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DOING HEGEMONY: MILITARY, MEN, AND CONSTRUCTING A HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

*Hegemonic masculinities are at the top of the gender hierarchy and exist in relation to subordinated gender constructs. Traditional constructions of hegemonic masculinities include risk-taking, self-discipline, physical toughness and/or muscular development, aggression, violence, emotional control, and overt heterosexual desire. Using a grounded theory approach, 43 men were interviewed focusing on the process of hegemonic masculinities construction (*n *= 25 pre-active duty Reserve Officer Training Corps members and* n *= 18 Delayed Entry Program men). By casting non-military personal (i.e., civilians) and service members of different branches (i.e., Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force), different occupational specialties (i.e., infantry, artillery, supply, etc.), and different rank (officer versus enlisted) as less physically able, self-disciplined, willing to take risks, emotionally controlled, and/or intelligent, pre-active duty servicemen discursively dominate others. The end result is that men create hierarchies that subordinate others while simultaneously placing their own perceived characteristics in positions of symbolic dominance.*

Keywords: masculinities, gender, identity, discourse, military

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Drawing on in-depth interviews with 43 men planning to enter active duty military service, this article explores how men construct a hegemonically oriented masculinity by symbolically constructing masculine hierarchies in which they situate themselves on top. The men positioned themselves as more morally oriented, self-disciplined, physically able, emotionally controlled, martially skilled, or intelligent than civilians, members of other branches, different occupational specialties, and of different rank. In claiming these characteristics as qualities possessed by themselves, pre-active duty service men construct a masculinity that is symbolically dominant over others.

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Men, Masculinity, and the Military

Social identities and notions of self are intimately intertwined with the institutions in which individuals are embedded (Blumer, 1956; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997; Sartre, 1963). Individuals find purpose and meaning within institutions partly because they can access the symbolic and material resources for constructing personally meaningful identities (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). Military service offers men unique resources for the construction of a masculine identity defined by emotional control, overt heterosexual desire, physical fitness, self-discipline, self-reliance, the willingness to use aggression and physical violence, and risk-taking, qualities tightly aligned with the military (Higate, 2002, 2007; Higate & Hopton, 2005; Hockey, 2002; Padilla & Riege Laner, 2002; Regan de Bere, 2003; Siebold, 2001). These qualities are also in line with the hegemonic ideal (Connell, 1987, 1995, 2000, 2005).

Men join the American military for many reasons, such as family history (Karner, 1998) and economic considerations (Eighme, 2006; Segal & Segal, 2004). For men, one distinct benefit is access to the resources of a hegemonic masculinity. For example, material resources important to a hegemonic masculinity, such as economic security and physically able and fit bodies, are offered by military training and service in the form of steady paychecks and demanding physical training. What the military-as-institution offers is not a hegemonic masculine identity; gender identities are not something individuals possess, nor are they items individuals acquire because of institutional memberships. Identities are actively constructed as part of an interaction strategy that uses available symbolic and material resources (Goffman, 1959; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Instead, the military offers the promise of being able to construct and claim a hegemonic masculine identity by making the necessary resources institutionally available.

Connell states "hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power" (1995, p. 77). Using this definition, military men can legitimately make a claim to a hegemonic masculinity. As service members, they are agents of American state domination (Connell, 2005; Nagel, 2005), legally vested with the right to use lethal force in order to maintain political and physical domination of others. Violence, aggression, risk-taking, physical ability and self-discipline are tools actively used to force others, nation states and individuals alike, to submit to American political and military will. These are also the tools of hegemonic masculinities.

