RAPE, WAR, AND THE SOCIALIZATION OF MASCULINITY:
WHY OUR REFUSAL TO GIVE UP WAR ENSURES THAT RAPE
CANNOT BE ERADICATED

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Rape is endemic during war, suggesting that there may be important conceptual links between the two. A theoretical model is presented positing that rape and war are correlated because traditional (hegemonic) masculinity underlies, and is a cause of, both. An analysis of the literatures on masculinity, rape perpetration, and military socialization is conducted to support this model. Particular elements of traditional masculinity that are implicated include status and achievement; toughness and aggression; restricted emotionality; and power, dominance, and control. It is argued that society’s need for effective soldiers is the root cause of traditional masculine socialization and that this socialization ensures that rape will be prevalent. Possible strategies to minimize rape while preserving traditional masculine socialization are discussed. However, it is concluded that as long as most nations rely on warfare to respond to geopolitical conflict, rape prevention efforts will necessarily have only limited success.

Rape perpetrated by soldiers is endemic during wartime. A variety of sources support this claim, such as anecdotal evidence provided in literary accounts of war during ancient times (e.g., The Iliad; Homer, 2008) and careful studies of recent conflicts in Darfur (Gingerich & Leaning, 2004) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, 2010). Moreover, rape perpetrated by military personnel is not directed only toward enemy civilians. When women are part of the military, rape perpetrated by men against their female comrades is not uncommon. This seems to be a serious problem in the current U.S. military, with women reporting sexual assaults both stateside and in combat zones overseas (Corbett, 2007; U.S. Department of Defense, 2009; Harman, 2008). In addition, spousal rape and other forms of domestic violence may be more common among military families than in the general population (Heyman & Neidig, 1999; Merrill, Crouch, Thomsen, Guimond, & Milner, 2005; Rentz et al., 2006). Furthermore, anthropological studies have shown that societies in which rape is more common are also societies in which war is waged more frequently (Sanday, 1981). In contrast, war is infrequent or unknown in societies where rape is infrequent. Thus, rape and war have been shown, at a macro level, to be correlated.

There are a number of possible explanations for this empirical association between war and rape. In the present article, I argue that one important reason that rape and war are associated so seamlessly is because traditional (or hegemonic: Cheng, 1999; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) masculinity underlies both. I propose a theoretical model in which traditional masculine socialization is a causal antecedent of both rape and war.

There are, of course, other causal explanations for why rape and war are associated. For example, cultural spillover theory (Baron, Straus, & Jaffee, 1988) argues that the presence of culturally endorsed and legitimated use of violence (e.g., the use of force by the military in wartime) leads to an increased acceptance of violence in other domains (e.g., rape perpetrated by civilians against other civilians). This would be an example of a direct path from war to rape. Other causal pathways are also possible, including a direct path from rape to war, indirect effects, and bidirectional models (with rape and war each being causal antecedents of each other). All such models are interesting and worthy of exploration; however, they are not the focus of the present article.

Rape and war each require many elements of traditional masculine socialization in order to be possible. However, some aspects of traditional masculinity are hypothesized
to be relevant for rape or war perpetration, but not for both (see Table 1). I describe this argument in fuller detail below, beginning with an overview of theoretical accounts of traditional masculinity. I then review the evidence that traditional masculine socialization is implicated in rape perpetration and that traditional masculine socialization is implicated in war. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of recommendations and suggestions for further research.

In reviewing the literature, I drew widely from research on sexual aggression perpetration, and I use this term synonymously with rape. The theoretical model is meant to explain not only why rape occurs during periods of armed conflict and in military contexts, but also why rape occurs in civilian contexts and during peacetime. However, I limit the scope of the theoretical model to rape by male perpetrators rather than extending it to rape by female perpetrators because the effect of traditional masculine socialization on women (e.g., in the military) is not well researched. I return to this point in the conclusion.

### REVIEW OF TRADITIONAL/HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

Brannon (1985) was one of the first theorists to put forward a model of (Western) masculinity. This model includes four elements: anti-femininity (“No Sissy Stuff”), status and achievement (“The Big Wheel”), inexpressiveness and independence (“The Sturdy Oak/The Male Machine”), and adventurousness and aggressiveness (“Give ‘Em Hell”). Anti-femininity includes prohibitions against men having and expressing feelings, being vulnerable, and having sexual feelings for men (because homophobia is part of traditional masculine socialization). The status and achievement norm directs men to always be successful at what they do, to strive for wealth, and to be capable. The prescription for inexpressiveness and independence requires men to suppress their feelings, to solve problems without the help of others, and to never appear weak. The norm of adventurousness and aggressiveness encourages men to take physical risks and to be violent, if necessary (or, at the very least, to be the kind of man who is perceived as being capable of violence). This theoretical model has been partially supported by psychometric work. For example, Thompson and Pleck (1986) conducted a factor analysis of Brannon and Juni’s (1984) masculinity items and found three factors: anti-femininity, status, and toughness.

