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MASCULINITY AND COHESION IN MINIATURE WARGAMING

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MASCULINITY AND COHESION IN MINIATURE WARGAMING

A Thesis

presented in partial fulfillment of requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts

in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology

The University of Mississippi

by

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ABSTRACT

This research looked at the interactions on online platforms of those people who are part of the miniature wargaming community. The goal of this study was to answer 1) Which masculinities are present and practiced within the miniature wargaming community, 2) What is the reason for the cohesion of the miniature wargaming community. I found support for different masculinities, such as geek masculinity, hegemonic masculinity, and domestic masculinity. These different masculinities have different aspects and some of these aspects were displayed in the miniature wargaming community, with no masculinity being presented in all aspects. I also found support for the theories on Field by Bourdieu, contributing to the cohesion of the miniature wargaming community because of the discussion of practicing, playing, and the competition of the game. While masculinity, and competition and cohesion are present and their presence can be explained by my findings, there is a part of the community where participants in the hobby of miniature wargaming have made their own space. This separate space which the community has made for themselves allows them to seemingly ignore certain aspects of both masculinity and competition.

DEDICATION

To Family and Friends

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

When it comes to leisure, people do all sorts of different activities when they try to relax, have fun, and interact with other people. The choice might depend on the subculture(s) in which they participate. Thanks to leisure and leisure activities people come together and interact. Some leisure activities or hobbies are not available to everyone. Social, cultural, and institutional norms, especially those related to masculinity, affect who can partake in which activity. Masculinity is an important aspect of our society which influences many decisions that people make and leisure is no exception to that. This project is about people, mostly men, coming together to play with little toy soldiers in hobby stores found in our daily lives.

Hobby stores in this study are defined as stores that supply products to build and operate miniature toys, from miniature trains, to remote controlled cars, or miniatures that are toy soldiers. Anyone may enter these stores found in large cities and in small communities, almost anywhere in the world. The stores can be located in strip malls or may have their own buildings. What products they carry is often dependent on what the local population needs in terms of their hobby supply. To reach a wider audience besides hobbyists and get other people to come to the store in order to create traffic, some of these stores carry comics. Miniature wargaming also happens in private clubs where people meet. Conventions happen all over the world for miniature wargamers to meet. Consequently, the hobby store, the conventions, and the private clubs are vital to the community. People who play miniature wargames also participate in discussion with other players. This discussion can happen in the hobby store, or when the hobby store is closed online on the internet. With the rise of the internet in the early 2000's the

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miniature wargaming community, like a lot of other people, enjoyed a new found connectivity with its global members. Discussion boards and blogs were created on the internet, allowing the community to communicate like never before. What is unique about hobbies is that people who have normally little to no association with each other can come together and interact despite their social, cultural, or institutional differences that on a day-to-day basis would keep them apart (Waskul and Lust 2004:345). The everyday identity of people is broken down and repurposed in order to not just find relaxation, but also to facilitate new connections to people through social interactions that are part of the hobby (Koeffel and Haller 2008:1; Williams 2017:122). These interactions can range from asking tips about how to better paint a piece, to asking what strategy is the best, actually taking the RC car to the track, or putting the little toy soldiers on the table and pushing them around.

For this study, I focus on tabletop miniature wargaming. What is a tabletop game? Tabletop games are games that are played on a table or any surface that is flat. Examples for tabletop games are board games such as chess. Tabletop miniature wargaming refers to taking toy soldiers and moving them across a table against someone else's toy soldiers and playing according to certain rules found in the respective game rule book. The miniatures in miniature wargaming represent the military pieces that a general deploys in battle and take on the form of soldiers, artillery, and vehicles. The miniatures used in miniature wargaming serve an aesthetic purpose. The scale at which miniature wargaming is played makes it hard to have a realistic representation of an actual battle. Tabletop miniature wargames evolved from wargames which started in the 18th century in Prusia where the military and king would play out scenarios for campaigns that they had planned (Heistand 1898). The pieces back then were made from wood and were mostly just shapes unless great craftsmanship was applied, which was usually reserved

for the higher classes. The game has evolved over time. Nowadays, miniatures can still be just made of wood or paper, but with new technologies and mass production tabletop miniature games now feature highly detailed miniatures that hobbyists put together and paint. Some hobbyists have even elected to forgo the miniature aspect of the game. They now play miniature wargaming in the virtual world, using software to render the table they play on and the miniatures, which allows them to play over the internet with people from all around the globe.

Currently, the biggest tabletop miniature game in the world is called Warhammer, and it is produced by the company Games Workshop. Warhammer is a game played in a Sci-fi or in a fantasy setting that involves different factions making up different armies that players can collect and then pitch against each other. Both the Sci-fi version, a futuristic setting played out in the year 40000, and the fantasy version, set in an age where elves, dwarves, and other mystical beings stride on the world, have their own rules. Similarly, all the different factions have their own rules to make them stand apart from each other within the game. The different factions within the games are all depicted differently, from glorious and heroic to sinister and evil. The central story for both games revolves around humanity holding out against the forces of evil that besiege them from all sides. The miniatures for the different factions all have their own aesthetic and usually have their own recommended painting style, although the hobbyists have the final say in the end on how they wish to put models together and paint them. Hobbyists choose which faction they wish to play when they enter into the hobby. Another possibility is to only join the hobby to construct and paint the miniatures and not play.

The people who are hobbyists are what I would call everyday people. They go to work, come home, and then immerse themselves in the hobby if there is time left in the day. They are lawyers, agricultural workers, IT specialists, healthcare specialists or even famous actors.

Miniature wargaming is not just for adults. Children play miniature wargames as well. I started

playing at age 10. The oldest player I personally know is 59. One problem with miniature

wargaming is that it is expensive which is why most of the player base consists of adults.

Children who want to participate in the hobby depend on adults to finance their participation in

the hobby. When I first started in 2001, a single box of a single squad of troops had a price tag of

30 Euro. The requirements to play depend on the game, but usually you need at least a couple of

squads, which means to participate you have to spend some money. Nowadays, the price for a

single miniature can range from just $5 to $3,000.

People in the hobby distinguish between "playing" and "hobbying." "Playing" is actively

participating and playing wargames with the miniatures. "Hobbying" is putting the models

together and painting them (Meriläinen, Stenros, and Heljakka 2020). Playing with the

miniatures is optional. Because some miniatures are worth up to $3,000, they see little to no

interaction on the table due to their status as a rare and special miniature. These two dimensions

of "playing" and "hobbying" both have a casual and a competitive aspect to them that hobbyists

can freely join. There are tournaments that people can participate in for renown within the hobby

and prizes related to the hobby, often in the form of gift cards and trophies.

People all over the world play Warhammer. Games Workshop reports that the hobby of

miniature gaming is played all around the world, with Games Workshop having over 500 retail

stores where people can go play (Warhammer Community 2018). This does not include all the

independent stores where people can come and play. In addition to Warhammer from Games

Workshop, there are many other miniature wargames that bring people together. People spend

hours every week doing this, from putting the miniatures together so that they can be painted, to

playing with them in the wargames. All this takes up time and people choose to do this over

other possible hobbies. As Meriläinen, Stenros, and Heljakka point out, miniature wargaming and the hobbying aspect of it have become a structured and goal-driven form of leisure (2020:13). Another reason why we should look at the hobby of miniature gaming is because participants within the hobby are able to gain status with playing the game. While the status is confined to the subculture of miniature wargaming, people still participate in tournaments in order to increase their renown (Lee 2019:47). Studying the wargaming community can address the question of how leisure or subcultural activities facilitate social cohesiveness as people from different backgrounds interact in these hobbies.

I myself have been part of the tabletop miniature gaming hobby for 19 years, participating in both the casual and the competitive scenes in Warhammer and in other tabletop games. During my involvement, I had the chance to interact with a wide variety of people. It was only when I started my studies at the University of Mississippi, I realized that all these people were white men of different ages. Playing games as a leisure activity has been associated with being an activity that is made solely for men since the 1980's (Salter 2018:250). It is men who traditionally play games (Giacomelli and Gibbert 2018:168). Furthermore, what game a person plays seems to depend on their identity, with games that have masculine aspects drawing in those who identify as masculine (Jun and Kyle 2012:368). The number of people of color and of women with whom I have interacted in my hobby over the years has remained rather small. The only increase that I have noticed since I began playing years ago is the population of people of color in the hobby. After meeting with Dr. Velitchkova and reading about masculinity and to some extent about leisure, questions started to form in my mind about why this was the case, especially since hobby stores as they are described are available to all people. Hobby stores are part of the public sphere and anyone with interest can enter. However, I found out that it is not

that case that just anyone can enter the hobby store and be part of the hobby. I had never before considered that maybe the cost of the game, which over the years has steadily increased, might be a reason why certain people are not able to get into the hobby. Also, I had not thought about how the majority of men in hobby stores might have something to do with why women are not seen there as often.

While leisure activities are supposedly available to everyone, societal or cultural norms affect who can actually participate. For example, it can be hard for women to participate, as women are expected to be mothers and may not have time to participate in leisure all together (Roster 2007:445). This means that this project is concerned with the question of what masculinity is like in spaces where people play miniature wargaming and engage in other leisure or subcultural activities. Answering this question relates to broader theories of masculinity by looking at the type(s) of masculinity present in wargaming and at how this type of masculinity is structured. Furthermore, this project is also concerned with the question of why the people in the community come together to participate in this leisure time activity.

Theoretical Framework

Theories Related to Cohesion

Field and Habitus

According to the Bourdieusian field theory, the reason why people find themselves together in a field is because they share similar structural relations to economic and cultural resources (Bottero & Crossley 2011:101). Bourdieu describes that fields are their own game in which it is in the best interest to practice the necessary behaviors of the field in order to not just gain the different capitals that the field has to offer, but also to be able to manipulate the capital in one's favor (Friedland 2009:899-900;Toft-Nielsen & Krogager 2015:69). Bourdieu states that symbolic interactionism is not the reason for group cohesion. In Bourdieu's point of view people come together in the field because they have the same goals (Bottero & Crossley 2011:101). The relationship that forms between people due to practices within the field helps with the reproduction of the social structure that forms (Friedland 2009:889). The habitus that forms not only strengthens the common practices of the field but also strengthens the interactions and relationships between players of the field (Bottero & Crossley 2011:103). It is important to take note that habitus grows to increase capital within the field as well as facilitate recreational activity while at the same time strengthening interactions between people (Ignatow & Robinson 2017:955). In addition to the different applications of habitus it is important to remember that habitus still remains an indicator of class (Ignatow & Robinson 2017:955). Practice of the actions in the field and the desire for competition are what keeps people together in cohesion.

What would group cohesion look like if dynamics related to field theory and habitus are at play? I expect that, if cohesion is due to Bourdieu's field dynamics, then I would observe

people trying to gain capital in order to increase their standing towards others in the community. I expect that people will use the capital that they gain to shift the rules of the field in their favor. In addition, I would also expect that people will have common practices that they all do which connects them to each other.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism explains differently why people come together and stay together through interactions, language, and symbols. In its simplest explanation "symbolic interactionism addresses how society is created and maintained through repeated interactions among individuals" (Carter & Fuller 2015:1). Symbolic interactionism concerns itself more with the meaning behind actions than it does with the structure that leads to the interaction itself. It is based around the language and symbols used in the communication between people (Carter & Fuller 2015:1; Chen & Duh 2007:22).

In itself there are three different schools of symbolic interactionism which are: The Chicago school, the Iowa school, and the Indiana school (Carter & Fuller 2015:2). In the Chicago school of thought, symbolic interaction is what makes up our social structures, and it concerns itself with the processes that lead to the experiences that are created through interactions. For the Chicago school cohesion comes from the interactions between people and the language and symbols that they use to communicate (Carter & Fuller 2015:2). The Iowa school viewed symbolic interactions as those acts that were informed by other prior events in the social sphere (Carter & Fuller 2015:3). The Indiana school on the other hand, "emphasized that meanings and interactions led to relatively stable patterns that create and uphold social structures" (Carter & Fuller 2015:4). For both the Iowa and Indiana school of thought cohesion

of a group, like with the Chicago school, comes from the interaction between people and the way they interact with others through symbols and language (Carter & Fuller 2015). Where the Iowa and Indiana school further differ is the way on how to approach the study of symbolic interactionism. The Iowa school turns toward quantitative methods, while the Indiana school uses a mixed methods approach of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Carter & Fuller 2015:4).

Part of symbolic interactionism is the concept of what is known as looking-glass self, in which the self is made up by the interactions one has with others in society. Or our sense of self is in fact just our perception of society's view of us (Robinson 2007:94). Goffman takes the concept of looking glass self and breaks it down further, states that symbolic interaction and the self that is built through the interaction with others comes from two different parts. First, obvious signs and expressions that are open and visible and second, symbols and signs which are hidden. (Robinson 2007:96) Chen and Duh describe how in gaming the player forms his identity through the interaction by looking at the player's own character and how the player's character is positioned in the game among other players (2007:23).

Through symbolic interactionism we are able to understand why people come together to form social movements and collective behavior. Due to the symbolic interaction between people in groups and through the construction of the self, the people of the group form an identity which they all share (Carter & Fuller 2015:9). The group is bound together by rituals that perpetuate the group.

This leaves me with the question whether the cohesion that is found in the gaming community is based on symbolic interactions between members of the community. If that were to be the case, what I would expect is that the people create their own identity based on how they

perceive others, and also how those others perceive them. Furthermore, I expect that, if cohesion is due to symbolic interactionism, then the people who are part of the hobby perform recurring actions which are part of the hobby and its identity. What I expect is that these actions as rituals in the hobby are different from the practices of Bourdieusian field theory. I expect these actions will not be something that helps with the positioning within the hierarchy like the practices do. I Expect that the actions which symbolic interactionism is responsible for do not emerge due to competition between people but purely to interact with the people of the same hobby.

Marxist Theory of Deviant Subcultures

According to Marxist theory of deviant subcultures, cohesion is described as the struggle against the dominant cultural forces of society. This cohesion comes through the creation of subcultures as counter cultures (Pfohl 2009; Jenks 2005:117). The dominant culture of our society tries to reproduce itself (Jenks 2005:116). While subcultures are part of the general culture and borrow from the parent culture, they are in fact deviant from the main culture due to their own little bubble that they create (Jenks 2005:117-118). In the gaming world we find the geek or nerd subculture as an example (Downing 2011:752; Salter 2018:251). In one part of the geek subculture, men with technological interests gather and try to resist the dominant cultural interest by exclusion of people, mainly women, who do not seem as invested in their interests (Salter 2018:250; Harrison, Drenten, and Pendarvis 2016:61). In a different part of geek subculture, we find a resistance to class and age restrictions of the general culture (Downing 2011). In the subculture of punk music resistance manifests itself against the main culture in many different ways. Their rebellion comes through the different topics that are addressed in the

music they play (Moran 2010:59), as well as the way people belonging to the subculture dress (Moran 2010:62).

What would the cohesion of the miniature wargaming community look like if the dynamics proposed by the Marxist theory on subcultures are at play? I expect that if the cohesion occurs due to the resistance to the main culture of society, that actions taken by participants in the subculture go against what is considered normal in general society. I would expect that they might dress differently, or use a different language, and express opposition.

Theories of masculinity

Masculinity

Masculinity in its most general sense is the expectation of how men are supposed to act in our society. It is the standard of what it means to be a man in a group composed of other men and the actions associated with being a man, often associated with the suppression of non-men and weaker men (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009:279). Manhood acts establish masculinity through which they give status and thus a place in the hierarchy of men (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009:284). Masculinity influences people when deciding what to do in their leisure time. Persons with masculine identities seek out masculine activities as described by Jun and Kyle (2012:358). Assuming a masculine identity means to embrace aspects of masculinity, such as strength or courage. But masculinity has changed over time (Horlacher: 2015) and so have the activities that are associated with masculinity (Giacomelli and Gibbert 2018; Jun and Kyle 2012: 358; Roster 2007:444). Men are supposed to be using anger and aggression when expressing themselves in spaces where masculinity is part of the hierarchy (McKinnon-Crowley 2020:132; Reid, O'Neil, Blair-Loy 2018:580). Also, in masculine groups and spaces, there are only two possible options

when it comes to belonging to that group, a person is either part of the group, an insider, or they are an outsider. Should a person choose to leave a group or space they can come back, but they will find that they will have a hard time coming and being accepted back into the group (Reid, O'Neil, Blair-Loy 2018:588).

What does masculinity look like in miniature wargaming? If masculinity is important for miniature wargaming, then I expect to observe a hierarchy between the men that is built according to the rules of the present masculinity. Furthermore, I expect this hierarchy to depend on acts that award the status of being a man in the group of people who participate in miniature wargaming. Additionally, I expect that men display emotions such as anger and aggressiveness when they express themselves when it comes to manhood acts and masculinity when playing miniature wargames. Lastly, there is also the expectation that a person is either part of the group that is participating in miniature wargaming, or a person is not part of the group and thus faces acceptance problems.

