

A discursive analysis of the methodology utilized in

Perceptions of Equal Opportunity among Women and Minority Army Personnel

by Brenda L. Moore and Schuyler Webb

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“This study examines the perceptions of active-duty men and women in the U.S. Army to determine whether minority men are more satisfied with the equal opportunity climate than women and whether minority women are less satisfied with the equal opportunity climate than non-minority (White) women.”¹ Moore and Webb are quite explicit with the purpose of their study as well as the means by which they will determine their objectives. Utilizing information available from questionnaires administered to members of active duty military units they examine the resulting data to determine relationships between the various personal characteristics of the members of the unit and their corresponding attitudes toward the equal opportunity (EO) climate as they perceive it within their units.

Moore and Webb’s inquiry is one of several studies conducted on EO climate available in current literature. These researchers utilize survey data gathered by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) located at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida. The survey instrument utilized to gather the data was the Military Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (MEOCS) administered by DEOMI to commands throughout the US Armed Forces. The MEOCS had its beginning in 1990 as a tool for military commanders to assess the state of the equal opportunity climate within their units. DEOMI, a semi-independent unit created by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to support the Defense Department’s

¹ Moore and Webb, 215.

commitment to equal opportunity, developed the survey instrument through a set process of design, testing, and evaluation prior to making it available for unit usage.² The survey instrument, though originally designed and implemented for the use of unit commanders, quickly became popular with researchers seeking to examine issues and trends related to equal opportunity in the military. At least two studies precede the one referenced here³ utilizing MEOCS data and several more have followed⁴.

Moore and Webb's specific contribution to the literature examines the MEOCS data relating to the attitudes reported by women and minorities in comparison to men within the US Army. They break down minority men into Hispanic and African American for purposes of the study and also provide an interaction between gender and minority status in their analysis. Because the numbers of participants in other minority identifications (Asians and Native Americans) were too low, their responses were dropped from the study.⁵ The decision was made to examine only surveys completed by members of Army units and not attempt to include other services. The total number of survey instruments included in the study were 200,143 administered between 1990 and 1997.

Two hypotheses were developed and tested by the researchers. Hypothesis 1 (H1) was "Gender is a stronger predictor than race in predicting the attitudes of active-duty Army women toward the EO climate." Hypothesis 2 (H2) was "African American and Hispanic women are less satisfied with the EO climate in the Army than White women due to an interaction

² Dansby and Landis, 1991.

³ Dansby, 1998, Dansby and Landis, 1998.

⁴ <http://deomi.org/EOEEOResources/ReportsStudies.cfm>

⁵ Moore and Webb, 219.

effect between race and gender.”⁶ To test these two hypotheses the researchers chose to use the general linear model (GLM). The “F” test was utilized to determine significance of the results with the Eta Squared statistic utilized to establish the proportion of variance attributed to the various independent variables due to the large sample size. Participant’s race and gender were utilized as two of the independent variables in the model with an interactive term (race X gender) as a third independent variable. The researchers identified the independent variables as categorical with race having three categories (white, African American, and Hispanic) and gender having two categories (male and female). The researchers did not specify how they constructed their interactive variable.

The dependent variable, COMBUNIT, was a combination of scales taken from the MEOCS data. In their analysis the researchers determined scales 1 to 5 and 12 (perceptions on the EO behaviors within the respondent’s units) of the MEOCS data were significant with respect to individual attitudes toward the EO climate in the unit. Scales 9 and 10 which measured the respondent’s perception of the EO climate in the overall society were also significant. Scales 6 through 8, which measured respondent’s perception of organizational effectiveness, were not significant with respect to EO climate. Scale 11, which also measured respondent’s perception of EO climate in society, was not mentioned by the researchers with respect to significance.⁷ The researchers decided to combine scales 1 to 5 and 12 into a single variable, COMBUNIT, to function as their sole dependent variable. Their purpose in doing so

⁶ Ibid., 220, 221.

⁷ Ibid., 222 – The items in each of the scales utilized in the combined variable are listed in Appendix B of the study.

was to make their models more robust than if the individual scales had been utilized.⁸ The researchers did not provide information on how they combined these scales.

The researchers split their sample in two to test their hypothesis. The sample was split by enlisted and officer status of the respondents. In performing more detailed analysis the researchers eventually stratified the sample into paygrades within these two major categories to inquire as to changes in perception of EO which might be based on other demographic factors such as age, income, length of time in the service, education, etc. Paygrade served as a proxy for these various attributes to determine any interesting variations across personal characteristics.

The researchers determined the first hypothesis was not supported by the data and that the second hypothesis was partially supported.⁹ Gender explained less than one percent of the variance in the models based on the Eta Squared statistic. Also, even though the interaction effect proved to be significant according to the model, it too accounted for less than one percent of the variance. Race accounted for three percent of the variance for enlisted and seven percent for officers.

According to the researchers the second hypothesis was partially supported. They determined this by calculating the mean scores of the stratified participants by gender and by race and then compared the means for the various groups. As all factors were significant according to the GLM, the resulting comparison of means indicated the relative perception of the EO climate within the participant units in a statistically significant manner. The means of

⁸ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

the perceptions of African Americans were less than those of Hispanics which were less than those of whites for both enlisted and officers. Even though there were some anomalies to the predicted order when compared by paygrade, the overall trend demonstrated that African American and Hispanic women had lower estimations of the EO climate in their units than did white women. The case was the same for men. In fact, African American and Hispanic men were found to be more pessimistic regarding the EO climate in their units than were white women.

One other finding of interest to the researchers was the impact of paygrade on perception of EO climate for women.¹⁰ In the paygrade stratified models the researchers determined the higher the officer paygrade, the more meaningful gender was in explaining perception of EO climate with a nearly 50 fold increase in variance explained between paygrades O1-O2 and O6. The variance explained at the O6 level was almost one percent.

The researchers concluded that gender is not a significant factor in predicting the perception of the EO climate within a service member's unit but that race is. Hispanics seem to be more satisfied with EO climate than are African Americans but neither minority race is as satisfied as are whites. The lack of significance related to gender may be attributed to the opening of increased opportunities for women in the services following the first Gulf War. Based on analysis of performance and overall opportunity, more than 83% of enlisted jobs and 95% of officer jobs were opened up to women in the early 90s. Since then women have been able to compete more effectively and have now even had one of their number achieve the highest rank possible, four star general.

¹⁰ Ibid., 227.

Max Weber and the Ideal Type

Though not specifically mentioned by Moore and Webb, concepts associated with Max Weber are prominent in their inquiry and the selection of their methods of inquiry. Weber is known as the pioneer of the ideal type. In his work, “Objectivity in the Social Science,” he posits,

“An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct. In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a utopia.”¹¹

This concept of the ideal type was a means by which Weber proposed social science inquiry could in some ways mimic hard science inquiry despite the fact the significance of any such inquiry ultimately rested not how things were by nature by rather on the values established and existing within a certain cultural setting. The objects of inquiry were established by the researcher based on items considered significant and of interest. “The values to which the scientific genius relates the object of his inquiry may determine, i.e., decide the ‘conception’ of a whole epoch, not only concerning what is regarded as ‘valuable’ but also concerning what is significant or insignificant, ‘important’ or ‘unimportant’ in the phenomena.”

¹² In selecting the phenomena of interest, the researcher might even be self-deceived in thinking he or she was investigating the concrete reality due to an impression based on consideration of only a small portion of an absolute infinity of possible facts.¹³ In the process of

¹¹ Weber, p 90.

¹² Ibid., p 82.

