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# Brotherhood in Tension: The Militarized Appropriation of Homosocialism and Homoeroticism

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**ABSTRACT** - The military is an institution that relies on norms of masculinity allegedly to sustain social cohesion between units and its identity as a “brotherhood.” This reliance subordinates femininity within the military culture and ostracizes the feminized individuals who serve. Simultaneously and paradoxically, militaries integrate homosocial, homoerotic, and feminized behaviors within their practices, traditions, and norms. This article looks at how this appropriation manifests, particularly in the German Armed Forces, locating various feminized practices adopted by military units over the past century and the adverse consequences of this appropriation. In analyzing these behaviors, I argue that this appropriation at the heart of military identity perpetuates heterosexual, hypermasculine norms that the institution idealizes by reinforcing gendered and heteronormative boundaries. In turn, I contend that this further marginalizes feminized individuals in militarized settings, particularly gay men.

The military has been portrayed as a brotherhood long before national armies came to stand as they are now. The idea that unit cohesion strengthens this brotherhood has remained strongly present and deemed crucial within preparation for combat. The identity of the brotherhood rests upon norms of traditionalized masculinity—strength, an unemotional nature, fearlessness, to name a few—and simultaneously casts those deemed “feminine” as incompatible with the military, on the basis that these individuals would disrupt this important social cohesion. However, while arguing the incompatibility of feminized individuals such as gay or queer men in the military, the military itself engages in behaviour that is homosocial, homoerotic, or otherwise feminized. Unlike if these behaviours were practiced by those feminized, the brotherhood enacting them is accepted and the acts themselves are appropriated into the masculine identity of the military. In this research paper, I argue that this appropriation of homosocialism, homoeroticism, and feminized behaviours key to military identity perpetuates the heterosexual, masculine norms the institution idealizes by reinforcing heteronormative boundaries and further marginalizing individuals who serve, particularly gay men.

I look specifically at Germany’s military forces from World War I to the present, a history that serves as an exemplary case of this appropriation in a variety of its forms. I chose the German military not only because it offers a rich and documented account of both homosocial and homoerotic practices that subvert typical concepts of military identity, but also because of the fluctuations in its policies and values over the past century. This allows me to locate how the appropriation of homosocialism, homoeroticism, and feminized behaviours and its implications on feminized individuals are sustained throughout these shifts. Thus, I seek to showcase how this appropriation is not a unique occurrence; it is linked specifically to the military as an institution and the hegemonic masculinity it entrenches, rather than to the historical or societal context it sits in.

The three behaviours that I argue are appropriated at a unit level are homoeroticism,

homosocialism, and practices that are linked to constructed ideas of femininity. Here, homosocial behaviour is understood as the social interaction between members of the same sex that has been categorized as “feminine”; it opposes the dominant norms of masculinity. Examples of this include open displays or gestures of mutual concern, emotion, or affection. Homoeroticism is similar to homosocialism; it occurs between members of the same sex but is characterized by male-male physicality, bodily acts, and sexual encounters instead of mere social interaction. Accounts of homoeroticism often portray these acts as disassociated from homosexuality; homoerotic acts are not inherently linked to sexual identity and instead are argued as sexual acts without desire or feelings attached to them—that is, platonic sexual acts (Kühne 2017, 73; Lehring 1996, 281). These range from intimate bodily experiences to fulfillment of sexual urges from living in close quarters to rituals of celebration or hazing that involve nudity or simulation of sexual acts. Feminized behaviours are those that aren’t homosocial or homoerotic in kind, but instead are those in which the male participates in activities—obligatory or not—that places them in a position constructed as feminine. This includes being forced to obey orders by superiors, undertaking tasks coded as feminine such as cleaning or working on appearance, or general acts of objectification. It is important to emphasize that these behaviours described are not themselves inherently “feminine” but are coded as such into a patriarchal society, justifying my use of these in a hierarchical opposition to the typical “masculine” norms—also socially constructed—that correspond to militarized settings. In order to argue that the appropriation of such behaviours is one that pushes feminized individuals to the boundaries and furthers militarized masculinities, I will first lay out a base that both examines the theory of hegemonic masculinity and the historical background of the oppression of queer and feminized identity that arises from it. Next, I will look at how the German military forces have integrated homosocial, homoerotic, and feminized behaviours into their practices. Lastly, I ask how this serves to sustain venerated

masculinized ideals of the military by analyzing the repercussions of this appropriation on the individuals within the military that these acts were appropriated from, the consequences on the appropriators, and the overall effect it has on military masculinization and its perceived identity. This appropriation has widespread consequences on several groups of feminized individuals—including women and transgender service members—but I look specifically at gay men. Though this is a limitation of my paper, the types of appropriation that occur and are analyzed will take into account how they rely upon and perpetuate larger ideas and systems of patriarchy in particular.