Hegemonic Masculinities

The concept of hegemonic masculinities has been applied inconsistently to disparate levels and objects of analysis and has been used to explain everything from individual identity constructions, as it is here, to corporate power and the policies of nation states (Campbell & Mayerfeld Bell, 2000; Collinson & Hearn, 2005; Demetriou, 2001; Donaldson, 1993; Hearn, 2004). A point of clarification is that hegemonic masculinities are both external and internal (Demetriou). External hegemony refers to masculine power embedded in the structure of an institution. In the United States Army,

women are currently banned from direct participation in the combat arms (infantry, armor, and artillery). This official policy enables men to maintain positions of dominance over women. The military rank system (general to private) ensures that some men maintain dominance over other men and women. Internal hegemony is the hierarchal structuring of masculinities such that some constructs are dominant and privileged over other masculinities and over femininities (Demetriou). In this view, hegemonic masculinities are configurations of everyday gendered social practice (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985; Connell, 1987, 1995) in which individuals construct gender identities in relation and opposition to other men and women. There are four loosely identifiable categories of masculinities; hegemonic masculinities are at the top of the hierarchy and receive the greatest patriarchal dividends (Connell, 1995). *Subordinated masculinities* are oppressed, exploited, and subject to overt control by more dominant forms. Gay and immigrant masculinities are examples. As subordinated masculinities, they tend to be barred from economic, social, and ideological power in Western society. *Marginalized masculinities* consist of constructions that are neither dominant nor subordinated, but relegated to being dominated by more powerful forms of masculinity even while they receive a greater share of the patriarchal dividends than subordinated masculinities. An example might be black or working-class masculinities; while working-class masculinity is marginalized when compared to the masculinities of the middle and upper classes (Pyke, 1996), as a collectivity it emphasizes physical toughness (Kimmel, 1996; Majors & Billson, 1992; McKay, Mikosza, & Hutchins, 2005; Messner, 1992), reifies men's association with musculature (McCreary, Saucier, & Courtenay, 2005; Pope, Phillips, & Olivardia, 2000), and is culturally lauded. And finally, *complicit masculinities* refer to configurations of gendered practice not constructed on the basis of dominance yet still receiving some social benefit because society privileges men (Connell, 1987; Johnson, 2005). To illustrate complicit masculinities, we could think of working-class, Black, heterosexual, egalitarian, involved fathers who do not view themselves as traditional heads-of-household still receive some "patriarchal dividends" albeit "without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy" (Connell 1995; p. 79). Further ways of conceptualizing masculinities, such as *resistance masculinities*, (e.g., feminist men who actively work to deconstruct patriarchy (Kimmel & Mosmiller, 1992; Messner, 2000), or *protest masculinities*, (e.g., working-class men who challenge middle- and upper-class men's dominance by covertly or openly rejecting their authority (Walker, 2006), make it clear that internal hegemony refers to how masculinities are structured hierarchally in opposition/comparison to other masculinities.

My concern here is not to identify and delimit the various internal masculinities. As Connell (1987) notes, "these other masculinities need not be as clearly defined—indeed achieving hegemony may consist precisely in preventing alternatives gaining cultural definition and recognition as alternatives, confining them to ghettos, to privacy, to unconsciousness" (p. 186). This paper explores the everyday narrative practices that enable men to claim a hegemonically masculine identity by discursively constructing dominance over other men/masculinities.

I draw on in-depth interviews with 43 pre-active duty military service men to highlight the process of how men use the symbolic resources of the military to create masculine hierarchies in which they situate themselves as more morally oriented, self-disciplined, physically able, emotionally controlled, martially skilled, or intelligent than non-military personal (i.e., civilians), members of different branches (i.e., Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force), military members with different occupational specialties (i.e., infantry, artillery, supply), and members of different ranks (officer versus enlisted). In claiming these characteristics as qualities that they themselves possess, pre-active duty service men locate their discursive constructions of masculinity as dominant over others and open the way for claims of a hegemonic masculinity that draws on the resources made available via the United States military.