Other researchers have developed their own definitions of masculine ideology, which generally overlap with Brannon’s. For example, Levant and colleagues (Levant et al., 1992; Levant, Rankin, Williams, Hasan, & Smalley, 2010)
developed the Male Role Norms Inventory to measure seven dimensions of masculine ideology. These included the three dimensions found in Brannon’s conceptualization: rejection/avoidance of femininity, achievement of status, and toughness/aggression. Levant and his colleagues split Brannon’s “Sturdy Oak” dimension into two, distinguishing between restricted emotionality and self-reliance. Finally, they added two additional categories, both of which are related to rejection of the feminine: (a) homophobia and (b) nonrelational, objectifying attitudes toward sexuality.

O’Neil (1981, 2008) claimed that devaluation and fear of femininity was the centerpiece of masculinity and described six important consequences of masculine socialization, which mostly overlap with Brannon’s model: (a) restrictive emotionality; (b) wanting control, power, and competition; (c) homophobia; (d) restrictive sexual and affectionate behavior; (e) an obsession with achievement and success; and (f) health care problems. Other aspects of the “masculine mystique” include beliefs that men are biologically superior and that sexuality is a primary means of proving one’s masculinity. Goldberg (1979) argued that for success as a man one needs to have a basic sense of distrust, the need to control, an ability to manipulate others, and a repression of human needs (e.g., needing less sleep than others, the ability to endure pain, and “nutritional disregard” or the ability to go without food).

Other scholars have developed theories of hegemonic masculinity that implicate power as the most important element. For example, Cheng (1999) defined hegemonic masculinity as being centrally concerned with power and dominance. Such dominance could be enacted physically (in terms of greater size and strength) or it could be enacted through having power in a hierarchy (such as in an organization). Technological knowledge can be used to gain power; for example, Bill Gates might exemplify this power of the “nerd.” No matter what its form, hegemonic masculinity is about “the winning and holding of power” (Donaldson, 1993, p. 645). Kimmel (1994, p. 125) agreed, writing that “[t]he hegemonic definition of manhood is a man in power, a man with power, and a man of power.”

In elaborating his definition of hegemonic masculinity, Cheng (1999) described several important attributes. These include domination, aggressiveness, competitiveness, athletic prowess, stoicism, and control. Cheng stresses that aggressive behavior, even to the level of physical violence, is an important component of hegemonic masculinity. A man can prove his masculinity by engaging in aggressive or violent acts against others, especially against those regarded as feminine (e.g., women and gay men).

MASCULINE SOCIALIZATION AND RAPE PERPETRATION

There is a great deal of empirical evidence suggesting that traditional masculine socialization is a risk factor for rape perpetration. This evidence includes anthropological studies demonstrating (and theorizing about) cross-cultural differences in rape rates (Sanday, 1981; Watson-Franke, 2000) as well as psychological studies, both experimental and correlational. Many of the psychological studies were reviewed in a meta-analysis by Murnen, Wright, and Kaluzny (2002), who found that 10 of 11 different measures of masculine ideology were related to sexual aggression perpetration. In this section, I summarize and review this evidence, organizing it within the framework of the dimensions of masculinity described in Table 1. The dimensions that are most central to rape perpetration are hypothesized to include Feminine Avoidance, Status and Achievement, Toughness and Aggression, Restricted Emotionality, Nonrelational Sexuality, and Dominance/Power/Control.

Feminine Avoidance

The need to avoid being seen as feminine leads men to purge the self of anything feminine (including compassionate feelings; see section on restricted emotionality, below). Moreover, it is associated with devaluing women and believing that women are different from, and inferior to, men. Such devaluing is correlated with sexual aggression perpetration. For example, in Sanday’s (1981) anthropological study, societies in which rape was common were ones in which women were treated with contempt rather than respected. At the individual level, the belief that women should not have equal rights with men has been associated with self-reports of a greater likelihood of raping (Osland, Fitch, & Willis, 1996) as well as actual sexual aggression (Hamburger, Hogben, McGowan, & Dawson, 1996). At the extreme, these sexist attitudes can evolve into virulent misogyny or hostility toward women, which has been identified as a prominent risk factor for rape (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, 1995; Malamuth, Check, & Briere, 1986).

