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A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction

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by

Robert James Mobley

2019

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Managing One's Queer Identity While Serving in the U.S. Military: How Queer Migration that Does Not Choice Impacts the Way in Which Queer Servicemembers Identify Throughout Their Military Career

by

Robert James Mobley

Master of Arts in Geography

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Adam D. Moore, Chair

Using auto-ethnographic methods coupled with social media analysis of a secret Facebook group that contains personal accounts of active military junior officers, this work brings in conversation this data with theory that currently comprises the framework of queer migration. Much has been written on the movement to strike down the DADT policy; not much thought has been given to the aftermath post its abolishment. Although the repeal of DADT was a relief for many queer servicemembers, several still live as if DADT was law, due in large part to the management of their career of coming out as a result of where they may or may not be spatially located physically and within the ranks. This work examines how queer U.S. servicemembers' lives are impacted by mobility coupled with lack of choice.

The thesis of Robert James Mobley is approved.

John A. Agnew

Juan C. Herrera

Adam D. Moore, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

To the men and women of the U.S. Military who have silently served and/or continue to silently serve.

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Introduction:

Growing up in the rural South, the idea of mobility was one that was always intriguing. Despite the perceived hospitality and excellent cuisine, the South has not been a welcoming environment for queer people. While growing up I did not necessarily admit to myself that I belonged to the queer community, I knew enough to know that this was not someplace that I wanted to remain. As such, I combined the idea of the military along with college to provide the opportunity to depart from the South. Although the military is not the best place for one to be queer as a young adult, the idea of attending a prestigious service academy with the promise of a career that would take me all over the world was enough to convince me this was something worthwhile. Attending the Air Force Academy, I finally came out to my close friends and myself. Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) was in effect, but I was still able to be more open about my sexuality living in Colorado than I ever could in Georgia. This idea of mobility; allowing the military to send me to places that are more open to queer people than that of where I grew up was a promising idea. After the repeal of DADT was enacted shortly after graduating, I thought that was the last obstacle to living a happy gay life. Little did I know that continually moving, the very thing that attracted me to military service would be the very obstacle that I would spend most of my career grappling with in terms of my ability to fully realize the idea of exiting the closet.

It is a fact that members of the U.S. military lead highly mobile lives; both figuratively and metaphorically. One must be able to relocate to wherever duty requires. Moreover, one strives to move up the ranks as more experience is gleaned throughout their military career. This thesis examines the ways in which this spatial dependence shapes how one feels, behaves, and is treated within the U.S. military depending on their sexual orientation. Using auto-ethnographic

methods coupled with social media analysis of a secret Facebook group that contains personal accounts of active military junior officers, this work brings in conversation this data with theory that currently comprises the framework of queer migration. Existing literature has focused on the movement to strike down the Clinton Administration's discriminatory DADT policy; not much thought has been given to the aftermath post its abolishment. Although the repeal of DADT was a relief for many queer servicemembers, several still live as if DADT was law, due in large part to the management of their career of coming out as a result of where they may or may not be spatially located physically and within the ranks. I intend to fill in this gap by examining the lives queer U.S. servicemembers; how they live and how the lack of choice coupled with mobility is not addressed in current queer migration literature.

The first section of this paper outlines the history of gay servicemembers in the military focusing in particular on the legal frameworks that regulated their place within the institution. Beginning with the early days of the military through post World War II, no official language banning homosexual servicemembers existed across the services. However, that does not mean there were no concerted efforts to rid homosexual servicemembers from the ranks. Post World War II and shortly after the creation of the Department of the Defense (which replaced the Department of War), directives banning homosexual servicemembers were published. The enforcement of such directives ebbed and flowed depending on the personnel needs as the nation negotiated several wars. After the Vietnam era, a more concerted effort was put forth by the department to bar homosexuals from actively serving. This era included the investigative arms of each of the services conducting undercover stings to locate homosexuals who were actively serving. The Clinton Administration's passage of the DADT began the era of closeted service.

Post DADT shepherded in the age of open service for lesbian, gay, and bisexual servicemembers, but still does not permit the open service of transgendered members.

The second section of this paper situates my research questions within the literature surrounding queer migration and coming out/queer identity. This section briefly outlines the main arguments that comprise the queer migration literature. It also details key conceptualizations of the coming out process. The third section of this paper explains what it is like to manage a queer identity while serving in the United States military, especially in relation to mobility. The fourth section provides further personal accounts of what it means to navigate bosses and colleagues within the military institution. Following this I illustrate some of the difficulties experienced by homosexual servicemembers within the communities in which they are forced to migrate. This research challenges queer migration literature, which assumes mobility by queer people is because of choice.

History of LGB service in the U.S. military:

Today's military can trace its beginning to 14 June 1775 when the Continental Congress authorized the enlistment of riflemen to serve the United Colonies for a period of one year in what was the newly created United States Army (Wright 1983). The ratification of the U.S. Constitution further solidified the establishment of the military. Specifically, Article I, Section 8 prescribed Congress to establish a permanent standing military.[1] During this time up until World War II, the military did not have an established written policy barring homosexuals from military service. However, that does not mean homosexuals were welcome. One of the first documented

[1] To provide and maintain a Navy; To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces; To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions; To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress.

cases illustrating this involves the prosecution and discharge of Lt Frederick Gotthold Enslin in a court-martial on charges of sodomy and perjury on 10 March 1778 (Shilts 2005).[2]

After World War II Congress set out to transform the US military into an institution postured not as an aggressive "war is policy by other means" (Howard and Paret 1984) force, but one that should serve as a strategic defense force. The National Security Act of 1947 transformed the military into the five branches we have today along with its hierarchical framework. The act renamed the Department of War the Department of the Army, merged the Department of the Army with the Department of the Navy to create the Department of Defense, established the position of Secretary of Defense, established the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and created the United States Air Force as a separate branch of the armed forces. Shortly after its creation, the newly formed Department of Defense in 1949 codified a standard policy that, "Homosexual personnel, irrespective of sex, should not be permitted to serve in any branch of the Armed Forces in any capacity, and prompt separation of known homosexuals from the Armed Forces is mandatory" (Berube 1990).[3] Although this was the first instance of language that explicitly barred homosexuals from serving, when personnel needs increased due to combat, the military developed a habit of relaxing its pre-screening criteria. This is evident in several examples including Tom Dooley, a Navy medical doctor who received fame for his service and anti-communist views during Vietnam (Shilts 2005), Harvey Milk who served in the Navy during the Korean War and later became the Mayor of San Francisco and a famous gay-rights activist (Shilts 2005), and Leonard Matlovich who came out on the cover of Time magazine in 1975 and