Every society has its own masculinity which is the hegemonic masculinity that sets the rules of how men should act and is in constant conflict with other masculinities which are trying to replace it as the hegemonic masculinity (Hinojosa 2010:180; Schrock & Schwalbe 2009P:280). Hegemonic masculinity is about superiority over others as well, whether they are other men or women (Giacomelli & Gibbert 2018:170). This establishment of superiority looks different for every social class. For lower social classes masculinity revolves around appearing strong whereas for higher social classes masculinity revolves around knowledge (Reid, O'Neill, and Blair-Loy 2012:581).

While hegemonic masculinity is about establishing dominance, actors have to be careful to not give into their emotions and actions too much since being too emotional is not considered

masculine and could lead to a loss of status in the masculine hierarchy. (Hinojosa 2010:186) This is why men have to carefully navigate manhood acts, actions that give status in the hierarchy, using aggression and violence or their occupational status and income. (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009:282) If aggression, violence, status, and income do not work to establish dominance, men can also fall back on coercive behavior (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009:285), all in order to signify that they as men are something special (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009:287).

What would hegemonic masculinity look like in miniature wargaming? If there is hegemonic masculinity in miniature wargaming, then I expect to find that men will fight for superiority. I expect to find aggression and violent behavior in order to establish superiority. I expect that, when someone is from a lower class, their attempt to dominate will take physical form, while domination from higher classes will come in the form of knowledge. Furthermore, I expect that all aggression is controlled and managed, and that any excessive use of emotions is acknowledged as a weakness by others.

Geek Masculinity

When it comes to playing games and masculinity, masculinity takes on the form of geek or nerd masculinity. Groups that form around geek masculinity perform activities which are not mainstream in society. That can be playing video games (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:319) or participating in live action role play, LARP for short, which is dressing up as knights and such and then fighting each other (Martin et al 2015:295). Geek masculinity is a form of masculinity that takes aspects of the hegemonic masculinity found in society and adds their own values to it in order to compensate for those hegemonic aspects its practitioners can't meet. These added aspects include: being more heroic and seeking glory (Martin et al 2015:301), being more

academically focused than athletic (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:295; Braithwaite 2016:2;l Salter 2018:249), and having a persecution complex that manifests in fearing that people are out to bring one back in line and normal society (Chess & Shaw 2015:216; Braithwaite 2016:3).

In groups where geek masculinity is prevalent, any actions become gendered in order to establish who is the dominant person (Martin et al 2015:303), with completely neutral actions such as playing music to accompany the games being played are delegated to those who appear to be more feminine, not heroic (Martin et al 2015:305). This means that women that are part of groups with geek masculinity are often excluded. This exclusion can be a direct exclusion from the group or while they are part of the group they are put in the background where they gain no recognition (Salter 2018:250, Martin et al:300). Similar to hegemonic masculinity, for geek masculinity there are manhood acts that establish standing in the hierarchy within the group and between the men. These manhood acts favor competitiveness over cooperation (Braithwaite 2016:3), which means that if a person does not perform manhood acts they can't belong to the group (Martin et al 2015:305). In addition, men display emotions such as anger, callousness, and aggressiveness which is the same as in hegemonic masculinity (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:310). Within the group, it is also important to be trained in what the group does, since the interaction between people is based on specialization and on how knowledgeable a person is about the activities that the group does (Salter 2018, P. 251). In addition, the interaction between people will be socially awkward, which is a characteristic as well for those who are part of a group that practices geek masculinity (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:295; Martin et al 2015:295).

What would geek/nerd masculinity look like in wargaming? If there is geek/nerd masculinity found in wargaming and the hobby store where the people play, then I expect to find that the men there try to be more heroic and try to seek glory. I can also expect to find that the

people there are more academically inclined than athletic. In addition, I expect that people playing wargaming have a victim complex where they feel pressured to join back in with the mainstream society and culture. Furthermore, I expect to find that people will display emotions of aggressiveness, anger, and callousness. Along with these emotions I expect that most interactions in the game are based on being competitive and are not friendly interactions between people. And that interaction between people can be socially awkward since in the literature people belonging to geek masculinity are classified as socially awkward. Lastly, I expect that knowledge of the game is highly priced between people and dictating the prestige of those involved in miniature wargaming.

Domestic Masculinity

In the case of this project, masculinity is found in the stores where people come together and play miniature wargaming. These stores are used to allow those who come there to separate themselves from their professions, families, and other identities in order to reassure and reinvent themselves. This separation of identities plays a role in what is called domestic masculinity. Domestic masculinity revolves around the space that men are able to make their own; the setup of the space adds to the construction of identity and habitus that the man tries to assume (Moisio & Beruchashvili 2016:657). One way in which men perform domestic masculinity is by sharing their space with others, either their sons (Moisio & Beruchashvili 2016:667) or other men ,friends that they invite to reproduce masculinity (Moisio & Beruchashvili 2016:669). The space in domestic masculinity is a space in which a man can show off his possessions even if they might not get seen by others because it still shows the status of the item and separates the space from other spaces where the man normally can't display his prized items to others (Moisio &

Beruchashvili 2016:663). This separation of the space for men and other spaces is created in order to block out the feminine areas of society and establish a place only for men. While women technically still have access to the space, they usually don't enter in order to keep the sanctity of the space intact (Moisio & Beruchashvili 2016:663).

What would domestic masculinity look like in hobby stores? If it is the case that domestic masculinity is found in hobby stores, I expect to find the overall space of the store to be separated into areas for people to gather depending on whether the people are considered masculine or not. Furthermore, I expect that men in the hobby store will have personal possessions that they cherish and that are off limits to non masculine people.

Militarized Masculinity

The occurrence of absence of women in masculine spaces is nothing new. Miniature wargaming has its roots in the military (Heistand 1898), this might be the reason why there are so few women in the hobby. Masculinity and the military have gone hand in hand for a long time, with men directly being associated with the military (Eichler 2014:82). This connection is far reaching in our society. Militarized masculinity is interwoven into almost every fiber of our daily life, from how we react to foreign people to how the products we consume are made by the actions of militarized masculinity (Eichler 2014:82; Enloe 2007). Even the personal characteristics that militarized masculinities value relate to hegemonic masculinity with characteristics, such as being courageous, violent, aggressive, or tought (Eichler 2014:82; Decosta 2014:465; McCluskey 2019:34-40). The connection of masculinity, men, and the military has been going on for so long now that it is traditional (Goldstein 2002:265) and as with anything traditional it often excludes women (Eichler 2014:83). Even now with the restructuring

of this tradition women still are seen as outsiders (Eichler 2014:82) because the military opposes feminism (Eichler 2014:83). When acting according to the norms of militarized masculinity, men perform in acts of self sacrifice, glory, and heroics (Sjoberg and Via 2018:210). Another aspect of militarized masculinity is the fact that should a woman manage to join a group where militarized masculinity is prevalent she stays a woman; a man in such an environment becomes a soldier (Sjoberg and Via 2018:212). Women are portrayed as beautiful peaceful souls that need to be protected by men who are the just warriors in this environment (Eichler 2014:83). Should personnel in groups with militarized masculinities lose, they try to shift blame to either a different party or an interfering aspect in order to still appear strong (Dcosta 2014:463). This has to do with the idea that in militarized masculinities those who are part of a group that practices such a masculinity are afraid of failure, which is a drive in order to succeed (Goldstein 2002:P. 254). Furthermore, people who are part of groups with militarized masculinity do not want to feel shame which like fear is another motivator for success (Goldstein 2002:269).

Is militarized masculinity found in hobby stores where people play wargames? If that is the case what I can expect to find is that women are not welcome due to the traditional military aspect of the game. Furthermore, I expect that, if militarized masculinity is found in hobby stores, then this militarized masculinity also transcends the space into other areas outside of the hobby store. If militarized masculinity is found in the hobby store I can expect that men will perform acts of self sacrifice, glory, and heroics when they play the game. If militarized masculinity is found in hobby stores then what I expect to find is that men portray characteristics such as being courageous, violent, aggressive, or tough, and that they don't want to lose and will shift the blame on something else should they do so. Should militarized masculinity be found in

hobby stores I can expect to find that men are afraid of losing, showing fear, and that should they

lose, the shame will drive them to succeed the next time around.

2. METHODS

With the ongoing pandemic that is raging across our nation the ability to go and observe in person is in jeopardy at any point. Public places to observe could have shut down at any point in time, for an unknown length. Observing people, despite distance, does not mean that the observer can't get sick and when the researcher interacts with his environment it is not guaranteed that the researcher does not get others sick as well. For that reason my unit of analysis for this thesis project are posts online by people of the community on appropriate platforms. In the literature when it comes to gaming, researchers look online to answer their questions (Adams 2005; Blackburn & Sharrer 2019; Chen & Duh 2007; Chess & Shaw 2015; Gray, Buyukozturk and Hill 2017; Harrison, Drenten and Pendarvis 2016; Lau 2017; Pietersen et al 2018; Shay 2017; Toft-Nielsen & Krogager 2015; Wilhelm 2018). Instead of going to a physical location the research looks at multiple different online platforms to analyze comments.

Data Sources

The research site for this project are two websites: Reddit and DakkaDakka. Both platforms, Reddit and DakkaDakka, are public websites that are accessible via the internet. Reddit claims to be the face of the internet, allowing users to submit content to the site such as links, text posts, and images, which are then voted up or down by other members. Posts are organized by subject into user-created boards called "subreddits". These subreddits cover a variety of topics such as news, politics, science, movies, video games, music, books, sports, fitness, cooking, pets, and image-sharing. The written language in the post is dependent on the

rules of the subreddit. Some subreddits forgo all rules, allowing for what is understood to be NSFW or "not safe for work posts" as well as racist comments to be submitted. If there are rules they are enforced by moderators. Moderators are people who volunteer to take care of the subreddit while adhering to a set of rules for moderators as well as the rules of the subreddit that is moderated. There is no reward for being a moderator.

The subreddits that I looked at in this case are the subreddit Warhammer, a discussion board for the biggest miniature wargame in the world, and the subreddit Minipainting, a discussion board to talk about painting all sorts of miniatures.

DakkaDakka is a large, independent wargaming community that features discussion, tutorials, and images for many games. Like Reddit, DakkaDakka has multiple subforums in which users can post content. Likewise, content on DakkaDakka can be links, text posts, and images - all relating to miniature wargaming.

Both platforms, Reddit and DakkaDakka, are accessible at all times, provided that the user has internet access. The participants who post on these platforms are anonymous, employing the use of aliases to interact with others and the platform. Signing up is free but if a person only wishes to watch and read signing up is not necessary. Only if the participant wishes to post and comment on both websites, they need to sign up.

This research project analyzes posts and comments on both Reddit and DakkaDakka. By using both Reddit and DakkaDakka I was able to analyze posts and their comments that were about hobbying aspects of miniature wargaming. A post is a submission by a member of the platform, be it Reddit or Dakkadakka. A post usually belongs to a single subforum, in case of Reddit a subreddit, where the post addresses a topic relevant to said subforum/subreddit. Posts

can consist of only a single word or picture or are almost written essays in length. Comments are responses either to the post itself, or a response to another comment.

I looked at the posts and the posts' comments and the topic they discussed. Are they about rules, pointing out mistakes and thus threatening the standing of the person? Did the comments portray emotions? Did the comments feminize? Another consideration was the talk about skill and performance in the comments which I analyzed. Posts about hobbying, which consists of, putting miniatures together and painting them, I analyzed by examining the descriptions of skills and knowledge. Was it a hypersexualized female miniature? Was it a masculine man? How was the miniature described in the post. As for the comments that I analyzed for hobbying posts, I looked at was the discussion and mentioned skills and knowledge. Furthermore, I also observed the portrayal of emotions and whether feminization occurred.

Sampling procedure

Hundreds of posts are made everyday on the two platforms Reddit and DakkaDakka. In order to increase feasibility of obtaining meaningful data I analyzed different posts of different weeks out of the year 2020 until I found saturation in the content and comments. All posts that I analyzed were posted on the subreddits "Warhammer" and "Minipainting" on Reddit, as well as on Dakkadakka in the Most Exalted Thread section. To clarify, a thread is the original post that starts the conversation that users have on online platforms. After gathering the data, I coded posts and comments using qualitative analysis software, then compared findings to what the existing literature had found.

In the end, I collected and analyzed 15 posts, with a total of 1583 comments of various lengths. I selected posts in the manner described below in order to have some sort of

representativeness of the community as well as to have a plethora of communication happen between people of the community that was varied. I chose to not to select posts with 30 comments or less in order to avoid selecting posts in which the conversation was singular. In a post with only 10 comments the 10 comments might just be 10 people praising the work that was done by the person that posted their work.

On the 31st of October I copied and pasted 2 posts from the subreddit "Warhammer", and copied and pasted 2 posts from the subreddit "Minipainting", as well as 1 post from the website Dakkadakka.com. The posts on reddit which I selected were the top post of the month for each subreddit, as well as the top post of the year for both subreddits. On Dakkadakka.com the post I selected was from the most recent exalted forum topics and posts. Exalted forum posts on Dakkadakka are those that have received acknowledgement from platform participants by voting positively on the post. On reddit when one visits a subreddit such as "Warhammer" or "Minipainting" at the top of the page, underneath the banner one can choose to look at Hot, New, or Top posts of the subreddit. When selecting Top the user is asked to specify which time frame he wants to look at when looking for the Top posts. For this sample collection the top post of both the Top of the Month and the Top of the Year was selected. I chose and analyzed a post when it had 30 or more comments in order to make sure that there was participation happening between users of each platform.

On the 30th of November and the 31st of December at 4pm I copied and pasted 2 posts from the subreddit "Warhammer", and 2 posts from the subreddit "Minipainting". I also copied 1 post from the website Dakkadakka.com. As in October, the posts on reddit which were selected were from the top category, with the categories being top of the month and top of the year. On

Dakkadakka.com the post was selected from the most recent exalted forum topics and posts. All posts that were selected had at least 30 or more comments made.

When I opened a post that fulfilled the criteria, the post and all comments were copied and pasted into a word document which was labeled with Top Post of the Month or Top Post of the Year and which subreddit it came from. On Dakkadakka.com the post that I selected from the forum happened by going to the forum tab which is found at the top of the page. Once the page was loaded, at the top of the page Thread Tools was clicked on and Top Rated Topics were selected. Once the page had loaded I selected Recent Exalted Threads to display the top posts made not too long ago. I selected the first post with the same criteria as on reddit, which had 30 comments or more. Once selected I opened the posts and page for page copied them into a word document which was labeled with the position the post had in the Recent Exalted Threads list and that it came from Dakkadakka.com.

Coding

I coded the gathered sample using the Atlas.ti software. I created five groups of codes for my data. Emotions, Identity, Masculinity, Performance/Interaction, and Subcultural. In the process I created 150 codes which I applied using both deductive and inductive reasoning. The codes I created through deductive reasoning came from the literature on each of the theories I used to form my questions that guided this research. As for the inductive reasoning, I analyzed what was in my samples and came up with codes, such as "giving thanks" to describe the action of one person thanking another. Inductive coding is done when things are found that do not belong to any of the theories, such as emotions that are shown that are not aggression for example but sadness which literature on masculinity does not mention. Codes such as Academic

were coded for being part of the Identity group of codes since the academic identity is one aspect of geek masculinity. Under the performance/interaction group I coded inductively codes such as admitting mistakes and I deductively coded as an example correcting another user. Aspects of the hobby, such as about hobbying (which is any talk about the hobby in general), I coded under the Subcultural coding group. In the Masculinity coding group all theoretical codes that are related to masculinity are put, such as the code questioning of skill or the code persecuted. See Table 1 in the Appendix for examples of codes used to analyze the data.

Reflexivity

I am a player of the game myself at the same time I am a researcher. This doesn't just mean I have access to the groups playing. It also means that I am accustomed to the behaviors that are going on in the hobby and practice them myself. Both consciously and unconsciously. This is something I have to be mindful of because I could dismiss certain things as normal and not report them despite them being an important piece of information.

For this research I entered a space dominated by men and it's been that way. That means that I as a white man have it easy fitting into the miniature wargaming community. With most of the other players in the tabletop gaming community being men I was accepted from the start. I never had a problem due to my gender and sexuality. Both gender and sexuality are important. In addition I have to admit I don't know the troubles that a person goes through when they aidentify as LGBTQ or women. Do they have downplay or hide these identities from the group? Can they be open about their gender or sexual identities within the community? I never have had to consider what LGBTQ individuals have to go through until now. I had to pay attention to not assume someone is straight or a man when looking at my data. I also had to make sure that I did

not assume that I know what LGBTQ individuals went through. All of this is important because in the literature on masculinity anything other than heterosexual identity is something that is expected to be put down and is an outlet for emotions such as the aggression that masculine men are supposed to portray.