## Background

The military is often conceived as an enterprise with an identity reliant on the sustainment of a “macho man” image or the “illusion of masculine invincibility,” which has remained the case for Germany up until recently (Bianco 1996, 53). Soldiering has been consistently perceived as a manly job, requiring its personnel to have and propagate socially constructed norms of masculinity, including physical strength, the capacity for tolerating bodily and psychological pain or torment, and the ability to remain stoic and rational through all situations. In this sense, military masculinities are set upon “wider social assumptions about what it is to “be a man,” and the affirmation of these ideas in institutional practices and wider cultural processes” (Basham 2013, 103). Furthermore, because the military is itself a national institution, these soldierly behaviours are often justified through the idea of serving the nation. For example, Jason Crouthamel (2014) points out that in the German military during World War I, masculinized characteristics such as aggression and bravery were enhanced and transcribed as aggression towards enemies, and bravery for the sake of the nation (47).

The military is thus a locale where dominant ideas of masculinity flourish and are continuously perpetuated in direct opposition to behaviours, actions, and identities deemed “feminine.” In militarized settings, femininity is

“coded as an arbitrary, fictional construction which represents weakness, subordination, dependency, and disloyalty” and is hence rejected because of its un-masculinity (Belkin 2012, 26). Often, as is the case of German armed forces in World War II with regards to British soldiers, enemies were targeted as effeminate and weak, thereby building up the soldiers’ identities as distinctively and contrastingly masculine, heroic, and strong (Kühne 2002, 236). In coding femininity this way, the military is a representation of what Jennifer Maruska (2010) distinguishes as hypermasculine hegemonic masculinity (236). This hypermasculinity is an image various militaries create to maintain their idealized identity and is put into practice via exclusionary policies that are based upon and further emphasize the dominant masculine and subordinate feminine dichotomy. Thus, the military embraces stoic men because they are “strong enough” to protect the nation, while simultaneously rejecting those feminized. The patriarchal ideas behind these exclusionary policies are thus revealed; gay men—actively constructed and stereotyped as feminine—are placed in a subordinate position linked to womanhood and marginalized due to the alleged hindered military capabilities that come with this positioning (Bianco 1997).

This rejection has been seen in many states’ policies that have explicitly banned homosexuals from serving openly, including in the US until the 2010 repeal of “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” and in Great Britain until 2000 (UK Ministry of Defense 2000; US Congress, House 2010). These changes are tied with the demand and shift towards political moral obligations of equality and civil rights (Polchar et al. 2014, 19). Military acceptance tends to occur in the wake of such shifts and acts as “one of the last bastions of masculinity and homophobia” (Bleiker 2017). Germany presents itself similarly, with regulations first allowing homosexual soldiers to serve openly in 2000 and granting legal protection from discrimination in 2006 (Douglas 2020). German armed forces began permitting homosexuals to serve in 1969 (US Government Accountability Office 1993, 6). However, bans on homosexual relations were placed until the 1990s, targeting those who exhibited homosexual

orientation or engaged in homosexual behaviours (Fleckenstein 1993, 9). Prior to that, there were several trials of soldiers arrested for homosexuality under Paragraph 175 – Germany’s legal prohibition of sodomy. It was argued that they were disrupting military order and that they “may lead to the isolation of certain groups or the formation thereon, to jealousy and mutual distrust” (Crouthamel 2014, 125; Fleckenstein 1993, 9). Until 1987, homosexual members of the German armed forces could have their security clearances withdrawn because they were thought of as vulnerable to compromise by foreign intelligence agents (US Government Accountability Office 1993, 36). This was the case for Germany’s Gunter Kiessling, a third-ranking general and a deputy NATO commander who was dismissed in 1984 by Manfred Wormer—then the Minister of Defense—on unproven charges that he was homosexual and posed a security risk (Fleckenstein 1993, 4). In this way, homosexuals in the military and their perceived failed masculinities compromised not only the identity of the institution but also the missions themselves.