¹³ Op. cit.

investigation the researchers under this schema will be guided by the “evaluative ideas which dominate”¹⁴ both the people involved as well as their age. The conceptual schemes which predominate in their field will control both the construction of their problems and the methods they choose to investigate them. Though the ideal type does not form the actual hypothesis, it governs the types of hypotheses which can be formed as well as the methodology chosen to either prove or disprove the concepts (or affirms that neither proving nor disproving is possible).

Moore and Webb anchor their investigation both in the literature of their very specific field and the prevailing ideas of the day with regards to race, gender, society, and military service. They also adopt a specific view of their object of analysis, the individual service person that has completed a survey, which is essential to the statistical technique they deploy. More follows below with respect to the literature and ideas of the day while attention is now turned to consider the concept of the social survey and the statistical techniques applied to the researchers interpretation and related assumptions.

The concept of the social survey can be traced back to the work of Charles Booth who produced a study entitled “[*Life and Labour of the People of London.*](#)”¹⁵ Booth’s project was a means to gain an understanding of a social problem. His work attracted significant attention and was eventually incorporated in any number of applications ranging from product research for marketing purposes to management of people to political polling and decision making. As the process of social surveys increased both in quantity and importance, it also gained

¹⁴ Ibid., p 84.

¹⁵ Groves et. al., 4.

continued interest and focus from members of professional communities. Time and experience revealed the wording of questions was critical to the ability to gain reliable and reproducible data and that certain methods contributed not only to the more reliable collection of data but also the more economically affordable collection of data as the fewer questions necessary to acquire the information of interest, the more surveys could be conducted and “better” results could be achieved. Psychometricians became involved speculating how meaningful numbers could be applied to subjective states and how researchers could measure attitudes and opinions which were not externally observable. Rensis Likert emerged in 1932 as a leader in the field demonstrating how a “single, streamlined question, with a scaled set of answers, could accomplish much the same thing as a lengthy series of paired comparisons.”¹⁶ His institute, the University of Michigan Survey Research Center, became the premier institution establishing the conceptual schemes which today dominate the field.

Moore and Webb find themselves well entrenched in this particular stream of ideas. They open their work by referencing the history of race and gender within the larger context of US society and the military in particular and outline previous research and concepts associated with this field of knowledge. They focus on a specific area of the field, the interaction of gender and race, as a specific locus of inquiry that has not been well investigated by others and posit their work will contribute to the overall knowledge of the field as they investigate the facts of the situation. Their hypotheses are formed based on their own review of the relevant literature and the seeming problems that exist with respect to women serving in the military in spite of the advance of women in the military and the overall success rate of the military in

¹⁶ Ibid., p 5.

incorporating racial minorities compared to other aspects of society. Thus they have identified a paradox which they can shed light on through the application of scientific methods.

The specific statistical method they choose is the general linear model. This was chosen to “examine the effects of race and gender on the attitudes of active-duty personnel toward the equal opportunity climate in their units.”¹⁷ We see in this statement the concept of the ideal type, the active-duty person, the concept of meaningful measurement of subjective states, the attitudes of the ideal types, and the ability to manipulate the data gathered based on a statistical technique.

GLMs are mathematical models to permit statistical investigation of data presumed to reflect real world situations. GLMs have three components, a random component, a systematic component, and a link function.¹⁸ Moore and Webb appear to be utilizing a specialized version of the GLM in their model. They indicate their model is “Intercept + Gender + Race + (Race x Gender).”¹⁹ Though they do not include the random component or the link function directly, they do indicate they are utilizing the F-test to establish significance and the Eta square statistic to determine variation explained. They also indicate the dependent variable is the COMBUNIT variable which would seem to be some sort of average on a five point discrete scale to the tenth level which was derived as indicated above. These characteristics of the model indicate they assume their data is normally distributed and that the random component has an expected value of zero across the sample. In addition, as they are utilizing a Likert scale for their dependent variable, they are also assuming the responses can be considered to

¹⁷ Moore and Webb, p. 216.

¹⁸ Agresti and Finlay, p. 550.

¹⁹ Moore and Webb, p. 223.

approximate interval data measuring a latent variable and that there are equal distances in the intervals between the two extremes of the scale. As they add several variables together, they are also assuming the intervals of all the individual questions are the same. These assumptions in their procedures are not defended and challenge their statistical inferences. They also challenge their concept of the ideal type.

As was stated above, the idea of a survey is to derive meaningful numbers related to subjective states. Moore and Webb take the numbers they create from the MEOC surveys to be meaningful. Their use of the GLM and the assumptions associated with it are neither defended nor potentially warranted. Their unit of analysis, the individual soldier, to be consistent with their statistical methodology, would necessarily be able to respond in a meaningful manner to the questions asked and to have them reflect a latent condition within. They break down their samples by race, by gender, by enlisted/officer status, and by paygrade as a proxy for age, education, and experience (among others). By doing the comparisons as they have they are making an assumption all these various factors are at least consistent and that they all permit the individuals in the various categories of interest to interpret the question in a similar way and to respond with a similar latent variable. As is true with all ideal types, the type is capable of being treated objectively, there is a unity of coherence of the object, and there is a logical consistency between the various objects considered.²⁰ These assumptions can be challenged in the case of Moore and Webb on all three fronts.

Can the various objects in their inquiry be treated objectively? Is there a unity of coherence between them? And is there a logical consistency? Another pioneer in the field of

²⁰ Drysdale, p. 82.

survey research, Philip Converse, proposed a “black and white” model in understanding the results of social survey questions.²¹ In his model based on studies of national cross-section panel studies conducted between 1956 and 1960, he found a small percentage of respondents were consistent from one sampling instance to the next with regards to being constrained by a political ideology. The largest percentage of the electorate, however, showed no such consistency and their responses over time were essentially random. His findings led him to believe most people asked about issues in which they have no specific opinion will provide an answer due to their desire to conform even though there is no objective reality to the answer they provide. In the present case, the individual soldiers who provided answers to questions regarding EO climate as good soldiers probably answered every question in front of them. According to Converse, many of these answers would be purely random as they do not represent any subjective state nor do they indicate an underlying variable – they are simply noise. This certainly calls into question any pretension to objectivity of the data. Converse found that most people would provide an answer to the questioner even when provided an opportunity to decline comment entirely simply due to the fact they were asked. This might also find applicability in the military setting as all soldiers are provided training regarding gender and racial relations. They are expected to have opinions whether any exist or not. This threatens any assumptions of coherence between the various responses. The assumption by Moore and Webb that they are dealing with meaningful data obtained over time and across a wide variety of commands with different missions and in different settings is also threatened. The use of race as a category of determining in-group and out-group status has been

²¹ Converse, 173.

demonstrated to be capable of being undone based on shared values and common threats.²²

As the various military units sampled have been formed into teams of various strength and potency based on several factors (mission, location, current status) the relative salience of race on perceptions of EO climate will differ markedly. The assumption of the ideal type regarding logical consistency across the survey universe does not hold up in light of these conditions.

Overall, it would seem Moore and Webb's adoption of an ideal type and the utilization of the GLM for their analysis are not compatible and undermine any significance in their findings.

Argument for Argument Sake – Utilizing Tropes

Moore and Webb imply they are investigating their topic of interest to explore a paradox that exists within institutions that have political import. Specifically, they indicate gender issues within the military would appear have a greater impact on cohesion within the military than should be the case given recent advances of women in the military system. They include race in the inquiry as a related field and to explore any potential interactions between the two characteristics of the subjects of study. They do not specifically relate why these two characteristics and their impact are of interest to the broader society and to larger theoretical concerns. Their research would seem to fit into the category of "hole filling."