[2] Since the establishment of the Continental Army in 1775, sodomy has been illegal and remains so to this day, despite the landmark 2003 Supreme Court case of *Lawrence v. Texas,* which essentially ruled that laws that outlawed sodomy are unconstitutional. The current language that outlaws sodomy is contained within the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) Article 125: (a) Any person subject to this chapter who engages in unnatural carnal copulation with another person of the same or opposite sex or with an animal is guilty of sodomy. Penetration, however slight, is sufficient to complete the offense; (b) Any person found guilty of sodomy shall be punished as a court-martial may direct. While there have been no contemporary examples of a person being prosecuted solely under this law, it remains at the disposal of military commanders.

[3] This was period of mounting red-baiting hysteria at the beginning of the Cold War. Oftentimes, homosexuality was associated with communism, or assumed to make government employees susceptible to communist blackmail schemes.

who was a purple heart and bronze star recipient as an Air Force servicemember during Vietnam. While all of these people later separated or were forced out because of their sexual orientation, these examples clearly show the US military's flexible nature of allowing homosexuals to serve in times of extreme need.

After the Vietnam War and the transition to an all-volunteer force, and in response to Matlovich's court case, which in 1980 ordered him reinstated into the United States Air Force and promoted with back pay (Shilts 2005), the US military issued DOD Directive 1332.14 in 1981 which changed to nature of its ban on homosexuals in the service.[4] This new policy led to the active seeking out of homosexuals by the various military branch investigative federal law enforcement services, such as the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and the Army Criminal Investigation Command. During this period, the military actively hunted homosexual servicemembers. As one colleague recently recounted to me, "I can take you to several friends that spent over a year in Leavenworth because some people in power thought they were less than human and not fit to deserve equal rights to their straight brothers and sisters in Arms." The individual described this as the "Witch Hunt Era."

When President Clinton was elected in 1992, he promised to end the ban on homosexual service in the U.S. Military. While a complete ban did not come to fruition, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994 (Pub. L. 103-160) amended Title 10 of United States Code, Section 654 (10. U.S. Code § 654) in a way that relaxed the ban on homosexual service in the armed forces of the United States of America.[5]

[4] Homosexuality is incompatible with military service. The presence in the military environment of persons who engage in homosexual conduct or who, by their statements, demonstrate a propensity to engage in homosexual conduct, seriously impairs the accomplishment of the military mission. The presence of such members adversely affects the ability of the armed forces to maintain discipline, good order, and morale; to foster mutual trust and confidence among service members; to ensure the integrity of the system of rank and command; to facilitate assignment and worldwide deployment of service members who frequently must live and work in close conditions affording minimal privacy; to recruit and retain members of the armed forces; to maintain the public acceptability of military service; and to prevent breaches of security.

[5] The new law codified that a member of the armed forces may only be separated if:

The practical result of the new language in the law resulted in Department of Defense Directive 1304.26, i.e., Don't Ask, Don't Tell. As a result, the military could not ask a member of the armed forces about their sexual orientation and that member could not be forced to tell their superiors their sexual orientation. The experiences of homosexual services members during this time, the experiences varied. Several colleagues I know recount being out to their units with no negative consequences. Others, such as Reichen Lehmkuhl remember being outed, harassed and hazed while at the U.S. Air Force Academy (Lehmkuhl 2007). My experience of being outed to my commander while at the U.S. Air Force Academy did not affect my retention because my commander did not feel like my sexual orientation disqualified me from military service. Regardless, under this policy (1993-2010), more than 13,000 individuals were discharged for nothing other than their sexual orientation (UCLA William's Institute 2010).

It was not until the 2010 Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act was passed and became fully effective in 2011 that openly homosexual (lesbian, gay and bisexual) servicemembers were legally allowed to serve in the armed forces of the United States. Even though this law became effective over seven years ago, much difficulty still disproportionately affects these servicemembers, as I discuss below.

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(1) That the member has engaged in, attempted to engage in, or solicited another to engage in a homosexual act or acts unless there are further findings, made and approved in accordance with procedures set forth in such regulations, that the member has demonstrated that (A) such conduct is a departure from the member's usual and customary behavior; (B) such conduct, under all the circumstances, is unlikely to recur; (C) such conduct was not accomplished by use of force, coercion, or intimidation; (D) under the particular circumstances of the case, the member's continued presence in the armed forces is consistent with the interests of the armed forces in proper discipline, good order, and morale; and (E) The member does not have a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts.
(2) That the member has stated that he or she is a homosexual or bisexual, or words to that effect, unless there is a further finding, made and approved in accordance with procedures set forth in the regulations, that the member has demonstrated that he or she is not a person who engages in, attempts to engage in, has a propensity to engage in, or intends to engage in homosexual acts.
(3) That the member has married or attempted to marry a person known to be of the same biological sex.

Literature review:

My research interrogates the literature surrounding mobility, more specifically queer migration. Queer migration literature centers on describing the displacement experienced by queer people as the result of a choice to experience life that does not persecute their sexuality. However, not every time a queer person is displaced is that displacement due to a choice. Queer migration largely is silent on this issue. I begin with the conceptualization of coming at that is used in this paper. Nicholas Guittar (2013) argues that "in the most basic sense, coming out may refer to the self-affirmation of one's sexuality and/or any outward disclosures of one's sexuality—and it is oftentimes cited as including both of these interactions." Across the wide range of literature that addresses coming out, it is generally described as a process that is comprised of a series of "stages." One of the most often cited models (Cass 1979) establishes "a number of stages which resonate with the experiences documented in many qualitative studies of coming out" (Guittar and Rayburn 2015; 338). Nathaniel Lewis (2012; 212) notes that while many psychological models have defined coming out as a life course event (Floyd and Bakeman 2006) that affects relationships (Cant 2005), social support systems (Barker et al. 2006), and the emotional well-being of those who navigate this process (Flowers and Buston 2001; Lewis 2009), these mostly harken back to the Cass (1979) model, which has long framed coming out as a primarily internal process of sexual identity development, characterized by an abstract set of stages such "identity confusion" and "sexual experimentation." Models such as these suggest that coming out is a unidirectional process. Much like a checklist or recipe, once one moves through all stages of the process one will achieve sexuality based self-actualization.