Before I started to think about how the hobby is portrayed by those who participate in the hobby, I thought that others simply had no interest in the game. In my mind I would have never thought that it was the people who participated in the hobby that kept outsiders from joining. I had always thought that it was simply the hobby itself that others had no interest in and was the reason for not joining the miniature wargaming community. Neither had I thought about the game and what it stands for and how it might conflict with how different genders are brought up in our society. This could make certain genders not want to participate in the hobby of tabletop gaming. How some gender stereotypes also hinder leisure activities altogether was never something I had considered before, which is something that I need to look out for. Furthermore, I also need to consider how gender stereotypes manifest themselves in the community.

As the researcher I am an outsider that looks to dissect just what the people do when they play the game. There is also the fact that as the researcher I am looking at things that people may not want the public to know. An interpersonal matter that I need to be mindful of is that I have read about what other researchers have found in the same setting. I can't dismiss other researchers' opinions because of what I read that other researchers have found, or only because it doesn't match up with what they found in their studies.

Miniature wargaming is mostly played by white men. This means I also need to consider race of course, and the challenges that come with not being white in a society that is dominated by white culture and the privilege of whiteness itself. I cannot simply assume that someone who

posts online is white and that what they posted was not influenced by power dynamics surrounding race. This is especially the case should miniature wargaming be a geek masculine space. Because in the literature on geek masculinity, minorities are targets for domination by its practitioners, just like women and LGBTQ individuals.

3. FIELD DYNAMICS

Field and Position

The people of the miniature wargaming community see themselves as a welcoming and open community that they think is largely ignored or overlooked. In this chapter, I talk about how the community of miniature wargaming and the games they play can be considered a field that is based on knowledge, skill, and competence and is defined by masculinity.

Bourdieu thought of the field as a game where players come and interact with each other because of objective relations. In everyday language people have the same goals in the field that they share (Bottero & Crossley 2011:101). Fields are not just made up of people who share the same goals. Fields are structured and have mechanisms that define the boundary of the field. These mechanisms and structures are:

> (1) The agreements about what is at stake; (2) who the players are and what positions they occupy; (3) a consensus regarding the rules by which the field works; and (4) a shared interpretive frame that allows those in the field to make sense of what other actors are doing in the field in a particular situation (Allbright et al 2003:8).

I found that the discussion about play and practice revolves around rules and their application, as well as what miniatures should be used, or how to play in certain ways. Users of the platforms Reddit and Dakkadakka discuss in length about the game of Warhammer and Warhammer 40.000. They talk about the rules and how the rules impact the performance of players. Users also mention in their discussion how players should act when playing.

Users and players try to position themselves through the discussions they have on the platforms. Users in the online community of miniature wargaming try to position themselves in a higher position by stating that they and others should be taking the high road. I identified this in

the one data sample that shows a woman showing off a dress that is related to the lore of the game Warhammer 40.000. People try to position themselves over others in both the masculinity literature, and literature on Bourdieu's field theory (Bottero & Crossley 2011: 101; Albright et al 2003:2-3). Not only are women a rarity, but what makes this situation even more special is that the woman that is showing off the dress also frequently posting pictures of her in nude on the reddit platform in other subreddits. Since individuals identifying as women are something unusual in the miniature wargaming community, some users ask others to behave and act normal due to the nature of the content: "I was gonna say lets not be weird about a women in the hobby and then I saw the slaanesh level chaos of her profile." Or "Let's still not be weird though lol." And "the Tau'va approves, lets not be weird." The users are trying to be inclusive, but also to be seen as someone who is upstanding and trustworthy. What is meant in the first example is that the content of the woman's profile contains sexual content. Because they mention the chaos god slaanesh they are talking about perversion, which the community understands as something sexual. Not only did users of the platform try to place themselves above others with this attempt, but they also established that men should protect women.

Users also self-promoted themselves in order to increase their standing. Users on the platform Dakkadakka have a signature. This signature is posted along with what users comment on, and the signature can contain anything that is TOS (Terms of Service) friendly. In some cases users will self promote their blogs in which they show off their skills such as: "https://www.dakkadakka.com/dakkaforum/posts/list/0/766717.page A Mostly Renegades and Heretics blog." Or "Industrial Insanity - My Terrain Blog" This is an embedded link accessible by clicking the signature that promotes the player. As well as

"https://www.dakkadakka.com/dakkaforum/posts/list/772746.page#10378083 - My

progress/failblog painting blog thingy." Other signatures include a link to their own versions of

the game like Homebrew oldhammer project:

https://www.dakkadakka.com/dakkaforum/posts/list/790996.page#10896267" that they have

come up with in order to fix perceived flaws of the game in its current state. When clicked the

link will direct a person to the user's blog where their work is shared, showing off what the user

can do with the skills and the knowledge they have acquired in the hobby. Users self promote

which allows them to stand out among others to set them apart in the competition. Being set

apart from others means one has a better chance of recognition and increase of status (Schrock &

Schwalbe 2009).

Knowledge/Competence

In order to participate in playing and practicing in the field a person has to have

knowledge - competence - of the game. Without that knowledge a player can't enter since the

field is made up of a consensus of rules which are made by the players overall in order to achieve

the goals laid out in the field. Knowledge in field theory can be thought of as cultural capital as is

explained by Bourdieu (2018). Cultural capitals, such as knowledge of the game and the rules for

all the different factions, are accessible to all players and openly shared with one another. In my

findings, players go out of their way pointing out how to use the cultural capital in order to be

competitive within the field. "You need to know what's in other codexes to play intelligently." or

"You bunched up, you lost. [...] it was a noob trap that veteran players could exploit to

curb-stomp people for easy victories." as well as "Practice playing on a chess clock" are

examples of people sharing their knowledge (their cultural capital) with others so that they may

improve. In the first example a user points out that as a player you have to know what other

players and their armies are capable of by being knowledgeable about their rules, which is found

in what is called a codex - the official rule book of the faction. In the second example, a user

points out how to act in certain situations and that as a player you should avoid putting yourself

into said situation. The last comment is an example of another user giving tips on how to

improve in playing the game faster and more competitively. The users actively teach other users

how to be more effective within the game:

> There are tricks to moving and attack with lots of models. Have your dice arranged so
> you can grab 10, 20, 30, etc. all in one go and reroll as needed to get your 60/90/120
> shots or attacks. When moving it helps to measure out the critical models on the edge of
> the unit, then you can just double hand dart up the rest of the models within that boundary
> you know to by 6". If you want to pick up the horde, I say go for it. It's a lot of fun.
> In this example, the user is sharing a trick on how to perform tasks faster while playing.

Time management is important in miniature wargaming because games can last many hours, and

in tournaments the time limit for a game is on average 2hours and 30 minutes. Depending on the

army a person plays, actions such as rolling dice or moving miniatures can be time consuming

and need to be managed efficiently. Knowledge is not just shared to teach other users, but also to

point out mistakes that others make when it comes to playing. Players tell others just what and

how capital (both economic and cultural) have to be utilized in order to get what they, as the

player, want out of the hobby:

> If you are a tournament player and don't mind prioritizing rules over models or playing
> the same king-of-the-hill knockoff Steamroller scenarios over and over again 9th is great
> and probably is the best edition ever. The breadth of stuff at the top tournament tables is
> as great as it's ever been, and the stratagem card-combo game makes for a much more
> engaging competitive environment than earlier editions.
> In this example, the user writes about how the current version of the game of Warhammer

40.000 is a good game for tournament players due to its elements, noting that if one is not a

tournament player one's opinion on how good the game is might differ. And what people want out of the hobby is an important aspect of the hobby that is different for each individual player.

Community Goals

Players enter the field with their goal in mind. It is one of the prerequisites to participate in a field as a player (Bottero & Crossley 2011:101). In my findings, what it comes down to is that a player either participates competitively, or they are part of the casual side of the miniature wargame. This means that two sides are also fighting over the hobby and what miniature wargaming represents, which leads back to the idea of players trying to change the rules of the field. For example "I dispute your claim that tournament win rate data is the only data that matters, and that I cannot possibly not be having fun because the tournament win rates prove that this is the bestest 40k ever." Or "Perhaps you should have a discussion with the dudes you play against, and try to get a nice casual game going." is an example of an argument made by those who wish for the game to become more casual and changing it in that direction. Where the competitive side argues "9th generally it's fine if you're a tournament player." stating that the game itself is already geared to be competitive in nature and has been for a while:

> If playing with what you want was never a good idea, and GW put focus on tournament play since 3ed , then it is more then 20 years focusing on on the gaming aspect on the game. You can't say that w40k isn't focused on it, if GW has focused on it for that long. Or rather you can, but if you do you are wrong.
> The players of the game are constantly driven to be competitive with each other in order

to gain recognition (Friedland 2009:894). And in order to gain that recognition they use any and all capital that they have available to them in the field of miniature wargaming. One thing absent from this field is the limited availability of resources to people. Normally those who participate in a field compete for the resources in order to trump over other players (Friedland

31

2009:900;Toft-Nielsen & Krogager 2015:58). But in the case of miniature wargaming, players describe on the online platforms that you don't have to play what everyone else is playing in order to participate. Even to compete in tournaments it seems that players do not have to compete by bringing the same capital. Which is exemplified in the comment Jidmah makes:

> Well, in a balanced environment that competitive players strive for, that would be none. Currently roughly 2-3 codices can be considered "garbage", I doubt that you will find any edition where you had a "garbage tier" as small as this.
> Oh, and this is also easily proven wrong by data. All codices are played in great number, the least played one is chaos knights - a fairly powerful codex, judging from its win rates. It's also worth noting that pretty much every other codex has already placed in the top 3 of a major event more than once.

Where he points out exactly how all capital that is available - all the factions within the game- seems to be competitive, and only a few available options need to work harder (practice?) in order to compete. On one end of the spectrum users point out that the game is meant to be played in a competitive setting: "As to 9th generally it's fine if you're a tournament player, or don't mind spam lists, or don't mind having to netlist to play even basic pick-up games[...]" Or "[I]f everyone thinks in terms of "it's definitely more important to play the competitive tournament-standard than to have fun or use models I like", then sure, everyone will stick to 9th." One user even goes as far as to state that the game due to its mechanics is competitive no matter what: "If you ditch the whole card-game support-stack mechanism 9th makes for really, really dull pick-up games." Which leads back to the idea that the game is meant to be played in a competitive setting. On the other hand, other users stand in conflict with this idea stating that Warhammer 40.000 as a game is casual to begin with. "Most balance can be fixed just by tweaking the point costs. And balance only matters at all in a "competitive play style" which I would argue hardly makes any sense at all for a game like 40k." Or "GW never intended it to be a competitive game. It makes no sense at all for it to be competitive."

Utilization of Capital

While users were discussing whether the game was competitive or not there were some

users who mentioned capital. The discussion of use of capital and what capital is worth using is a

part of the discussion about whether the game is competitive or not, and is used as an argument

against the idea that Warhammer 40.000 is competitive. A user makes the argument:

> To be a tournament player I have to a) play spam lists, b) only play the Codexes that aren't garbage, c) buy models based on their rules, d) play unfluffy, bizarre, and counterintuitive things to maximize the impact of my stratagems, and e) buy a new army every six months because my last one got nerfed into unplayability in a tournament setting.

This means that players of the game need to be able to acquire certain capital at certain times in

order to stay in the competitive scene. To be exact, the user is pointing out that in their opinion

only a few factions within the game are competitive, and that to compete you have to play those.

And if you as a player don't, your only other option is to play spam lists, which are lists built

around having huge amounts of miniatures on the table in order to overwhelm the opponent. This

is refuted by users who see the game as competitive:

> Well, in a balanced environment that competitive players strive for, that would be none. Currently roughly 2-3 codices can be considered "garbage", I doubt that you will find any edition where you had a "garbage tier" as small as this.

What the user means by this is that all the factions, with all their differences are balanced and can

compete with each other, without one faction being proportionally stronger than others. Users

point to the idea that almost anything is usable within the game and that people can use whatever

they wish when it comes to playing the game of Warhammer 40.000. The argument here is that

everything in a competitive setting is viable to use and this applies to the game of Warhammer

40.000. That if you want to have a good time playing that you need to make sure that your

opponent knows that: "Perhaps you should have a discussion with the dudes you play against,

and try to get a nice casual game going on that isn't full of your average space marine army." The

user in this example suggests that the player should ask their opponent to go easy on them and not play a tournament geared army in their game. Among this discussion of whether the game is competitive or casual I found once more that users resort to discrediting other users, hoping to place them in a lower standing in the hierarchy of masculinity, but also the field itself (Reid, O'Neil, Blair-Loy 2018:581; Bottero & Crossley 2011:101). Attempts that I found are simply insults thrown at another user: "I do blame Jidmah for being an ass about people who might want to play the game differently than he does[.]" Users also attempted to make the other users seem like an abnormality within the field:

"You have weird interests. This isn't about liking. Your story simply doesn't match up. That is not how the game works." I also found attempts to simply discredit the opinion of another user in order to influence their standing: "If someone is so casual, and so painting or converting focused, why does he care what is good and what is bad?"

Furthermore, other users call out other users on the lack of evidence in support of their argument: "[Y]ou keep referring to netlists run by tournament players without actually being able to provide any or knowing anything about tournaments. We're done here." This questions the competence and knowledge of the user in order to influence the standing in the hierarchy.

One thing that the literature mentions about fields is that agents who participate in the same field do so because they share economic and cultural resources. They also have the same goals for why they participate in the field (Bottero & Crossley 2011:101). But how does one participate effectively in a field when access is open but at the same time limited through economic resources? In the case of miniature wargaming, players can buy and use miniatures how they please. As long as it is not for competitive play. A player needs to play by the official rules of the competitive setting. One thing noted within the community is the significant amount

of money needed to buy such rules. Players complain that they have to spend more money for a book from which they only need a few pages. CEO Kasen wrote:

> I will not drop $50 for a clunky physical edition of a handful of rules whose tacked-on full-color fluff and unnecessary model showcase I may or may not care about and whose rules will be so much arsepaper in between two months and two weeks.
> Here the user is talking about how they don't agree with the idea that it costs them

money, and a lot at that, describing how hard it is to competitively play in the field due to costs. This is acknowledged by player Type40: "GW is already a gatekeeper... they just aren't doing the convenience thing." who actively calls out the company that makes the miniature wargame, Warhammer 40.000, Games Workshop being its own gatekeeper. Making it harder for players to participate.

I found when it came to the discussion about whether and how to be competitive between players was the fact that some users were being reflexive. They were trying to put themselves in the other players' position. Users asked questions in order to identify how others had come to experience what influenced their view on whether the game of Warhammer 40.000 as a miniature wargame is competitive or not. One such comment found in the sample was "How many games? Which army? What exactly was terrible? How much experience did your most experienced unit gather? What unit was it? What agenda was the worst one?" where one user was trying to understand another user and their point of view and how they had gotten there. This reflexivity is unusual in my review of these online posts where players were often in competition with each other, trying to cement their position and defend their point of view as right.

Change

The subject of the discussion that users had was not limited to whether the game was competitive or casual. Users also discussed rules and their applications and whether they should reject certain rules. Comments such as "I'd say the 9th Edition works for pick-up games if you decide to ditch CP and stratagems altogether.", "If you ditch the whole card-game support-stack mechanism 9th makes for really, really dull pick-up games." highlight this discussion about rules, their application, and how one would want to play the game in order to achieve the goal of having good pick up games (called pugs). With the goal of having a good pick up game being the reason these players entered the field, and their discussion about how to apply rules is an attempt to establish how the field should look, as Allbright et al (2003) explains. An example in regards to what people should play with is "Can you provide that lists that are doing this? I'm quite curious." where a user is asking another user what army is capable of tabling opponents in a single turn, meaning that the game is won in one turn of play.

Changing the rules of the field is another aspect which often overlaps with play and practice in the gathered data. Changing the rules of the field is something that is attempted once someone is in a position of power in a field (Friedland 2009:899-900; Toft-Nielsen & Krogager 2015:69). In the data, users are calling for others to change the edition that they play Warhammer 40.000 in. The current edition is 9th, meaning it's the 9th version of rules that the manufacturer of the game has brought out. One example that points to this is from user SolarCross who states:

> Skip 9th and go to Oldhammer. There is no narrative (Space Marines with knives can and will kill a tank by stabbing it because the right people shouted at them), if you goof around you will get tabled in a turn (the lethality of the game makes "durability" more about avoiding LOS than anything else), the army rules are set up to make conversions pointless ("no option in the box? no rules!"), and the line of sight rules are set up to punish people who try ("My antenna can see the tip of your spear, I can shoot you!").

