mounted by Leonard Matlovich and others (Hippler, 1989), were largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, they highlighted the wide latitude of discretion afforded to commanders in implementing existing policy and the consequent variation in the rigor with which it was enforced. They also resulted in court orders that the military justify its exclusion of homosexuals more clearly (Osburn, 1995). In response, the Department of Defense (DoD) formulated a new policy in 1981 which declared unequivocally that homosexuality is incompatible with military service (DoD Directive 1332.14, January 28, 1982, Part 1, Section H). Under this policy, nearly 17,000 men and women were discharged because of homosexuality in the ensuing decade (General Accounting Office, 1992a). The Navy was disproportionately represented, accounting for 51% of the discharges even though it comprised only 27% of the active force during this period. Statistical breakdowns by gender and race revealed that, for all services, White women were discharged at a rate disproportionate to their representation: White females represented 6.4% of personnel overall but 20.2% of those discharged for homosexuality (General Accounting Office, 1992b).

By the end of the 1980s, reversing the military's policy was becoming a national priority for advocates of gay and lesbian civil rights. An increasing number of lesbian and gay male members of the armed services came out publicly and vigorously challenged their discharges through the legal system. Many national organizations officially condemned the DoD's policy and many colleges and universities banned military recruiters and Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) programs from their campuses. In 1992, legislation to overturn the ban was introduced in the U.S. Congress.

With the 1992 election of President Bill Clinton, whose campaign platform had included a promise to "issue executive orders to repeal the ban on gay men and lesbians from military or foreign service" (Clinton & Gore, 1992, p. 64), the military policy seemed to be on the verge of elimination. Shortly after his inauguration, President Clinton asked the Secretary of Defense to prepare a draft policy to end discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and he proposed to use the interim period to resolve the practical problems related to implementing a new policy.

Clinton's initiative, however, was greeted with intense opposition from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, members of Congress, the political opposition, and a considerable segment of the U.S. public. After lengthy public debate and congressional hearings, the President and Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA), chairperson of the Senate Armed Services Committee, reached a compromise which they labeled "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" (hereafter referred to as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," or DADT). Under its terms, military personnel would no longer be asked about their sexual orientation and would not be discharged simply for being gay. Demonstrating a propensity to engage in sexual conduct with a member of the same sex, however, would constitute grounds for discharge. In the fall of 1993, Congress voted to codify most aspects of the ban. Meanwhile, the civilian lower courts issued contradictory opinions about the policy, some upholding its constitutionality and others ordering the reinstatement of openly gay military personnel who were involuntarily discharged (Jacobson, 1996). Higher courts, however, consistently upheld the policy, and the U.S. Supreme Court has never reviewed its constitutionality.

DADT has remained in effect since 1993. Discharges generally increased during the 1990s, and harassment of gay and lesbian personnel appeared to intensify in some locales. With the beginning of the new century, the White House and Congress were controlled by Republicans who were on record opposing service by openly gay personnel. Prospects for eliminating the ban appeared slim. In 2002 and

2003, however, calls for changing the policy gained new momentum. Following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the war on terrorism and U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq created a renewed need for personnel. In that context, many objected when nine military linguists – including six who were fluent in Arabic – were discharged in 2002 after their homosexuality became known (Heredia, 2002). In 2003, three high-ranking retired military officers publicly disclosed their homosexuality and challenged the DADT policy's legitimacy (Files, 2003). Throughout this time, public opinion appeared to favor allowing service by openly gay personnel. A December, 2003, Gallup poll registered 79% of US adults (including 68% of self-described conservatives) in favor of allowing gay men and lesbians to serve openly.

Whereas psychiatry's early assumption that homosexuality is a mental illness was incorporated into military policy before World War II, the mental health profession's repudiation of its earlier views in the 1970s did not have the same impact. Psychiatrists and psychologists are no longer employed to screen out gay men and lesbians at the time of their initial enlistment. Nevertheless, military mental health providers experience pressures from superior officers to report information about service members' homosexual feelings or behaviors disclosed to them during therapy. Indeed, legal limits to confidentiality often create conflicts for mental health professionals who work in military settings (Barnett & Jeffrey, 1996).

A complete history of the U.S. military's reactions to homosexuality is too long and complex to detail in the present chapter (for more extensive accounts, see Bérubé, 1990; Burg, 2002; Haggerty, 2003; Lehring, 2003; Murphy, 1988). From the brief historical summary presented here, three general conclusions are relevant for understanding current policies. First, in large part because its existence predates modern notions of sexual orientation, the U.S. military historically has attempted to craft policies that deal with both homosexual *behavior* and personnel who have a homosexual *identity*. Second, perhaps reflecting tensions between these two aspects of sexuality, military policy has been repeatedly modified over the past century. This has included effectively suspending enforcement of prohibitions on gay personnel when troops were needed for combat. Third, medicine, psychiatry, and psychology played an important role in shaping the military's reactions to homosexuality in the first half of the 20th century, but current military policy does not reflect contemporary psychological and psychiatric thinking.