Recent studies have begun to rethink coming out as a multidimensional occurrence that includes point-in-time events as well as a gradual process (Appleby 2001; Johnson 2008; Yon-

Leau and Munoz-Laboy 2010). Nicholas Guittar and Rachel Rayburn (2015) suggest that the temporal dimension of coming out has also largely been ignored. Specifically, they argue that

> The management of one's identity—affirming it, deciding when to speak of it, when to deflect, when to compartmentalize—are all central to coming out. All of these internal interactions discussed …resonate with Goffman's work on the career of mental health patients (1959) and his work on the management of a discreditable stigma (1974), and they reflect some important elements of the 'homosexual career' as asserted by Plummer (1975). (347)

Take for instance my own experience. Growing up in the Deep South, being a gay person in general, and more specifically in high school, was not something that was widely supported. I can remember the constant ostracization of the only out student that attended our high school. As such, I wrestled with deep feelings and confusion during the formative years of my adolescence. I knew I found guys to be sexually attractive, but I discounted those feelings as being wrong, temporary, and inappropriate because my environment did not accept those feelings and the actions that resulted from those feelings as normal. The same debate went with me to college when I attended a military academy. As I progressed through the highly regimented, conscripted, and conservative curriculum of a military academy, the feelings of sexual and emotional attractiveness to men because less temporary and more permanent. However, the perceived wrongness of such feelings also remained, to the point that I remained in the closet throughout the majority of my time at the academy.

As Guittar and Rayburn (2015; 354) point out, "even the most 'out' people will find themselves in new environments, around new people," hence their emphasis on homosexual identity as a career that has to be managed, rather than a one-time process of coming out. The

following is an excerpt from an interview they conducted with an undergraduate at a regional university in the state of Florida in which the interviewee (Adam) shares his concerns about transitioning to the less gay-friendly life of the professional world

> I do know that once I get into the upper echelon of the working world, it's like, even now, I work for two gay lawyers so it's not even an issue there, but once I do step out of that big, gay bubble, I do anticipate to have that conversation a lot more, which would be a lot easier if they would just go ahead and pass ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act) (354).

Florida is a state that does not offer employment protections on the basis of sexuality. As such "Adam perceived that he would have to engage in a greater degree of identity management once he graduated" (354). Another example they provide is Athena, a 44-year-old who identifies as a lesbian: "You're always kind of coming out. Every time you're in a new situation where you need to mention who you are, you're coming out again'' (347). Guittar and Rayburn argue that this perception

> Resonates with Orne's (2011) concept of 'strategic outness,' means that coming out is comprised of limitless ebbs and flows. For example, an individual may affirm a gay identity, share her sexuality with those who matter most, and come out at work only to be relocated to another city by her employer. The woman will encounter new coworkers and likely establish a new network of friends, after which she will face similar decisions of whether or not to come out to others" (347-8).

Furthermore, they posit that

> Adam's experiences also serve as a clear demonstration of how coming out is still oftentimes a matter of managing a discreditable social stigma (Goffman 1974). If sexual

> minorities were no longer stigmatized in society coming out would become a non-issue—that is, there would be nothing socially significant to 'out.' Until sexuality ceases to be a socially divisive characteristic, LGB(Q) people will continue to manage careers of coming out" (354).

This conceptualization of coming out as a career is most important when examining LGB life in the U.S. military. While the oppressive DADT law has been repealed, there is still very much a stigma that is attached to LGB servicemembers; a stigma that is more oppressive to the everyday lives of these servicemembers than that of civilians such as Adam and Athena. Conceptualizing "coming out" not as a deterministic, staged process, but as an ever-evolving continuous process that regresses and transgresses depending on one's position and location within life, is useful for understanding the intricacies of military life for queer servicemembers.

Another body of literature that informs this thesis deals with that of what one might consider the closet. As Eve Sedgwick suggests, the closet "is the defining structure of gay oppression this century" (1990; 71). More to the point, "the closet is a term used to describe the denial, concealment, erasure, or ignorance of lesbians and gay men" (Brown 2000; 1). It is important to note that the closet is not just a metaphorical space. As Michael Brown writes, "listen to how men describe their subject position being in the closet. It is not merely a metaphorical space (though it certainly is that). It is a way their physical geographies are demarcated" (2000; 46). Think back to when I described my adolescent youth in the Deep South, or how Adam's experience on a college campus differentiated from his feared treatment in a professional setting in the state of Florida, a state that does not have any employment discrimination protections with regard to sexual orientation. The closet, thus, is defined by and how LGB individuals demarcate their lives based on where they live and among whom they

circulate professionally and personally. While it is true that same-sex marriage is legal in all 50 states it remains more or less difficult to fully exit the closet based on the customs, norms, and courtesies of a given location. Moreover, while the United States supports a highly mobile citizenry (one can easily travel between and reside in any of the 50 states), it still does not absolve the "national closet" that many feel bound within.