Sample and Methods

Forty-three 43 pre-active duty service men aged 18-29 in 2005 and 2006 were interviewed for this study. *Pre-active* refers to the men's status as contract-bound military members who, prior to the interview, had *not* served on active duty (i.e., full-time military service). Twenty-five men were U.S. Army or Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets (AROTC and NROTC, respectively) at a large university in the Southeast. Sixteen were NROTC cadets and nine men were AROTC cadets, with AROTC cadets being slightly older (21.2 years versus 20 years for NROTC). Only one cadet (AROTC) had completed a bachelor's degree at the time of the interview. The other 18 men were U.S. Army enlisted personnel (mean age = 20.3) in the Delayed Entry Program (DEP), so-named because of the time lapse between when enlistees officially join and when they are scheduled to leave for basic training, which in some cases, can be upwards of one year. Eight DEP men had some college, with two holding a Bachelor's of Science degree. Of the 43 participants, one was African-American (DEP) and two were Hispanic, one who was Cuban (NRTOC) and the other Mexican and Ecuadorian (DEP). All other participants were Caucasian. All participants resided in the Southeast at the time of the interview. Participation was voluntary. All names used are pseudonyms.

Analytic Approach: Grounded Theory Method

The analytic approach draws on the grounded theory method (GTM), which is effective for analyzing qualitative interview data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; LaRossa, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) because individuals convey lived experiences discursively (Cahill, 1986; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997; Pascoe, 2003) and because it is rigorous (Charmaz, 2006). The analysis began with open coding, a process of line-by-line analysis of data to identify phenomenological themes. Themes are coded (labeled), and when patterns are evident, they are coded as categories or subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Some themes were emotional control, physical ability, and self-discipline, categories of the core category of hegemonic masculinity and all central to next phase of analysis, axial coding, or the process of densely packing data around a core

category and comparing the properties and dimensions (i.e., variations) of the categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Consistent with a grounded theory approach is the simultaneous collection and analysis of data, enabling researchers to engage in the constant comparative method, or continuously comparing case (i.e., individual) to case, case to category (i.e., themes and patterns), and categories to categories along their various dimensions and properties (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss; LaRossa; Strauss & Corbin). Traditionalist approaches recommend starting research without any preconceived notion of what the data suggest (Glaser & Strauss), but in practice, beginning research without assumptions is impossible (Charmaz, 1990, 2006; Strauss & Corbin). Preconceived ideas grounded in experience are not necessarily problematic because they provide a degree of theoretical sensitivity to subtleties in the data, useful when thinking about the various ways categories, properties, and dimensions of the data are related (Strauss & Corbin). Thus, my own gender experiences and brief military service sensitized me to potential patterns in the data.

Discursively Constructed Hegemony

Civilians

One tactic for constructing an identity in-line with hegemonic masculinity is to compare the perceived qualities of service members to non-service members. One way this is done is to construct narratives in which the men possessed greater self-discipline, a characteristic that set them apart from civilians. For some, self-discipline is found in self-presentation. Andrew (AROTC) said that "Some people just emulate military service. They live it 24/7. It's just real pervasive. You can tell." By way of example, he told me about making a game of picking service members out of a crowd. Sitting with his mother at an airport, he noticed a group of young men and women who appeared to be waiting for someone "coming back from being deployed or basic training or something."

> And I eventually picked him out and he wasn't wearing anything Army.
> How he walked, the haircut, etc. I said, "That's the guy." Sure enough.
> He had a determined glare. Not a glare. He had a determined fixed gaze.
> He knew where he was going. He didn't wander aimlessly.

The posture, the gaze, how the man moved and his overall countenance conveyed a sense of self-discipline and purpose that Andrew does not see in civilians. "In or out of uniform, I know that he's a soldier."

For others, discipline is found in action. "I'm not going to sit around," said Kyle (DEP). "I am actually putting myself into something." Military personnel are people who have no trouble "getting out there and getting what they got to do, done." Ryan, who is involved in ROTC said:

> As much as we complain about marching and polishing our boots and getting up early for PT [physical training], the fact that we are able to do that, because a lot of people can't get themselves out of bed early in the morning. The fact that we are able and willing to do that on a regular basis says a lot about the fact that we've disciplined ourselves.