Current Rationales for Exclusion

Over the past 50 years, military and political officials have articulated many different rationales for excluding gay and lesbian service members. At various times, they have argued that gay men and lesbians are mentally and physically unfit for military service, pose security risks, engage in sexual misconduct more often than their heterosexual counterparts, threaten unit cohesion, and violate the privacy of heterosexual service members (Osburn, 1995).

Some of these rationales are no longer credible to most military officials and scholars. Since the 1980s, a consensus has emerged among policy makers that homosexual men and women are fully capable of serving in the military and that many have done so despite policies that officially excluded them. During House Budget Committee hearings in 1992, for example, General Colin Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that the reason for keeping lesbians and gay men out of the military "is not an argument of performance on the part of homosexuals who might be in uniform, and it is not saying they are not good enough" (House Budget Committee Hearing, 1992, p. 112). He further characterized individuals "who favor a homosexual lifestyle" as "proud, brave, loyal, good Americans" (House Budget Committee Hearing, 1992, p. 112). In 1991 testimony before the same House committee, then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney referred to the then current policy concerning gay people and security clearances as "an old chestnut" (GAO, 1992a; House Budget Committee Hearing, 1991).

What remains contested is whether the presence of acknowledged gay men and lesbians in the military would adversely affect heterosexual service members because of the latter's discomfort with homosexuality and gay people (MacCoun, 1996). Thus, the unit cohesion and privacy rationales now dominate the discussion of whether gay men and lesbians could serve openly in the U.S. military without compromising military effectiveness.

Unit Cohesion

The unit cohesion rationale is the official justification for the current DADT law and policies that regulate gay and lesbian service members, and it is premised on the idea that the military must exclude known gay and lesbian service members if it is to maintain morale, good order, and discipline – qualities associated with unit cohesion (U.S. Code 654, 1993). According to this perspective, heterosexual service members dislike gay men and lesbians to such an extent that they would be unable to work with them and trust them with their lives, thereby destroying the bonds necessary for units to function effectively (Miller & Williams, 2001). This rationale emerged in the policies articulated by the military in 1975 and 1981 in response to court decisions (Osburn, 1995).

The research literature on cohesion is vast, and the construct has been defined, described, and measured in numerous ways, often reflecting prevailing societal conditions and the values and interests of the scholars conducting the research (Siebold, 2000). Early academic research on cohesion tended to define it as a property of the group that resulted from positive social relationships among group members (e.g., Lott & Lott, 1965). The military has often related cohesion to combat, emphasizing the loyalty that service members feel toward each other, the group, and their leaders as they accomplish dangerous and life-threatening missions (e.g., Henderson, 1985). Wong, Kolditz, Millen, and Potter (2003), for example, argued that U.S. soldiers in Operation Iraqi Freedom developed trusting relationships, or cohesion, by withstanding hardship and enduring austere conditions together, and that these emotional bonds played a primary role in motivating them to fight.

Cohesion is not a unitary construct and multiple dimensions of cohesion have been discussed in the research literature. Perhaps the most common distinction made by behavioral scientists is between *social cohesion* (the nature and quality of the emotional bonds of friendship, liking, caring, and closeness among group members) and *task cohesion* (members' shared commitment to achieving a goal that requires the collective efforts of the group). A group displays high social cohesion to the extent that its members like each other, prefer to spend their social time together, enjoy each other's company, and feel emotionally close to one another. A group with high task cohesion is composed of members who share a common goal and who are motivated to coordinate their efforts to achieve that goal as a team (MacCoun, 1996).

The debate about the correlation between group cohesion and performance continues (Kier, 1998; Guzzo & Dickson, 1996). For example, based on interviews with approximately 40 service members who reported on their own motivations for fighting during combat in Iraq, Wong et. al. (2003) argued that social cohesion is an important determinant of unit performance. While their approach may have yielded an accurate impression of respondents' perceptions, however, it is not methodologically adequate for determining whether combat effectiveness actually resulted from social cohesion or another source for which they failed to control, in particular task cohesion.