Status and Achievement

One of the markers of male status in many cultures is to “have” an appropriate woman (i.e., one who is available only to high status men). The characteristics of the high status woman might change from culture to culture, but the commonality is that she is treated like an object, a “trophy wife” that brings status to the man who has “won” her. Objectification or dehumanization has long been recognized as a precursor to violence and even genocide (Staub, 1989) in an intergroup context. Similarly, treating women like objects within interpersonal relationships makes it more likely that they will be abused (sexually and otherwise). The belief that women are sex objects is one of the rape-supportive implicit theories described by Polaschek and Ward (2002), and empirical studies have supported this connection. Polaschek and Gannon (2004) analyzed rapists’ descriptions of their own offenses and found evidence of the belief that women are sex objects in the majority of the men. Bleecker and Murnen (2005) found that college men with degrading
images of women in their dorm rooms were more likely to hold rape-supportive attitudes. In an experiment, Golde, Strassberg, Turner, and Lowe (2000) showed that exposure to videos of male–female interactions that objectified women led to an increase in rape-supportive attitudes. Finally, male college students who reported being exposed to conversations in which women were sexually objectified were more likely to commit sexual assault (Koss & Dinero, 1988).

**Toughness and Aggression**

Traditional masculinity requires men to be tough, aggressive, and willing to use violence if necessary (Brannon, 1985; Cheng, 1999; Levant, 1992; Thompson & Pleck, 1986). These attitudes would be expected to increase the risk of violence and aggression in general, including perpetrating sexual violence against women. Indeed, some of the earliest studies on risk for rape perpetration (e.g., Burt, 1980) showed that acceptance of interpersonal violence was associated with rape-supportive attitudes. Other studies have associated this variable with sexual aggression perpetration (Byers & Eno, 1991) and self-reported likelihood of committing rape (Dean & Malamuth, 1997). In their meta-analysis, Murnen et al. (2002) found an average correlation of .27 across 15 studies that used Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence (Burt, 1980) to predict sexual aggression. In addition, they found that Hypermasculinity (a composite measure that includes an acceptance of violence) had an average correlation of .28. At a macro level, Sanday (1981) found that rape was more common in tribal societies that endorsed the belief that men should be tough and aggressive and that had high levels of interpersonal violence.

Further evidence for the centrality of this dimension of masculinity to sexual aggression perpetration can be seen by examining comprehensive theoretical accounts of sexual aggression perpetration. Most such models include a pathway or component related to aggression or an acceptance of interpersonal violence. For example, Malamuth and associates' confluence model (Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes, & Acker, 1995; Malamuth, Sockloski, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991) includes attitudes supporting violence as part of their “Hostile Masculinity” pathway, and Hall and Hirschman’s (1991) quadripartite model includes cognitions that justify aggression as one of four key components.

**Restricted Emotionality**

Men who are socialized into traditional masculinity learn to suppress their emotions in order to minimize vulnerability and maintain dominance. This restricted emotionality results in what Levant (1998, p. 36) referred to as “normative male alexithymia,” the inability of most men to identify, describe, and experience a range of emotions. There is a pressure for men to be generally unemotional and stoic (Cheng, 1999). A recent meta-analysis of 41 samples confirmed that men experience greater levels of alexithymia than do women (Levant, Hall, Williams, & Hasan, 2009). Evidence supporting the role of masculine socialization in creating this gender difference was presented in Levant et al. (2003). In that study, belief in masculine ideology predicted alexithymia, even after controlling for demographic variables. Emotions such as fear, empathy, and tenderness are especially likely to be suppressed because they convey vulnerability (Brody & Hall, 2004; Mosher & Tomkins, 1988). In contrast, because anger is associated with higher status (Tiedens, 2001), it is the one acceptable male emotion (Levant, 1995) so that all feelings become channeled through anger. Long (1987, p. 310) coined the term “male emotional funnel system” to describe this phenomenon.