In this example, SolarCross advertises a different version of the game that they think is superior to that of the current edition of rules in Warhammer 40.000. They complain that the lore and gameplay are not in synchronization, allowing for things to happen on the table that make no sense lore wise, and that the current edition hinders the creative aspect of putting miniatures together. Users are wanting to change editions because they feel as if it would make the game more competitive and increase desire to participate in the hobby overall. This interestingly is a position that puts them in a non dominant position because playing becomes easier making the competition harder. Their proposed change is an inversion of the rules of the field, which is how dominated groups fight in fields (Friedland 2009). I interpreted this breaking of rules as a suggestion of new things within the hobby of miniature wargaming that are not official. Many players on the platforms voice suggestions when it comes to how to change the rules. Examples from the gathered data consists of "My personal proposition is make -1D standard to Monster and Vehicle keywords, with the trade off that you have +1 to hit against such target." or " just give each vehicles a base and mark it in 4 places and now it has 4 sides." More often than not these suggestions are in order to gain an advantage for a players own faction(s) to be more competitive within the game. Players want to master the rules of the game in order to perform more efficiently than others who are just starting out. It also allows them to get to positions where they can challenge the rules and break them, which allows them to distinguish themselves further. It also means that they are not stuck in a routine of just executing the rules that are expected of them (Hilgers 2019).

Competition in the field: Competence Questioned

When players enter the field with their goal in mind they have to face off against other

players. This competition takes on many forms. One of the forms of competition for a higher

standing in the field is in the shape of questioning of another player's competence (Allbright et al

2003; Friedland 2009; Hilgers & Mangez 2014). Users throughout the samples call out other

users for how they play the game wrong due to what they are saying. One example from the data

is:

> If you are getting tabled within two turns and people with dozens of games on record
> aren't, despite losing every single game they have recorded, you are either actively
> working towards losing that fast or making up stuff.

In this example one user questions the competence of another user due to them saying that when

they play they lose the game within the first turn. The user points out what they think the other

person is doing wrong and that they are either hindering themselves while playing, or that they

are lying about their situation. The questioning of the competence happens because a player's

actions go against the framework that is used to understand actions normally taken by players in

the field, as Allbright et al (2003) explains. Normally a game does not end in the second turn of

play. A game of Warhammer usually goes 6 turns which makes losing in the first or second turn

something of an anomaly. The argument that the user is making is that either the player does not

have the experience to play or that he is incompetent and playing bad on purpose. It is in this

argument that playing and practice is the main reason for this discord. This leads to further

discussion about play and practice and how that may be amended. An additional example from

the discussion of how not to lose in turn one is:

> Perhaps you should have a discussion with the dudes you play against, and try to get a
> nice casual game going on that isn't full of your average space marine army. Something
> like this: "Hey look, I know I'm playing Alpha Legion CSM and knights but I'm after a
> nice casual game, I swears it, please don't place spacemarines or necrons. Or if you are
> don't touch them in melee with your filthy kniveses. Thanks!

In this example the user is talking about how in order to avoid losing games very fast that one has to communicate that with the opponent. Specifically that a player should ask their opponent to play something non-competitive in order to not have their competence questioned.

The questioning of competence - the questioning of a person's knowledge - happens in the field because agents are in competition with each other over standing within the field (Allbright et al 2003:7; Friedland 2009:902; Hilgers & Mangez 2014:6). The competition is based on the framework of the field, which in the case of the miniature wargaming community is competence or knowledge, and skill - specific abilities - in order to increase one's status and decrease others. Users blamed other users that seemed to have influenced the game in ways that people disapprove of when it comes to their hobby - that it was their incompetence that had led to a change within the game:

> No, it's fault of brainless 4chan grade imbeciles who screeched one competent rule writer (who was giving armies the stuff they needed, not what the models had, and telling people to convert their own cool models) out of GW just because the whiners didn't like two lines of fluff he wrote.

Here the user points to the party they think is at fault for what is happening to the game. In their mind, people from the discussion board 4chan managed to get one of the rule writers to leave the company due to their whining. I found further questioning of competence in relation to questioning of skill. Users are discussing a painting. The painting in question was done bad on purpose to be compared with a more than average painting. Comments questioned the competence and the skill of the user: "It's straight up cursed." pointing out just how bad the terrible painting is, or: "THIN YOUR PAINTS." which I interpreted as a direct and aggressive command to improve one's painting technique, which to me showed multiple aspects of masculinity: aggression, trying to take command, and pointing out the mistakes of another. I observed and coded further contest when it comes to posts and comments that are related to

playing or practicing the game. Users of the community question what people are doing, their

knowledge, skill, and overall competence. User TyranMade questions the math of Mezmorki in

his post:

> May I ask how you got that math? Heavy bolter: 3 shots. BS 3+: 2 hits. S5 vs T8, 5+ to
> wound: 0.67 wounds. AP -1 vs Sv 2+, 3+ to save: 0.22 failed wounds. 2 Damage: 0.44
> damage suffered. Lascannon: 1 shot. BS 3+: 0.67 hits. S9 vs T8, 3+ to wound, 0.44
> wounds. AP -3 vs Sv 2+, 5+ to save: 0.30 failed wounds. D6 Damage, average 3.5: 1.04
> damage suffered. 1.04/0.44 = 2.33. The lascannon is 2.33 times better than a heavy bolter
> against Land Raiders.

In this case TyranMade's conflict with Mezmorki is about the use of a gun during a game and its

probability of doing something during play, questioning the method and knowledge of

Mezmorki. TyranMade looks at the math done by Mezmorki and questions it. The numbers in

this example all relate to weapons within the game, as well as the miniature carrying it, and the

probability of it doing damage during play. While looking like a polite interaction TyranMade is

questioning the math that Mezmorki did and thus questions his competence which makes the two

stand opposed to each other going by the definition of what conflict is.

Skill is questioned in contests between users in the community since skill is important to

how one performs in the field. I found this questioning of skill when it came to playing or

practicing the game, but also to hobbying aspects such as painting. As for playing the game users

who want to participate in the hobby of miniature wargaming need to be vigilant as to how they

play their miniatures less they get called out for not playing the game right:

> That wasn't a choice. You bunched up, you lost. Spacing out all my orks 2" was a
> mandatory part of the game that wasted a lot of my time. At best it was a noob trap that
> veteran players could exploit to curb-stomp people for easy victories.

In this example the user calls out the positioning of the models on the table. Miniatures in

Warhammer 40.000 have to be in what is called unit cohesion. Miniatures have to be at

maximum 2 inches away from another miniature that is part of the same squad. In this case the

user points out that instead of having the maximum range of unit cohesion the other player just

had all their miniatures bunched up, which was the reason they lost. The attack on the skill

comes in the form of calling the other user a noob or falling for a noob trap, with noob

translating as someone new to the hobby without a lot of knowledge. When it comes to the

questioning of skill in painting, what users revealed is that the questioning happens in regards to

the male body. Unless everything on a miniature is painted perfectly the community questions

the skill of the artist. This questioning of skill was done despite the piece that was painted and

shared with the community being flawless in every other aspect.

> First of all, wow. That must really require some impressive skills! Just a suggestion
> though, I would either redo or completely remove the nipples. Your dad should look at
> reference to check the positioning. Other than that it's absolutely stunning, the level of
> finish is fantastic. Congrats to your old man!

or "Amazing. Fix the nipples and send it to competition." and "Rework those nipples dude." The

male body's perfection is necessary in the eyes of those who participate on the online platforms.

This could be due to making sure that the male body is seen as perfect at all times since any

signs of imperfection could be used against the masculinity of the group.

This competition based on knowledge and skill between the players of miniature

wargames turns into a conflict between the two parties. Conflict is defined as a serious

disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one, as well as being incompatible, or clashing

with someone else. On the online platforms those who post and comment find themselves in a

verbal conflict due to difference of opinion about something regarding the hobby. In that

situation players want to look superior in comparison to others when there is a situation where

failure could be an option. The conflict between players of the field in this case is based on

knowledge and skill. One example is the argument about the different gods of chaos and their

nature in regards to a post about a woman that is showing off a dress that relates to the hobby.

The argument is about where the power of these fictional gods comes from starting with "Every

bit of power Slaanesh has is at the behest of Tzeentch. All Chaos gods are slaves to the

machinations of Change." This in return is countered by a post stating "Except nurgle." A third

party which was uninvolved posted:

> You could argue him concocting and improving his diseases embodies the natural change
> in nature. He may be the epitome of it. I know he is supposed to be stagnant and lord of
> decay but honestly just how he works is basically change. Things can't stay the same;
> they always rot and degrade. That's change that's not stasis.

This example shows how users use their knowledge in an argument. It also showcases how

people who are not involved in the discussion will enter the conflict in order to show off the

knowledge they possess. The question then becomes whether the involvement is meant as an act

to position oneself on a higher level than the others involved, or is it to simply point out mistakes

and correct other users.

I coded other contest or conflict in posts regarding the hobbying aspect of miniature

wargaming. Users get in conflict with other users because of the difference in opinion on rules

and lore, which is based on the knowledge that people have:

> But isn't that the entire point of having the main studio write the rules for fw units in
> 40K? If it's written by the same people who write the codexes then they should be taken
> into account in the rules. That's why I mentioned keywords: I'd bet that, for example, the
> Astreus will get the keyword that lets it use the repulsor field stratagem like the other
> primaris repulsor tanks. Likewise, any loyalist vehicle with smoke launchers will get the
> Smoke Screen keyword so that they can use the Smoke Screen stratagem. If we see that
> same keyword on other factions vehicles datasheets then we'll know that those factions
> will have that stratagem as well. At minimum we'll see what's CORE or not.

Which is a response to:

> Considering it is fully GW rulesteam this time, that would just exemplify their lack of
> quality control and competence. I'm very cautious when I hear "it's GW rulesteam". We
> don't know how their team works. It might be divided into smaller units and if there is
> bad communication or no communication at all between them, we can still end up with
> datasheets written without Codexes in mind (or the other way around) or with dated
> informations and as a result, incredibly stupid combos.

One user states their idea about how things go which is questioned by the other user. The

discussion in these two quotes revolves around how rules are created by the dedicated team at

Games Workshop, the company that makes Warhammer 40.000. The conflict challenges what one user says, but it does not discredit the opinion or character of the other person, which can happen too.

Competition in the field: Decreasing of Status

When standing is important, those who are in conflict will try to lower the standing of other competitors (Giacomelli & Gibbert 2018). In my data I found the decrease of status by users is in comments that decrease the status of another party directly. For example "They feel threatened because my toys are models while they are too ugly to be models." While the user does not decrease the status of another user within the thread, the user decreases the status of another group - women - directly. Those who identify as women are who this user is addressing by "They" and the decrease of the status of women comes through comparing women to miniatures. Miniatures are often referred to as models, but not as in models who walk the runway. In this case, however, the user is trying to make that association. Another example is:

> "Poor OP. "Is 9th fun?" they ask, unknowingly waking the Salt Demons. "It's not a game!" "In making my own ruleset!" "God tournament minmaxers suck!" "It's impossible to use 9th for pickup games!" All this and other straight up bad takes and side spats to boot. Yep, there's that salt I was on about. Honestly people, what did any of the above actually add to the thread and the OP's question? Some of you have fought these fights to thread lock before. Why again?

Here the user decreases the status of other users on the platform Dakkadakka.com for their opinion on the newest edition of Warhammer 40.000.

Beyond the questioning of competence, I also found contest between users in the conversations users had when users were trying to point out ways another user had done something wrong that needed correction. I found contest through correction of other users in all

aspects of the hobby. From lore and rule discussion to painting miniatures as the following

conversation shows:

> Arseypoowank: "Nice dress but show us your painting skills! Tits are temporary, EDGE
> HIGHLIGHTING IS ETERNAL."
> El_f3n1x187: "[N]ope, edge highlights are temporary too, specially with minis that get
> handled all the time."
> Arseypoowank: "That's why you clear coat."
> El_f3n1x187: "[C]ome on man clear coat is mandatory but its not permanent."

The decrease of status here comes from the lack of knowledge and the need to correct the other

user's statements. When Arseypoowank talks about edge highlights and how they are eternal, he

is talking about a painting technique where the painter applies paint to the edges of objects,

making it seem as if light is reflected from them. El_f3n1x187 points out that, due to tear and

wear of miniatures, edge highlights fade away. Arseypoowank counters this statement by

mentioning clear coat. Clear coating a miniature means to spray them in a protective layer of

vanish. The argument is then taken apart by El_f3n1x187 when he states that clear coats also

fade away after some time. Correcting another user leads to conflict because a mistake is pointed

out which is exploited as a weakness. Being weak or showing weakness in masculinity can lead

to loss of status, which no man wants. In these examples Users deploy their knowledge as a tool

to correct others. Another example for this comes from a post about whether the newest edition

of Warhammer 40.000 is good and worth getting back into. In a response to the post:

> So.... if you kept everything exactly the same but shrunk it down to 10mm or 15mm scale
> you'd then say 40k is a game?If you enlarged your Go set to 3' pieces etc would it no
> longer qualify as a game? I'm sorry, but I find your idea that scale determines what a
> game to be sillier than 40ks current terrain rules.

Another user writes:

> I will clarify my point. A pure game piece just has to communicate its game identity and
> something of its game state which usually comes from its position on the board. [...]
> Now wargames, any wargame is not an abstract game like chess they are more like
> simulations. So looks matter somewhat but a simulation should simulate and for a
> tabletop wargame that should mean having a model scale that is not too distorted from
> the table ground scale. For that 6mm is closest, with 10mm and 15mm being fairly

reasonable distortions. So 28mm is too big on that count. But more than that 28mm
makes the game more expensive and logistically more awkward. The ONLY benefit to
28mm is that it makes a nice big canvas for painters to freehand tattoos and freckles and
whatever else.

In the response the second user points out, using his own knowledge, how the other user is

wrong about their statement. He ridiculed the other's idea by pointing out how what he thinks is

actually correct. This sort of contest between users closely resembles another sort of conflict that

happens when users complain about things within the hobby of miniature wargaming. As for

playing the game users who want to participate in the hobby of miniature wargaming need to be

vigilant as to how they play their miniatures lest they get called out for not playing the game

right. When it comes to the questioning of skill in painting, what users revealed is that the

questioning happens in regards to the man's body. Unless everything on a miniature is painted

perfectly the community questions the skill of the artist. This questioning of skill was done

despite the piece that was painted and shared with the community being flawless in every other

aspect:.

First of all, wow. That must really require some impressive skills! Just a suggestion
though, I would either redo or completely remove the nipples. Your dad should look at
reference to check the positioning. Other than that it's absolutely stunning, the level of
finish is fantastic. Congrats to your old man!

or "Amazing. Fix the nipples and send it to competition." and "Rework those nipples dude." The

man's body perfection is necessary in the eyes of those who participate on the online platforms.

This could be due to making sure that the male body is seen as perfect at all times since any signs

of imperfection could be used against the masculinity of the group.

All these examples of conflict are not just about users correcting other users or

complaining, or trying to simply position themselves higher in the field, but also portrayals of

superiority by one user over another. Superiority is defined as the quality or state of being

superior also to others, as well as having a superior characteristic compared to others.

Other portrayals of superiority took the form of making sure to not just point out that another commenter was either exaggerating, or making a mistake. In the example "1) No model, no rules. 2) A 20-page complaints thread on Dakka." I found one user of dakkadakka pointing out how ridiculous their thread is by saying that it is unnecessary to make a complaint on Dakka in response to what change the game of Warhammer 40.000 is going through due to the change of editions. Another example found in the sample was "No, "ruin" it. Not ruined. Ruin is correct. https://www.wordwebonline.com/en/RUIN" where one user corrects another user on the platform. These instances of superiority were all found in regards to conflict and contest between users.

Higher status means to have command over others. I found in the data some instances where users try to assert control and take command. In some instances users talk about how they already have asserted control and taken command. "My wife calls them figurines, and one time... dollies (!?) I had to put my foot down! She now denies it haha!" Or "Danke! My partner thought it was cute and while she resists 40k this may be in the future of stockholming her lol" In other instances users try to take control of another user by binding the other user to them through language or action. "I'm new to Reddit, is there a "propose" button?" And "It suits you well my little nerd!" These are examples of taking control or command over another person. But users also make the point that they are taking control or command of the game when playing. "I'm not getting tabled within two turns by actively working towards doing that. I'm getting tabled within two turns and tabling other people within two turns using the same list." In this example the user was trying to take command of the conversation that was being held. The argument between users of the platform was how to best avoid being tabled (defeated in a short amount of time) in the game of Warhammer 40.000. The user is trying to take command by invalidating other users

comments by trying to make the point that it is the game itself - " the same list" - that allows for players to be defeated easily, and that it is not the players themself. This also relates to the next section which is in regards to complaining.