Nelson addresses the means by which much current research within political inquiry is determined. "To justify political inquiry as filling a hole in some research literature is to signal empiricism without self-critical theorizing."²³ He suggests we are in a period in which phenomena determine issues. In such a period, political science finds the phenomena that

²² Kurzban, Tooby and Cosmides, p. 15387. Of note, these researchers did find gender as a category of grouping does not go away under similar circumstances. This finding could potentially have bearing on challenging the findings of Moore and Webb as race should have less salience than gender.

²³ Nelson, 79.

determine its issues within the broader society and the various self-understandings of the public. In the present case the subject of inquiry appears to be the larger discussion of equality and race relations within a liberal democracy and specifically the role of the military with regards to its status as an agent of social change over against its ability to fight wars. Nelson in his comments regarding the method by which research questions are determined provides a criticism in that such research “often yokes itself to dubious assumptions implicit in the ordinary language or talk about politics.”²⁴ The danger here is the issues are defined by the popular discourse and not by underlying theory. Investigation then is conducted to determine whether the popular discourse is true rather than looking at critiquing and informing on whether the discourse is appropriate and of interest.

Tropic Claims

Moore and Webb are examples of Nelson’s suggestions. Their summary objectives are to examine differences (expressed as satisfaction with the EO climate) across gender categories and to explore the same differences within gender controlling for race. They admit that the variables they have chosen do not permit them to explore the cause of the attitudes observed but do claim “the findings of this study accurately contrast the effects of gender and race on attitudes about equal opportunity in Army units.”²⁵ To accurately contrast the effects of gender and race they choose to evaluate survey data using a GLM. This is completely in keeping with an approved rhetoric within political science. This is a default approach growing from the ideal type discussion above and related to the strength of empirical research in

²⁴ Ibid., p 81.

²⁵ Moore and Webb, 216.

today's understanding and environment. The rhetoric they have chosen necessitates a brief statement of the issue, a review of the literature, the formation of at least one hypothesis (in this case there are two), the development of a model, the obtaining of data, the manipulation of the data in relation to the hypotheses, the examination and interpretation of the results, and a discussion of the impact and possible future inquiries or the proposal of more holes to fill.

Moore and Webb in accepting this approved rhetoric make an assumption they can indeed accurately contrast effects of gender and race because empirical theory and presuppositions properly applied can do just that. But can they? Does it make any difference? And, is it the right question to be asking? I have tried to demonstrate above the methodology they chose is seriously challenged based on the assumptions necessary for it to be valid in the way Moore and Webb apply it. They themselves give no rigid criteria on if their hypotheses are "proven" true or false and do not specify the level of confidence necessary for any such determination. Even as they find their methods do not support the first hypothesis, their claim regarding the second is only that it partially supported. This seems to be a far cry from their set out goal to accurately contrast effects of gender and race. But they do not see it as a failure; rather they look further into subsets of the population and plausible explanations as to why their suppositions have eluded them. In other words, they could not do what they set out to do but because the issue they chose to explore is important to society, there must be another way to prove it true.

Being Trapped by your Trope

This might be a case of “being trapped by their trope”.²⁶ Because Moore and Webb chose to follow the approved route of rational choice researchers, they were limited in the types of results they could achieve. Users of rational choice and GLM methodologies sometimes succumb to a misinterpretation of Karl Popper’s discussions of falsification regarding social theory. According to Nelson, Popper did not insist that good theory is necessarily falsifiable or that that falsifiability is a prerequisite to a valid inquiry.²⁷ Rather, good theory insists on reasonable arguments for any claims it may make. In the present case, the reliance on the GLM to accurately contrast effects of personal characteristics on attitudes would seem to be counter to the larger effort. The researchers in adopting this methodology were unable to deliver as they could not adequately verify or falsify their claims in accord with the standards they chose. Yet they “know” through their literature review and certain other statistics that an issue of public concern remains. They became trapped by their trope in that the trope they chose did not serve their larger agenda. This agenda has more to do with equal rights and fair treatment than with attitudes toward a non-defined EO climate. The two are not the same and should have been considered differently. In this case, to have included the GLM as only one basis of argument in a larger context utilizing other tropes and a different definition of the agenda might have proven useful. If their intended agenda had been to advance the cause of the military as an agent of social change within the society, they might have then used the statistical data that seemed to support their case (women senior officers) and tied that together both with personal interviews and public stories about the effect the military has had

²⁶ Nelson, p. 114.

²⁷ Nelson, p. 96.

in bettering causes of concern to the public. In one sense they do this through their appeal to Harry Truman's order to integrate the military through Executive Order 9981²⁸ but reliance on this one artifact is too little and too common. They do not however discuss the controversy surrounding this use of the military as it may or may not contrast with unit effectiveness and the various issues involved with war fighting capabilities. By ignoring this aspect of the argument they weaken their case and do not well serve the larger issues.

Moore and Webb's rhetoric is reflective of established rhetoric in the field and lacking in making their argument. By choosing to utilize approved methods they forced a tool (GLM) where it was only marginally effective in advancing their case. They also failed to argue their case on larger grounds and instead accepted the results of their analyses as the argument when their issues appear to be broader and require additional methods. More recent examples with a more varied appeal, a diversity of deployment of tropes, and some demonstrated internal contradictions and debates would potentially have greater impact to not only help verify the public's concern but in fact advance the cause Moore and Webb want to pursue.

From whence did the argument come and whence does it go? – An archaeology and genealogy of equal opportunity climate

A variety of agendas are woven together in any political discussion. The origin of those agendas is always instructive in determining the various issues of concern and their interrelatedness in examining a particular topic of study. Michel Foucault developed an approach to illuminating agendas and discourses through the examination of their various

²⁸ Moore and Webb, p. 217.

archaeologies. He further developed a means to pursue altering power relationships within them through genealogic studies.

Andersen suggests Foucault incorporates four formations in his discussion of discourse formulation from the archaeological undertaking; the formation of objects; of subjects; of concepts; and of strategies.²⁹

The Objects

The objects in the current study are the men and women of the Army. To be more specific, they are the men and women of the Army who took the MEOCS survey between two specified dates and who happened to identify themselves as active duty and African-American, Hispanic, or White in regards to their personal racial categories. Though these may be the specific objects, they are also only specific in that they are representative of a larger group or class of objects. This larger class of objects is by extension the entire population of individuals serving in the US Armed Forces and by extension beyond that, the population of the US in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. These are truly the objects as the concepts explored by Moore and Webb are issues that have to do with liberal democratic society and it's incarnation in the US. "Military service is often viewed as being an avenue of upward mobility for minority men."³⁰ Upward mobility from where? – From the lower echelons of American society. Here a specific object is the minority male. Military service is typically viewed as being a male domain even in the United States, where women are "liberated from many of the restrictions

²⁹ Andersen, 14.

³⁰ Moore and Webb, 215.

associated with traditional norms.”³¹ Just as the military is a path of upward mobility for minority men, so should it be a place that provides equal opportunity for women given the fact it is a servant of the American people. Another object is the American woman. The objects of the study are here defined. The actual participants serve as proxies for the larger issue of racial and gender equality. The researchers do provide some more history in terms of how minorities and women have become directly involved in the military context but largely rely on established discourse as to why these are important objects. Of interest is the conflict which exists between the two primary classes of objects. It would seem this military which serves the cause of democracy on behalf of all people and serves as a social change agent for oppressed men actually is serving as an impediment when it comes to women who have been liberated (notice the military overtones in their statement) in the rest of society. This tension within the objects causes certain accommodations within the investigation.