The most common argument for the marginalization of feminized individuals from and within militaries, stresses social coherence and team morale; it is argued that these individuals endanger these ideals and hence impair military efficiency (Bianco 1996, 60; MacCoun 1996, 158). Though this is not based on empirical grounds, institutions like the German Ministry of Defense have used this as further “evidence” that homosexuality affects others regardless of whether or not homosexual individuals have the capacity for combat (Fleckenstein 1993, 9). More precisely, the “male bonding which unit cohesion depends upon will be impossible with gay men present” because many heterosexual men argue they feel vulnerable or “preyed upon,” and hence cannot do their job (Cohn 1998, 135). In turn, as exclusionary policies explicitly contend, overall combat effectiveness is compromised. This sustains the hegemonic masculinity of the military by placing the feminine other as a threat to military effectiveness and blaming them for “hetero-male shortcomings” (Gilder 2019, 161). This blame was seen on a large-scale post World War I and during

the rise of the Nazis, where a stab-in-the-back myth arose, contending that the German loss was the fault of those who fragmented unit cohesion—specifically homosexuals (Kühne 2002, 237).

However, the emphasis on social cohesion reveals that while the individual who participates in behaviours deemed homosocial, homoerotic, or feminine is vilified, the male bonding at the unit level, which may be just as homosocial or homoerotic, is embraced. Carol Cohn (1998) points out that, though homosexual individuals in the military are marginalized because they are allegedly denying the “inferiority of their sexuality and identity and that they are incompatible with military service,” these behaviours that strengthen brotherhood ties are appropriated as positive and encouraged for better combat effectiveness (139). In the next section, I look closer at these unit behaviours within German militarized settings to gain a clearer understanding of what this means for both the military’s hypermasculine identity and the feminized individuals within these units.

### The German Military

Germany’s armed forces have a long history of these masculinized identities and simultaneous acts of homosocialism, homoeroticism, and feminized behaviours. Though in recent years there have been efforts to re-center ideals of soldiery that are explicitly less masculinized, homosexual marginalization still occurs (German Bundestag 19th Electoral Term 2019, 64). In this section, I look closer at the foundations of such marginalization in several practices found within the German military: entrenched homosocial and homoerotic ideals of comradeship, various aspects of military training, and hazing and initiation rituals that have occurred over the past century. This will serve as a basis for my argument that these components have consequences that further support militarized masculinities, despite the elements of femininity involved within these practices.

During the World Wars, the German armed forces were faced with the horrors of trench warfare and extreme destructive power. The soldiers were nonetheless sent to the front idealized as the

warrior male, the bearer of the nation’s security and martial masculinity. For German men, “war was seen as a testing ground for manliness” and showed true individual sacrifice for the sake of the nation (Crouthamel 2014, 53). Key to the German military experience was the emphasis the army placed on glorified unit solidarity, in this case, described as comradeship. Going beyond supposed norms of friendship, comradeship was the adoption of sacred ideals of sacrifice for one’s brothers and exceptional acts of love. Comradeship was prominent in the German forces to the extent that it was argued as a unifying tactic by some homosexual advocacy groups during the Weimer era, wherein “the ideal of comradeship [...] opened the door for homosexual men to assert that male-male love was not only acceptable but also a cornerstone of the defense of the nation” (42). However, instead of increasing tolerance towards homosexuals, comradeship fueled the stab-in-the-back myth—pointing to the marginalization I look at in the next section of the paper.

The concept of being a good comrade and engaging in the social behaviours of comradeship acted as a “counterweight to the world of “men”” in the sense that it provided a sort of alternate universe where forms of femininity were adopted to sustain unit cohesion (Kühne 2002, 233). This was seen in a variety of homosocial and homoerotic behaviours that soldiers not only experimented with but embraced in attempts to cope with the emotional toll of being at the front. The most prominent examples lie in performances of cross-dressing and the newspaper headlines of World War I. On the front page of newspapers, feminine characteristics such as compassion and sensitivity were highlighted to provide comfort in the violent and stressful environment, often writing on homosocial bonds that mimicked husband-wife intimacy (Crouthamel 2014, 117). Cartoons such as “washing day” featured playful depictions of men doing their laundry, joking “sarcastically that they had become “women” as a result of life at the front” (114). Cross-dressing entertainment, often for comedic or theatrical purposes, was a common act of temporary relief from war stress that was tolerated by military authorities. Despite

these acts being considered harmless, authorities and doctors made sure to maintain “boundaries between what they perceived as threatening or benign to the military society,” the former including “transvestite behaviours” and those that could lead towards temptation of same-sex love (111).