These particular emotional problems can put men at greater risk for committing rape. Describing their four-part theoretical model of rape perpetration, Hall and Hirschman (1991) argued that “affective dyscontrol” (an inability to control or cope with negative emotional states such as depression or anger) is an important precursor to some types of rapes. Restricted emotionality was predictive of rape-accepting attitudes and self-reported sexual assault in a community sample of Canadian men (Senn, Desmarais, Verberg, & Wood, 2000). Similarly, clinical evidence suggests that many rape perpetrators have problems with anger management (Ward & Hudson, 2000) and that anger might be a central motivator for a subset of rapists (Groth, 1979). Anger-proneness in combination with restrictive emotionality (and masculinity threat) predicted physical aggression in one laboratory-based study (Cohn, Seibert, & Zeichner, 2009). Emotional restriction was also an important factor in Lisak, Hopper, and Song’s (1996) study of male survivors of physical and sexual abuse. Survivors who broke the cycle of violence and did not go on to perpetrate abuse had lower scores on emotional restriction and gender rigidity. Additionally, at the macro level, Sanday (1981, p. 23) found that societies in which men had warm (as opposed to “indifferent, aloof, cold and stern”) relationships with their daughters were ones in which rape was infrequent or absent.

Low empathy is a risk factor for sexual aggression (for reviews, see Geer, Estupinan, & Manguno-Mire, 2000; Ward, Keenan, & Hudson, 2000), although the effect of empathy is sometimes seen only in combination with other factors. For example, Dean and Malamuth (1997) found that high-risk men who were also low in nurturance were more likely to commit sexually aggressive acts than were high-risk men who were high in nurturance. Other studies have also found that empathy played a moderating role in predicting sexual aggression, with high empathy being a protective factor (Abbey, Parkhill, BeShears, Clinton-Sherrrod, & Zawacki, 2006; Wheeler, George, & Dahl, 2002).

**Nonrelational Sexuality**

Traditional masculinity demands that men prove their manhood by having frequent, impersonal sexual relations with many different women. These women are treated as
conquests rather than as people. The archetypical example is the Don Juan character (Mandel, 1996), who seduced and manipulated women, leaving them damaged and hurt. A similarly cavalier attitude was seen in Boswell and Spade’s (1996) ethnographic study. They found that men from high risk fraternities (i.e., those that were seen by members of the college community as being less safe for women) bragged to their friends about their sexual conquests from the previous night. This attitude toward women, and toward sexuality, would be expected to be associated with sexual assault, and studies support this theoretical prediction. For example, Yost and Zurbriggen (2006) found that men high in sociosexuality (those who believe that sex without love is acceptable and who have multiple sexual partners) expressed greater endorsement of rape myths and also reported more perpetration of sexual aggression. Thinking of sexuality as a game is also linked to attitudes conducive to rape (Russell & Oswald, 2002; Sarwer, Kalichman, Johnson, Early, & Ali, 1993). Hypermasculinity (a multidimensional construct that includes sexually calloused attitudes) was correlated with sexual aggression perpetration ($r = .28$) in Murnen et al.’s (2002) meta-analysis.

The importance of nonrelational sexuality in predicting sexual aggression is confirmed by its central place in several important theories of rape perpetration. For example, Malanuth and colleagues’ (1991, 1995) confluence model of sexual aggression perpetration has two paths: hostility toward women and promiscuity. The latter path describes men who prefer having numerous casual sexual encounters rather than engaging in sexual relations as part of a committed relationship. Sexual promiscuity predicts sexual assault perpetration both cross-sectionally and longitudinally (Malanuth et al., 1995).

**Dominance/Power/Control**

The need to control others and hold power is a risk factor for aggression in general and for rape in particular. Zurbriggen (2000) found a correlation between power motivation (a concern with having impact and control) and coercive sexual behaviors. More generally, Murnen et al. (2002) found an average correlation of .27 (across 12 studies) between sexual aggression perpetration and the belief that men should have dominance over women in sexual relationships.

Goldberg (1979) described distrust of others and the willingness and ability to manipulate them as a component of traditional masculine ideology that relates to power and control. Burt’s (1980) Adversarial Sexual Beliefs (ASB) scale measures the belief that romantic relationships are fundamentally based on exploitation and that the other sex cannot be trusted. Murnen et al. (2002) found an average correlation between ASB and sexual aggression perpetration of .19 in the 16 studies that measured it. Qualitative studies also support this finding. For example, Polaschek and Gannon (2004) found that 65% of male rapists’ accounts of their offense expressed the belief that women are dangerous, manipulative, and untrustworthy.

**MASCUrine SOCIALIZATION, WAR, AND SOLDIERING**

Many scholars have argued that traditional elements of masculinity are valued by the military and reinforced in military training (e.g., Addelston & Stirratt, 1996; Brandy, 2003; Enloe, 1983). Initial socialization experiences in basic training are centrally connected to masculinity: “Masculinity...becomes the major emphasis of basic training” (Arkin & Dobrofsky, 1978, p. 157). A similar framework is experienced by those entering military academies. Adams (1984, p. 528), writing about the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, said “the socialization process in cadet training can be described accurately by masculine or agentic role characteristics.”