Carol Pateman is one who makes the argument as to how women have been made the objects within this discourse. “Sexual difference is political difference; sexual difference is the difference between freedom and subjugation.”³² Her argument traces the inclusion of women in the great founding documents of western civilization. Through research, citations, and reason she demonstrates that when the founders indicated “all men are created equal” they understood exactly that – men (and men without color at that). Her study well establishes women as objects in this discourse and proposes necessary steps to resolve the tension of gender in society. Charles Mills responds to Pateman by making a similar argument with

³¹ Ibid., 216.

³² Pateman, 6.

respect to people of color.³³ He also traces the history of exclusion of all but western Europeans from positions of importance in a deliberate and intentional manner as democracies were formed. Even as the documents and ideologies of democracies were put in place, people of color were systematically excluded not only from participation on an equal basis but were denied the very ability to participate due to their inferior natures as constituted within the prevailing discourse. These classes then are the objects within this study.

Such objects are perfectly amenable to investigation via rational choice and GLM considerations. The objects are in fact the ideal types as introduced by Weber. These are representative individuals of a general class. As such, the characteristics which divide them from the other classes in society are not characteristics which would make them differ from the types of analysis and behavior to which they must be adaptable in order to compete equally, in this case in the military. By forming them in the way they are permits them to be studied analytically. As their inclusion as objects in the present discussion is to demonstrate that apart from characteristics that do not matter for the items of concern (performance in the military) the means of demonstrating the success of their inclusion can focus on their perceptions of it rather than other performance characteristics. The researchers make no effort here to include evidence that women and African-Americans and Hispanics make as good or better soldiers than White people do. This is beyond question in the manner in which they have been formed as objects. The issue is whether they are treated as equals and if this is demonstrated through their own attitudes toward their perceptions of equality. From this perspective, the only way to determine the answer is to conduct social surveys, assume the various parameters are fulfilled,

³³ Mills, 43.

and analyze the results with non-emotional and non-judgmental vigor to arrive at thoroughly impartial but scientifically verifiable results.

The Subjects

This leads to the formation of the subjects. In this case the subjects are the two researchers – Brenda Moore and Schuyler Webb. They are joined by others who have utilized the same types of data toward similar ends as identified in their text and bibliography. Moore gains her status as a faculty member at the Buffalo branch of the State University of New York. She also served for six years on active duty in the Army (thus an object as well). Webb's status emerges from his employment by DEOMI in their research directorate as well as his own status as a Navy officer. They are constituted as social scientists who can speak on these topics of inquiry by virtue of their training and positions. They utilize the methodology they do in order to be fair and impartial and participate in the discussion only as suppliers of information which can be utilized to make decisions which have an impact on others lives. They make substantive evaluation of their findings in an impersonal and detached way not advocating any personal opinions but speaking on behalf of established societal norms. Moore and Webb's subject status being constituted by their positions, employment, and training makes them part of the larger whole in terms of the institutions of power. They represent together a union of military leadership and academia. They appeal to the importance of diversity in U.S. organizations³⁴ thus bringing in the institution of industry. By also referencing the Department of Defense (DoD) they are including the political structure of the US as DoD is a cabinet department of the executive branch of the federal government as opposed to one of the Armed Forces. The

³⁴ Moore and Webb, 234.

subjects in this paper are all of the important institutions of our society who are demonstrated to have an interest in the well being of the objects of study and who also have responsibility to make things right where discrimination continues to persist, at least if measured in the objective terms defined.

The Concepts

One of the major concepts considered in the research is Equal Opportunity Climate (EO climate). This is the central issue in terms of the survey participant's perceptions. The current researchers do not provide a definition but rather take for granted that all would understand. In one of their cited articles, Micky Dansby, another member of the DEOMI team, does provide the authorized definition.

“EO climate is considered: The expectation by individuals that opportunities, responsibilities, and rewards will be accorded on the basis of a person's abilities, efforts, and contributions, and not on race, color, sex, religion, or national origin. It is to be emphasized that this definition involves the individual's perceptions and may or may not be based on the actual witnessing of behavior.”³⁵

In considering this definition and the larger concept, one can gain an appreciation of why the methodology employed by the researchers was chosen and why the topic was of interest to them. This concept of EO climate, as formulated, deals with expectations and perceptions rather than measurable or observable actions or behaviors. As such, to measure it one has to employ techniques which permit addressing non-observable opinions and perceptions. The social survey has evolved to do exactly this. The definition also specifically formulates the factors to be included in perception of EO climate as those which cannot be utilized to determine a person's abilities, effort, and contributions. These include race, color,

³⁵ Dansby and Landis (1998), 88.

sex, religion, and national origin. The factors included in the current study only deal with three of these as they presumably are more in keeping with the current agenda and are not as politically sensitive as exploring religion, a topic which is in and of itself not externally observable even as the attitudes formed by and in response to it. The overall definition and concept is in keeping with the agendas as outlined above and argued for by Pateman and Mills among others. Because the concepts of racial and sexual discrimination are kept separate from rationality they are not subjected to rational determination in all aspects of their manifestations. The factors considered in determining individual and unit performance may not include the factors which are part of EO climate. These factors are now subject to the same sort of objectifiable standards as are performance indicators. They are excluded from this type or rational consideration. The concept being put forward in the larger argument regarding race and gender relations moves consideration beyond individual performance to societal and cultural characteristics. They cannot be dealt with in a meaningful sort of way at the individual level or put in another way; any individual advances will have an inconsequential impact on the larger societal issue. The definition and concept is tailored to this as it does not provide concrete instances of discrimination but is large enough and vague enough to include them on the basis that they would be examples of negative climates.

The very words chosen to describe the concept, equal opportunity climate, are very much linked to the manner in which those who advocate this as an agenda item desire to frame the issue. Equality is a given and cannot rationally be abridged within the way we define individuals within our society. This is part of modernity finding its roots in Cartesian thought

and carried through much of the enlightenment agenda. Any denial of equality must be on the basis of culpability. People are not culpable for their gender or their race.

Opportunity is a word that connotes hard work and individualism. The entire country was built on the basis of responding to opportunity whether that was taking the opportunity to protest high taxes by throwing tea into a harbor or the opportunity to journey to barren parts of the land and there create new cities and farms. Once again, it is a positive concept within the present discourse and one can be denied opportunity only if culpable of a crime. Race and gender are not reasons to limit opportunity.

Climate is associated with words such as harsh, balmy, pleasant, or demanding. As utopia tends to seek a pleasant or balmy climate and not be subject to a harsh or challenging one, the ideal being portrayed by this concept equates equal opportunity with a setting which may be a harsh or demanding one or one which is easy and pleasant. Whichever it is does not depend on who I am but rather some vague concept not of my doing or subject to my sway. Since as individuals we are not responsible for our climate, the individual person of color or woman is also not responsible for the EO climate. Rather, climate is a product of a higher power, Mother Nature in terms of weather and the Commanding Officer or leadership in terms of EO. All we can do is respond to the climate as best we can as individuals but as we respond, we certainly have thoughts and impressions. No one likes being cold, miserable, and in danger of hypothermia in a frigid climate. In the same manner, no one likes being in an environment in which they are made to feel less than equal or are unwelcome or not valued in a work setting. The use of climate serves the larger concept very well and serves to displace the responsibility

of achieving equality from the individual to the system, sometimes represented in the Commander of the unit.