I found users calling other users out for being awkward, weird, and sexual in unnecessary ways. "But if you want to be weird, you can pay to see her NSFW content on onlyfans."As well as "Congrats. You made the most cringe comment so far." Or "Y'all are simps." Users call other users out for the sexualization in their posts and place the others on a lower standing while elevating themselves in the masculine hierarchy. Hegemonic masculinity is about how men, through manhood acts, position themselves higher in the hierarchy of men. Such manhood acts transform boys into men and are meant to help men dominate those who are in competition with them - other men, as well as women (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009:281; Wolkomir 2012:413). In this case a man puts himself above other men by pointing out how the other men are being dominated by a woman. In addition, the work of the women is devalued compared to the work of men, arguing that she did not put in as much work in her post as men do in their posts because the post in question is NSFW (nude content). According to the norms of hegemonic masculinity, men are supposed to be disciplined and always in control, not following their emotions, unless those emotions are used to put other men or women in their place (Goldstein 2002:267; Hinojosa 2010:181-182; Welland 2013, P. 889). In addition, according to masculinity norms, women are seen as something inferior to men (Horlacher 2015:21). In this case, men who do not show restraint and fall for the women are being called out for having lost control, which turns them into simps - being weak for a woman- which is not something a man should be.

Competition in the field: Complaining

Complaining can be seen as an indication that there is a conflict between two parties. When players complain it makes others aware that there was an interference with the goals that the men had tried to achieve. I observed contest when users complained about certain things from within the hobby. The difference of opinion is what gives users ground to argue with each other:

> You have weird interests. This isn't about liking. Your story simply doesn't match up. That is not how the game works.The only reason why I can see you getting tabled in two turns with an army that is as durable as alpha legion infantry is because there is indeed an extreme gap in player skill or because rules are being played wrong. In either case you would be having the same issues in any edition.

This user is addressing the complaint of another user who describes the current edition of the game warhammer 40.000 as a place where people can't play past turn one due to how destructive the rules have made the game. This is not fun to him and thus he complains. The quoted comment addresses that complaint and tries to find fault with the other user. Another example is "ignore baconcatbug, some people's hobby is 40k, his hobby is complaining about 40k." In this example one user responds to another who was offering his point of view about the most current edition of the game and challenges their opinion, knowledge, and standing within the community. Complaints about playing also relate to playing in the most current edition of Warhammer 40.000. Part of the discussion between users in the data collected is related to how users argue whether the newest edition, 9th edition, is good or bad. These arguments are as much a conflict between users and their opinions as well as the users voicing their complaints about the newest edition. Posts like:

> Skip 9th. The way GW wrote the 9e missions Tau are nigh-unplayable and likely going to remain so unless GW changes so much about the new Codex they're unrecognizable, which is unlikely given their established pattern of barely touching statlines and trying to fix everything with stratagems." are made discrediting the edition and stating how it is problematic to to play.

This sentiment is repeated in other posts such as:

> Skip 9th and go to Oldhammer. There is no narrative (Space Marines with knives can and will kill a tank by stabbing it because the right people shouted at them), if you goof around you will get tabled in a turn (the lethality of the game makes "durability" more about avoiding LOS than anything else), the army rules are set up to make conversions pointless ("no option in the box? no rules!"), and the line of sight rules are set up to punish people who try ("My antenna can see the tip of your spear, I can shoot you!").

In both of these examples the users complain about the current rules of the game Warhammer 40.000. In its 9th form the game for them is unplayable due to multiple reasons, such as that the narrative of the lore is not represented by the rules of the game, or that the faction Tau is not fun to play. Users are complaining about the same thing because of different reasons. They defend each other's position either on purpose or unknowingly.

When it comes to playing or practicing, complaints of users on these platforms are mostly about not being able to play with certain miniatures. In this case the complaining is due to a conflict with the party that does not allow players to use certain miniatures that the players possess and want to utilize. Miniatures get replaced or phased out with newer editions of the game. This is also related to complaints about rules as discussed earlier. "Hey man, it was the Astra Militarum Stormhammer for all of 8th, and I even took 3 to NOVA 2017. But you're right, they moved it on the webstore so I guess that means it can't have a datasheet now." or "I expect more cut units and more nerfs to render all my FW units even more unplayable than they already were. And still no Taghmata content." Furthermore, users complained about rules that have changed or are in the process of changing with the release of a new book. Complaints are about the disappearance of units that previously had rules: "Wow Eldar Corsairs just scrubbed from existence." or:

> Stuff I can see now… Chinork Warkopta gone. Lamenters chapter master still gone. Inquisition land raider gone. Mechanicum stuff still not in 40k - frustrating given that so much 30k marine stuff has rules...including units that are canonically not supposed to

exist anymore like the jetbikes XD. GK Psycannon dread seems gone. Chaos Sonic
Dreadnought seems gone.
or "Why on earth are they taking models they are currently making and switching them to

legends rules only?" In the first and second example users are talking about the disappearance of

units from a new rulebook. The book that is talked about contains units for the game Warhammer

40.000 that are produced by the company ForgeWorld, the sister company of GamesWorkshop.

The last complaint is about miniatures that are being actively produced by GamesWorkshop but

their ruleset is changing into what is called legends, which means that they are not able to be

used in certain settings, for example tournaments, unless otherwise specified.

Forgiving or Forgetful Community?

Despite the competitive nature of users' discourse, I also found a surprising lack of

attention to mistakes other users made or to admissions of lack of knowledge. Mistakes range

from simple spelling errors such as "indescribabley" or "choas" to grammatical errors like the

use of then when it should be than. No attacks on another user's intelligence are made. No

weakness is exploited in order to gain a competitive edge over another person. Other mistakes

that users make include the lack of knowledge: "What model is that in the bottom image?" Or

"Wait that bottom model actually looks so sick, does anyone know where it came from?" This is

in regard to the composition of miniatures that are being used in the hobby. These mistakes or

lack of basic knowledge of the game are ignored and the users receive answers to their questions

without their lack of knowledge being questioned. Another user admits to not having any idea

about the hobby at all but that he wanted to give his opinion on a piece that was posted in the

Warhammer subreddit: "Just passing through from r/all, just wanted to say I really like this even

though I don't know anything about Warhammer." And again in this situation other users do not

question the lack of knowledge of the user despite them stating that something is good, without actually having knowledge about it. Furthermore, there are instances where users of the platforms admit that they made mistakes outright and no other user is calling them out about it in order to attack the position that they hold. Users say things like "never heard of that term before, I'll have to use it in the future going forward." admitting to not knowing certain slang used within the community. Another example is "Maybe I need movement trays too." where the user admits that he could do better than he is doing right now. Other users even go as far as to defend mistakes that others made. In the top post of the year in the minipainting subreddit users come to the defense of the poster. In the post in question, users argue about the painted nipples on a miniature. Some users defend what the artist did in his painting:"I think they represent bruises, not nipples... not only because of the look of them, but because of the position." Or "They've got to be wounds or something. I can't seem to figure out why the nipples would be orange." This deflects the perceived mistake of having painted the nipples wrong on the miniature as called out by other users. According to the literature on Field Theory, cooperation between people who are in competition with each other is unusual because it eliminates advantages that one player has over the other, making it harder to gain a better position in the field.

A Masculine Field

When looking at the field that makes up the game of miniature wargaming it becomes clear that it is a field that is masculine due to the practices of the members of the community. What I found in the data I collected was that the interactions revolved around the interaction between men as well as men and women. Masculinity revolves around having a standing within the group, and the higher one's standing is the more respect they command (Reid, O'Neil,

Blair-Loy 2018). Because of this, conflict or contest is part of masculinity. What we understand

as masculinity is a fight between men for status among men (Reid, O'Neil, Blair-Loy 2018).

Furthermore, any masculinity is in constant battle with other masculinities that wish to replace it

as the dominant masculinity (Reid, O'Neil, Blair-Loy 2018). Group insiders fight with others

belonging to the group constantly, as well as with outsiders (Braithwaite 2016). Masculinity is

about competition and men are more competitive than those who assume a feminine identity "In

terms of gender-typing of these play styles, masculinity is more in line with competitive play

practices, whereas femininity is more in line with cooperative play styles" (Wilhelm 2018:227).

When it comes to men and their actions, masculinity theory argues that it is never the man who

was the reason for their loss (Dcosta 2014:463). By complaining, men blame and shift

responsibility onto other things that influenced them and made them lose which frequently

happened in the miniature wargaming community. In geek masculinity in particular knowledge

and skill are important in order to compete with other men and gain standing within the

masculine hierarchy (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:295, Braithwaite 2016:2-3, Salter

2018:249-250). And the use of knowledge and the theoretical application of skill was found in a

lot of the discussion between users on the different platforms. Furthermore, in the findings there

is a staggering amount of violence in the interactions between users. Violence is another aspect

of masculinity and often found in manhood acts that establish masculinity (Schrock & Schwalbe

2009). In the following chapter subsections I examine my findings in regards to the masculine

aspects that I found within the field.

Masculine Hierarchy

Like with Field Theory, in theories on masculinity people are described trying to position themselves over others (Bottero & Crossley 2011: 101; Albright et al 2003:2-3). I found users established positions within the masculine community of the field. In order to position themselves men do what is called manhood acts. Manhood acts look different depending on where the competition takes place, and where the men come from - class and profession for example (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009:284). In case of the miniature wargaming community manhood acts took on the form of sexualization, violence, and the use of knowledge and skills.

The users on the platform tried to position themselves by stating that they and others should be taking the high road. I identified this in the one data sample that shows a woman showing off a dress that is related to the lore of the game Warhammer 40.000. Not only are women a rarity in the community, but what makes this situation even more special is that the woman who is showing off the dress also frequently posts pictures of herself nude on other subreddits. People of the warhammer subreddit have found out about the nude posts by looking at her profile and reacting to them in the comments to the post. As women's presence is something unusual in the miniature wargaming community, some users ask others to behave and act normal due to the nature of the content: "I was gonna say lets not be weird about a women in the hobby and then I saw the slaanesh level chaos of her profile." Or "Let's still not be weird though lol." And "the Tau'va approves, lets not be weird." The users are trying to be inclusive, but also to be seen as someone who is upstanding and trustworthy. Not only did users of the platform try to place themselves above others with this attempt, but they also established that men should protect women. Men protecting women and taking charge is something that is discussed in Giacomelli and Gibbert (2018). This protection of women also outlines how

different genders are supposed to act in certain fields (164). Increasing one's standing is part of

all masculinities. Increasing the standing means one is more respected among one's peers that

share the same masculinity (McKinnon-Crowley 2020:129; Reid, O'Neil, Blair-Loy 2018:581).

Users of the platforms shamed other users in an attempt to lower the competitions standing

among those who participated in the discussion at hand. In one example from the sample:

"You're not. If you're worried about your opponent using 'fake' rules, you're having fun the

wrong way. This hobby isn't about rules. It's about buying Citadel miniatures. Please report to

your nearest GW store for attitude readjustment. Take your wallet." We have one user shame

another about the way they want to play the game, calling them out. Decreasing the status of

another participant in the masculine hierarchy is a common practice, which is often achieved

through sexualization, unless it is geek masculinity, where knowledge about the groups activity

is questioned in order to decrease status (Salter 2018). Similar examples relate to the newest

edition of Warhammer 40.000 and playing the game. In this example the user calls out another

user for his play style and lack of knowledge within the hobby decreasing their standing within

the game and the masculine hierarchy:

> Because that's the default way to play 9th?But you wouldn't know, you have thoroughly
> proven that you clearly have no notable experience whatsoever with this edition and are
> just running your mouth based on your experience with 8th. You not knowing about
> crusade despite claiming to be a narrative player really says it all.

This example shows how one user attacks another. Pointing out that the other does not know how

to play the game because of an overall lack of experience. In response to this the accused user

does not just defend themself, but also tries to increase their standing by providing knowledge,

which is one aspect of geek masculinity and its hierarchy.

> I know plenty about Crusade. I've tried to play Crusade. It's terrible. (Level-ups have a
> wildly disproportionate effect on armies with more expensive units, if you don't keep up
> with the tournament meta to build your Crusade roster you'll still build a list that'll get

accidentally tabled a lot, and if you don't min/max for the missions you'll run into
missions you can't play.

The response describes how the user knows how to play, trying to defend their status by claiming

that they in fact do have knowledge about the game. In this case they are talking about Crusade

gameplay, which is a narrative way to play the game of Warhammer 40.000.When it came to

femininity within the data I gathered it showed that if femininity was present that it became

sexualized. There were two posts that I collected that had been posted by users that said that they

were women. One post was about a woman that had painted a miniature and in the other was a

post of a women showcasing a dress that was related to the lore behind the miniature wargame

Warhammer 40.000. In the post with the woman in the dress, which presented femininity, users

in the community sexualized her and her actions on the platform Reddit. This was not found in

the post of the miniature which was painted by a woman. That users sexualized the woman in the

dress is in line with manhood acts that establish images of heterosexuality (Osgerby 2003:60),

the importance of sex (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:311), and the importance of womens sexual

behavior (Braithwaite 2016:5). Since masculinity is built upon what are called manhood acts,

one kind of manhood act is the sexualization of women as a way to signify heterosexuality,

which also establishes gender boundaries (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009:285). This is why users

sexualized the post in ways such as "Pretty girl in a stunning dress. Clicked on your profile

looking for minis and stayed for the sexyness!" or "Fuck! You're so adorable!" and "Time to sin

and bless slannesh". The first two examples are straight forward about how they sexualize the

woman. In the last example the sexualization is hidden behind the symbolic language of the

community. Slannesh is the god of perversion within the Warhammer universe and by blessing

slannesh what is understood is that the person is going to perform a sexual act. The other post by

another member who identifies as a woman in the community was not sexualized, which makes sense since there was nothing feminie involved except that the artist was a woman.

Of Women entering the Field

When women did join the hobby they were scrutinized by the whole community trying to gain favor with them, and if that did not work out there was only conflict to be found. Men trying to gain favor with women when they enter the field of miniature wargaming is why the tone of the conversation starts off differently. In the data, right of the start, men called for civility in comments such as "Let's still not be weird though lol" to which other users agree to "Yes everyone please heed this person's words." or "Let's not indeed." One interesting thing that I noted in the data was that users called for civility but as soon as they found out about the NSFW (Not Safe For Work) aspect of the content the women posted that civility became a joke. "I was gonna say lets not be weird about a women in the hobby and then I saw the slaanesh level chaos of her profile." The user starts by asking everyone to be civil with the woman, but he has seen what the woman posts (nudes on other subreddits) and it seems that it invalidates civility. This sort of exclusion is opposite of what Thea Miller (2018) found. In Miller's study women who participate in a game like magic the gathering without having the support of men participants are the target for sexism and exclusion which forces the women to leave the game in the end. Furthermore, the behavior of being welcoming to the women in the miniature wargaming community can be seen as coercive, given that men are only doing it to further their goal of dominating others. Coerciveness is one aspect of masculinity according to Schrock & Schwalbe (2009).

Women hide themselves online in order to avoid bringing forth a feeling of insecurity in men which men complain about. The woman, in the post that I collected in which the woman displays her warhammer related dress, writes in a comment: "I usually post my mini stuff on a sfw account not linked to this one but I might shift stuff over to this one." Since her post in this case is about her in a dress, she thought to post it with her account that also posts nude on other subreddits. Women are rare within the hobby of miniature wargaming. Men confirm the rarity of women in the hobby with comments such as:"Girls that are interested this hobby are like hens teeth." Women take precautions before revealing themselves. Users, who are men, give the reason why. "I only made the mistake of bringing my girlfriend to a WH store one time. The way some players respond to a girl in the room is gross" or "Its true what you say though some groups/shops are very unwelcoming to girls" as well as "My SO got swarmed" and "She liked the display case models but it was the players who were very clingy and uncomfortable" are examples of men acting when women enter the field of miniature wargaming. This reflects what McKinnon-Crowley (2020) experienced when she entered the field as part of the "Magic: The Gathering" card game community, which is a community that practices geek masculinity, as a woman. But before women were scrutinized by men for rejecting their advances, men were trying to gain favor with women when they entered the field of miniature wargaming.