Indeed, most scholars agree that social cohesion cannot be seen as the primary cause for high levels of military performance (Segal & Kestnbaum, 2002). Rather, task cohesion seems to be more important (Kier, 1998; Lott & Lott, 1965; MacCoun, 1996; Mullen & Copper, 1994). Successfully accomplishing a challenging task as a group, combined with familiarity but not social similarity, increases small-unit cohesion (Bartone, Johnsen, Eid, Brun, & Laberg, 2002). Effective leadership at the unit level is also a key element for creating cohesion (Siebold & Lindsay, 2000). After reviewing military and civilian studies of cohesion and performance, MacCoun (1996) concluded that task cohesion — not social cohesion or group pride — drives group performance. He pointed out that when social cohesion is too high, deleterious consequences can result, including excessive socializing, groupthink (the failure of a highly cohesive group to engage in effective decisionmaking processes; Janis, 1972), insubordination, and mutiny (Kier, 1998; MacCoun, 1996). MacCoun (1996) concluded that the impact — if any — of a new sexual orientation policy would be on social cohesion. Because coworkers can perform effectively as a team without necessarily liking each other, he argued, such a reduction in cohesion would be unlikely to reduce the military's ability to complete its mission successfully.

Thus, notwithstanding a few studies such as that by Wong et. al. (2003), the literature raises serious questions about the validity of the unit cohesion rationale (Kier, 1998). Because unit cohesion is more influenced by the successful completion of tasks and sharing of common goals than by social similarity, the presence of known gay or lesbian service members should have little negative impact so long as they share the same goals as their colleagues (Kier, 1998; MacCoun, 1996).

Another problem with the unit cohesion rationale is that it fails to acknowledge that most gay and lesbian service members exercise considerable discretion in revealing their homosexuality to others and are likely to continue doing so even if DADT is eliminated (Herek, 1996; MacCoun, 1996). Research on foreign militaries suggests that when bans on homosexual service members are lifted, relatively few gay and lesbian personnel disclose their sexual orientation. Although the Canadian military estimated that 3.5 percent of its personnel were gay or lesbian, for example, the Department of National Defence received only 17 claims for medical, dental, and relocation benefits for same-sex partners in 1998, six years after Canada lifted its ban. This suggests that service members were reluctant to out themselves by requesting benefits. Similarly, only 33 soldiers identified themselves openly as gay or lesbian to a research team three years after Australia lifted its ban, although it is reasonable to assume that the actual number of gay service members was considerably larger (Belkin, 2003). If most gay and lesbian service members do not reveal their sexual orientation, it seems unlikely that their homosexuality would pose a serious threat to the effective operation of their unit (Belkin & Bateman, 2003; Kier, 1998; MacCoun, 1996).

Finally, even when a unit includes openly gay and lesbian personnel, experience does not indicate that cohesion suffers as a consequence. Bérubé (1990) provided extensive evidence that many lesbians and gay men served more or less openly in the U.S. military during World War II. Their sexual orientation was known to many of their heterosexual comrades, and they served effectively in combat with the respect and admiration of those comrades. More recently, the literature includes case studies of individuals such as Margarethe Cammermeyer and Perry Watkins who served openly without undermining their units' cohesion (Osburn, 1995). More generally, in countries that have lifted gay bans, there have been no reports that the small number of gay and lesbian personnel who came out compromised military performance, readiness, or unit cohesion in any way. The fact that 24 countries have lifted their bans on homosexual service members without undermining cohesion suggests that the U.S. military's rationale may not reflect military necessity (Belkin, 2001, 2003; Belkin & Bateman, 2003; Belkin & Levitt, 2001; Belkin & McNichol, 2001). Indeed, the U.S. military itself has refrained from enforcing the ban when personnel were needed for combat operations, the time when cohesion matters most to the military mission. As noted above, many homosexual recruits were accepted and retained for service during World War II when all available personnel were needed (Bérubé, 1990). And during the first Gulf War, the ban was effectively suspended via stop-loss order without any apparent impact on cohesion or readiness.

Privacy

Even while the unit cohesion rationale continues to be debated, a privacy rationale has been articulated with increasing frequency in discussions of the DADT policy (Belkin &

Embser-Herbert, 2002; Frank, 2000). This rationale states that the presence of gay men and lesbians violates the privacy or modesty rights of heterosexual service members who feel they should not be forced to shower or live in close quarters with homosexuals of their same sex (Bianco, 1996; Moskos, 1994; Ray, 1993; Wells-Petry, 1993). The question of heterosexual and homosexual men showering together has been one of the most emotionally charged issues in the debate over gay people in the military (Belkin & Bateman, 2003; Kaplan, 2003; Kendall, 1993). Whereas some scholars maintain that the current policy on gay men and lesbians in the military protects the privacy of heterosexual service members (Wells-Petry, 1993), a growing body of research challenges this assumption, suggesting that lifting the ban would have no negative impact on service members' privacy. Indeed, some have argued that by sparing heterosexual service members from interrogations about the suspected homosexuality of other personnel and by removing pressures to prove their heterosexuality (which is accomplished typically by exaggerating their conformity to stereotypical gender norms), eliminating the ban would actually enhance the privacy of all members of the military (e.g., Belkin & Embser-Herbert, 2002; Herbert, 1998).