The Strategy

The strategy for applying these concepts to the objects by the subjects is analysis of data from the MEOCS survey. Even as this is the immediate strategy of the study, the larger strategy has to do with the use of a MEOCS type survey with its underlying assumptions within the military environment. The MEOCS survey is utilized by military commands around the globe. With the use of the military as a social change agent and lead institution in creating equality, the commander of a unit now has an additional responsibility of ensuring his or her unit is performing this mission. He or she is responsible for creating and maintaining an acceptable EO climate. The way they know if they are doing this is by sampling their personnel. This concept is somewhat foreign to the military and is in all likelihood forced upon it. The military naturally prefers objective performance measures. How many tanks are running, how many people do I have, what percentage of my training is complete, how many days can I go without supplies? When the concept of EO was imposed on the military it was deliberately imposed in a non-objective manner. It was imposed in such a way as to ensure the commander could never really be sure he or she was achieving the goal. It introduces a certain sense of helplessness and lack of control. Commanders are now responsible for something that they cannot control as it is known only in the minds of their people. Here is a perfect opportunity to consider the genealogy of equal opportunity and the EO climate in the military.

The Genealogy

One of the categories of analysis in the study of Moore and Webb was White soldiers. The concept of whiteness is not subject to question. It is an established norm that serves as the basis of all further comparisons. It is the majority ethnicity and also is the position of power. Are we not as a nation a majority white population? And are not the Armed Forces composed of primarily white service members? But what is it to be white?

The concept of whiteness is a political creation which was brought into existence to maintain control of power. “The knowledge, ideologies, norms, and practices of whiteness and the accompanying ‘white race’ were invented in the U.S. as part of a system of racial oppression designed to solve a particular problem in Colonial Virginia.”³⁶ Subsequently the concept was extended to ensure the majority population was formed against the minority and rights were distributed accordingly. By defining whiteness and providing privileges in society based on being included, those in control of institutional power were able to maintain that control, preserve cheap labor for their enterprises, and make use of authoritative techniques to control the non-white population. What began as a political concept has come to be understood as a biological axiom in the minds of some and is now viewed as cultural, economic, political, and even sometimes spiritual. In constructing a genealogy of whiteness, Helfand makes the case whiteness has long been associated with maintenance of power. The evolution of the concept of an integrated military, first in terms of racial integration and eventually in terms of gender integration, can then be viewed as part of the power struggle within the US. That which symbolizes power for the most powerful nation in the world is the military strength we possess.

³⁶ Helfand, p 2.

If within that power structure, people of color and all sexual characteristics are equal, those very same people must be equal in all other aspects of society. When General Colin Powell became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff he achieved in both a real and representative fashion one of the biggest victories for the civil rights movement. He represented a non-white achieving the pinnacle of power within a very powerful institution. His selection represented a victory of sorts in the assault on whiteness.

Having commanders (who are assumed to be white based on the majority classification scheme in use) subject to the power of their member's perceptions displaces the commanders power and shifts it to the service member instead. This is the genealogy at the level of the EO climate and the command climate survey. It is an instrument of power designed to combat whiteness. What may have been introduced into the discourse by Harry Truman as an attempt to maintain social order following the War and to placate members of his Democratic coalition has come to be utilized as an all out assault on the power of whiteness.

The methodology employed by Moore and Webb is designed to take advantage of this power shift. They attempted to utilize the GLM to demonstrate gender was not being accommodated as it should be within the modern military. They set out to link the assault on whiteness with the assault on maleness. In a sense, they were seeking to combine Pateman and Mills. If the military is the place where whiteness is most thoroughly and systematically undone in favor of equality, it should also be the place to undo the power of maleness. Their study was designed to establish objective proof of the success or failure of this battle in the gender wars. Women in uniform are here not simply soldiers like all others but a particular kind

of soldier fighting for our nation both in defense of our land but also assaulting the inequalities of sexism within an otherwise liberal society.

The tool chosen by Moore and Webb did not work as they had anticipated. They then were compelled to utilize it in a different way. They interpreted the results by race instead of gender and emphasized the remaining power of whiteness overrode the issues of gender. As good as the military is with regards to racial equality, it is not good enough. This is demonstrated by the statistical analysis deployed. Women of color are the most disadvantaged of all demonstrating whiteness and maleness do combine to deprive equality to the weakest in our society. Moore and Webb preserved their assault by showing women of color as opposed to all women in the military continue to be disadvantaged in their service in comparison to males and whites.

In summary, Moore and Webb's study resides in the predominant discourse regarding race and gender relations within our society. These categories have been defined and populations created through political and public framing. The framing of equal opportunity as a climate comes from the discourse and is supportive of it. The categories have economic and control implications and have been useful in history to advance and preserve hegemony on the part of those included in the white male category even though this appellation has continuously been modified based on new discursive statements.

Even though the current debate is over the military's incorporating racial and gender minorities in its ranks in an effective manner, the larger discourse may in fact be based on preserving these categories to strengthen the current hegemonic position and preclude opening integration to other minority groups. Most notably gays and lesbians continue to be

excluded from the ranks of the military and are increasingly being excluded officially from other aspects of society. By engaging in this study and finding the military still needs to do more with regards to racial and sexual equality, Moore and Webb may in fact be prolonging the hold these objective categories have in our discourse and preventing other minorities from moving toward full inclusion. In a very real sense, Moore and Webb's findings reinforce and advance the hegemonic discourse. The conclusion – more needs to be done.

The larger picture – deconstruction of the concept climate

Moore and Webb's analysis of the perceptions of Army personnel with respect to the EO climate of their units answers some questions and raises others. Even as they pursue their agenda, they also undermine it in some very important ways. To examine some of the tensions, inconsistencies, and imponderables in their article, I now turn to a discussion informed by the deconstruction method as developed by Jacques Derrida.

“Deconstruction proceeds by identifying the central opposition that determines the architecture of a text. Once that opposition is found, the implied hierarchy is reversed in order to put the spotlight on the concept treated as posterior, imperfect, invalid, or unwanted in the original text. Finally, the posterior, etc., concept is shown to be indispensable by demonstrating how both terms relate to each other, and how the suppressed term implicitly enters the argumentation at crucial points.”³⁷

Climate as the central concept

I believe EO climate serves as the central concept in Moore and Webb's text. This concept predominates and is the underlying reality against which perceptions are evaluated. Sometimes referred to as environment, the predominant referent is to climate as a reality that exists. It is portrayed both as a given and an unchangeable. This portrayal creates a tension,

³⁷ Noorderhaven, 607 – 608.

however, in that even though portrayed as a given and a constant, the EO climate is exactly that which they also believe needs to be changed. If the climate as perceived by minority members of the military does not improve, their overall project has failed.

Utilizing EO climate as a constant provides Moore and Webb and other researchers in this area a common yardstick of their own creation. This constant is essential in their methodology as they consider survey data gathered over a period of years and in military units scattered across the globe with different personnel configurations and different missions. If the climate were not constant in some sense, comparing the various perceptions from one year to the next as parts of a single whole would be inconsistent with their methods. They make no provision to analyze EO climate as it may have changed through time. On the surface, this constancy of EO climate provides a means by which Moore and Webb's findings can be accepted as presented; some outside actor or process needs to do more to improve the climate for minority members of the military. This conclusion based on such a presupposition leaves room for further investigation and discussion when considered through the deconstructive process.

Above I discussed briefly factors associated with selection of the phrase "EO climate" from an archaeological point of view. Here I look more in depth at what the word climate includes as utilized by Moore and Webb. I will also consider what it excludes.