Feminine Effects

The appearance of a woman within the community enabled other users to shame users who they deemed as what would be called "thirsty". In one instance a user posts "It is though a thousand neckbeard mouths cry out in pain." in response to when the woman reveals that she and her boyfriend work on projects together. In this case he is shaming those in the community who were interacting with the woman in order to gain sexual favors by calling them neckbeards, or men who are virgins seeking to interact with women in order to lose that trait.. The same sort of shaming is found in the comment "3.0k upvotes. Of course. I mean this clearly took so much more effort than all those amazing minis we see posted everyday which get a fraction of the likes. Lmao. Downvote away." where the user is shaming the other users who upvote the post because a woman was the one who posted it. This sort of shaming would make sense looking at it from the perspective of geek masculinity, where men should be dominating women (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:311) and women's work should be part of only the background within the hobby (Martin et al 2015:305).

Being feminine was not just negative but in certain cases came with approval of others within the community. The two users who identified themselves as women through their post received a lot of positive feedback about their actions. Users commented "Suits you. Talk about getting yourself trending :)" giving their approval or "You could still repent and join his Sisters of Silence! Cool dress tho!" In the first example the user simply approves the post of the woman, stating that what the woman had posted was approved of. In the second example the user doesn't just comment that they approve of the dress but also makes a reference to a faction within the game of Warhammer 40.000. The faction Sisters of Silence is a personal army of the Emperor of Mankind, the leader of the Imperium, and only acts on his command. The user is playfully

suggesting that the woman is playing the wrong faction - the forces of chaos, since that is what her dress represents - and could always make the switch to the good guys (the Imperium). Femininity is also met with inclusion. One example of inclusion is "That's hella cool sist[er]!" In this example the user includes the woman user in the hobby by placing her in the universe of Warhammer 40.000 as part of the Sisters of Silence or Sisters of Battle which are both forces of the Imperium which is one of the 3 main factions of the game. Another example of inclusion of femininity would be "Probably weirder then us." In this case a user places the feminine user among them due to their association with the hobby and that the hobby is a niche activity. Going by already existing literature, receiving such an inclusive welcome and approval of your work as a woman by men in the community, like is the case in my data, might actually come with coercive motives. Both McKinnon-Cowley (2020) and Miller (2018) mention that men are friendly and welcoming in order to gain a sexual advantage over other men with the woman.

One thing that stood out to me was that a lot of users were asking how they could reproduce what the woman had achieved. Whether it was where to buy a dress in comments like "Fuck yeah, that's grouse! Can I ask where you got it?" or "Can I ask what paints she uses? I am new to mini painting and I really like how bright her colours are! She did so well!!" or how to recreate the paint scheme. Normally women are delegated to do background work while men are doing the only work that is truly important (Martin et al 2015). So that men were trying to reproduce the work of a woman was different from the literature.

I also found that in some instances femininity was transformed into something masculine. Women can do masculine things like fighting but in the end will always remain a woman. They can be soldiers but are still women. Men on the other hand become and are soldiers. (Eichler 2014) I interpreted the following example:

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> [T]hats a sister of battle. her hands are behind her back because she is hiding a dagger that she is using to cut the bindings. then presumably she will stab vect in the dick, which is why he has been absent from the tabletop for years.

In this example the user points out that the miniature is not just a soldier, but a woman soldier at that, making sure to distinguish between the two. The piece the user is talking about is a miniature that is part of the Asdrubael Vect miniature pack which is painted and shown in the sample from Warhammer Subreddit and was the top post of the month in october. The miniature in question is that of a suggestively modeled woman as a slave. This sort of making the women somewhat masculine but still feminine at the same time is what Eichler (2014) observed when looking at women soldiers and their reported actions in combat.

In addition the data revealed that the presence of women lets other users bond over their engagement with the other gender. Users share their experiences that they have had. Comments such as "My SO supported me getting back into it, showed interest in some of the nighthaunt models and now we paint together and it's hella fucking cute." or "Hell to the yeah! My wife has no interest in the hobby. Yet, she knows the zen place it give me. So she lets me be the geeky manly man I am. I fucking love this hobby." In both examples the interaction with women in their experience is shared and positive. Some users do also share negative experiences that they have had when it came to interactions with women in the hobby. One user states "My ex once said if I brought any models home she would "stomp on them"." The presence of femininity makes users share these experiences with others on the platform. Bonding between men in a masculine space is attributed to domestic masculinity.

Violence

I mentioned that manhood acts consist of either sexualization or violence. In masculinity violence is part of manhood (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009:282). In the literature on geek masculinity, violence is described as an important part of what is enjoyed by the community. If something has violence in it it has a higher participation rate (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:320; Salter 2018:249). In the case of my data a lot of talk about violence that was found came in the form of symbolic language related to the game of Warhammer 40.000. Users on the platform use phrases directly copied from books and texts that are officially published by Games Workshop - the maker of Warhammer 40.000. Violent phrases range from: "SKULLS FOR THE SKULL THRONE!" or a different variation "BLOOD FOR BLOOD GOD! SKULLS FOR THE SKULL THRONE!" This is an offering to one of the (hopefully) fictional gods of the Warhammer 40.000 universe which is the patron of war and destruction and is only pleased by offerings of skulls for the god to sit on, and blood flowing in rivers. Another phrase that comes straight from the books and texts is: "Death to the corpse emperor!" This one is a rallying cry for the factions of chaos who are engaged in eternal war against the forces of the Imperium, which calls for the death of their already dead leader. In opposition to this rallying cry stands the call "For the Emperor." who is the leader of the Imperial forces. Both phrases are used to give allegiance within the hobby to their respective faction. Other calls for violence are found in the form of calling for a commissar: "This commissioner right here, commissar…" Or "[P]lease report to your local commissar so he can give you a reward." Calling for a commissar in the context of Warhammer 40.000 is asking for someone who works for HR. A commissar in Warhammer 40.000 investigates breaches in moral, leadership, and faith in the Emperor. In Warhammer 40.000 any breaches found are punished, which the commissar is also responsible

for executing. The normal punishment in the fictional universe of Warhammer 40.000 is dead by being shot. So in these cases users are talking about how the other user needs to be shot for their heretic action against the Emperor. While this is talk of violence, at the same time it means that the users approve of what the other user has posted.

I observed approval from users in the form of talk about violence when users complimented others users for the paint job they had done in one of the samples collected. "This is pleasant... unsettlingly pleasant. It's like a vintage "Little People" toy strapped into a mechanical murder suit." Or "Oh it's dark allright. A murder machine with a happy little smile burning the heretics…" And "Come along with me, With the magos and skitarii. We can wander through the rad wastes, And murder our enemies." In this case the approval comes in the form of how well the users work fits in the violent setting of the Warhammer 40.000 which is an abstract example of how violence leads to a higher participation. (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:320; Salter 2018:249) In this case the participation is the approval of the community because of the violence the model incarnates.

Furthermore, I found further talk about violence when the miniature gaming community combines their culture with the culture of society. This combining of the subculture with the main culture hints to that this community is not built upon the idea of resistance, as is the case with Marxist subcultures (Woo 2009:24). In the post with the giant Space Marine statue which was discussed when it came to bonding between users, there were also instances of users talking about violence. This talk of violence came in the form of transforming christmas carols into the universe of Warhammer 40.000. "Dashing through their lines, Chainsword at my side!" This is taken further by another user who continues: "Through their flesh I tear, laughing all the time!" In this case we have the Christmas carol jingle bells being transformed to suit the brutal

nature of Warhammer 40.000. While at the same time also being festitive in relation to the Warhammer 40.000 community. Other such examples of main cultural transformation with violence are: "Deck the Halls with filthy Xenos." Or "We wish you a merry purging, we wish you a merry purging, We wish you a merry purging, For the Glory of the Emperor"

Other users instead of transforming Christmas carols simply transformed certain rituals that are associated with Christmas to match the violent atmosphere of Warhammer 40.000

"Heretic children get burning promethium in their stockings." And "I've made my list, checked it twice and guess what? YOU'RE NOT ON IT![Purging intensifies]." As well as "Ahh the Krampus Chapter. They mysteriously appear once a Terran cycle. To deal out vengeance on the heretic, and enjoy cookies and milk." This showcases the combination of subculture and main culture. All these examples in their different context show that violence plays a huge part in miniature wargaming. It's part of its fictional lore and has been incorporated into the language that is used by those who participate in this leisure activity. Violence is part of many masculinities, which would suggest that the world of miniature wargaming is a masculine space indeed. In addition, users participate in the violent transformation of the christmas charrols due to the idea that violence brings forth participation in masculinity (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:320; Salter 2018:249).

Masculinity, Skill, and Knowledge

In masculinity knowledge and skill are important to what the literature calls geek masculinity (Roster 2007). Knowledge and skills are used to establish the hierarchy in geek masculinity since the interactions between men are based on them (Salter 2018:251). I found that men in the field relied heavily on what they know and the skills that they had learned while being

part of the miniature wargaming community. In the following examples, knowledge is used to

point out flaws in the rules themselves and how that influences the aspect of playing:

> As to 9th generally it's fine if you're a tournament player, or don't mind spam lists, or don't mind having to netlist to play even basic pick-up games, but I really dislike it due to the emphasis on tournament play and the masses of bloat GW constructed to make up for the fact that they pulled all the interesting gameplay out of the core rules.

Or

> If you haven't played 40k before, there is no reason to start another edition than 9th - older editions have different aspects that people (rightfully) miss today, but you also can't deny that the quality of the ruleset itself, the balance between armies, the balance between units within an army and the support from GW was much, much worse in older editions.

The interaction between men here is the user giving feedback using their knowledge and

understanding of the game. They are pointing out how their opinion is that of someone that is

part of the masculine hierarchy and has the necessary knowledge to understand the game. In

particular, the users are discussing the 9th edition - the 9th version of rules - for the game

Warhammer 40.000. In geek masculinity spaces men use their knowledge in order to compete

with their adversaries. The knowledge they use to compete is the knowledge of the game.

Manhood acts revolve around the use of knowledge to compete in conflicts with other men. One

example is the argument about the different gods of chaos and their nature in regards to a post

about a woman that is showing off a dress that relates to the hobby. The argument is about where

the power of these fictional gods comes from starting with "Every bit of power Slaanesh has is at

the behest of Tzeentch. All Chaos gods are slaves to the machinations of Change." This in return

is countered by a post stating "Except nurgle." A third party which was uninvolved posted:

> You could argue him concocting and improving his diseases embodies the natural change in nature. He may be the epitome of it. I know he is supposed to be stagnant and lord of decay but honestly just how he works is basically change. Things can't stay the same; they always rot and degrade. That's change that's not stasis.

This example shows how users use their knowledge in an argument. What the user is talking

about is how the chaos god Nurgle gains their power and how it has to do with the aspect of

change. Change within the game of Warhammer 40.000 is usually associated with the god of

chaos Tzeentch who in the lore is a rival to Nurgle. It also showcases how people who are not

involved in the discussion will enter the conflict in order to show off the knowledge they

possess. The question then becomes whether the involvement is meant as an act to position

oneself on a higher level than the others involved, or is it to simply point out mistakes and

correct other users.

Since manhood acts are based on knowledge, competition between men is also settled

through the correction of mistakes, which is just like the correction of the competition in field

theory. In most cases when one user corrects another in their post the use of knowledge is made

to discredit their statement. An example for this is found in a thread about whether the newest

edition of Warhammer 40.000 is good and worth getting back into. In a response to the post:

> So.... if you kept everything exactly the same but shrunk it down to 10mm or 15mm scale
> you'd then say 40k is a game?If you enlarged your Go set to 3' pieces etc would it no
> longer qualify as a game? I'm sorry, but I find your idea that scale determines whats a
> game to be sillier than 40ks current terrain rules.

Another user writes:

> I will clarify my point. A pure game piece just has to communicate its game identity and
> something of its game state which usually comes from its position on the board. [...]
> Now wargames, any wargame is not an abstract game like chess they are more like
> simulations. So looks matter somewhat but a simulation should simulate and for a
> tabletop wargame that should mean having a model scale that is not too distorted from
> the table ground scale. For that 6mm is closest, with 10mm and 15mm being fairly
> reasonable distortions. So 28mm is too big on that count. But more than that 28mm
> makes the game more expensive and logistically more awkward. The ONLY benefit to
> 28mm is that it makes a nice big canvas for painters to freehand tattoos and freckles and
> whatever else.

This response shows the use of knowledge in order to discredit the other user's idea and opinion.

The user in the first example is asking about the scale of the game and how the game would

change due to the change of increasing or decreasing the size of the miniatures. The response in

the second example discusses the scale of the models as well, trying to give reason as to why the

game is the scale it is. The masculinity literature notes that men discredit other men to place the competition lower in the masculine hierarchy (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:295, Braithwaite 2016:2-3, Salter 2018:249-250).

4. GENDER BOUNDARIES

Group Belonging

To be part of a field and compete in it a person has to accept the rules of the field, have a vision of what they want to achieve, as well as have an idea of how to act in the field. Even if a person decided to follow this framework that does not mean that they will be welcomed. Acceptance of those who are already part of the field is not guaranteed. By taking a look at the literature on masculinity, boundaries of communities become clearer based on performance between men. In regards to the miniature wargaming community men are trying to be inclusive and allow anyone in general to join, even women who want to participate in the leisure activity. Inclusivity took on the form of trying to include people into multiple facets of the miniature wargaming community, to simply just stating that users should be included for who they are and the content they brought with them into the community.

Conflict in the field consists of conflict between the participants of the field. In the case of masculinity conflict can exist not just between users (men) in general, but also between genders (men vs women). In the literature on masculinity men are seen as superior to women (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019; Schrock & Schwalbe 2009). In my data, I found that the presence of femininity brought forth a persecuted complex from men of the miniature wargaming community. "3.0k upvotes. Of course. I mean this clearly took so much more effort than all those amazing minis we see posted everyday which get a fraction of the likes. Lmao. Downvote away." In this comment to the post of the woman in the dress the user complains that every other post has to work much harder at gaining attention and attraction within the community. The user felt

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that his hard work he put in the hobby was being erased. Another comment I found was: ":(((

corrupting my hobby". Here the user complains that women are invading his hobby which was

pure and free of sexual images - which is not the case when looking at miniatures that are

available within the hobby - and is not the same as before. Men see themselves as victims as part

of geek masculinity. Men see it this way because their hobby is not mainstream and they

perceive themselves as outsiders who are now under attack by an invading mainstream culture

(Braithwaite 2016:6).

According to the literature on masculinity men have only two choices when it comes to a

masculine group. Either they belong to the group and take action according to all the rules set by

the group and its masculinity or they are not part of the group (Hinojosa 2010:183; Reid, O'Neil,

Blair-Loy 2018; Salter 2018:251). Based on the data it does not seem as if users make a hard

distinction between who is an insider, or who is an outsider. Neither does it matter how valid

their opinion is within the hobby. In the data, there is also an instance where a user admit that

they are not part of the group at all with comments such as "I don't even know what subreddit

this is or what chaos Marines are but that twirl and smile are mad cute" and no person from the

community calls them out for being an outsider and their opinion. This should reinforce the idea

that there are no boundaries being drawn in regards to who is and who is not an outsider of the

group but when looking at the interaction between genders that boundary becomes much clearer.

Inclusion & Exclusion

The miniature wargaming community thinks of itself as being inclusive and open to

anyone. I did find examples of inclusion in the data that is the top post for the minipainting

subreddit for November. There, users are being inclusive by telling the user who posted a painted

miniature to also share it with the broader community in another subreddit called r/modelmakers: "R/modelmakers would appreciate that." Users are being inclusive to the poster who identifies as a woman in a broader sense, trying to include her in more facets of the hobby, not just the painting of miniatures but also building them. Based on the current theories on masculinity, this sort of inclusion of the feminine is unusual, since for example Martin et al (2015) speaks about how women were excluded from many of the opportunities to perform or are delegated to the background of activity. I coded for inclusion in the group, the data collected showed that users try to be inclusive to people who post things they approve of. One example for inclusivity is the post that was collected with the woman that is showcasing her dress. Users actively go out of their way to tell people to not be weird because she is a woman. "I was gonna say lets not be weird about a girl in the hobby and then I saw the slaanesh level chaos of her profile." Or "Let's still not be weird though lol" And "Yes everyone please heed this person's words." users go as far as combining it with symbolic language from the hobby "the Tau'va approves, lets not be weird." Or "That's hella cool sista!" In this case Tau'va refers to the command structure that guides on of the factions in the Warhammer 40.000 universe and sista refers not to the parental bond but to another faction within the game of Warhammer 40.000, the Sisters of Battle. Up to this point the inclusiveness was singular and only based around the fact that others should simply include the woman for being a woman being part of the hobby. Users go on to also try to be inclusive stating how the woman is not mainstream compared to other users and that it makes her part of the community: "Probably weirder then us." Furthermore, users are being inclusive by asking for other content to be posted that relates to the hobby, such as miniatures that were worked on: "Well please post it here whatever you decide to do. I love seeing other peoples minis."