We now have a deeper understanding of the theoretical frameworks that situate this thesis. It is now time to delve into the literature that I will interrogate, concerning queer migration.[6] According to Andrew Gorman-Murray queer migration does not necessarily refer to the displacement of queers. Rather, "queer migration occurs when the needs or desires of non-heterosexual identities, practices, and performances are implicated in the process of displacement, influencing the decision to leave a certain place or choose a particular destination" (Gorman-Murray 2009; 443). Sexual identity does not need to be the sole factor in migration; other reasons such as economic status, education, and familial background may factor in. However, as long as sexuality plays a central part in driving the motivation of migration, such displacement can be identified as queer migration (Gorman-Murray 2009). Puar, Rushbrook, and Schein (2003) add to this conceptualization of queer migration by arguing that "non-normative sexuality is often tantamount to spatial displacement" (386). Additionally, Brown (2000) suggests that displacement is oftentimes intermingled with sexual identity. "A quite recurrent theme in these narratives was that of having to move to another place to know oneself as gay. It wasn't enough to open the closet door; one had to leave its interior for a different location. (Brown 2000: 48). Knopp (2004) further claims that sexual identities, relationships, and desires are linked with movement in many non-heterosexual lives. There remains more to

[6] In exploring the queer migration literature it is essential to have a basic understanding first of the word queer, because as Sullivan (2003) this is a word that has many different meanings. Borrowing from Fortier (2003) I define queer as the practical term of reference for gay, lesbian, and other non-heterosexual identities.

the dialogue, however than simply discussing that people move because of their non-heterosexual identity.

Building upon the idea of queer migration, Gorman-Murray argues that there is a need to shifting the explanatory power of queer migration away from macro-scale dichotomies such as coast versus interior regions, rural-to-urban relocations, and between an enlightened, liberal, queer-positive West, and a 'backward' developing world (see Binnie 2004; Cant 1997; Puar 2002; Weston 1995) to "the motivations of individual migrants and the movement of the queer body itself through space; we need to 'downsize' the scale of explanation from the regional or the national to the body." (Gorman-Murray 2007: 111). Gorman-Murray's suggestion is useful, but it is worth noting that he focuses solely on queer migration for civilians. This presents a topic of inquiry that remains to be considered. How does one navigate a career of coming out within the specific mobility and institutional frameworks of military life while not necessarily maintaining complete autonomy of their "queer body"?

Managing queer identity in the military:

The above question highlights a fundamental feature of the military environment that shape the management of one's queer identity: A high degree of mobility coupled with limitations of autonomy and choice when it comes to where one lives and who ones' colleagues are. To begin with the issue of mobility, as Rachel Woodward and Neil Jenkings (2014) note, military personnel live and work in an organization in which enforced personal mobility is quite fundamental to the job. Moreover, "in many armed forces there is a level of individualized mobility built into career structures and job rotations…" (Merriman, Peters, Adey, Cresswell, Forsyth, Woodward 2016; 50). For illustrative purposes, I will highlight just my journey

throughout my relatively short career in the military. I joined the military in June 2005 by being admitted into the United States Air Force Academy. As such, I moved from my childhood home in Georgia to Colorado. During my four-plus years at USAFA, I traveled to Brazil for three weeks, Slovakia and the Czech Republic for two-plus weeks, and Connecticut for an entire semester. In 2009, I commissioned as an officer in the United States Air Force and moved to Alabama for my first assignment. My second assignment came in July 2012, which forced me to move from Alabama to North Dakota for three years. In 2015, my third assignment moved me from North Dakota to Boston, Massachusetts. In 2017, I moved from Massachusetts to Los Angles, California, where I have written this thesis. While not all of these movements were mandatory, without any say on my part, the very fact that I had to move was not if my career was to progress.

It bears unpacking at this point what lack of autonomy when it comes to mobility means for an officer in the military. Broadly speaking, officers in each branch of the military, to include the United States Coast Guard, have certain milestones they must meet to progress in rank. If one does not progress in rank at specific timeframes, they are statutorily not permitted to remain in service. To reach these certain milestones, an officer must be flexible in moving to the "right job at the right time." To illustrate this point I will explain what this means for an Air Force officer. Upon commissioning, each officer is assigned an Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC), which is essentially a servicemember's job. Once assigned, the officer is counseled on what roles and activities should be taken and performed to successfully progress to the next level. This is usually done through the use of a career pyramid (Fig 1).