The word climate can be traced back to the Latin "*climatis*" referring to a region or slope of the earth.³⁸ The concept developed from the root word for "to slope" which related to the changing slope of the earth from equator to pole. This changing slope was believed to cause

³⁸ Online Etymology Dictionary, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=climate&searchmode=nl>

various temperatures and other weather related phenomenon based on the amount of energy from the sun's rays absorbed as they struck the earth at various angles. Eventually the surface of the earth was carved into regions based on their respective slopes and the word climate moved from being associated with the slope of the earth to the weather associated with the region. The word is associated with conditions which impact our life and are both unchangeable and beyond our control. We cannot change the climate; we can only move from one to another. Climate also connotes universality in that all regions of the earth's surface with the same slope are expected to have similar weather, all other things being equal. The word climatology, the study of the climate, first appeared in France in 1843 and coincides with development of modern thought and science. Study of climate is a scientific endeavor of the highest order as weather has so many factors involved in its manifestation. Climate is an object capable of being studied but one which science has yet to master.

Today climate extends beyond simply the weather associated with various regions based on their distance from the equator. It now includes any concept equated with our surroundings which tends to be a given and includes synonyms such as tone, mood, feeling, ambience, atmosphere among others.³⁹ Another aspect of climate is something we have learned to control to better our lives when we are inside human constructed structures. Change of climate is also taking center stage with regards to issues related to global warming; that which we thought was a given and essential for our continued survival is now being altered in a reckless and uncontrollable fashion through seemingly unrelated actions. The word climate

³⁹ The Free Dictionary, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/climate>

is laden with overtones; some of which Moore and Webb exploit for their study and some of which they seem to desire to ignore.

Moore and Webb utilize the concept of an unchanging and constant climate effectively in painting the picture they intend. In so doing they rely on the normal use of the term and its associated concept in the hegemonic discourse as mentioned above. For Moore and Webb, the EO climate is something that exists as part of today's Army (e.g. "... are minority males as satisfied with the EO climate in today's Army?"⁴⁰). It is a given and has identity which can be conceptualized at the institutional level. It is also divisible and can be thought of at the unit level ("attitudes of active-duty personnel toward the equal opportunity climate in their units"⁴¹). The attitudes of the objects of the study toward the climate can change but the EO climate remains the same.

Utilized but not exploited are concepts of climate related to its changing in response to unit variations. Moore and Webb reference a previous study by Dansby and Landis in which the "the favorable perception of group members on the EO climate increased" when the representation of minority women and minority male officers increased.⁴² They also note a discrepancy in the common understanding of the impact of the EO climate on minorities (this being negative in the Army of today) that despite the fact African American women rate the military's EO climate unfavorable; they re-enlist at a higher rate than do other women.⁴³ There is a sense that EO climate is not an unchanging given which permeates all Army units with an oppressive impact on minorities. Instead, it can be improved and it may not always have its

⁴⁰ Moore and Webb, p 216.

⁴¹ Op.Cit.

⁴² Ibid., p 219.

⁴³ Ibid., p 220.

presumed effect in making it less likely minorities will serve both voluntarily and with increased interest and effectiveness. In their conclusions Moore and Webb indicate all personnel should be afforded a positive human relations climate.⁴⁴ I find it interesting they change their language at this one point from EO climate to human relations climate when referring to the alternative to the oppressive EO climate which has been presumed to exist during the period of their study. The meaning and impact of climate is centered on the hegemonic meaning and context. Despite their efforts, other perspectives on climate erupt from the text.

The importance of the concept

Why is the EO climate in the military so important to Moore and Webb? In the first sentence of their abstract, they provide us the answer, “Equal Opportunity is recognized by the Department of Defense as being crucial to maintaining a high state of military readiness.”⁴⁵ Interestingly, this is the only direct statement they make relative to EO climate and its relationship to institutional success. No further discussion or comment is offered nor apparently required. The link between the two does not even make it out of the abstract despite the fact the abstract is supposed to be a synopsis of that which is to come. We are presented with a simple statement declaring equal opportunity to be essential to the success of the Department of Defense in maintaining military readiness. By extension, equal opportunity is also necessary for the defense of our nation and the cause of freedom worldwide. Moore and Webb objectify equal opportunity by replacing it with EO climate.⁴⁶ The EO climate is

⁴⁴ Ibid., p 234.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p 215.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 215. In their abstract Moore and Webb from their discussion on race relations and equal opportunity in their first two paragraphs to the active-duty men and women’s perceptions of the equal opportunity climate with

equated with the success of the institution by substitution and is to be measured by comparing soldier's perceptions of it. The concept of EO climate as introduced and portrayed in the article is an embodiment of the struggle faced by minorities and women in finding acceptance and success within the military institution and, by extension, the larger society. It is part of the hegemonic oppression against minorities in our society and is something beyond the control of minority members. It is universal and unchanging when considered at the institutional level and is assumed to be negative with respect to contributing to the overall success of the military. EO climate is something that needs to be changed but change must be imposed from other than minority members as they are portrayed as helpless before the EO climate.

The concept's limitations

This concept of climate cannot stand without revealing cracks and flaws. The exterior pushes through in the analysis of the data collected through the MEOCS process. One such instance becomes evident on considering satisfaction with the EO climate as determined by paygrade. African American women in paygrade E7 were found to be more satisfied in their perception of the EO climate than were African American women of other ranks.⁴⁷ E7 African American women comprise 61 percent of all women in the Army within this paygrade. They are the majority at this point. The unalterable and uniform climate has apparently been altered by forces from within, minority forces at that. The data demonstrate climate is not a given but changes in response to the makeup of the community at the unit level.

no further discussion. The implication is the climate is a true reflection of race relations and is also something which men and women can perceive and have perceptions regarding.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 231.

A second and related crack in the climate monolith is observed in this part of the discussion as well. As climate is a function of the majority population (usually White) and in this segment of the Army the majority is African American⁴⁸, would one not expect the more junior African Americans serving under their own majority to have an improved perception of the EO climate? This is not the case however as junior African American women had similar attitudes toward the EO climate as did junior men. This presents a dilemma. On the one hand the climate has changed based on who is in the majority and on the other the climate has not changed despite the fact minorities are here in the majority.

These findings appear to differ from those of Dansby and Landis in which the perception of EO climate was affected by the percentage of minority officers but not the percentage of minority enlisted members.⁴⁹ Dansby and Landis had explored EO climate based on research of Kanter in which she determined token groups do not have an impact on their organization due to their low numbers in relation to the overall size of the group. Dansby and Landis may have confirmed aspects of Kanter but may have also added to her in noting officers apparently have a larger impact than do enlisted based on their overall influence above and beyond their sheer numerical strength. In Moore and Webb the same phenomenon appears to be occurring as the majority of the relatively senior enlisted members of some organizations are now minority representatives. The statistical findings do not so much appear to be an artifact of improper analysis but are more in keeping with what one might expect overall. The interesting

⁴⁸ Though nearly all military occupational specialties have been opened to women, women soldiers in the Army tend to be clustered within several specific job types. These types have been open to women longer and have been populated in such a way as to permit women to attain leadership within them. This is reflected by the percentage of female African American E7s serving within the Army. Within these job types, the working environment tends to be set by the leading enlisted personnel which also tend to be at the E7 level within small units. E7s tend to provide primary leadership for junior enlisted in groups of 5 to 25 within the services.

⁴⁹ Moore and Webb, p 219.

and anomalous character is with respect to the more junior minority women who do not seem to benefit from the majority status of their racial kindred. Unlike Dansby and Landis, the climate in this case does not appear to improve based on changes in leadership except for the leaders themselves. The leaders seem to change their perception of the climate but others remain the same. This speaks to the fact there is not one overriding climate in the organization but rather the EO climate is a matter of one's perception. The climate can and does vary by individual depending on their perspective and not simply their racial or gender identity. It is not a categorical construction based solely on minority status but an individual construction which depends on a larger range of personal variables than one's gender or the color of one's skin.