On the other hand, I also found exclusion when coding the data, but not as frequent as indicators of inclusion. In the most exalted post on the website Dakkakka for the month of November I coded multiple instances of general exclusion of people who try to participate in the group. In one of these instances a user does not just discredit another user's opinion, but tells them that the way they are trying to play the game is not the way it was intended to be played.

> Most balance can be fixed just by tweaking the point costs. And balance only matters at all in a "competitive play style" which I would argue hardly makes any sense at all for a game like 40k. You might as well play chess for the artistic outlet, or play darts down the pub in order to develop washboard abs. It's just not that kind of game.

In this case the user is not outright telling the other user that they are not part of the community, but since the other user is not playing the game right, he might as well stop playing. The user talks about the balance of the game and the balance of all the factions within the game. All the factions in Warhammer 40.000 have different abilities in order to set them apart. The argument is that such a balance of factions only matters for competitive games. Another example of this from the same forum post is: "So, why are you running your mouth about people playing in tournaments then? If you don't care, keep quiet." or

> Then don't make posts about what's run in them my man. And maybe stop deluding yourself into thinking that editions before ninth and eighth didn't have terrible dogshit units that if you took against units that weren't terrible and dogshit would put you at a disadvantage.

Here we have the user gatekeep or exclude another user from the competitive/tournament scene of the miniature wargaming community revolving around the game Warhammer 40.000 due to the way they have been talking in the forum. The user points out how every edition of Warhammer 40.000 had its flaws and that the complaining of the other user has to stop because they don't know what they are saying. Another user acknowledges this:

> Sounds like you're gatekeeping casual games. Take a step back and reconsider how *you* play.Just like you want to play with your collection, they want to play with theirs. And who here is god enough to say anyone's fun is wrong.

That players gatekeep casual play makes sense since in the literature masculinity favors competitiveness (Braithwaite 2016:3; Martin et al 2015:305). Another aspect of masculinity that relates to inclusion and exclusion is the division of labor based on gender and gender roles (Martin et al 2015:303; Hinojosa 2010:181). The coding revealed that there seems to be no such thing as a division of roles based on gender. "My boyfriend helps me with painting so we tackle it as a team!" states one verified woman. Meanwhile, another user shows the same sentiment speaking about how his wife was the one that brought him back to the hobby of miniature wargaming. "My SO supported me getting back into it, showed interest in some of the nighthaunt models and now we paint together and it's hella fucking cute." It went as far as that they are now doing the hobby together according to the users statement.

Bonding

The literature on domestic masculinity talks about men bonding with other men in their own separated space. This bonding comes in the form of sharing experiences and the recreation of masculine activities appropriate for the space in which the bonding happens (Moisio & Beruchashvili 2016, P. 658). In the case of the data I collected the instances of bonding that I found all relate to a shared experience within the hobby. Users responded to other users sharing that they had or have the same experience within the hobby of miniature wargaming. The conversation between users was about how their partner at some point did not support their hobby. "As a guy I'm afraid I can only sympathise. Girls that are interested this hobby are like hens teeth. My ex once said if I brought any models home she would "stomp on them."

Other users were bonding with this particular user by talking about how they sympathize with them. "Hell to the yeah! My wife has no interest in the hobby. Yet, she knows the zen place it give me. So she lets me be the geeky manly man I am. I fucking love this hobby."

Other users were trying to bond with the user by stating how important a hobby is and how others should support a man's hobby, even if they do not like it themselves.

> Let me get on a footstool so I can Foot of Gork her! I dont get why someone SOs can be against a harmless hobby. As long as you were willing to spend time with them who cares if you painted miniatures in your free time.

Or

> Yeah that's a damning attitude to have. My SO supported me getting back into it, showed interest in some of the nighthaunt models and now we paint together and it's hella fucking cute.

These examples don't just showcase inclusion, symbolic language, or violence when taking them apart into small pieces, analyzing only certain parts of the example. Taking the example and looking at it as a whole and how men support each other it explains how men give each other support. In the first example the user talks about Foot of Gork'ing someone, which means stomping on them. Foot of Gork is a magic spell that the Ork faction of the Warhammer universe can summon. In this case the user is talking about how they would beat up a woman for her actions against her SO and his hobby interest. In the second example the user talks about how due to the Nighthaunt miniature range of Warhammer they and their SO have found something to bond over and do together. Users don't only offer support, but they also protect, or defend the actions of one of their own with their statements. This bonding and protection also relates to interaction with the other gender. The bonding happens over the criticisms of what the other gender (woman) is doing.

In another instance I observed that users bond with each other over the space itself where they used to participate in the hobby of miniature wargaming. In one of the posts, which was

collected as data, a large life-like statue of a Space Marine - a soldier for one of the factions of

the game Warhammer 40.000 - is displayed all dressed up as Santa Clause. Users on the platform

comment how they recognize the statue, know where the store is, and how users went to the store

before covid. Such examples from the data are: "Eyyyyyy, that's where I usually get all my stuff.

I honestly recommend the store to anybody in the area as the guys there are hella chill."

and "I used to play there pre covid!" or "Aha! I knew I recognized that entryway!" In all quotes

the users state how they know which place is talked about and bond over how they recognize it

as their store.

Sexualization of Women

When I looked at the posts I collected for my data, I found that the presence of women in

the community became the target for manhood acts that were related to the sexualization of

women. The sexualization of women is a manhood act for regular masculinity, as well as for

geek masculinity (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009). Consumption related to masculinity often has sex

or sexual content involved in order to portray heterosexuality (Osgerby 2003:77).

Heterosexuality is important for masculinity and is considered to be one aspect that makes up

masculinity and is a norm for men to assume (Horlacher 2015:21). For geek masculinity, sex is

important because it symbolizes conquest and fulfills desire (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:311).

So it is not surprising to find users on these platforms talking about sex either directly: "[T]hanks

to you I've found a whole porn side of Reddit I didn't know existed" Or by pointing out how

sexual something is - which goes hand in hand with the previously discussed sexualization:

"Pretty girl in a stunning dress. Clicked on your profile looking for minis and stayed for the

sexyness!" And "Checks profil to see if there are painted minis "A surprise, to be sure, but a

welcome one" Users also talk about performing sexual acts directly: "Time to sin and bless slannesh" This is in relation to the post of the woman in the dress which on other subreddits shows herself naked. This sort of language is riddled with meanings that are only known to those that are part of the community. Blessing slannesh means to participate in acts of perversion.

I observed users commented things like: "Pretty girl in a stunning dress. Clicked on your profile looking for minis and stayed for the sexyness!" Or "That is indescribabley awesomely cool! If I wasn't happily married I would have such a crush on you." As well as "Fuck! You're so adorable!" Users sexualized the women in the dress in order to show that they are heterosexual like men should be. The sexualization did not have to be as direct as the examples given above. Sexualzation of the women also came wrapped in the symbolic language of the subculture. Examples for this are: "The powers of choas are indeed seductive." This example is talking about the chaos god Slaanesh who in the lore of the Warhammer 40.000 universe is the god of pleasure, excess, and perfection in any way - intercourse included - (https://warhammer40k.fandom.com/wiki/Slaanesh) As well as "It's krumpin time" And "KRUMP KRUMP KRUMP KRUMP" Where krumpin or krump means beating something or someone in the fictional language of the Ork faction in the Warhammer 40.000 universe (https://warhammer40k.fandom.com/wiki/Special:Search?query=Krump&scope=internal&navigationSearch=true).

I collected one post as data from the Warhammer Subreddit that depicted a glider vehicle which was armed, had lots of spikes, and besides a crew that manned it flew a couple of women slaves on it. The slaves both being human women were the center for some of the conversation of the community. Within the community the vehicle in question is classified as an assault vehicle. It is meant to bring a player's miniatures across the table and into battle at close range.

The classification of the vehicle allowed the community to make comments like "After all, what is an assault vehicle without sex slaves". This kind of comment was picked up by other people in the community and echoed in different variations throughout the post such as "I have always asked myself, 'What is a Land Raider [another assault vehicle] without a couple of gimps?'" Or "The most important part of any combat vehicle is the sexy womens." In addition to these comments portraying manhood acts, these specific examples are manhood acts of sexualization. Sexualization also establishes boundaries between men and women and their place in society. Manhood acts often entail the sexualization of women as a way to signify heterosexuality, and also establish gender boundaries (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009:285).

I found one example in the data where there was a call for the sexualization of women in order to complete the piece of art. Depicted in the post was an almost naked warrior sitting on a throne. Holding a sword he radiates masculine perfection. The only thing that is missing according to a user of the minipainting subreddit is "a half naked woman at his feet" to finalize the masculinity of the model.

In summary, the sexualization of women in the miniature wargaming community has many facets. First there is the sexualization of miniatures. Then there is the sexualization of community members that identify as women. The sexualization that is happening is either direct or hidden behind meanings and phrases only members of the community can know.

5. THE COMMUNITY

The Community

Those that play miniature wargaming have come together to build a community to which they can belong. This community stretches not just from the hobby store that they frequent, but also is present on the world wide web in the form of online forums. Looking at the online community they have built a new and separate space for them. In this space users seem to be able to sometimes forgo some of the aspects that are expected of them of society in regards to masculinity or field theory.

In this group of like minded individuals people feel free to share emotions. People share emotions that are not related to masculinity such as sadness or guilt in this place. Normally the showing of emotions is punished with loss of status, unless the emotions are aspects that make up masculinity. Two emotions that were frequently found in the data were amazement and astonishment. Both emotions I frequently found in posts that were about artwork that other users had posted. Comments like: "Awesome." Or "this is awesome" As well as "Amazing mate, bravo!" exemplify how the users shared this emotion. One thing to note is that users combined their statement of feeling amazed or astonished with insults that were meant to be complimenting. "Holy shit, it is amazing." And "That's fucking awesome." Another positive emotion that was mentioned by users was that of cute emotion. Users expressed in posts that they felt something was cute. Such as "Oh ma gawd its so cute!" or "cute dress!". While some might argue that cute is not an emotion per se, researchers have been trying to define the emotion inspired by cuteness and cute-emotion (Buckley 2016).

Users also mention that they have been pleased in some way. Something that other users said or they did themselves met their expectations and they shared that with other users. For example: "I'm having a blast at 1500 points honestly" Where the user states that he is pleased with playing the game Warhammer 40.000 and is having fun when playing it at the 1500 points level against other people. Another example of pleasure is "THIS PLEASES THE BLOOD GOD." In which case the user screams that what was posted pleased the chaos god Khorne, which in the hobby means that they approve of what was posted. Another example of pleasure is "A surprise to be sure.. but a welcome one" which is a meme from the Star Wars Movie "The Phantom Menace" where one character of the saga is pleased with the events that have transpired. This is utilized symbolic language. Yet another positive emotion that I found being shared with other users on the two platforms is that of excitement. Users proclaim that they were excited either by what was posted, or by what they posted themselves. "Long time lurker here, I'm very excited that my Chaos Marines dress arrived!" which is an example of users posting something they are excited about. Whereas "I'm kind of excited about it too." is an example of another user being excited for something that was posted.

I found in the data that users share with others that they are happy. In one case the user is happy that another user has split up with their SO. The SO had been against the users participation in the hobby of miniature wargaming. "I am happy you aren't with her that's more toxic than a blade blessed by the horned rat." In the data there were also some instances where users felt awe. Since awe is the emotion we feel when inspired we coded comments like stating that users were inspired by something. Such comments were "This is beyond incredible!! Very well done! It's inspired me to try it too." or "Inspired work! 👍". Users also expressed their love

in the data that was gathered. Love was both used in a positive, as well as in a negative way by users of either platform. Users stated that they would love things that other people posted, such as "I love Conan and I love this paint job." or "I love everything about this so much." As for negative uses of love, one example is "I really would love not to buy this book…" When users stated that they felt love for something, when it was in a positive way it meant they approved of what they commented on. In regards to the negative use of love, users were talking about how the game they love is good now and that they don't want it to change. Most of the uses of the emotion of love had to do with artwork submissions by users on both subreddits. It was used as an acknowledgement of skill.

Furthermore, users on both platforms also voiced that they were feeling sad. Sadness was associated with loss of rules for miniatures like in comments such as "[J]ust browsing FW's catalogue makes me sad, because so many cool things are gone to be replaced." or "I'm sad Corsairs are dead now." One user who identified as a woman expressed sadness when her dress did not come with pockets "No! And that does make me sad." where the sadness is due to womens clothing favoring fashion over practicality. Overall, the emotion of sadness was found mostly in discussion of overall hobby topics.

In this community unlike normally men don't compete against each other. Normally, men are supposed to compete in order to increase their standing both in the field (Rowe 2003) and the masculine hierarchy (Bottero & Crossley 2011). What was found in the samples, which were taking from this online community, was that users are cooperating with each other instead. Those who participate on reddit and dakkadakka share questions they have about the hobby. And other users cooperate by sharing their knowledge. Sharing of knowledge and how to get better in the field is unusual, since normally the competition in the field does not allow for cooperation

between agents (Rowe 2003:115). Those who use the online platforms of the community will openly ask for help, asking questions on these messaging boards, and receive helpful answers from other users. Examples of questions being asked range from "Do Forgeworld not sell any Corsair stuff anymore?" asking about the availability of capital usable within the game, to "post all your dad's other minis. Is he a professional artist?" which is asking about the standing another user has in the field, or "Can I ask what paints she uses? I am new to mini painting and I really like how bright her colours are." asking how to reproduce aspects of the hobby, and " is 9th ed any good?" whether the rules of the game are good or not. All of these questions highlight the asking of questions and asking for cooperation from others who are also using the online platforms. They openly show their lack of knowledge about things, they admit mistakes that were made, and are asking how to eliminate these things that would normally be weaknesses in masculinity and the field. And people feel free to answer the questions. They share their own recipes for success, not caring that another player could use the shared knowledge to advance their standing.

Symbolic Language

Communities that are established have their own rituals and languages which is explored by the literature on symbolic interactionism, (Carter & Fuller 2015) and field theory. (Hilgers & Mangez 2014) Some users of the platform Dakkadakka go as far as to identify with the factions that they play and collect and give themself titles that relate to said factions. Symbolic interactionism and identity theory try to understand how identities motivate behavior and emotions in social situations (Serpe and Stryker:2011). Some of this interaction can also be understood as labeling encounters according to Chen and Duh (2007), where encounters label

and define others within the community (23). When looking at the Self-Other framework through

constant symbolic interpretation of the interaction with other hobbyists, players are able to

understand where they stand, who they are, as well as how they are supposed to function in the

group. (Chen & Duh 2007:22)

I found that users will, throughout their interaction with other users, make the same sort

of statements that are related to the hobby. The theory of symbolic interactionism explains that

people join in groups and stay together because they interact with each other. And their

interactions are repeated among themselves and that is what creates these groups (Carter &

Fuller 2015:1). These interactions that are repeated by members of groups can be based in

actions, language, and symbols. Since the data collected consists only of text, there is some

limitation in regards to observing symbolic interactionism as means of cohesion.

Symbolic language used in the gathered data took shape in the form of words and phrases

which were related to the hobby. Usually they are related to one of the many factions that are

playable in the hobby of Warhammer and Warhammer 40.000. This use of such phrases thus

involves and addresses players of that specific faction, as well as everyone else that is part of the

hobby and is able to understand what was said and what was meant. Phrases that are universally

known in the community are "Blood for the Blood God, Skulls for the Skull Throne.", "For the

Emperor.", or "Waaa…...agh" and are battle cries that users will utter before or during games

played, or during conversations about lore. In the data I found that people used the phrases

"Blood for the Blood God, Skulls for the Skull Throne." and "For the Emperor." which in the

symbolic language of this particular subculture means that they approve of the post. These two

examples are as said more generic examples of approval in symbolic language used. More

specific uses of symbolic language that I found in the data samples were heretic or heresy, asking for the commissar, and calling other users either brother or sister.

Users specifically call someone a heretic or call someone's actions heresy and what they mean by that is they associate the actions in the others post with the factions that belong to chaos in the game of Warhammer 40.000. "Heretical but looks good." or "I approve of the heretical nature of this post." are examples of this found in the gathered samples. In such cases users were calling them heretic because they have managed to capture the essence of what it means to belong to chaos within the fictional world of Warhammer 40.000. This is also the case when users called for the commissar. As addressed in the section about violence, calling for the commissar or inquisitor within the context of Warhammer 40.000 is asking for someone who tries to keep those who are part of the Imperial faction in Warhammer 40.000 in line and pure. Examples from the samples include "Inquisitor? Yes, right here" or "Cute and Heretical? Commissar? Help!". Calling for the commissar because of what a user has posted credits them for how well they have managed to capture the essence of what it means to belong to chaos within the fictional world of Warhammer 40.000.