As Belkin and Embser-Herbert (2002) noted, the privacy rationale depends on two central premises. First, in spite of the numerous other personal sacrifices that military service requires, service members should be allowed to maintain some control over the exposure of their bodies in intimate settings. Just as the military segregates men from women for intimate activities such as showering and using toilet facilities, proponents of the privacy rationale argue, homosexuals and heterosexuals should likewise perform such tasks apart from each other. Because such segregation ultimately is not feasible, homosexuals should be excluded (Belkin & Bateman, 2003; Shawver, 1995; Moskos 1994). A second, implicit premise of the privacy rationale is that a privacy injury takes place whenever a heterosexual becomes aware that a homosexual person is seeing his or her naked or partially clothed body (Wells-Petry, 1993). Underlying this premise may be the notion that gay men and lesbians are disproportionately likely to be sexual predators who use seduction or coercion to force sex on unwilling heterosexual service members (Belkin & Bateman, 2003; Belkin & Embser-Herbert, 2002).

As Kaplan (2003) and Shawver (1995) suggested, the privacy rationale is based partly on the assumption that heterosexuals in the military do not currently shower or share latrines with homosexuals, that is, current policy prevents heterosexuals from encountering homosexuals in intimate environments. However, many heterosexuals in the military already are aware of gay and lesbian peers (Evans, 2002; Osburn, 1995). Out of 368 officers and enlisted personnel in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps surveyed by Bicknell (2000), for example, 20% personally knew a homosexual service member and another 22% were unsure if they did. Similarly, out of 394 female veterans and active-duty service members surveyed by Herbert (1998), 79% of the women who identified as heterosexual said they knew women in the military who were lesbian or bisexual. Thus, heterosexual service members currently serve with colleagues they know to be homosexual, and some scholars have argued that Don't Ask, Don't Tell does little to preserve heterosexual privacy rights in this regard (Belkin & Bateman, 2003; Belkin & Embser-Herbert, 2002).

If heterosexual and homosexual service members already serve together, why haven't privacy problems erupted on a mass scale? One likely reason is that in most cases social norms dictate behavioral strategies whereby service members negotiate potential violations of privacy. These interaction patterns, which include mutual gaze aversion and similar behaviors, were termed *civil inattention* by Goffman (1963) and the *etiquette of disregard* by Shawver (1995). They operate routinely in civilian life with the consequence that homosexuals and heterosexuals routinely share settings such as public restrooms and locker rooms with few problems (Shawver, 1995). In most military settings, civil inattention and the etiquette of disregard prevent the occurrence of situations in which service members (heterosexual and homosexual alike) feel their privacy has been violated. They allow heterosexuals to maintain the assumption that no homosexuals are present in showers and latrines, whether or not this is truly the case.

A second reason that relatively few violations of privacy are perceived is that people adapt their personal standards of bodily modesty to new circumstances when necessary (Shawver, 1987). Such adaptation has been observed in a variety of settings, including college dormitories (Vivona & Gomillion, 1972), medical environments (Millstein, Adler, & Irwin, 1984), and prisons (Shawver, 1987; Shawver & Kurdys, 1987). Female U.S. military personnel in the 1991 Persian Gulf War reported that modesty needs often assumed less importance than other needs, such as hygiene, and they adjusted to a general lack of privacy for dressing, bathing, and using the latrine (Schneider & Schneider, 1992).

Finally, concerns about personal modesty are rapidly being addressed by new environmental designs in military facilities. Belkin and Embser-Herbert (2003) argued that because the new 1+1 barracks design standard will soon provide most service members with their own bedroom and a bathroom shared with just one other person, the "gang latrine" is a relic of the past for most military personnel most of the time. Even in overseas combat deployments and on submarines, many if not most service members shower in single-stall settings. These architectural changes, Belkin and Embser-Herbert (2003) argued, make the privacy rationale no longer valid.

Prospects for Change

Even if statutory and political barriers to allowing openly gay personnel to serve were to vanish overnight, the military would still face the prospect of implementing a new policy in a domain that has evoked intense emotional arguments on both sides. In this section of the chapter, we examine some practical issues relevant to replacing the DADT policy with one that does not discriminate against personnel on the basis of their sexual orientation.