An examination of military recruitment advertisements further suggests that key elements of traditional masculinity (including toughness, aggression, and adventurousness) are valued. J. Katz (2002) discussed some of the ways in which these advertisements construct masculinity and rely on masculinity threat to be effective. The implicit question in many advertisements is “Are you man enough?” Advertisements for other products also link masculinity and the military, suggesting that this connection is part of the broader social culture. One example is cigarette advertisements featuring brand symbol Joe Camel in a fighter pilot jacket with military planes nearby.

In this section, I provide conceptual arguments for the plausibility of a causal link between traditional masculinity and war, and I review the evidence that exists to support these conclusions. As in the previous section, I organize my argument around the dimensions of masculinity presented in Table 1. Of these dimensions, I hypothesize that five are most relevant for creating an effective combat soldier: Status and Achievement, Toughness and Aggression, Restricted Emotionality, Self-Reliance, and Dominance/Power/Control. Various sub-categories within each dimension are also hypothesized to be relevant.

**Status and Achievement**

A concern with status implies a familiarity and comfort with hierarchy and “pecking orders.” Being socialized to accept a hierarchical structure is part of traditional masculine socialization (Cheng, 1999; Kilmartin, 2010, p. 148), with the result that properly socialized men know their place within a status hierarchy—whether that hierarchy is part of a multinational corporation, a street gang, or a fraternal organization. Of course, few organizations have such a formally articulated and strictly enforced hierarchy as the military. The “chain of command” is a fundamental part of military culture and the instantiation of military authority (Jaffe, 1984). An important part of the socialization that occurs
during military indoctrination is to learn the vital importance of obeying the orders of superior officers, generally without question (Gal, 1986; P. Katz, 1990), and to conform to official norms and attitudes (Arkin & Dobrofsky, 1978). Soldiers who do not respect the hierarchy—who question authority and refuse to obey orders—can endanger themselves and others during combat. The military functions most efficiently when it comprises individuals who will obey and respect the hierarchy (Fogarty, 2000). For this reason, basic training stresses the importance of hierarchy (Arkin & Dobrofsky, 1978; P. Katz, 1990; Shatan, 1974), building on a belief that is already firmly in place for a traditionally socialized man. This training seems to be effective in instilling these beliefs. In a study comparing civilian students with students in military academies and those enrolled in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), Kurpius and Lucart (2000) found that male military students reported greater acceptance of the status/hierarchy norm, in comparison with male civilian students.

The objectification of others that is often linked to hierarchical social systems clearly plays an important role in preparing soldiers to injure and kill others. Dehumanization and objectification of the enemy are necessary preconditions to killing (Arendt, 1964; Opotow, 2005). Such objectification can include feminization (Zurbriggen, 2008), the use of generally derogatory labels, or equating the enemy with animals or insects. For example, during the first Gulf War, a U.S. Marine Lieutenant Colonel described watching Iraqi troops from his plane: “It was like turning on the kitchen light late at night and the cockroaches started scurrying . . . We finally got them out where we could find them and kill them” (Fisk, 1991, p. 379).

**Toughness and Aggression**

As shown in Table 1, the elements of toughness and aggression include adventurousness, athletic prowess, physical size and strength, willingness to take physical risks, and being capable of committing violence. In spite of the advanced technology used in modern warfare, infantry combat still depends on size, strength, and athleticism (Chandrasekaran, 2010). Thus, effectiveness as a soldier would be enhanced by physical strength and endurance. For that reason, passing a physical fitness test is a requirement for service in the U.S. military (Ellin, 2005). The importance of athleticism and physicality was shown in a study by Adams (1984), in which leadership ratings of West Point cadets were correlated with their performance on a physical fitness test and with positive attitudes toward physical activity. Arkin and Dobrofsky (1978) also reported that screening of military recruits focused mostly on physical characteristics, suggesting that physical prowess is considered highly important. Students attending military academies reported stronger acceptance of the male role norm of toughness than did civilian students (Kurpius & Lucart, 2000).

Because killing the enemy is one of the important goals of warfare, soldiers must be capable of committing violent acts. Traditional masculine socialization teaches men that violence is manly and that walking away from violence, or finding a nonviolent compromise, marks a man as a cowardly “sissy.” Men who have internalized this hypermasculine, macho script believe that violence is not just acceptable, but is actually preferable (Mosher & Sirk, 1984).