"As far as discipline goes," Dan (NROTC) said, "you're working. You're not going to be one of those guys hanging around the coffee pot and chit-chatting." This sentiment is shared by Dan's ROTC colleague Dusty who compared his expectations for an immediate future as a military office to his father's experiences as civilian manager. "He has people under him that I would never want to have under me. I won't ever have to worry about that in the military.... People get things done when you want them to get done, they don't wait."

Physical ability was also discussed as a distinct characteristic that service members possess. Physical ability refers to physical ruggedness and the ability to handle the rigors of a military lifestyle. "It's not something everybody can do," said DEP enlistee George. Joel's (DEP) brother, a former service member himself, was fond of telling him, "You're going to hate PT [physical training]," to which he would retort, "Well, it ain't supposed to be for fun, you know?"

Some men said the military was a place where bodies are transformed. Andrew said he "went from a civilian without a clear idea of what I want to do in life," in which he was "physically unfit," to someone who was joining the army, mixing the imagery of self-discipline with physical fitness. Jose (DEP) said that when people envisioned service personnel, they conjured up muscularly oriented imagery. "G.I. Joe, muscles, balls to the wall. A badass." Part of his motivation to join was his desire "to be, you know, cut," using a slang body-building term to refer to well-defined musculature. After he finished saying this, he smiled, flexed his already sizable and considerably tattooed bicep and exclaimed "Pah-pow." The emphasis on physical fitness implies that service members have the ability to handle the physical demands of the military. Civilians do not.

The men have constructed narratives in which they possess a physically able and fit body inhabited by a disciplined self. These characteristics are in line with hegemonic masculinities. But what makes this a discursive construction of a hegemonically masculine identity is *how* the narratives structured, with the narrator sitting atop loosely structured hierarchies of disciplined/less disciplined or fit/less fit. The practice of rank-ordering of civilians versus military personnel enables these men, symbolically at least, as future military personnel to dominate civilians by positioning them as less self-disciplined and less physically able. This is the discursive structuring of the internal hegemony of hegemonic masculinities. As we shall see below, participants discursively subordinate service members in other branches, within the same branch but different occupational specialties, and service members of different rank.

Inter-Branch Rivalry

Comparisons of the perceived characteristics of Army versus Navy versus Marine versus Air Force service personnel often serve as a source of ribald humor and a way to bond with fellow branch members. "Go Army, beat Navy!" is both an exhortation of support for sports teams representing these service branches and an expression of the better branch. Inter-branch rivalries spawned dominance in two ways: through discounting the others martial abilities or by casting other men as hypermasculine.

Martial Ability

Not surprisingly, martial ability lies at the heart of much of the inter-branch rivalry. Men threw jibes at personnel in the other branches by questioning their mental and physical abilities as these were related to their martial abilities, defined here as military discipline, intelligence, combat readiness, and branch physical-fitness standards.

"I decided to go Navy and I'm happy I did," said Norman, a NROTC cadet who planned to become an aviator. In the Navy, "you are given responsibility of being in charge of a plane and you carry out the mission the best that you see fit." In contrast, "the Air Force is very rules-oriented and you have to ask permission to do everything." Norman's response derides Air Force service members for checking with their supervisors, with the implication that the Air Force is a service branch inhabited by those who are not responsible enough to do their work without a highly structured environment. Without stretching it too much, perhaps Norman is also hinting at differences in self (military) discipline.

Stiles had a different view on which branch of the military was the best. Of course, this may have stemmed from the fact that he was planning to join the Navy. He and his fellow NROTC colleagues sometimes joked, "about the Air Force and the Army [ROTC]. The only reason they went into the Army or Air Force is because they couldn't get into this program." Dan, also from the NROTC, said the same about Marines, who he joked about as "being really dumb." Both men positioned Navy personnel as more intelligent. Stiles called to question the intellectual and physical ability of Army and Air Force cadets who aren't up to the standards of the NROTC whereas Dan focused on intelligence.

A friend of Dan's in the Army told him that naval service members "do nothing, and how we're a bunch of wimps. How we don't fight and we just sit there and sit back on our ships and do nothing." Of course, Dan disagrees, but Dell (AROTC) appeared to side with Dan's friend.