As noted above, even most supporters of exclusionary policies acknowledge that lesbian and gay personnel are no less capable than heterosexuals of successfully performing the duties required by military service. To the extent that problems are associated with implementing a nondiscriminatory policy, therefore, they can be expected to stem largely from the attitudes, reactions, and conduct of heterosexual personnel. In the following paragraphs, we discuss two foci for change: the organizational culture in which heterosexual personnel work; and their behavior, attitudes, and beliefs. (For more detailed consideration of the points raised here, see Belkin, in press; Herek, 1993; Kauth & Landis, 1996; MacCoun, 1996; Sarbin, 1996; Zellman, 1996).

Kelman's (1961) model of behavior change provides a useful vocabulary for this discussion. It distinguishes change that occurs as a result of *compliance* (changing one's behavior as a result of external coercion) from change based on *identification* (adoption of the target behavior because the individual regards it as consistent with her or his identity or self-concept) and *internalization* (acceptance of the target behavior as congruent with one's own value system; Kelman, 1961). Whereas initial reductions in discriminatory behavior in response to a new policy will probably reflect compliance, such changes will be more stable and long-lasting to they extent that heterosexual personnel come to regard nondiscrimination against gay personnel as consistent with their professional identities as members of the Armed Forces (i.e., identification) and with their personal values of fair and equal treatment for all service members (internalization).

Organizational Change

Any attempt to integrate openly gay and lesbian personnel into U.S. military life necessarily involves institutional change. Fortunately, the military has extensive experience with making structural changes to integrate new categories of personnel into its ranks, including women and members of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities (Evans, 2003; Kauth & Landis, 1996; Thomas & Thomas, 1996). In addition to revisiting the lessons learned from those experiences, the military can make use of social science knowledge about organizational change and policy implementation. This research literature suggests several important steps for effective policy implementation.[2]

First, the effectiveness of the new policy will depend on whether the military applies a single standard of conduct to all personnel. Based on the experiences of other military forces that have integrated gay men and lesbians, a workable standard would emphasize that each individual is to be judged on the basis of her or his performance relevant to military goals (i.e., that everyone should be judged on her or his own merits), that all personnel must respect each other's privacy (e.g., that intimate situations such as sleeping quarters and the latrine are not sexual); that interpersonal harassment — whether verbal, sexual, or physical — will not be tolerated, regardless of the genders of people involved; and that no service member will be permitted to engage in conduct that undermines unit cohesion.

Second, whether or not organizational members comply with a mandated policy is affected by two factors: their own calculations concerning the likelihood that it will be strictly enforced and compliance failures detected, and the severity of sanctions for noncompliance (Zellman, 1996). Compliance is more likely to the extent that enforcement is perceived to be strict and that noncompliance carries high costs. Consequently, the most effective policies are formulated so that the implementation plan includes *pressure* (i.e., clear enforcement mechanisms and high sanctions for noncompliance) and *support* for effective implementation (i.e., adequate resources, allowances for input from lower levels of the organization into the implementation process, and rewards for effective implementation) so that individuals perceive that their own self-interest lies in supporting the new policy.

Third, leaders play a critical role in changing the perceptions of the junior ranking personnel who actually implement a policy so that the latter come to view it as consistent with their own self-interest and with the organizational culture (identification and internalization, in Kelman's terminology). Thus, a new policy's effectiveness will depend on statements of clear support from the highest levels of leadership. Integration will be successful if upper-level commanders send strong, consistent signals of their support for the new policy and their commitment to ensuring behavioral compliance with it (MacCoun, 1996; Zellman, 1996).

Fourth, the policy's success will depend on whether lower-level leaders are convinced that active monitoring and support for a new policy will be noticed and rewarded, and that breaches of policy by subordinates will be considered instances of leadership failure. Although some militaries that successfully lifted their gay bans do not provide any training on their new policies, it seems likely that a minimal amount of training would help leaders address and solve challenges related to implementation. Zellman (1996) argued that leadership training should be designed to create *fixers* — people who care about successful implementation, have the skills necessary to anticipate and identify implementation problems, and can make adjustments to improve the implementation process. To be effective fixers, leaders must be allowed enough discretion so they can act to correct implementation problems. At the same time, this discretion must be bounded by behavioral monitoring and strict enforcement of a code of professional conduct. Leaders must be provided with clear procedures for reporting problems, and they must be convinced that accurate information about implementation problems is valued (i.e., that compliance difficulties do not indicate a failure of leadership).

Fifth, as noted by Zellman (1996), policies are more easily implemented to the extent that they are simple; reflect a cause-and-effect relationship that organizational members agree is valid; and are narrow in scope, that is, they involve small changes and few people. In this light, indications that officers and enlisted personnel do not understand the DADT policy is problematic. Research with Naval officers, for example, indicated that many of them did not

[2] The following discussion draws heavily from Zellman (1996).

clearly understand then-current policy on sexual orientation and this misunderstanding may have affected their enforcement of it (Sarbin, 1996).