A third anomaly appears as White women are found to be more satisfied with the climate at all paygrades than are minority men. This occurs despite the fact White women are part of an absolute gender minority at all paygrades and also both a racial and gender minority at the E7 paygrade.⁵⁰ If climate is a function of the majority (whiteness and maleness) and those not in the majority are oppressed by it, should white women be more satisfied than those in a greater relative majority (non-white males) and should they be more satisfied than those in an absolute majority at paygrade E7? Minority status alone is not a predictor of perception toward EO climate.

One additional anomaly appears in the perception of senior female officers toward EO climate. Senior women are less satisfied with the EO climate than are junior officers by a considerable margin.⁵¹ High ranking African American officers are, however, more satisfied

⁵⁰ Ibid., 231.

⁵¹ Ibid., 227.

with the EO climate than are Hispanic officers. If climate is something that does not respond to individuals or is only a function of the white male majority, why would higher ranking African American officers be more satisfied than Hispanic officers when at all other ranks African Americans are less satisfied? Would they not be less satisfied based on their greater awareness of injustice and their greater understanding of the system based on their greater numbers and their relative investment in the system for their own community? Would they not be more condemning of how the given structure is unresponsive to their needs and desires as equal members of the human race? And would they not have more concrete and replicable opinions formed which would be well displayed on survey results?

In all of these cases the presuppositions associated with the central concept of EO climate as deployed by Moore and Webb are undermined. EO climate is not a uniform unchanging reality which is a product of white male hegemony. Instead, it varies by situation, is changeable, depends on one's personal perspective, and is apparently more salient for some minorities than for others. There seems to be a part of EO climate which is a product of the unit composition and the personal experience level of the individuals involved in the unit.

The concept's other

What is this other of EO climate? Moore and Webb do not directly provide a concept for us. They seem to have no interest in providing the other in their discussion. Their agenda is to determine whether women or minorities have a more negative view of EO climate. Other concepts are not within the scope of their inquiry except to note them as interesting findings within the data. But surely an other exists and extrudes from their own discussion.

The other in this case would appear to be the concept of camaraderie. This concept is key to the effective functioning of a military unit and is included in Moore and Webb's concept of equal opportunity though not acknowledged. Camaraderie is defined most simply as comradeship. It is epitomized perhaps most eloquently in the phrase "One for all and all for one." A parallel and largely overlapping concept is esprit de corps, a sense of unity and common interest developed between the members of a unit with specific tasks and responsibilities. Military units are effective as they are able to develop and maintain camaraderie to permit them to face sometimes overwhelming tasks acting in a harmonious way. All members of the unit are essential as they contribute to the unit goal and none can be disenfranchised through prejudice or ignorance without harming the overall good. Even as Moore and Webb operationalize equal opportunity as EO climate, one could also operationalize camaraderie as community climate. EO climate includes it but does not acknowledge such. Community climate is real and palpable but not capable of objective measure. It varies over time and place based on the makeup and circumstances of the unit and is potentially perceived of differently by individuals within the unit based on their personal circumstances which may include race and gender. Rather than being a climate defined based on minority status or gender, it is based on human respect and working relationships and a sense of unity generated by commitment between all members of the unit. Community climate is not the overarching unchanging climatic condition determined by geographic location on the earth as is the intended understanding of EO climate; instead it is the climate within a home which is regulated and changed by human action to best meet the needs of the occupants.

Community climate is part of Moore and Webb's text even though not specifically identified. It stands behind their assertion that equal opportunity is crucial to maintaining a high state of military readiness as racial minorities have been successfully integrated into the military better than in other parts of society. The military community situation is better as a result of this lack of discrimination. Community climate also breaks through in the discussion of the female African American E7 EO climate perceptions. "A plausible explanation for this finding is that representation of African Americans, particularly African American women, is highest in the higher enlisted paygrades."⁵² These soldiers perceive the EO climate better as the overall climate of the unit is more in keeping with their own preferences and needs as they have more to say about it. It is their community.

Perhaps the most telling inclusion yet exclusion of Moore and Webb's text is in their choice of a dependent variable. They explicitly find the scales of the MEOCS survey measuring organizational effectiveness are not significant when considered against race and gender as independent variables.⁵³ They exclude them from their study. These excluded scales are reflective of community climate in that they ask all personnel about how they perceive the well being of their unit and how well they believe it is functioning. Two of the questions in this part of the survey are "this organization is proud of its people" and "my workgroup works well as a team".⁵⁴ Compare and contrast these types of questions with those included by Moore and Webb in their combined dependent variable.⁵⁵ All the questions included are based on

⁵² Ibid., 231.

⁵³ Ibid., 222.

⁵⁴ Questions 45 and 50 of the current version of the DEOCS (renamed from MEOCS) as found on the DEOMI.org website.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp 235 – 236.

opposition. They are framed either in terms of male/female or majority/minority opposition. Supervisors are either identified as supervisors with no adjective or as majority supervisors; minorities and females are apparently not supervisors. When asked about reverse discrimination, the commander chose between a qualified majority applicant and a less qualified minority with no question suggesting the opposite could have been true. When asked to rate the EO climate in the organization, it proceeds from very poor to very good. The focus of the questions included is on the individual with “member” being utilized 11 times in the five factors and “team” or “community” not being used once. The rest of the survey which the members took is excluded from the study even though by being included at the time of survey it was very much a part of the overall result. The various questions on such a survey interact with each other to produce unique results.

Analysis of the portion of the survey reproduced by Moore and Webb in their appendix reveals questions from the excluded scales were intermixed with the questions included in their analysis.⁵⁶ Tourangeau et. al. discuss the impact of question order on sampling of attitudes via survey research. Respondents to such surveys do not necessarily consider their entire emotional and volitional reserves in answering survey questions. Instead they tend to respond by taking a quick inventory of their memory’s content with recent attitudes having priority. “These contents might include memories for relevant personal experiences and behaviors, affects, general propositions about the issue, and so on;”⁵⁷ Previous questions are known to precipitate salient memories as individuals participate in social surveys. Questions regarding

⁵⁶ Questions 2, 26, 27, and 33 are not listed in the scales provided and are presumed to be part of scales 6 to 8 which dealt with organizational effectiveness. These questions were intermingled with the ones included in the study and may have precipitated question order effects.

⁵⁷ Tourangeau et.al. p 496.

religious behaviors have been shown to impact questions regarding religious belief when inserted immediately prior to belief questions.

In the MEOCS, it is entirely possible and probable various opinion questions interact with one another influencing both the perceptions of EO climate included by Moore and Webb as well as perceptions of command effectiveness. Though the questions in the survey are specifically designed to minimize response order effect⁵⁸, the questions not included in their Moore and Webb's analysis may have had positive or negative impact on the questions they do include. By excluding some questions and retaining others, specifically those associated with negative behaviors observed within the command versus positive ones, they have made a deliberate choice to emphasize and capture negative perceptions. They have also sought to make the results of their analysis more definitive by ignoring the potential of an individual having observed negative behaviors in the command but nevertheless having a positive opinion of the command and his or her place in it. In so doing they have minimized the undecideables.

The questions used in Moore and Webb's analysis utilize the concept of opposition and assume underlying dominance of one type of people over another type of people. They specifically excluded questions related to team, community, pride, and effectiveness as they did not prove significant on the independent variables utilized in the study.⁵⁹ Perhaps this aspect of the unit climate is not based on race or gender but on a different organizational concept, one

⁵⁸ The questions in the MEOCS are constructed in such a way that a respondent cannot consistently answer either five or one to all questions indicating a positive or negative overall attitude. By varying the way in which questions are worded the salience of each question is enhanced and the tendency of some respondents to answer all questions the same is discouraged or is at least able to be spotted if the internal consistency is not in accord with normal response patterns.