Goldstein (2001, p. 7) argued that the capacity for killing does not come naturally, but must be cultivated and encouraged. Huggins, Haritos-Fatouros, and Zimbardo (2002) made a similar point when discussing the grooming process that must occur to produce individuals who are capable of committing torture. Hypermasculine men, who embrace the belief that real men commit violence, have already been socialized in this direction. It seems likely that it will require less effort to train them to kill than to do so to someone who has a strong conviction against violence and whose sense of identity as a man does not depend on being violent.

**Restricted Emotionality**

Although restrictive emotionality can have negative consequences for mental health (Good et al., 1995), it can be highly adaptive for a soldier. Feeling stoic (as opposed to panicked) is a helpful defense mechanism when one is injured. Stoicism also makes it unlikely that a soldier will question the status quo, even when it is unpleasant. Such a soldier will be less likely to question the purpose or goals of a war, even in the face of personal suffering or loss. Similarly, fear is a natural response to an immediate, life-threatening danger, but although fleeing from danger is a typical (and rational) response to fear, it is an emotion in combat that is counterproductive to larger military goals. Soldiers who do not experience fear—or more to the point, whose identity rests on not revealing to other men that they are afraid—can be relied upon to set their own personal safety aside during battle.

The role of empathy may be particularly relevant. Military training seeks to inhibit empathy (Cortright, 2006; Pershing, 2006) because it could be life threatening in a combat situation. One method of doing so is through haz ing and humiliation rituals that extinguish feelings of empathy for others (Pershing, 2006; Snyder, 2003). One Israeli medic described a process of desensitization to the effects of violence that was part of his training: “[T]hey show you pictures of horrible things. Victims of accidents, smashed limbs, smashed people. They show this to you so that you get accustomed to all this kind of stuff” (Sasson-Levy, 2008, p. 308). Empathy toward the enemy during actual deployment is often ridiculed (Mejia, 2007). If, instead of being taught to suppress their feelings of compassion, soldiers were trained to honor and respect the humanity of the enemy, it would likely make them less able to kill, and therefore, less effective as soldiers.
Self-Reliance

Self-reliance is an important aspect of traditional masculinity. It includes being competent to take care of oneself and fix problems; it results in a situation where one does not have to ask others for help; and at its most extreme, it allows for a repression of basic human needs such as sleep, water, and adequate nutrition (Goldberg, 1979). Self-reliance is likely to be helpful in combat, given that privation and shortages occur (Chandrasekaran, 2010) and that backup support may not be available. For example, in the first few years of the second Gulf War, U.S. soldiers and units in Iraq who were equipped with inadequately armored vehicles constructed makeshift armor scrounged from scrap metal (Moss, 2005). One sergeant expressed this theme, stating, “As marines, we are always taught that we do more with less and get the job done no matter what it takes” (Moss, 2005, para. 8).

Dominance/Power/Control

War is an act of power, at both the geopolitical and individual levels. Thus, it is not surprising that political leaders with high levels of power motivation (i.e., a chronic concern with impact and control) are more likely to enter a war (Winter, 1980, 1987). Winter (2007) also found that power motivation was high in political crises that resulted in war, as compared to matched crises that resulted in peace. Similarly, individual soldiers with high levels of power motivation, or belief systems that embrace the idea that some should dominate over others, might be more successful or tenacious.

In addition, some of the subcomponents of this aspect of masculine ideology would be predicted to improve performance and survival for individual soldiers. Distrust of others, in particular, is a survival skill that most soldiers quickly learn. Regaining trust after returning to civilian life is difficult for many combat veterans and leads to problems in relationships (Herman, 1997). The ability to manipulate others (e.g., the enemy) is also likely to have survival value.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the previous sections of this article, I reviewed the arguments and empirical evidence supporting the theoretical model: that rape and war are associated because masculine socialization is one of the causes of both. That review, summarized in Table 1, suggests that whereas most dimensions of masculinity are implicated in both rape and war, a few dimensions are relevant to only one or the other. In this concluding section, I have several goals. First, I describe a meta-theoretical perspective of my theoretical model, focusing at the macro level on underlying motivations and implications. Second, I sketch a more detailed version of the model that builds on the dimensional representation of masculinity outlined earlier. As part of that theorizing, I describe future directions for psychological research, ending with implications and recommendations.

Macro-Level Meta-Theoretical Perspective

The research and scholarship I reviewed previously supports the proposed theoretical model: that traditional masculinity, as currently constructed, is one of the causes of both rape and war. This model is silent, however, on the reasons why this form of masculinity is so prevalent, historically, culturally, and individually (traditional masculinity is an exogenous variable in the model). I suggest a possible answer: that most societies construct masculinity in the particular hegemonic form outlined in Table 1 because they want the capability to wage war, either in self-defense or as a means of conquest. A society that trains its members (whether male or female) to eschew the values of traditional masculinity (including toughness, aggression, tolerance of violence, respect for hierarchy, restricted emotionality, dominance and power, and self-reliance) will not be able to train soldiers to kill, nor to wage war effectively.