Finally, policies imposed from outside an organization (or from outside the local site of the organization, e.g., a post or base) often meet with resistance because they are perceived as incompatible with local organizational culture. Such policies can challenge the value placed on learning from local experience in the organization, threaten deeply held beliefs concerning local organizational autonomy, and even be perceived as endangering the organization's survival. Given the resistance to change inherent in large organizations — especially to a policy that is widely perceived as inconsistent with the organization's existing culture — a new policy will work best if personnel are persuaded that it will not be harmful to the organization or to themselves, and may even result in gains (Zellman, 1996).

Individual Change

Once the military as an organization is committed to changing its policy toward service by gay and lesbian personnel, it will be possible to consider the factors that affect individual change. Two types of change are relevant to the present discussion: (a) changes in heterosexuals' conduct toward gay men and lesbians and (b) changes in their attitudes and beliefs about homosexuality, gay personnel, and relevant military policies.

Early military programs designed to eliminate racial conflicts were premised on the assumption that change could best be facilitated by changing Whites' attitudes and beliefs about Blacks and other minorities. Such programs included sensitivity training and educational sessions about, for example, Black culture and history (Kauth & Landis, 1996; Thomas, 1988). Systematic evaluation of those programs, however, suggested that such "consciousness raising" often met with resistance, resentment, and hostility from Whites who were required to participate in it (Thomas, 1988). By the time a 1973 training manual was published, a clear distinction was being drawn between attitudes (i.e., prejudice) and behavior (i.e., discrimination), with policy implementation focusing on the latter (Department of the Army, 1973).

It is reasonable to conclude that a similar distinction between private beliefs and public conduct will facilitate implementation of a new sexual orientation policy. To make this distinction, however, the military will have to identify the specific types of behavior that officers and supervisors must learn in order to implement the policy. This will require distinguishing between behavior that simply expresses private beliefs and that which is discriminatory or harassing. It also will entail identification of the behavioral skills that heterosexuals need to learn in order to establish civil working relationships with gay personnel.

Whereas a new policy concerning homosexual personnel will ultimately focus on behavior, understanding the social psychological processes that shape heterosexuals' attitudes and beliefs will ultimately prove useful for implementing it. Attitudes influence behavior both directly (when individuals deliberate about their intentions to act and consciously use their attitudes to inform their conduct) and indirectly (when attitudes unconsciously shape how an individual perceives and defines a situation). Global attitudes often are not particularly useful for predicting a specific behavior because many other factors play a role in determining whether a behavior occurs, including characteristics of the immediate situation, social norms, the actor's ability to enact the behavior, and the actor's attitudes toward performing the behavior. However, those global attitudes are correlated with general patterns of behavior across a variety of settings, times, and forms (Ajzen, 1989; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fazio, 1990). Within this context, an understanding of heterosexuals' negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians is important for understanding general patterns of behavior, even though such attitudes will not predict an individual heterosexual's specific behaviors in all situations.

Surveys of the civilian population indicate that hostility toward gay men and lesbians has declined in recent years (Herek, 2002; Yang, 1997). Comparable data from active duty personnel are generally lacking, making it difficult to identify attitude trends within the military. Some studies indicated strong opposition to lifting the ban among enlisted personnel in the early 1990s (Miller, 1994) and among military elites in 1999 (Miller & Williams, 2001). In another study, however, 64% of naval officers disagreed with the statement that they “feel uncomfortable in the presence of homosexuals and have difficulty interacting normally with them” (Bicknell, 2000, p. 170). Bicknell (2000) also found that 71% of naval officers and 74% of sailors agreed with the statement “Compared with my peers, I consider myself more tolerant on the issue of homosexuals in the military” (p. 173) Comparisons across these studies are difficult because they were conducted with convenience samples and used different methodologies and survey questions.

A more recent study with a national probability sample indicates that sentiments within the military are not uniformly antigay. In a 2004 telephone survey, 50% of junior enlisted personnel in a sample of 371 active military personnel (including members of the National Guard and Reserves) believed that gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly; for the total sample, the figure was 34% (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2004). Taken together, these findings indicate that attitudes toward current policy vary within the Armed Forces and suggest that the personal attitudes of individual service members may constitute a less significant obstacle to change than has been widely assumed. Reflecting these patterns, (Ret.) General Wesley Clark stated on NBC’s *Meet the Press* that the “temperature of the issue” has cooled over the past decade, and that service members “were much more irate about this issue in the early ’90s than I found in the late ’90s” (National Broadcasting Company, 2003).