That same comfort granted by these practices was provided in the form of “sanctioned homoerotic behaviour that could include physical affection, even kissing as an expression of friendship, between otherwise heterosexual men” (Crouthamel 2014, 231). This, combined with a willingness to show fear and pain to comrades during combat, is an example of the military being understood as a site for the construction of abstracted masculinities, where the conventional femininities of comradeship disrupt the masculine characteristics of the military man. Comradeship was thus an “escape” from the real-life violence faced, but also the socially pressured masculine norms these men were forced to follow. However, and quite paradoxically, the integral feminine nature of comradeship—itsself homosocial and homoerotic in kind—was based on a sense of community that arose from symbolic and practiced subordination of the feminine other, including homosexuals. For example, in the German military and social initiation processes of World War II—similar to the modern-day experiences described below—the male recruits were bodily degraded in various ways and objectified as such, something traditionally experienced solely by women at the time (Kühne 2002, 235-236).

However, it went further than this, as “the femininity expressed in comradeships became the fundamental pillar of being a man” (Kühne 2002, 244). This fundamental pillar represented an evident double standard; while there was an acceptance of homosocial behaviour and a toleration of homoerotic relations, they were only accepted as long as homosexual identity was not involved to ensure that homosexual individuals did not “threaten the wider patterns of good order and discipline” (Morgan 1994, 168). Furthermore, a fine line was drawn between homoeroticism as a sentiment that could strengthen unit bonds—such as sexual horseplay in the military barracks of

World War II—and actual homosexual behaviour, in large part due to Nazi Germany’s homosexual panic (Giles 2001, 238). This points to the function of comradeship as a balancing act between the “hard” ideal of masculinity and the “soft” elements of being a man;” the act of comradeship was sanctioned only to maintain the military and its effectiveness as a masculine enterprise while remaining forbidden if acted upon outside of this purpose (Kühne 2002, 244). Thus, comradeship is a prominent example of a dissonance in which the feminized individual engaging in these homoerotic and homosocial behaviours would be disrupting the cohesion, but the heterosexual, dominant man doing so is preserving it.

Besides these ideals of comradeship, the German military has become more and more progressive over the course of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century regarding the explicit exclusion of gay men—including barring discrimination and bullying from a legal standpoint. However, the homosexual individual has remained targeted and opposed in the modern German military, including being “treated like outsiders by their comrades” (Bleaker 2017). Thus, these more tolerant views in no way entail that the argument against the compatibility of homosexuality and the military as a masculine institution has faded out. I argue that this is because, despite a distancing from the intensity of ideas of comradeship, dominant masculinities engaging in feminized behaviour remain considerable and present elsewhere in German military dynamics, particularly in military training and ritualized hazing practices.

Behaviour coded as feminine begins early on in training when the personnel are stripped of their individualistic identity and controlled in a way that replaces this individuality with a complete commitment to and dependence on the masculinized institution (Whitworth 2008, 111). For example, this is seen in acts of military assimilation during initiation processes of German youth movements wherein teaching “boys how to become a man, to think, feel and behave like other men, to adopt and internalize manly social qualities,” they are forced to “learn male conformity and male solidarity” (Kühne 2017, 78). This assimilation ranges from

explicitly gendered and homophobic insults used to teach young soldiers “to deny, indeed to obliterate, the “other” within the psyche”, to extreme physical brutalization (Whitworth 2008, 113).

However, while military training relies upon building up norms of militarized masculinity in the reconstruction of their de-individualized soldiers, it does so “premised on a simultaneous renunciation and embrace of the unmasculine” (Belkin 2012, 33). This training, often involving degradation rituals, initiates soldiers into a military culture of brutality while opposingly enveloping them in the “rough, inebriated, and smutty conviviality” (Kühne 2002, 242). For example, in the case of the assimilation rites described above, there were sometimes homoerotic practices included, with acts of torture and humiliation as key components (78).