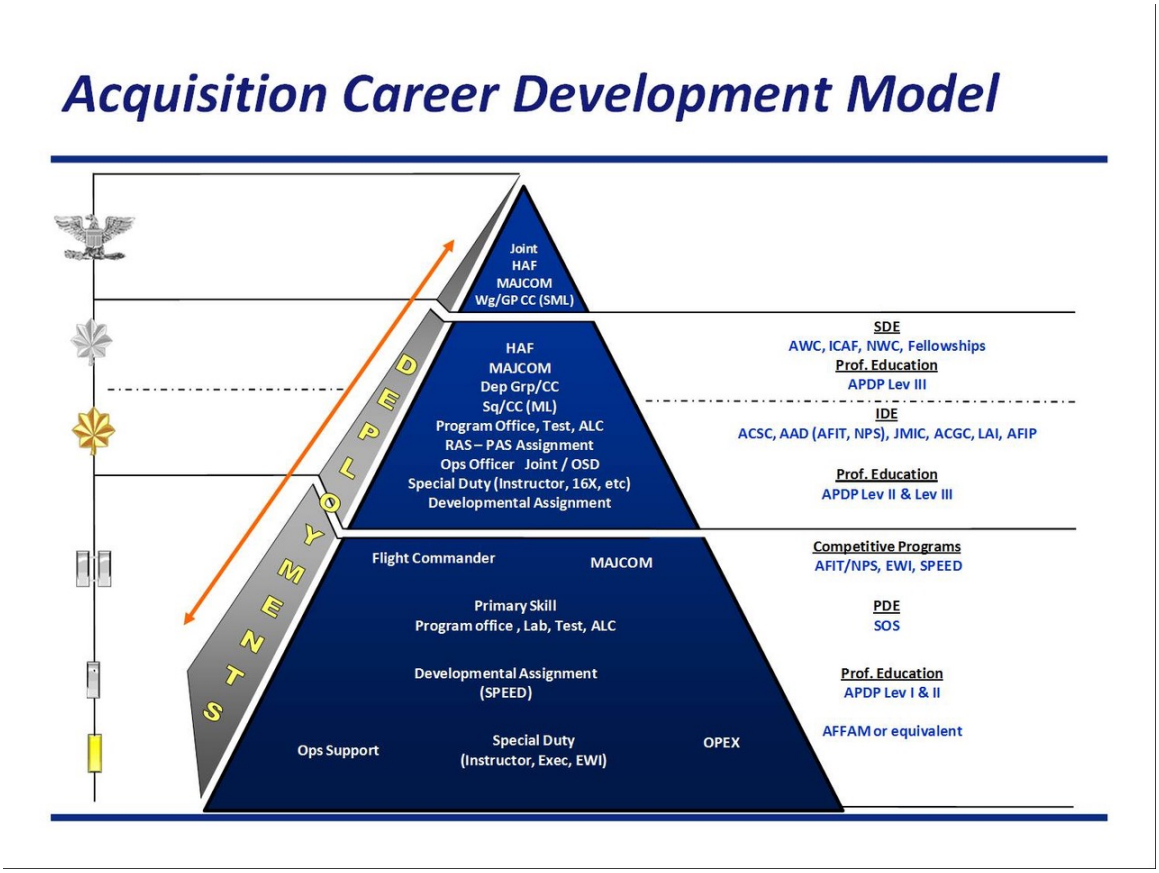

Figure 1: Career pyramid for an Air Force 63A program manager.

It can be safely ascertained that if the officer does not follow the prescribed types of jobs during certain periods he or she will not progress to the top of the pyramid. This is not to say that the goal of every officer is to rise to the top; essentially to become a senior officer within their career field. For instance, I realized about two to three years into commissioned service that this was not my goal. One reason is that I was not that passionate about my core AFSC. I yearned for research and teaching while remaining an Air Force officer. Second, I had no interest in being stationed in places such as Alabama, Utah, Ohio, and Florida because I realized these places were not as suitable for a gay man who hoped to marry and start a family, eventually. As such, I decided to sacrifice my career progression for other goals such as living in communities that were more conducive to my homosexual life, and pursuing graduate studies

followed by teaching at my alma mater. These are conscious choices that can be made if all the stars align and one is competitive for graduate school opportunities outside of one's career field, and if the Air Force has enough manning to allow one to do so. But it comes with a cost. So while I have pursued this path, it is always foregrounded by the "needs of the Air Force" as I have been reminded consistently throughout my career counseling.

While I have belabored the officer side of this experience when it comes to mobility and autonomy, there remains what enlisted life looks like with regards to this aspect of servicemembers' lives. While officers tend to move a lot, enlisted members do not necessarily. The enlisted force, which accounts for the vast majority of the active duty military, is considered the backbone of the military, and a repository of continuity and institutional knowledge. As such, enlisted members do not move as frequently as their officer superiors might. In the United States Air Force, it is not unlikely for enlisted members to remain at a single duty station for four, five, six or more years, depending on whether or not they decide to re-enlist. Consequently, "officers generally have a higher level of mobility than enlisted members" (Asselin 2014; 424). Examine the biography of any high ranking flag officer or non-commissioned officer in any branch of the military, and you will find many moves throughout his/her career. While it is important to note that servicemembers do rank their desired choices for moving, the needs of the service and one's career path ultimately dictate the assignment and location one receives (this lack of choice concept will be examined closer later in this paper). Moreover, while the U.S. military remains an all-volunteer force, one can always separate pending no mandatory service obligation should they so chose. Regardless, this mandatory/semi-selective mobility that is highly dependent on career and service is essential when interrogating the notion of mobility in general, and queer migration more specifically.

Up to this point, I have outlined the experience of mobility and lack of choice from the perspective of my service, which is the United States Air Force. It is important to understand that this illustration does not necessarily ring true in every military service. Each branch of the military has unique and separate missions. The Air Force's stated mission "is to fly, fight, and win—in air, space, and cyberspace." The mission of the United States Navy "is to maintain, train and equip combat-ready naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression and maintaining freedom of the seas." The mission of the Marine Corps (which falls under the Department of the Navy) is "as America's expeditionary force in readiness since 1775; the Marines are forward deployed to win our nation's battles swiftly and aggressively in times of crisis. We fight on land, sea, and air, as well as provide forces and detachments to naval ships and ground operations." The mission of the Coast Guard "is to ensure our Nation's maritime safety, security and stewardship." With these unique missions come unique demands that are placed on the respective service's officers and enlisted members.

For instance, while a Navy sailor may not be required to move to a B-52 base located in Minot, North Dakota, they may be subject to several months each year underway in a submarine or onboard a ship while porting in cities and countries all around the world. The experience of living in very close quarters, sometimes "hot bunking" with colleagues, plays very differently into how they manage their queer identity. While an Army infantryman might not be forced to live at a missile base in Montana, they may very well be sent to Fort Benning, GA in the Deep South that has typically not been welcoming to queer people. That same Army infantryman might also be forced to spend 15+ months in the mountains of Afghanistan or the deserts of Iraq in constant combat, sleeping in tents with several other people trying to fall asleep with mortar rounds going off in the background. And while a "Coastie" might have the privilege of having a

large selection of bases on the east or west coast, he or she might also be forced to serve in rescue missions in the remote, frigid locales of Alaska, or serve on drug interdiction missions out of the Florida Keys, or be subject to living in any number of the small towns the line the Mississippi River in the country's conservative interior. Each service offers their own bespoke experience when it comes to mobility; but the fact is that when mobility is expected of queer servicemembers, that lack of autonomy means a very different thing versus the experience of civilian queer mobility.

This issue is not exclusive to queer servicemembers. Mobility constraints affect both heterosexual and queer individuals, in some cases in similar ways. Anyone that has served and that has a family can identify. Earlier I mentioned my own experience with moving many times. Without a family, it was difficult. With a family, it would be even more difficult. As Segal (1986) noted, the military and family are both "greedy" institutions. More specifically, the military demands the full attention and abilities of a servicemember 24/7. The family concurrently demands attention, whether as a mother, father, son, daughter, brother, or sister. In short, the priorities of military and family life are often in conflict. With the abolishment of the draft and resulting all-volunteer force comprised of more than just single men, the competition of these two greedy institutions, family and military, is increasingly acknowledged (Albano 1994). Servicemembers and their families consistently express dissatisfaction with the high demands of military service that impact family life. (Bowen 1989; Harrell et.al. 2002; Orthner, Bowen and Beare 1990). While child care, elder care, education, parenting, and career choices for spouses are a concern for everyone, regardless of service, military families also are subjected to these stressors coupled with repeated relocations, including overseas postings, as well as frequent separations due to deployments to combat zones (Drummet, Coleman, and Cable 2003; 279).