⁵⁹ Moore and Webb, p 222 – “None of the scales measuring organizational effectiveness (scales 6 to 8) were significant.” Only the scales measuring perceptions on EO climate were combined into the single dependent variable.

that is marginalized and excluded by the decisions Moore and Webb have made. Camaraderie and esprit de corps are excluded from consideration by the focus on EO climate. Yet they also are essential for military effectiveness as well as positive EO climate. As Moore and Webb indicate, albeit indirectly, units without high camaraderie are not effective. Units with high levels of discrimination will not possess esprit de corps. “It is vital that the Army build and maintain the combat readiness of their most important weapons system – the soldier.”⁶⁰ Moore and Webb equate gender and racial equality with the Army’s combat readiness as though these two factors displace all others in taking care of soldiers. By focusing on EO climate and ignoring community climate, they have limited the conditions of possibility they can discern in favor of determining with precision how race and gender discrimination continue to have a negative impact on military readiness. In so doing they have infused the overall discourse with greater indeterminism as the remaining concepts related to command climate are pushed aside and not considered.

Displacing the concept

Based on this deconstruction of sorts, understanding might be enhanced by displacing the concept of climate, either EO or community, and reformulating the operational concept of the study as the unit human network (UHN). The various oppositions of interest can be examined in light of this new creation while the imponderables can be isolated. The UHN is an intangible as are the climates referred to above. It is something that can be described and conceived of as with climates; an individual’s attitude toward it is completely unique and not based on any other person’s attitude. The military itself is a hierarchical structure with larger

⁶⁰ Ibid., p 234.

units being composed of smaller ones. As a result, the UHN is scalable depending on the level of analysis sought. In questioning it however, it is able to respond with both the oppositions of the EO climate as well as the agreements of the Community climate. It does so as it operates at a more fundamental level than either of the climates. Rather than simply focusing on observed behaviors of others and perceptions of personal inclusion/exclusion the UHN also addresses how the various individuals either enhance the overall network or detract from it in terms of their unique identities, capabilities, and training. This permits diversity to be positive based on the multiple contributions of many rather than a leveling process of equality. Sameness and uniqueness can now exist side by side without either needing to surrender its value or its contribution. UHN permits an understanding of the whole as including all the parts with diversity taking into account more inherent variations within the members than simply race and gender.

Even though intangible, the network would be subject to both subjective and objective measures as nodes and connections could be defined and analyzed as to their functionality and criticality in the overall operation. The UHN is not static only yielding to external pressure but reflects changes in unit makeup and conditions, being subject to change as personnel come and go changing the diversity equation. It preserves the capability of exploring where discrimination persists based on race and/or gender but also incorporates the perceptions of effectiveness or lack thereof which are apparently not significant of race and/or gender.

UHN preserves many of the presuppositions of the EO climate in that it retains a focus on military readiness being predicated on lack of discrimination. It does so in a manner which permits a fuller perspective on discrimination with members identifying weaknesses and

discrimination versus having it being imposed in pre-defined categories. UHN does not however presume that all discrimination is the same as does EO climate. Instead it permits the reasons and beliefs for discrimination to remain undecided as the focus is on functional perspectives and not presumed discriminatory beliefs.

UHN is not capable of going beyond the unit to determine causes of attitudes and beliefs which reside within the minds of the unit members and cause discord and dysfunctional behavior within units. Though intuitive thought may indicate the total institution of the military has a major impact on how members beliefs are altered to conform to the prevailing doctrines and values of the institution, research indicates otherwise. Lovell and Stiehm find “contrary to the supposition of enthusiasts who imagine military service will effect a virtuous remolding of character, most veterans of military service emerge with preexisting values and beliefs largely intact.”⁶¹ Survey research of military members is limited to current behaviors and perceptions which are based on belief and value systems members bring with them from their own civilian pasts. These beliefs and values reflect the societal norms and pressures of their individual formative experiences. Where they are contradictory to military service, they may be suppressed for the sake of good order and discipline. Motivations and feelings regarding prejudice likely lie beyond the pale of the concept of the UHN as they precede the military experience and persist in spite of it.

New conceptual benefits

EO climate research presumes a relatively constant climate regarding equal opportunity in the military. It presumes this climate is based on issues of gender and race almost

⁶¹ Lovell and Stiehm, p 192.

exclusively. It presumes the EO climate is the major factor of a service member's perception of his or her unit's overall personnel climate and is the dominant factor affecting camaraderie and esprit de corps. EO climate minimizes, marginalizes, and ignores other factors related to these concepts of unit perception and effectiveness. EO climate ignores the other of community climate which addresses other issues related to how members perceive the human dimension of their military units. This other dimension, herein identified as community climate, may also ignore inherent prejudicial behaviors being blind to them particularly in the case of climates controlled by majority personnel.

The concept of UHN displaces both EO and community climate by focusing on network associations within units instead of perceptions; by permitting discussion and analysis of prejudicial behaviors not in terms of attitudes and beliefs but in terms of impact on function; by including all aspects of interpersonal functioning into the discussion versus only gender and racial identity; and by acknowledging in a working model that network functioning is a product of the makeup of the unit and not an historical artifact or a reality imposed from above or beyond. UHN can realistically deal with issues or prejudice but does so in a manner more in keeping with the context of military service rather than being an imposition of the hegemonic discourse.

Summary

Moore and Webb's article exemplifies a typical (if any article can said to be so) social science product of today's disciplines. It relies on established procedures, utilizes accepted methodologies (GLM), places itself within the ongoing literature (race/gender relations within the US and the military in particular), is offered in scientific formulae's (H1 and H2), analyzes

the results from a variety of perspectives to establish which have meaning and which do not based on objective criteria (F and Eta square tests), and offers discussion and suggestions for further research. In doing so it builds upon Weberian ideal-types without necessarily considering whether they are applicable to the chosen methodologies, relies on standard tropes which tend to trap them in their methods without being able to explore the interesting aspects of their study, accept a standard archaeology of the ideas with which they deal without seriously questioning if it applies in their case, pursue a hegemonic agenda which may be counterproductive to the actual goal with which they are concerned, and build on words with certain concepts and meanings which do not fit their case but are accepted and utilized to permit acceptance of their ideas.

Though Moore and Webb's treatment of the idea is helpful despite the alleged shortcomings, more may reasonably be expected of studies in this field. Further studies might be pursued utilizing alternative formulations of the MEOCS which focus more on a norm of unit human networks as opposed to a majority/minority climate. Such studies could be compared in major ways (satisfaction with overall service) to determine which provides more useable information for organization leaders. Specific studies could be done through interviews and targeted focus groups with female African American E7s and senior African American officers to determine what if any changes they have seen in themselves or their organizations that permits them to perceive themselves as more of a part of their organization. Better concepts of diversity networks could be developed as an alternative framework on which to construct future understandings of the military structures and units than now exist. New members can be indoctrinated utilizing these concepts rather than the current rubric of EO climates.

This entire exercise can be understood as a deconstruction of sorts. Not only was Moore and Webb's work considered from a perspective rarely applied, it was also supplemented with other concepts which if applied, might serve not to undermine the primary objects of their inquiry but to broaden and support them through a more effective means. These new methodologies would also expose presumed certainties which are not certain at all and reveal areas in which presumptions are not warranted and may result in faulty decision making. Questioning presuppositions and presumed structures can produce new and surprising results.

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