These acts are indicative of the German military acting as an institution that allows heterosexual “experimentation” via homoerotic behaviour; this behaviour is coded as innocent at the expense of the marginalization of the acknowledged homosexuals. This homoeroticism is further seen in various hazing experiences and rituals of humiliation involving the body and sexual acts, including conducting “climbing exercises in the nude before their fellow soldiers” and forced “sexually motivated medical exercises” while being recorded (Gebauer 2017; The Local 2010). These rituals allow for heterosexual men to participate in homoerotic behaviour without being labelled as gay or having their masculinity undermined. This is especially so when one considers that they occur amongst simultaneous ritualized attempts of proving masculinity—such as being forced to eat animal liver or being punched in the stomach multiple times (The Local 2010). At the same time, this provides further reasoning for the exclusion or disassociation of homosexuals from the military as it is the ostracizing of genuine homosexuals that makes the military a space for these homoerotic practices to be embraced (Cohn 1998, 142).

There is a similar appropriation seen within military drilling and maintenance, which demands strict characteristics of femininity, ranging from obedience to authority and attention to dress, to participation in activities such as “cleanliness,

tidiness, and domesticity, more commonly associated with the feminine” (Basham 2013, 105; Hooper 2001, 47). In using these at the key site of the personnel’s transformation, the military is engaging these aspects of femininity as controlled and rational. In this way, the masculinized space of the military appropriates these feminized behaviours “when carried out within the parameters of military efficiency and operational effectiveness” (Basham 2013, 106). Without the conformity of these feminized norms in the production of the male warrior, the contradiction these unmasculine behaviours pose to the military identity would be revealed. Together with the sanctioned homoerotic and homosocial behaviour described above, this behaviour showcases an underlying current of appropriation that not only sustains military identity but further disassociates it with feminized individuals.

### Consequences

It is this disassociation that is a key consequence of this appropriation. Using the analysis above, I demonstrate that the appropriation furthers military masculinity and its pitfalls. In this section, I will analyze the consequences that this appropriation has on both those who appropriate these behaviours—those with “dominant” masculinities—and those who they are being appropriated from—subordinate, “failed” masculinities—as well as how this plays out in the military’s perpetuation of its hypermasculine identity.

In demanding the conformity of individuals to various feminized behaviours described above and these individuals embracing homosocial practices to feel included in their unit, the “military has fragmented service members’ identities and generated a series of confusing double-binds that intensify their desire to become masculine while making it impossible to live up to that standard” (Belkin 2012, 40). In a similar vein, if military men engage with these homosocial and homoerotic desires in an attempt to substitute forms of intimacy, they experience a form of patriarchal confusion, thought of as the difficulty of sustaining “the naturalness of dichotomy between

“masculinity” and “femininity”” (Enloe 2007, 81).

Heterosexual attempts at living up to or refiguring their confirmation to these hypermasculine, militarized standards are aimed at proving their masculinity at the expense of the exclusion and denigration of subordinate masculinities, such as homosexual men. In having this mutilated sense of masculine self, heterosexual men in the military seek to reinforce their masculinity by scapegoating the homosexual soldier as threatening, as seen in the post-World War I stab-in-the-back myth and contemporary exclusionary tactics. This threat, in being integrated into the everyday military unit experience, would turn the warrior male into someone in “the female subject position – being the object of the gaze, being desired, being powerless before the gaze, instead of being the gazer” (Cohn 1998, 144). Furthermore, it locates the patriarchal reasoning behind this threat, in that it is gender—being gazed on as a woman—rather than sexuality that is at stake, supported by the sanctioned homoeroticism and homosocialism described above. This reveals that the appropriation of these behaviours actually serves to sustain the patriarchy, while the practices that cause this in and of themselves seemingly oppose it.

Furthermore, the military’s appropriation of homosocial, homoerotic, and feminized behaviours causes those insecure about their masculinity to reposition the homosexual as threatening once again. This explains how even after bans on homosexuals in the German military were lifted, discriminatory and homophobic policies persisted in the form of underground practices such as virtual glass ceiling policies, jokes at the expense of gay service members, and ostracization by fellow troops after coming out (Hemicker 2014). In this way, forms of homoeroticism and homosocialism in the military maintain the heterosexual power in the institution by forming boundaries between heterosexuals—who do not have the fear of being labeled as gay in participating in these behaviours—and homosexuals as a threatening “other.” Because homosexuals are excluded from participation in the unit and these homoerotic practices due to their “sinister nature,” their subordinate positioning is further secured and the desires of heterosexual

men who engage in these practices are prioritized (Basham 2013, 109). Thus, “homoeroticism and the “embrace of the unmasculine” is just as much a part of the performance of heterosexual masculinity as homophobia and sexism can be” (107).