In addition to describing the prevalence of positive and negative attitudes, empirical research on heterosexuals’ attitudes toward homosexuality in the civilian sector has consistently yielded correlations between those attitudes and other variables that are relevant to the present discussion. For example, heterosexual males generally express greater hostility toward homosexuality than heterosexual females, especially toward gay men (Herek, 2002; Kite & Whitley, 1998). Negative attitudes toward homosexuality and gay rights are also correlated with traditional attitudes toward gender roles, political conservatism, strong religiosity, and psychological authoritarianism (e.g., Herek, 2000; Kite & Whitley, 1998; Whitley, 1999; Yang, 1997). To the extent that these and related characteristics are widespread among military personnel (Stiehm, 1992; Thomas & Thomas, 1996; Zellman, 1996), the persistence of some degree of negative attitudes toward homosexuality among military personnel is not unexpected.

As noted above, initial cooperation with a new nondiscriminatory policy is likely to reflect mere compliance in many cases. Over time, however, it is reasonable to expect that personnel will conform to the policy not only because they fear the negative consequences of noncompliance but also because they feel that nondiscriminatory behavior is consistent with their identity as a member of the Armed Forces and because they have internalized the institutional values on which the policy is based. In addition, it seems likely that a policy change will result in changes in the attitudes some heterosexual personnel hold toward gay and lesbian service members. What is the basis for this expectation?

First, eliciting behavioral change through the organizational mechanisms described above may in itself lead to some degree of attitude change. This is especially likely after heterosexual personnel interact in a positive manner with gay and lesbian peers in the absence of overt threats of punishment. Two well known social psychological theories predict that attitude change will occur under these circumstances. Cognitive dissonance theory predicts that inconsistency between heterosexuals’ positive behaviors toward gay people and their negative attitudes will produce an unpleasant psychological state and they may resolve this dissonance by changing their attitudes. Self-perception theory predicts that heterosexuals will infer from their own nonprejudiced behavior that they actually do not harbor significant private prejudices against gay people. In both cases, the likely outcome is attitude change (for a review, see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

Second, a nondiscriminatory policy will create opportunities for some heterosexual personnel to interact with openly gay men and women. Provided that they meet certain conditions, such interactions are likely to have considerable impact on heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay personnel. They are most likely to foster more positive attitudes if they occur over an extended time period in a supportive environment where common goals are emphasized, where prejudice is negatively sanctioned, and where heterosexual personnel come to regard gay men and lesbians as individuals rather than as mere members of a disliked social category (Allport, 1954; Brewer & Miller, 1984; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000).

This prediction is based on a large body of social psychological research on the *contact hypothesis* which, as originally described by Allport (1954), asserts that many forms of prejudice are reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. Consistent with the contact hypothesis, heterosexuals with openly gay friends or acquaintances have been found to be more likely than others to hold accepting attitudes toward gay people in general (Herek & Capitanio, 1995, 1996; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Schneider & Lewis, 1984). This pattern may result partly from a preference among gay people for disclosing their sexual orientation to others perceived as likely to be already supportive (Herek & Glunt, 1993; Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Wells & Kline, 1987) but knowing an openly gay person is predictive of supportive attitudes even in demographic groups where hostility is the norm, e.g., among the highly religious and those with low levels of formal education (Schneider & Lewis, 1984). Thus, negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians are likely to be reduced to the extent that working relationships develop between heterosexual and gay personnel, especially when heterosexual and homosexual personnel must work toward common goals and when discriminatory behaviors and overt expressions of prejudice are negatively sanctioned.

These relationships are likely to change heterosexuals' attitudes to the extent that they cause the latter to individuate and personalize gay people, that is, to perceive homosexuals as flesh-and-blood individuals rather than as members of an undifferentiated mass (Brewer & Miller, 1984). Individuation and personalization are more likely to occur when heterosexuals have opportunities to speak with a gay person and directly discuss the latter's experiences. If such interactions are not perceived by the heterosexual person as extremely threatening, they are likely to refute myths and stereotypes, change perceptions of social norms, and challenge the psychological functions served by negative attitudes.

Attitudes are more likely to change if heterosexual personnel have this sort of experience with more than one gay person. Surveys of the civilian population indicate that heterosexuals who know two or more gay people tend to have considerably more favorable attitudes toward gay people as a group than do those who know only one gay individual (Herek & Capitanio, 1996). This pattern may occur because knowing several members of a stigmatized group is more likely to foster recognition of that group's variability than is knowing only one group member (Wilder, 1978). Knowing multiple members of a group may also reduce the likelihood that their behavior can be discounted as atypical (Rothbart & John, 1985). Nevertheless, the potential impact of contact should not be overstated. As noted above, even under a new policy many gay and lesbian personnel will refrain from publicly disclosing their sexual orientation, which will mean that relatively few heterosexual service members will interact with even one openly gay person in their own unit (MacCoun, 1996).