> They [The Army] are the guys on the ground doing the most.... They are the ones who win the battles, win the wars, not so much the Air Force, not at all the Navy. I don't even know what they are doing right now [in Iraq].

Garrison, NROTC, proudly suggested that what separated the Navy from other services was their combat readiness.

> When the president set them all down, [he] said "how quick can you be there?" The Air Force said "three weeks" to Afghanistan. The Army was like "we can have troops on the ground in two weeks," and Marines and Navy was like "we can be on the ground tomorrow."

And of course men could always question the physical fitness standards of the other branches, as did Ryan (AROTC). He stated that "when it comes to physical fitness or anything, it's the Army and the Marines who pride themselves on that, far more than the Navy or the Air Force." And as a future Army service member, those higher standards, and a physically oriented masculinity, are his to claim.

Hypermasculinity

Another tactic was to ridicule men in other service branches as too hypermasculine. Harry (DEP) decided against joining the Marines, in part, because of his experiences with men just out of Marine basic training who, in his view, "have real bad attitudes." Asked what he meant by this, he said:

> They're just like [deepening his voice a few octaves and shouting] "Yeah! I'm the best." You know? "Yeah! [shouting] Hoo-rah, Hoo-rah," everywhere, you know [flexing his muscles and turning from side to side]?

Many of the men felt that the Marines attracted overly aggressive men.[1] Army enlistee Michael talked with recruiters from all the branches, but found that he did not like the Marines' style of interaction. "They are very hard-ass and very mean, basically. Nobody really likes the Marines because they are mean." He chose the Army because he did not "want a personality like that, you know. I want to still be a fun guy."

Gibson (AROTC) contemplated joining the Marines, but, like Michael, said that their approach was not in line with his personal style. "If I had to describe them all [Marines] using one word, [it] would be intense." In a wonderfully descriptive example, Gibson told me about a friend who served as an Army infantry officer in Iraq with a unit that ran out of supplies while on a mission. His friend was sent to meet a unit of Marines detailed to resupply them, and arrived first. "They're all relaxed and they're all smokin' and jokin'. They're loosely on security because it's a relatively safe spot."

> The guy I knew had actually been playing with these Iraqi kids, shooting the shit, and then here come these Marines jumping out of the vehi-

[1] The author did not interview any DEP Marines, although one participant (NROTC cadet Dusty) did report that he contracted to become a Marine officer.

> cles screaming "Argghh!!" and they yell at the kids "Get out. Get out of the way." And they set up this security perimeter around the two cars and they're all running around and screaming, and this [Marine] corporal walks up [and asks] "Who's in charge here?" And this guy I graduated with stands up and says "I am," and he walks over and says "what's up?" "Sir," and this Marine is yelling and he's standing at attention because there is officer there, and the guy I graduated with is like "whats up?" So the Marine is all yelling, "Sir! We have your supplies and if you don't mind sir, we were told to return as soon as possible. And we got to go." By this time all the kids are gone! So they drop the supplies and try to get back in the cars just as quick and they can't all fit in the cars, so the cars take off with ten Marines running behind the cars.

"So that's the difference between the Army and the Marines," Gibson concluded. "On one hand, they are intense fighters, but on the other hand, it's a little obsessive. They don't need all that."

Viewing some military members as too aggressive seems inconsistent with the imagery associated with the military as an institution that legitimates and rewards violent aggression. However, asserting that some men are too aggressive marginalizes those who construct this style of masculinity. Placing boundaries on the acceptable expression of masculinity is an effective strategy for subordinating others within the masculine hierarchy.

Some of what these men reported is undoubtedly part of the tradition of interbranch rivalries and several men said that such talk was little more than friendly ribbing. That said, joking is "a theater of domination in everyday life" (Lyman, 2004, p. 154), a tactic that provided another opportunity for discursively situating the narrator at the top of the masculine hierarchy.