These additional stressors have led to a reduction in force for critical components of the military, regardless of sexual identity. For instance, the United States Air Force is currently faced with an enormous pilot shortage.[7] This problem is not just germane to Air Force pilots. Every service has been grappling with retention issues since the advent of the all-volunteer force, especially since 9/11, when the operations tempo for military members has been quite high. During the past two decades Army soldiers, Marines, Navy sailors, Air Force airmen, and coastguardsmen have been deployed and away from their families at alarming rates. While it may not be as easy for a sailor who works on a ship or submarine at sea, or an Army infantrymen who leads troops in to battle to find equivalent civilian work as easily as an Air Force pilot, navigating the stresses of military life is a challenge faced by all servicemembers.

These issues are magnified within the military's queer community. Not only do queer servicemembers have to deal with the same constraints as their heterosexual counterparts when it comes to mobility and autonomy, but managing their sexual identity becomes a second career that they have to maintain in conjunction with their military career. In other words, not only do queer servicemembers have to navigate the "normal" difficulties of constantly moving which may include transplanting one's spouse and/or children, finding work and or schools for one's spouse and/or children, integrating with the local community, integrating with co-workers constantly, etc., but they also have to manage their identity when placed into these different environments, in contrast to heterosexuals, who do not have to constantly "come out" when placed in new environments. Legally, homosexuals should not have to confront these challenges in the post DADT environment. In reality they frequently do. Mobility uniquely colors the experiences of queer servicemembers.

[7] "Faced with multiple deployments overseas and an airline industry on a hiring binge, fewer Air Force pilots are staying and have created a growing crisis for the nation's air power. The Air Force says it's about 2,000 pilots short – out of a total force of about 23,000 — of the number it needs to carry out the United States security demands" (Barber 2017).

Navigating one's queer identity with bosses and colleagues:

The U.S. military is constructed and governed in a way that is unlike that of any civilian organization. "Bureaucratic qualities such as reliability, impersonality, precision, routine and predictability, together with an emphasis upon the respect of traditions and obedience to authority, permeate the organization" (Hockey 1986). While this paints a very scripted picture that is not susceptible to any fluctuation whatsoever, this is not necessarily accurate as enforcement and adherence to the rules are very much based on the unit one may belong:

> Different kinds of Army units vary considerably in the degree of flexibility their members display in the maintenance and enforcement of discipline. Technical units, such as engineering workshops or communications squadrons, are primarily concerned with supporting and providing services for armored, artillery, infantry, and combat engineer units. Compared for instance with the infantry, unquestioning obedience is not such a prime requirement. Generally such units, unlike the infantry, do not come into direct contact with enemy forces and the organizational need for instant collective action is not so marked (Hockey 1986; 18).

Moreover, there is a strong cultural norm within the U.S. military that officers should exercise their discretion with regards to the rules and regulations to effectively execute the mission. As John Hockey (1986) notes, there is a preconceived notion that "superiors who made constant use of the formal method of maintaining discipline created an administrative burden for their unit" (20). Anecdotally, this leads to a view that perhaps "he can't handle his men" (Hockey 1986).[8]

[8] It should be noted that Hockey's analysis is based on the example of the UK military. That is not to say what results from his analysis is any less applicable. Reliability, routine, predictability, etcetera are all qualities that permeate the U.S. military. From the routine of basic training, which indoctrinates civilians into the mindset, to the scripted nature of the curriculum of pilot training, to the mission statements contained within the paper of each of the services; they all point to an organization that is required to be scripted, reliable, precise, and routine. Furthermore, I can personally attest to the differing cultures within certain career field communities that comprise each service. Fighter pilots have different

Speaking from personal experience serving within the military, this is entirely the case. For instance, I was outed during my time at the U.S. Air Force Academy by one of my roommates. Strictly speaking, I should have been discharged from the military as being gay at the time was against regulations. However, as I write this paper, I remain an officer in the United States Air Force because I had a commander that saw the bigger picture—that the mission was most important, and following this bureaucratic rule would have impeded the mission.

Queer servicemembers must navigate their sexual identity in addition to grappling with the same difficulties of military life their heterosexual colleagues endure. The following example that illustrates this claim comes from a secret Facebook group. The members of the group are all queer junior officers that are members of the various U.S. military branches. Many of the members were a part of the military prior to the repeal of DADT. While the initial purpose of the group was to provide a forum to discuss repeal as well as offer a forum to discuss and offer suggestions to people facing or potential facing separation or other forms of mistreatment as a result of their sexual orientation, the group primarily exists today for peer mentoring. The following takes place in the summer of 2018 and involves an Air Force officer who is still serving. This particular officer is married to his same-sex partner and remains open and out about his sexuality and family. This officer was also open and out to his colleagues, subordinates, and superiors at his previous duty location. As required, he was moved to a new duty location, which of course, entailed him being assigned a new commander (or boss). Along with dealing with the stress of relocating to an unfamiliar place with his family, this officer had to also navigate and build new work relationships. The first professional encounter with his new commander did not prove promising:

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concerns than contract specialists; submariners have different concerns than recruiters. It can be said that those who are closer to the "tip of the spear" are more forgiving and do not concern themselves with certain "red tape" as long as the mission is getting done effectively. See Lehmkuhl 2007 for a published frame of reference using a U.S. example.

> During my initial feedback, my boss (an O-5 or Lieutenant Colonel) wanted to confirm that I am indeed married to a man. After confirming this, he then proceeds to tell me that he believes homosexuality is a sin. But he's "not going to let that affect the workplace." He then tells me he's a "reformed Christian" who follows Martin Luther, and believes that all sinners will be judged by Jesus Christ. He doesn't believe that you can "pay" for your sins "like those Catholics do." I've never had a boss actually talk to me about religion (specifically their religious beliefs). Is this weird?