This explanation for the root cause of traditional/hegemonic masculinity, if correct, suggests that fundamental change in the means of negotiating conflicts between societies will be necessary if different, less violent forms of masculinity are to emerge and gain ascendance. The implications for rape prevention are also clear. Because traditional masculinity is an important cause of rape perpetration, rape cannot be eliminated if this form of masculinity remains dominant. However, as long as the United States and most other societies rely on warfare as a means for responding to geopolitical conflict, this form of masculinity must, and will, remain dominant. Thus, rape prevention efforts are linked in a very fundamental way with anti-war activism. If the latter does not succeed, then, ultimately, the former cannot either.

Model Specificity and Future Directions

I presented the theoretical model at a high level of generality. However, my review made the model more specific by focusing on the underlying dimensions of masculinity. As this model is developed in further research, it will be desirable to make it even more concrete and specific in order that testable hypotheses can be generated and researched.

Many of the efforts in that direction can build on the dimensions of masculinity outlined in Table 1. Each cell in the last two columns of the table is, in essence, a testable hypothesis: that dimension of masculinity is, or is not, predicted to be causally related to rape or war. Some of these predictions are already supported by empirical evidence. For example, several studies have shown that the acceptance of interpersonal violence is a predictor of rape perpetration (Murnen et al., 2002). However, although Murnen et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis clearly demonstrated that traditional masculinity is related to rape perpetration, many of the studies conducted to date have measured...
masculine ideology at a higher level of generality than that described in Table 1. Accordingly, we need studies that will test the specific, individual relationships between each of these dimensions of masculinity and rape-supportive attitudes and/or sexual aggression perpetration. The theoretical model is hypothesized to be relevant for male perpetrators; however, its applicability to women is uncertain. Although women are generally subjected to feminine socialization, a notable exception is the masculine socialization that occurs with military training. Further study of the effect of this socialization on women is necessary to discover whether this socialization puts them at greater risk of endorsing and perpetrating sexual aggression; interviews with women in the Israeli military (Sasson-Levy, 2003) and the U. S. Reserve Officer Training Corps (Silva, 2008) suggest that negotiating masculinity and femininity within the military is a complex and sometimes contradictory process for women.

Testing the meta-theoretical argument outlined above is more challenging but should be possible, at least in a limited way. The argument is that desire for war readiness (by a society or its leaders) is an important cause (and, therefore, an antecedent) of traditional masculine socialization. One prediction that derives from this argument is that an increase in attitudes supportive of war would precede an increased focus on hegemonic masculinity and masculinity threat. A specific example concerns the period immediately following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. The prediction is that indicators of traditional/hegemonic masculinity (e.g., in advertisements for volunteers for the military) should lag war rhetoric in political speeches—a hypothesis that could be tested with time series analytic techniques.

Conclusions, Caveats, and Recommendations

The analysis outlined above suggests that, as long as there continues to be a need (real or perceived) for soldiers and war, rape can never be eliminated. This conclusion is distressing, because virtually every developed society continues to believe that military might is necessary for self-defense and to achieve and protect national security. (Costa Rica is a notable counter-example [Bird, 1984.]) The United States, for example, devotes a large percentage of its federal budget to the military and is currently fighting ground wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as a more amorphous “war on terror.” If we assume that the need for soldiers is universal and that war is inevitable, then are high rates of rape inevitable as well? The theoretical model I described and supported in this article supports this conclusion. However, it is worth exploring ways in which the military might be able to train effective soldiers who are not at risk for committing rape. Such military socialization methods, if they exist, would potentially be relevant to masculine socialization and rape prevention more broadly.