Intra-Branch Rivalry

This also happened among members of the same branch. ROTC cadets hoping to become Navy aviators, submariners, and surface warfare officers (SWOs) marked differences between themselves and the work ethic, physical ability, aggressiveness, or intelligence of those working in the Navy's other jobs, like supply. The same was true for Army ROTC and DEP personnel who constructed differences between infantry, artillery, armor, and supply personnel.

Navy. Naval cadets used their occupational specialties to discursively construct other sailors as less disciplined. Stiles, the NROTC cadet who joked about the intelligence of Army and Air Force cadets, planned to become a surface warfare officer (SWO). He told me that the NROTC culture is dominated by aviators and submariners who chide him for "going SWO." There's a mentality that SWOs eat their young and you get yelled at the most and it's the hardest working one." As a SWO, he will be "on a ship standing watch for six hours a night or in engineering looking at some panel and

it's windowless and hot and you're unhappy." He continued on to say "I think some of the reasons people don't like SWO is that they think that's what it is.... And that's true to an extent." But by going SWO, Stiles associates himself with the hard workers of the Navy. In doing so, he constructs an identity marked by an ability to set aside the pleasures of aviation or the higher pay and relative security of submariners for the knitty-gritty, thankless work of surface warfare.

"Aviation," Leonard confided to me, "seems to be people who are more, a people person." Perhaps part of his desire to become an aviator was that "they seem to be fun loving people." And while fellow NROTC cadet Jaimie did not claim that submariners were hard working or had more fun than aviators, he viewed his chosen occupation as "a little cooler because you have that top secret aspect of it and nobody knows and things like that." His goal was to serve as an officer in the submarine service, but at the time of the interview, had not yet heard news regarding his active-duty assignment. "So that is my plan. If that does not work I probably will go aviation and slide just like everybody else [laughs]."

By contrast, Scott had plans to become a Navy S.E.A.L. "There are plenty of people that are in the military who are necessary in order for it to work," he said, but went on to imply that some of those jobs are less meaningful.

> In the Navy there is the supply core. These are the guys that are making sure that shipments of food get to certain destinations on time so they can be picked up by Helos [helicopters] and flown out to a ship and dropped off for extra scrambled eggs.

Of course, the supply core also transports ammunition, medical supplies, fuel, and other vital items necessary for the survival of the fleet. Demeaning their labor by stating their work was to make sure sailors had extra scrambled eggs for breakfast set Scott up to suggest that his military service is more purposeful than others. "I definitely want my life to mean something while I am here," he concluded.

Army. In a similar way, men in the Army compared themselves to other soldiers, situating themselves as more aggressive, having a stronger sense of duty, being more mature, or more intelligent. Richard, a DEP enlistee, explained that he signed up for the infantry because "some of the other positions they had weren't my idea of combat."

> Like they had a crewman on a Hummer with a rocket launcher on the back. But you didn't really do anything. You just drove the Hummer, worked at computers, and then shot the missile. And to me that's less combat involved than I really wanted to be. And at the same time, I feel it's a little too impersonal. If you're going to war and you want to fight somebody I feel that you need to fight them face to face. You don't hide behind your rockets miles and miles away.

Richard positions rocket crews as less "combat involved," stating that they were not truly "fighting" or that their jobs enabled them to "hide" from the enemy, impersonally firing rockets from a distance of several miles. As an infantryman, Richard will experience combat in all its brutal violence and he will have a front line view that enables him to claim that he, unlike others in the Army, will actually fight the enemy face-to-face, a discursive construction that ties nicely into a physically aggressive, fearless masculinity. By structuring a rough hierarchy in which infantrymen's fighting abilities are situated above men in other Army combat arms, he can claim that he is man enough to stand openly against his enemies and fight, unlike other soldiers who will cower behind mechanized weapons far to the rear of the battlefield.