Directions for Future Research

In its past efforts at implementing new personnel policies designed to eliminate discrimination against stigmatized minority groups, the military has relied heavily on social and behavioral science research for guidance and evaluation (e.g., Thomas, 1988). The military should follow a similar pattern for monitoring and evaluating a new policy concerning sexual orientation. It should be recognized, however, that the current policy has never been subjected to systematic evaluation. In suggesting directions for future research within the military, therefore, we caution against making policy change contingent on the results of such research. Indeed, signaling that the tenure of a new policy banning antigay discrimination will be based on the results of evaluation research could have the unintended effect of creating incentives for behavior that would sabotage the new policy. Instead, research should have the goals of monitoring compliance with a new policy, identifying problems with implementation and, when necessary, formulating solutions for those problems.

One level of research should focus on social psychological variables relevant to successful policy implementation. At this level, two types of information will be particularly useful. First, policy implementation will be facilitated by a clear understanding of heterosexual personnel's knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes related to homosexuality, gay people, and the new policy. Toward this end, descriptive survey research should be conducted on a regular basis to assess a variety of relevant variables, including the prevalence of various stereotypes, personnel's interpersonal contact experiences with gay men and lesbians, perceived social norms, and beliefs about the consequences of noncompliance with a new policy. Questions assessing these constructs could be integrated into questionnaires already administered to military personnel for other purposes. These data will enable the military leadership to monitor the effects of a new policy and to develop specific methods for improving its implementation. A related area for ongoing social psychological research is assessment of how well a new policy is understood by the officers who are responsible for implementing it. As noted above, one study indicated that many Naval officers did not clearly understand the DADT policy and this misunderstanding may have affected their enforcement of it (Sarbin, 1996). Ongoing research with military officers would be useful in identifying misinterpretations and misperceptions of current policy, and could offer guidelines for correcting those errors.

A second level of research should focus on organizational variables relevant to policy implementation. Examples of variables for monitoring at this level include the number of openly gay people serving, measures of unit performance (monitored in a way that permits comparisons between units with and without openly gay personnel, and within-unit comparisons before and after having openly gay personnel), and incidents of antigay harassment and violence. Data from these two levels of analysis could be usefully integrated. For example, the role of interpersonal contact could be assessed by examining correlations between unit performance and the extent to which personnel in that unit know a gay or lesbian peer.

Finally, comparative research on the experiences of different countries in integrating lesbian and gay personnel into their ranks will continue to be useful. No two militaries or national cultures are exactly the same and, consequently, the process of integration varies from one country to another. For example, some militaries, such as the Canadian Forces, are volunteer organizations that are not central to national identity whereas others, such as the Israel Defense Forces, are conscript militaries that play a more prominent role in the nation's consciousness (Belkin & Levitt, 2001; Belkin & McNichol, 2001). Understanding how different military organizations have implemented new policies within their respective cultural contexts will prove useful for understanding the roles played by cultural and organizational variables in implementing a new policy.

This brief discussion of research directions is based on an assumption that addressing any problems associated with implementing a new policy will require a focus on heterosexual personnel. This approach is consistent with the military's past efforts to integrate previously stigmatized minority groups into its ranks. When the military undertook to promote racial equality in the 1970s, for example, it located the core of the problem in the majority culture, as evidenced by the following passage from an Army race relations training manual:

> "The root of the race problem is to be found, therefore, not in the victimized minorities where it so often is sought, but in the white-managed and controlled institutions which discriminate against

> them. This point is critical because it tells you what to work on if you are trying to eliminate racial discrimination. If white people and institutions managed by white people are responsible for the continued practice of racial discrimination, then it is they who must change if it is ever to stop." (Department of the Army, 1973, p. 10).

A comparable focus on heterosexuals will be necessary for implementing a new policy concerning sexual orientation. If a new policy treats gay personnel as no less capable than heterosexuals of successfully performing the duties required by military service, the problems associated with implementing it will stem primarily from the attitudes, reactions, and conduct of heterosexual personnel.

Conclusion

The military has adapted successfully to dramatic new policies in the past 50 years, including the integration of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities (Evans, 2003) as well as women. Social and behavioral research has played an important role in helping the military to meet those challenges. If faced with the prospect of implementing a new policy concerning sexual orientation, the military is likely to be able to meet that challenge as well. As in the past, empirical research will offer valuable guidance for confronting the challenge of change.

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