As is required by Air Force regulation, initial feedback occurs when a servicemember moves from one base/unit/command to another, or when he or she receives a new supervisor or commander. What is appropriate to discuss in these types of feedback sessions are the boss's expectations of you as a member of their team. Religious beliefs are not at all relevant as the Constitution clearly states that Church and State are separate. However, the recent uptick in "religious liberty laws" have emboldened some to express their religious beliefs in their professional and private lives. This highlights the personal impact of the particular mobility and autonomy constraints queer military members have to navigate, both with regard to their professional careers and management of their sexual identity career. This individual was unable to assert control over the "coming out" process with his commander due to the fact that his marital status was provided in his personnel record. Instead, this migration forced him to come out under circumstances not of his choosing, and suffer the disapproval of his new boss. Moreover, reliving this experience is likely due to the highly mobile nature of all military personnel. Even if he does not move, he will receive a new commander in two to three years. It is a never-ending cycle. At a certain point it may be necessary to choose which career is more important if the stress involved in this renders service to the country to unbearable.

Other service members also expressed difficulty in confronting homophobic behaviors from fellow servicemen and officers. How does one handle experiencing homophobic comments? What pathways are available as a form of conflict resolution? Another example from the Facebook group involved a junior Army officer (rank unimportant due to identity) and an Army enlisted servicemember. The two went out to a bar off-base in Kansas with other members of their unit. After some drinks, it was time to go home. As the junior officer was ensuring everyone got home safely (the officer was not intoxicated), the enlisted servicemember called the officer a faggot. The other members from the work unit who were out at the bar that night all laughed. The army officer was obviously offended, but did not say anything to the enlisted servicememember that night. Offended and confused, the junior officer presented the incident to other members of the Facebook group and initially solicited ways to deal with this incident from JAGs (military lawyers) who belonged to the group. Fellow queer officers also chimed in with copious advice. Some people advised giving the member non-judicial punishment as it is against the law for an enlisted member to use contemptuous words toward a superior commissioned officer (UCMJ). Others suggested that it might also be an option to merely sitting the sober individual down and having a conversation (or counseling that is attached to the official record) as to why that is wrong.

In this example, rank clearly matters in shaping the possible routes for recourse. However, it is important to consider that this incident could also happen in a context in which it is the officer who makes a blatantly homophobic comment to a serviceman. If the ranks were reversed, how would things end? There is no law on penalizing an officer talking this way to an enlisted person. Are they less important when it comes to equality of race, gender, sexual orientation, in the very body that has sworn to uphold and defend that very equality as it is

embodied in the Constitution? In this particular example, the junior officer that was called a faggot was not in the enlisted servicemember's direct chain-of-command. As such, the officer went to discuss what happened with the enlisted servicemember's commander. The commander and the junior officer did not think that the enlisted servicemember called him a faggot out of malicious intent. As such, no one was court-martialed, nor did anyone receive non-judicial punishment (equivalent to a misdemeanor that follows a military member around for the rest of their career). Instead, both the commander and the junior officer thought it was important to use this as a teaching moment to educated the individual on why this type of conduct is unacceptable. Rank does not shield others from punishment; nor should it be used to unjustly punish others. This example illustrates why all should be held accountable to the very Constitution we all swore an oath to as servicemembers. However, it is important to educate people to they understand why certain actions go counter to those values rather than swift harsh punishment that lacks detailed explanation, and that was not necessarily deserved if the intent was absent.

The last example concerns a commander that refused to execute his duty toward a queer servicemember and how the latter navigated the situation. In May 2017, an Air Force Commander, Col Leland Bohannon, refused to sign an appreciation certificate for the same-sex spouse of an Air Force Master Sergeant who was retiring from his command. Typically, anytime a member honorably retires from the service and has a spouse, that spouse is afforded an appreciation certificate on behalf of the service from the servicemember's commander as gratitude for the spouse's sacrifice. Col Bohannon refused to do this, arguing that it was against his religion to sign an appreciation certificate for a same-sex spouse of an Air Force Master Sergeant who honorably served his country for over 20 years. He sought a religious exemption

but was not granted one. Despite this he still refused to sign the certificate, forcing a two-star Air Force General not in the servicemember's chain of command to sign the certificate. In response, the servicemember filed an EO complaint contending that he was discriminated against because of his sexual orientation. After an investigation by the Air Force Office of the Inspector General, Col Bohannon was removed from command, reprimanded, and had a negative letter sent to his Brigadier General promotion board. He appealed this decision, and the Secretary of the Air Force reversed the IG decision on the basis of religious tolerance. As such, Col Bohannon was officially justified in discriminating against a servicemember who honorably served his country only because that servicemember is gay and his gayness does not agree with his religion.

Navigating queer identity outside the military, within communities:

The above section examines challenges involved in managing one's sexual identity within the institutional constraints of the military. This section brings into conversation queer servicemembers' life outside the military, specifically the communities where they are posted. In other words, what does it mean to deploy to Afghanistan? What does it mean to live in Wyoming? Also, how do these experiences challenge arguments made in the queer migration literature?

It is no doubt that being posted to a base in rural North Dakota is vastly different than a city like Los Angeles. I have already alluded to this when describing my reasons for choosing a suboptimal career path for promotion because it is difficult to live in places that do not offer support for, or are more likely to discriminate against, queer people. When moving personnel to different postings the military does take into account factors that may adversely affect the lives

of personnel and their families. For instance, the Air Force, when sending members to Greenland, will not typically send family members with the servicemember because they know there is no infrastructure to support family life. When the military deploys women to certain Middle Eastern countries, training is provided so that women can adapt and adjust to the culture that is present in such countries. Also, if a servicemember happens to be married to another servicemember, the services try to match each member with a job and a base so that both can be co-located.[9] However, since the repeal of DADT there has been no such effort to take into account a servicemember's queerness and assign them (or migrate them) to locations accordingly.