DEP enlistee Skip said, "I don't want to be behind a desk, I don't want to be a medic, I don't want to be a cook. I'd rather be on the front lines." He reasons that being in the infantry will enable him to "say that I fought for my country and I knew I did something to support it, give back to what they gave me. I'm not saying those guys [in other jobs] didn't do anything," but personally, "I just can't do it. If I go to Iraq, I want to be saying, 'I fought,' not sat behind a desk." Meyer (DEP) agreed: "I might feel like I am serving more in the infantry." And Gibson (ROTC), who plans to become an infantry officer, bluntly stated what these men appear to be getting at: "The infantry is the military." "There are only two goals I've got for the Army," Tom (AROTC) said. "I want to go [to] the 82nd Airborne, get the maroon beret and then go to the Rangers, [and get] the green beret." Both of these Special Forces units have difficult training. To highlight the completion of training and entry into this elite group, soldiers wear different color berets. When I noted that regular army soldiers are now being issued black berets, Tom scoffed. "You can't see a black beret." The essence of the insult here is that because black represents a lack of color, black berets represent a lack status, a lack of training, a lack of dedication, and a lack of intelligence.

Not all the men in the Army signed up for the infantry, and not all of them agreed that infantry soldiers are the most dedicated or intelligent. Herb (DEP) is a college graduate who enlisted in military intelligence and found himself "talking to the guys at the recruiter's office" about their experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. "A lot of them were Calvary Scouts, so they were all on the front line and were interrogating people." One recruiter told him that, "if you want to be an interrogator you should be a Calvary Scout."

> And I was like, "Yeah, but you can't talk to them because you don't speak Arabic." And they are like, "I speak M16." I was just like "all right guys." That is like the difference between the combat guys and the educated intelligence people.... I would like to speak to them [enemy prisoners] in their own language so that they understand why it is that they are being interrogated. So that they can know what is going on. Pointing a gun at someone, you are not going to get anything intelligible out of them even if you did speak that language.

The difference between infantry soldiers and Herb was, in a word, intelligence.

Jackson (AROTC), who planned to become a supply officer, suggested there was an undeniable difference between infantry soldiers and other Army personnel. "For me, I'd say maturity." He explained that "when I was younger I wanted to be that infantry hardcore," but he came to realize that being infantry did not help his civilian occupational opportunities.

> 'Cause you know, what do you do after the army? What kind of skills are you taking from the infantry? Yeah, you're going to be a manager, you're leading a lot of people, but as far as technical skills, you're not really getting too many ... you could dig a ditch.

No matter what occupational branch of the service the men were planning to serve in, they compared the work ethic, physical ability, aggressiveness, or intelligence of personnel in their future occupational specialties to others, and invariably, they came out on top.

Officer-Enlisted Comparison

Not surprisingly, men in the Reserve Officer Training Corps and men in the Delayed Entry Program suggested that military members of similar rank, (i.e., officer or enlisted) were more motivated, dedicated, patriotic, intelligent, harder-working (self-disciplined), and/or better able to control their emotions.

Officer. Tim (AROTC) said that people enlist in the military "because they don't really have a lot of other options." Garrison (NROTC) felt that "A lot [of] these guys don't care about honor, courage, commitment. They're serving because it's the way they've had to support their families." The men's observations are correct in that those entering the military through enlisted service are predominantly working class (see Segal & Segal, 2004). That said, many young men (and women) enlist in the military for the same reasons that officers do—greater economic opportunity, adventure, a sense of honor, and/or a desire to serve their country.

To be fair, few ROTC cadets viewed the choice to enlist from this perspective. Others suggested that there was a difference in life experience that separated officers from enlisted. Mark, Army ROTC, recalled that a friend's father had enlisted in the Army and fought in Vietnam. "He was so torn apart after because of the stuff that he saw." By contrast, "I think that people in the officer program [ROTC] are more knowledgeable about that stuff." Presumably, future officers are better prepared to handle the psychological stressors associated with combat. Here, enlisted men's emotional control is called into question.