One potential alternative socialization method focuses on increased compartmentalization. For example, military training could emphasize the “officer and gentleman” model—training soldiers to kill in self-defense (or group-defense) when necessary, but to be “gentle men” in all other situations (and particularly toward women). Toughness, aggression, restricted emotionality, and the other dimensions of masculinity important for effective performance as a soldier would be activated during combat but “turned off” at other times. This strategy has been pursued by many (perhaps most) military groups, with strict rules of engagement meant to create boundaries and to ensure that violence is directed only toward the enemy, rather than more diffusely. Lower rates of sexual violence during some conflicts may be due partly to this type of compartmentalization (Wood, 2006), but the high prevalence of rape and sexual harassment within all branches of the U.S. military (Corbett, 2007), however, suggests that this strategy does not always work well. Nor would gender scholars expect it to work. Given that gender identity is a deeply foundational component of the self (Martin & Ruble, 2010), it is unsurprising that it is not easily switched on or off. A vivid
example of the failure of one Marine to compartmentalize was described by Orbach (2009, pp. 155–156):

He tried to hold on to his heart through his sweetheart, Rosa Mae. She symbolized love, softness and comfort. That “sweetheart package” was what the marines offered their men as a counterpoint to the brutality. But for Jerry, and for many other marines and soldiers, the rehumanization hadn’t quite worked. He was at war with the tender part of himself. The capacity to have loving relationships had degraded. It wasn’t easy to marshal one part of oneself and not another.... he couldn’t sequester bits of himself off quite so neatly (italics added).

A different strategy relies on the truism that behavior is always a result of a person-by-situation interaction. Even though dispositional factors (such as traditional masculinity) might make rape perpetration more likely, it will only occur if the appropriate situational factors are present. Such situational forces might include the consumption of alcohol (Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, & McAulson, 1996; Mahoney, Shively, & Traw, 1986), peer pressure (Mahoney et al., 1986), pornography use (Vega & Malamuth, 2007), norms promulgated by military comrades or superiors (Wood, 2006), or a climate of ethnic prejudice (Murthi, 2009). If the most important situational factors can be identified and minimized or eliminated, then rape rates would likely decline, even if most men embraced traditional socialization. Unfortunately, the situational moderators that have been identified to date tend to be ones that are widely present in society and, in some cases, increasingly so. For example, pornography consumption has increased due to its ready availability via the internet (Brown & L’Engle, 2009).

Another possible strategy would involve modifying masculine (and military) socialization to retain the elements that are necessary to produce effective soldiers but to eliminate aspects of traditional masculinity that are associated with risk for rape perpetration and are less relevant to the creation of efficient and effective soldiers. These aspects of masculinity are hypothesized to include femininity avoidance and nonrelational sexuality (see Table 1). The problem with this approach is that the various elements of traditional masculinity are interwoven to such a great extent that it may prove impossible to disentangle the individual threads. Moreover, theorists (e.g., O’Neil, 1981; 2008) have argued that femininity avoidance is the most important element of traditional masculinity. Indeed, O’Neil (2008) argues that femininity avoidance undergirds, and in some sense causes, all other aspects of traditional masculinity: Masculine socialization is built on boys’ and men’s terror of being labeled a “sissy” or a girl. If that single element was extricated, all of traditional masculinity would tumble, including the elements that are necessary for effective soldiering.

A different problem exists for nonrelational sexuality. It seems likely that nonrelational sexuality derives from several of the other fundamental pieces of traditional masculinity, especially restricted emotionality, aggression, and femininity avoidance (i.e., misogyny and hostility toward women). If several of these other pieces of masculine socialization are necessary for war-making, and therefore remain part of our normative constructions of masculinity, then nonrelational sexuality will continue to be common, even though it does not serve a direct purpose in war. In other words, even though it is not necessary, it cannot be eliminated.

In sum, although it might theoretically be possible to use one of these strategies to reduce rape while continuing to embrace masculine socialization, in practice, this outcome would likely be very difficult. However, any military organization that seeks to minimize rape of civilians or female soldiers would likely want to explore these strategies because they represent the best possibilities available at the present time.

Peace Work, Rape Prevention, and a New Masculinity

One of the implications of my analysis is that peace work and rape prevention are intimately intertwined. Efforts aimed at developing new strategies for global political interaction, ones that leave war behind as a failed experiment, will (if successful) eliminate the need for soldiers and the larger military apparatus. With this need eliminated, masculine socialization will no longer be necessary or useful. Because only the negative consequences of masculinity would then remain, it should be possible to embrace new forms of masculinity that are healthier for men, for women, and for the planet.

Similarly, my analysis suggests that rape prevention programs aimed at educating men about hostile masculinity and other elements of traditional masculinity may, in addition to reducing rape, also contribute to global peace. When men leave behind restricted emotionality, toughness and aggression, and dominance and control, they are less likely to join the military as a means for proving their manhood.

Efforts to socialize boys differently will likely have multiple payoffs, including a decrease in sexual aggression and rape as well as a reduced likelihood of war. In the end, the greatest benefits may be obtained by working simultaneously to end war, to end rape, and to allow men to inhabit a new masculinity that embraces their full humanity.

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