This inattention often negatively affects the lives of queer servicemembers. To illustrate this, consider the following example of a queer officer seeking advice on how to help a queer subordinate downrange[10]. The officer posted the following to the Facebook group:

> One of my soldiers recently started asking me about how I knew I was gay etcetera. After a few times, he told me he thinks he is gay and doesn't have a family that'd be supportive back home. I did talk to him about Behavioral Health, but I know that can be a hit or miss depending on what provider you get. Has anyone dealt with this? Also, how did you walk the line of professionalism while still helping out a Soldier?

Had the aforementioned taken place in a community like New York City, Los Angeles, or Atlanta, there individual in question would have had a plethora of help afforded to them by LGBTQ+ community centers. For that matter, had this member been living in many other cities in the United States, it might have been different than being faced with this revelation downrange

[9] The join spouse program (which attempts to match two married servicemembers to the same geographical area) does apply to heterosexual and same-sex married couples. On the one hand, this does present evidence of the military attempting to "take car of" queer servicemembers. On the other, this is a legacy system that was already in place prior to same-sex married. Absent any other legacy system in place, there has been no real effort for by the military to take into account the needs of queer servicemembers.

[10] Serving in a combat zone in the Middle East.

in a deployed environment surrounded by combat and a foreign populace that has outlawed homosexuality.

In 2019, it still seems as though queer servicemembers are not "taken care of" like their heterosexual counterparts. Not only is dealing with "coming out" stressful in and of itself, but doing so downrange presents a litany of obstacles. There is no family to turn to. There is no local supportive community outside of the military personnel. The only thing that seems to offer some solace is Facebook and a boss that is trying to help this individual navigate this process. Moreover, while the boss is trying to help, there is only so much they can do. Not to mention, the boss does not have many resources at his disposal since they are downrange. Some of the advice that was offered via Facebook comes from another officer:

> The journey of coming out or self-acceptance is never easy. While I think it's good to help him, I would recommend only to help him find other gay Soldiers or civilians to expand his gay social circle. He is seeing you as a mentor or life coach, that's a good thing and keep your role mainly as positive re-enforcement.

And one more point of view:

> You can be a mentor, just be sure he knows the line. As a female on ships we were often filling many roles (mother, boss, sister, confidant, psychologist, mentor). The key is laying out the roles. Especially deployed, I wouldn't want to leave him out in the cold with no one. There are also the new therapists that are civilian and through messages only.

Another example deals with an enlisted person that was in the Air Force. Prior to 2010 the "out" members that were actively working to have DADT were connected through Facebook. For all intents and purposes, we were each other's family. I knew this individual from the early

days of the repeal. We belonged to another secret Facebook group that contained queer members of the Air Force. After the repeal, the connectedness of the groups regressed. The fight was over as far as getting DADT repealed. The support and connectedness for one another further regressed after the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in 2015. As such, we were not an in-tune with each other's mental wellness as we had been during the days prior to the repeal. This individual that is the subject of this example had been stationed in remote places such as North Dakota, overseas in Germany, and most recently New Mexico. He had no immediate family during all of his moves. Moreover, being stationed in remote places that are not as friendly to the queer community does not leave people many resources to seek the help they need when they are facing problems that stem from people's mal-treatment of them; specifically when the mal-treatment stems from their sexuality. Lacking a welcoming attitude from the outside community, the military, and perhaps from the secret online groups he had been a member of, the servicemember committed suicide. The note he left behind pointed to the reason being that no one loved him; neither his family, nor his work, nor his community.

The aforementioned examples illustrate the aim of this section. Queer migration, and migration literature as a whole, purport that there is an element of choice present when one moves from one place to another. Sexuality is usually the forefront of that decision, driving migration so as to live and exist in a place that allows one to be queer in a comfortable setting. However, this is not the case when it comes to queer servicemembers. Their experience of a lack of autonomy or choice when it comes to mobility does not fit with the queer migration literature's arguments. In contrast, in many cases, it is migration itself that upsets their lives and brings back to the forefront the issue of being queer. Moving from an established community where one is out and comfortable is often a regress back into the closet, and thus the process of

managing one's identity begins all over again. And it is not just an issue of an unwelcoming community, as the institution queer servicemembers are a part of and the new colleagues they work with may also not be welcoming. As a result many look to virtual communities to find support. But there are limits to this strategy, as it cannot replace in person relationships. In other words, under the conditions I have described above, migration is not liberating. Instead it presents a conundrum for queer members of the military.

Conclusion:

Throughout this paper, I have attempted to demonstrate the unique challenges involved in managing one's identity as a queer servicemember, which does not lend itself to individual autonomy when it comes to mobility. Much of the literature surrounding queer migration speaks about having a choice when being displaced because of sexual identity and sexuality. The nature of military life removes such an option and replaces it with the needs of the institution. In an era that now allows lesbian, gay and bisexual people to serve openly, this work illustrates queer military servicemembers must navigate distinct challenges on top of the more general difficulties experienced by all servicemembers. Utilizing Guittar and Rayburn's (2015) model of managing one's identity as a career, I demonstrate that queer servicemembers are constantly forced to manage the terms of coming out, both within the institution where they work and the places they live, in contexts rarely of their choosing. This lack of spatial autonomy should be brought into the conversation with existing literature on queer migration.

Using the military as its case study, this thesis argues that not all queer migration involves a conscious/willing choice of displacement. This point applies more generally, I think. One implication of this claim is that the queer migration literature should be more attentive to

immobilities and constraints on spatial autonomy. This would round out and provide a fuller understanding of the dynamics of queer migration. Another aspect of queer migration that would be productive for future research concerns work institutions. Military service is a career that places unique demands on servicemembers. Comparing the dynamics explored in this thesis with other institutional contexts is an opportunity to nuance and develop a richer understanding of what managing one's identity means for queer people. Lastly, I hope that this work will bring front and center the fact that just because a discriminatory law is abolished this does not mean that all work on such a matter is achieved. As often noted, once a previously marginalized group is allowed "full access" to equality, many issues of integration often remain for generations to come. This should serve as a reminder that just because the big battle of equal rights for queer servicemembers was attained this does not mean that war of achieving equal treatment has been won, a point that, I hope, this geographic analysis amply demonstrates.

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