Enlisted. From the enlisted perspective, officers are inexperienced or lazy, looking for the easiest jobs in the military, and less self-disciplined. Herb has his bachelors' degree, but decided to enlist specifically to "get experiences with the men." "If you get a

college degree and join the Army and become an officer, you don't know anything about the military. [The men] are not really going to think that you are going to be a good officer." Harry (DEP) also has some college education, and when asked why he did not go in as an officer, he responded "You get to tell people what to do, but you don't know what they've been through when you don't know it yourself. That's why I want some experience under my belt before I do become a commissioned officer." Like Herb, he viewed this as a route to becoming a better leader. For both men, enlisted training will set them apart from, and above, other college-educated (future) officers.

Jose, the very tattooed DEP enlistee who said joining the military would enable him to increase his already considerable muscle mass, rejected that idea out-of-hand that officers are better soldiers than enlisted. He said officers were "half-educated, half-cocked micro-managers." He asked rhetorically, "these guys who get to be officers, what do they know? They just sit behind their desks and give orders." After sharing a story with me about an older brother who enlisted and, coincidentally, provided Jose with information about officers, he said, "It's us enlisted guys who get to do the work, do the job. They just sit around and drink coffee and get the credit. We're the one's sweating and working and they get the medals." From the perspective of the enlisted men, being enlisted was evidence of their greater self-discipline and stronger work ethic. Situating enlisted service in this way, officers were, by comparison, inexperienced, lacked the discipline to truly understand the military, and for Jose, incompetent.

Discussion

The process of structuring masculine hierarchies has been equated to "ideological warfare" (Connell, 1987, p. 186), in which groups of men are marginalized in an effort to "negate" their power (p. 187). Petersen (2003) asserts that research in and on masculinities not lose its focus on the underlying power dynamics, which in this paper were situated in the structuring of internal hegemony, or the hierarchal structuring of masculinities so that some constructs are dominant over others (Demetriou, 2001). Again, other masculinities need not be as clearly defined. Hegemony is partly about keeping some constructions of masculinity from gaining "recognition as alternatives, confining them to ghettos" (Connell, 1987, p. 186).

By discursively comparing themselves (their actions, behaviors, perceived virtues, abilities, and motivations) to others, the men, irrespective of their ROTC or DEP status, waged ideological warfare on civilians and other military personnel. They set themselves apart by suggesting that they (and those like them) were more self-disciplined, better physically capable, had greater emotional controlled, were more motivated by duty/honor/purpose, or were more intelligent than others. The men created loosely ranked dichotomies between groups that have more/less or are good/bad (or perhaps better/good). Doing so created a loose structuring of masculinities, albeit messy and imperfect, in which the men discursively positioned themselves above the other. Self-discipline, physical ability, emotional control, martial ability, and intelligence are qualities they viewed themselves, as future service members, as possessing. While the men did

not necessarily view participation in the military/branch/specialty as a zero-sum game (i.e., service/branch/specialty personnel possessed these characteristics, civilians/external branch/specialty members did not), their narratives suggested that service/branch/specialty members have more of these characteristics. As pre-active duty service members, their ascendancy to the top of the rough hierarchies they have created occurs as a verbal game of exclusion that creates boundaried space, relegating other men to masculine ghettos by subjecting them to symbolic subordination within the masculine hierarchy.

It is important to note that the men's future military service, as junior officers and low-ranking enlisted personnel, will likely place them in organizational positions of subordination, as they will be subject to the control of higher ranking male and female officers and, for the enlisted men, higher ranking male and female non-commissioned officers (i.e., sergeants). The irony is that by accessing the resources of the military to construct a hegemonic masculinity, they will be subordinated and/or marginalized. Thus, constructing a hegemonic masculinity through discursive subordination is viewed as an exercise in wielding symbolic, rather than real, power. Although this process is symbolic, it dovetails nicely with the men's anticipated association with the United States armed forces, where they will use violence and aggression, take risks, develop and use physical ability and self-discipline as tools used to force others to submit. And so, while the process of discursive subordination through the creation of rough hierarchies of civilian and military personnel is symbolic, it does provide men with practice at dominating others. In this way, the military provides men with the symbolic resources for constructing a hegemonically masculine identity.

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