Feminized others incorporated into the military thus illuminate the fragility of its hegemonic masculinity; not only does the integration “undermine ideals about the naturalness of masculinity and militarism,” but it also reveals how the feminine aspects of the institution itself are appropriated (Bulmer 2013, 139). This also serves as an explanation for why these behaviours are appropriated in the first place: they further the military’s masculine identity that would otherwise be compromised if the behaviour remained unacknowledged. It is these appropriated elements within the cohesive combat units that sustain the military’s identity as hypermasculine, doing so by using them to further the dichotomous and hierarchical norms of the heterosexual and the feminized male in the ways described above. Showcased by the German armed forces as a masculinized institution, the military continues its affirmation of the wider social ideas of what it is to “be a man” at the expense of the men who don’t conform to these same ideas.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed how homosexual men—as representing a subordinate class of “feminized masculinities”—have historically been isolated within armed forces because of the hypermasculine nature of military institutions. By closely analyzing the German military’s homosocial, homoerotic, and otherwise feminized practices, I have demonstrated how these behaviours were appropriated from the individuals in the military who have been, and continue to be, placed in a position of “other.” This position of inferiority and general exclusion allows for the innocence of these behaviours amongst heterosexual military men to be sustained as integral to the masculine identity of the institution, specifically in Germany. In doing so, I showed that this appropriation perpetuates

the heterosexual, hypermasculine idealized self the military purports to be, and as such, further marginalizes the gay men who serve in the armed forces. Furthermore, reflecting on the last century, I located this appropriation in the centrality of military masculine culture, persisting despite shifts in time and societal norms. Contrary to what I propose, some may argue that if the military is an environment where men can express feminized gestures of concern or empathy towards other men via comradeship, or where heterosexual men can experience non-stigmatized homoerotic behaviours without judgemental repercussion, this is a positive change in military identity. For example, Jason Crouthamel (2014), who has provided ample historical accounts of German comradeship during the World Wars, argues that wartime allowed homosexual men to humanize “deviant” homosocial inclinations and overcome a sense of social repression by engaging in sanctioned same-sex relations (117). However, if more closely analyzed, Crouthamel (2014) himself points to the idea that it was the men who adapted to the militaristic nature of the front that experienced this—specifically, those who discovered their masculine side while denouncing “the “effeminate” homosexual, replacing him with an all-masculine, mobilized homosexual man spiritually connected to the front ideal of “comradeship”” (141). Thus, I argue that in appropriating these acts into the hypermasculine culture of the military, deconstruction of this culture does not occur; rather, the military retains the idealized masculinity typically associated with the institution. There are limitations within this paper that are necessary to point out; the first being the focus on one country that possesses its own norms, culture, and military history. All three of these components radically differ amongst countries, and thus the prominence of this appropriation and subsequent marginalization depends on the national military being considered. Furthermore, Germany itself has recently gone through several changes in its military inclusion policy, including enacting a General Equal Treatment Act with legal protection from military discrimination in 2006 (Douglas 2020). The LGBT military index—ranking national militaries based

on their policies of inclusion, admission, tolerance, exclusion, or persecution—placed Germany 12th in the 2014 study, and since then, Germany has issued apologies for those who faced discrimination after 2000 (Douglas 2020; Polchar et. al 2014, 58). These steps taken, though in a positive direction, do not necessarily correlate with what the military as an institution represents and entrenches. Not only does discourse surrounding armed forces and the overtly hypermasculine behaviour remain in militaries like Germany’s, but there has not yet been an attempt at addressing the appropriated feminized behaviours I analyzed. Inclusionary policies have to go further than just targeting conspicuous discrimination and seek to address homosocial and homoerotic practices that run alongside them that marginalize gay men. In doing so, wider ideas of military identity can emerge, and the association of the military with masculinity can become more open to reconstruction.

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