When users use the words brother or sister to address someone they don't mean that these people are their literal brother or sister. In the fictional world of Warhammer 40.000, being called brother comes from the lore behind the factions of Space Marines and Chaos Space Marines. In the lore those who belong to these factions are split into what are called chapters or legions or warbands. Those belonging to the same chapter, legion, or warband call themself brothers. The reason for that is that to become a Space Marine, one has to undergo multiple operations to modify the body. One of those operations installs what is called gene-seed. This gene-seed is what gives the Space Marines their allegiance to their specific chapter, legion, or warband. And

since these Space Marines share the same genes they call themselves brothers. One important

aspect to this is that in the lore of Warhammer 40.000 only young boys can be turned into a

Space Marine. But that does not mean that women can't collect and play with either Space

Marines or Chaos Space Marines. On the other hand, Sister is a term that is only applied to

certain women within the universe of Warhammer 40.000. To be called Sister one has to belong

to the faction that is called Sisters of Battle. This faction is made up of only women who use

their unshakable faith in the god emperor to fight those who worship any other god of the

Warhammer 40.000 universe. Examples from the samples include "Brothers... Slannesh is

grasping at my soul!!" or "Do NOT post any weird comments here, brothers" as well as "Sister!

you have been accused of heres- oh no wait it says haberdashery, carry on." or "Thanks Sister. It

looks awesome." In all instances, when users call other users Brother or Sister, they call on them

as part of the group and community.

Other uses of symbolic language that are used to include another user is in the form of

associating their work with the fictional god of Slaanesh, the god of excess, and how what the

user has done would be rewarded by said god. "I apologize sincerly for the slaaneshy content

that has now corrupted you lol." or "Slaanesh would like to have a word." and "Slaanishy af."

Again users use this sort of symbol as means of approval and that it belongs in the community.

Most use of symbolic language is found in relation to talk and discussion about general

hobby aspects. Users use symbolic language in the discussion of lore or rules, or anything that is

not painting or assembling miniatures. One example is the discussion between multiple users:

> ObviousNarwhal
> 8 months ago
> Says the tzeentch devotee. You just don't want slaanesh gaining more power
> Scientist_tz
> Tzeentch Daemons

8 months ago Every bit of power Slaanesh has is at the behest of Tzeentch. All Chaos gods are slaves to the machinations of Change.
ObviousNarwhal
8 months ago
Except nurgle
Extermindatass
8 months ago
You could argue him concocting and improving his diseases embodies the natural change in nature. He may be the epitome of it.
I know he is supposed to be stagnant and lord of decay but honestly just how he works is basically change. Things can't stay the same they always rot and degrade. That's change that's not stasis.
[deleted]
8 months ago
But, alas, the same mind game works for change. The change is just a red-ordering of the old, often in an extremely similar manner, repetitively, and within a certain time frame. The cycle of change is a regular, and unchanging element, which is at the will of stagnation. No matter how much change you introduce, both the materials you are working with (reality itself), the manner in which you manipulate it (physics), and it's destination is all the same. The past caused the future, not the other way around, and thus, it is really stagnation that rules over change.
Extermindatass
8 months ago
Well if that's the case shouldn't the chaos gods be reordered? At least two of them are I intertwined.

In this example I found constant use of symbolic language that is repeated by those involved in the discussion. All of those involved in this conversation know the meaning behind everything that is brought forth as an argument. That is because they are part of the group. What the users are talking about is how the gods of chaos in the warhammer universe gain their power.

In the beginning of this section I had discussed how "For the Emperor." or "Blood for the Blood God, Skulls for the Skull Throne." can be understood for approval. In the samples I gathered there are also other kinds of symbolic language used to give approval. Such approval can be understood as an encounter that is other-reinforcing as Chen & Duh (2007) describe it . In such an symbolic interactionism encounter the social interactions boosts the others party self-conception (23). Some of those uses of symbolic language were found in the talk about the hobby aspect of painting miniatures. One such example is "The Warp effects us all in different

ways… What we dont know is that the top photo is Alpharius... always was Alpharius." The talk

of something or someone being Alpharius is an inside joke in the community. Alphraius is the

master of the Alpha Legion of the Space Marines, and is known to be the master of infiltration.

So in the community anyone and anything can be Alpharius as a joke if there is a question about

something's origins. Another example of symbolic language is "My suggestion would be to paint

them red." The reason the user tells another user to paint red is because of the faction that is

talked about. The faction in question is the Orkz. The reason for painting them red is because in

the lore Orkz belief that anything that is painted red is fast. So they paint everything red to make

it faster, which the user suggests as a symbolic action.

I coded some posts using symbolic language in order to lighten the mood and make jokes.

Users will make statements using symbolic language in order to be comedic. One example is

"AVE DOMINUS NICE." While just looking like latin mixed with english is actually an

example of symbolic language because normally the phrase goes "Ave Dominus Nox." This

phrase is used as a greeting between people that play the Night Lords Space Marine Legion and

comes from the background lore of the army. But in this case the user changed the normal phrase

in order to approve of what another user had posted. Another example in which symbolic

language is meant to be a joke is "For the EGG-peror". Here a user changed the phrase "For the

Emperor." Once again the user changed the normal phase, but still left in a state where other

people of the hobby would be able to identify the original phrase. The user did it in order to

relate the art piece that he commented on with this changed phrase to the hobby. This change

from "For the Emperor" to "For the EGG-peror" is actually picked up by another member of the

platform reddit and who then transforms another phrase, "For the Omnissiah", into "For the

Omelet-siah!". This phrase means the same as "For the Emperor" and is used by people who play or identify with the Mechanicus faction of the Warhammer 40.000 universe.

A lot of the uses of symbolic language I found was in posts about the interaction with women. In the top post of the year on the Warhammer subreddit a woman presented herself in a Warhammer 40.000 related dress. This drew a lot of attention because women are relatively rare in the hobby. Users commented with symbolic language such as "Heretic", "Sister", "Brothers" and called for the "Commissar" as well as talking about the god of perversion Slaanesh and how the women is doing Slaanesh's bidding. All are examples of symbolic language used by the community.

Other symbolic language that is repeated in the community is sexual. Earlier, I discussed calling out to the god Slaanesh who is the god of perversion. In the post of the women showcasing her dress we find this sort of symbolic language. From users saying things like "Time to sin and bless slannesh." to "Brothers... Slannesh is grasping at my soul!!" or "Slaanishy af." In all these cases the users use symbolic language to talk about sex and perversion. When considering that this space masculine makes sense, since manhood acts in masculinity often are related to the sexualization of women in order to establish that the group as a whole is heterosexual (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009:282). When looking at the miniatures that were posted by players in both the Warhammer and Minipainting subreddit, the miniatures portray the same symbolic meaning of heterosexuality. Men are muscular and warrior like, while women are submissive and meant to serve men, which corresponds with theories of masculinity and its consumption (Osgerby 2003:64) as well as with the idea that masculinity and femininity are constructed through symbolic interactionism (Carter & Fuller 2015:7).

Something that stood out is that, in this particular leisure activity and subculture, symbolic language is related to violence or violent acts. It is important to realize that the background lore behind the hobby of Warhammer and Warhammer 40.000 is all about war and survival in an unforgiving universe. Mankind is beset by dangers from all directions and violence is seemingly the only answer. Such violence is captured in phrases such as "Blood for the Blood God, Skulls for the Skull Throne." or "Death to the False Emperor." These are obvious examples that directly call for violence that even those who are not part of the culture can understand. Somewhat more hidden calls to violence are phrases that users post, for example: "It's krumpin time." or "KRUMP KRUMP KRUMP KRUMP." Here only someone who is part of the culture would know that the users are encouraging violence and only if they know that krumpin means to beat someone in the language of the Orkz. Another use of symbolic language that is repeated throughout the community is the call for the commissar. The same sort of repetition is found when users call for the flamer or heavy flamer. Examples are "We may need a heavy flamer to save him from the heresy of Slaanesh." or "Brother, pass the flamer... The HEAVY FLAMER!" People in the community call for the heavy flamer when something is related to chaos. This is because in the lore of Warhammer 40.000 people who are considered to be heretic are killed on the spot and the taint that they have left behind needs to be burned and purged, as exemplified in the comments made by users such as "Burn this heretic in the name of the emperor!!!" and "Smile while you purge heretics please :)." This use of violence in their talk goes much further in some of the comments posted. Users embody the symbolic meaning of the violence and speak in ways they would act on it. In comments such as "Let me get on a footstool so I can Foot of Gork her!" or "Could have gotten little metal dudes and watched the fireworks when she tried to follow through with the threat" users on the platform reddit speak about how they would handle

a situation where a significant other was threatening their hobby collection. This sort of violent threat is instantly recognized in the community too when another commenter goes "Easy there Khorne.", connecting their action to the god of blood, war, violence and gives the other comments meaning in context of the community.

Overall, all these different phrases and portrayals have a specific meaning to those that play Warhammer 40.000 and are part of that community. The meaning is understood to be the same by all members of the community. There are no instances found in the data where one player is asking for confirmation of the used phrase. All this connects to Blumer's theoretical idea of what symbolic interactionism is. For Blumer, symbolic interactionism is made up of three (3) premises: "(1) human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them; (2) the meaning of things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others; (3) meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by a person in dealing with the things they encounter" (Carter & Fuller 2015:3).

Emotions

Contest among competitors, sexualization of women, trying to get into command are all actions that users did within the community. All these actions are accompanied by emotions. When it comes to the different masculinities that we have theoretical knowledge of, we can identify them by looking for certain emotions. Emotions that are related to masculinities are for example: anger, aggression, and callousness (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:310; McKinnon-Crowley 2020:132; Reid, O'Neil, Blair-Loy 2018:580). Another example of a masculine emotion is awkwardness (White 2011:20) or possessiveness (Moisio & Beruchashvili 2016:663).

I note that due to the nature of how the data was collected that the allocation of emotions is not 100% feasible. Text cannot portray emotion unless the emotion is stated by the writer. With that in mind, most emotions that were coded came from users saying that they were experiencing emotions when commenting. Some exceptions were made when it came to how a comment was written. When part of a comment was written in all caps it was interpreted as screaming or yelling.

Aggression belongs to multiple masculinities, whether it is hegemonic masculinity, militarized masculinity, or geek masculinity (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019:310; McKinnon-Crowley 2020:132; Reid, O'Neil, Blair-Loy 2018:580). When I looked at the data collected only a single comment had aggression associated with it. Compared to aggression, I did not find any mentions of callousness and anger in posts. Normally I would expect that aggression would be found in plenty of posts, since aggression is an emotion that is found in many masculinities. The post that I interpreted as portraying aggression was "THIN YOUR PAINTS." which was in response to a post in which a painted miniature had thick layers of paint. Due to the perceived shouting from the user to the person posting the comment I coded it as aggressive. As I mentioned, no post explicitly mentioned that the user was angry with something or someone. Some posts came close to being coded with anger, such as:

> Editions before 8th and 9th absolutely had terrible dogshit units that weren't worth taking. You'll notice in my signature I'm not advocating going back and playing unmodified 7th, I'm rewriting a mix of 4th-7th rules to fix some of the problems with it. The problem I have here is with people who claim that 8th/9th are a massive improvement when in my experience they're just as bad as 7th for exactly the same reasons.

This example was about conflict with other users, as well as, using insults in their language. In one way the post could be read with the emotion of anger attached to it. There is also the possibility that the user was trying to be condescending or had some other emotion in mind when writing the comment.

I found that the emotion of awkwardness was not found directly in the data I collected. Awkwardness is one emotion that would be found if the community of miniature wargaming was one that practiced geek masculinity (White 2011). No user mentioned the emotion of awkwardness explicitly, but some posts, like this one, could be interpreted that way:

> She was interested in the actual models and thought they were really cool - I actually brought her because we were nearby and I wanted to show her an imperial knight in person. She liked the display case models but it was the players who were very clingy and uncomfortable. It's really a shame because the store owners are usually awesome.

What I interpreted as awkward from this quote in particular was how the community was responding when coming in contact with a woman. The clinginess of the players and the uncomfortable mood made the situation awkward.

 I observed that one post contained the emotion of guilt. In the comment "I thought the same and felt guilty so im glad someone else said it 😂 incredible job regardless." the user felt guilty because he did not have the courage to point out a perceived mistake. The comment is in the post about the muscular man sitting on his throne in which multiple people are complaining about the nipples being painted wrong. In this case the user is talking about how he feels guilty not pointing out that mistake. A feeling of guilt is not something that is found in masculinity since they don't want to be perceived to be at fault for some mistake. Rather they would normally shift blame to something else that made them fail (Bjarnegård & Melander 2011:142).

A different emotion that I found in the data was disappointment. Like with anger, I could have interpreted some posts containing disappointment. I coded the posts about disappointment mostly in the posts that pertained to rule discussion. Posts such as "What I expect.... Disappointment." in regards to what new products and rules will be released with a new book hitting the market. Another example where the emotion of disappointment is mentioned directly is "9th is looking pretty hopeful but I've been disappointed in the past." In this case, the user

hopes for the best with the newest rules for the game of Warhammer 40.000 but he knows that he might not get what he wants. Disappointment is not mentioned in any of the literature on masculinity, which meant that I coded disappointment inductively.

Another basic emotion I found was hate. One user posted "I hate Christmas. Yeah: I suck. But this — this makes me happy, even in a Christmas way." In this case there was not just hate from the user, but also happiness. Another user stated his hate about having to purchase a book and it only containing information for three of his possessions: "I hate buying this entire book for 3 datasheets…" The user experiences hate because he has to spend capital which yields only a small fraction of return. Hate is not mentioned in any of the literature on masculinity, which meant that I coded hate inductively.

In my data, I found users displaying pride, which is an emotion that is related to masculinity (Giacomelli & Gibbert 2018), when users talked about their collection. The reason this stood out was because the user was proud about the scars he had received when collecting his particular army. The user wrote: "Start collecting dark eldar/or anything chaos my dude. I have legit scars from my deathguard boys" as if proud of his wounds that he had received in line of practicing his hobby.

While not directly mentioned, I observed that multiple posts throughout the data had the potential to be interpreted in a satirical way. Comments such as "Hey now! That almost sounds like logic. You know what GW thinks about "logic" in these here parts" or "but we needed the design space and production facilities and lore mentions to sell more primarisleutnants." Both posts critique the company that makes the game Warhammer 40.000 in a satirical way. Most satire was found in posts revolving around hobbying aspects like the two examples already given. Other satire was found in relation to conflict or contest with other users of the platforms.

Here satire was used to mock the opposition in comments like "You clearly never experienced the joy of dropping your melta raptors in behind your mate's brand new land raider and popping it with a single shot... " This example is also an example for the use of symbolic language in combination with satire. In this case, satire is used in a negative way. The satire in this example comes from the play that is being made. The user is talking about how much joy it is to have a new miniature that is powerful be destroyed by your opponent in a single move. The mentioning of this happening and being joyful is the satirical part. I also found the opposite, where satire was used positively in symbolic language. In one post "Not enough spikey bits... would return...;)." the user is employing satire to say that the miniature in question does not have enough spikes, when the miniature clearly does. The satire is reinforced by the winking emoji at the end of the sentence. The use of satire is not surprising when thinking of satire as a tool of ridicule. In competitive settings such as masculinity, but also field theory, it serves to establish a difference between actors and their standing (Rowe 2003: 115).

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There are thousands of people all over the world who play miniature wargames. Despite that, the place that miniature wargaming fills in society is largely unexplored. While various studies have observed this niche subculture, some aspects have not been studied in detail. No study has yet tried to explain how and why people come together in the field that is the miniature wargaming community. Additionally, there is little literature on what masculinity reigns in the miniature wargaming community. Filling these gaps allows us to understand what is going on in the miniature wargaming community, which consists of many thousands of people all over the world.

Miniature wargaming as a field

Literature on field talks about how there are constant struggles between participants and that fields have internal mechanisms and structures that guide this conflict. These mechanisms and structures define the boundaries of these struggles and determine the nature of the field. These mechanisms and structures are:

> (1) The agreements about what is at stake; (2) who the players are and what positions they occupy; (3) a consensus regarding the rules by which the field works; and (4) a shared interpretive frame that allows those in the field to make sense of what other actors are doing in the field in a particular situation. (Allbright et al 2003:8)

Bourdieu's theory on field argues that cohesion comes from the practice and the actions of those who participate in the field as well as the desire for competition in order to reach a set goal (Friedland 2009:899-900;Toft-Nielsen & Krogager 2015:69). In the miniature wargaming community, users on the platforms do discuss their goals, which points to the first criterion of

what makes up a field: the agreement of what is at stake for the participants.The literature on field theory describes that the field is divided by those who hold power and those who do not. Power usually manifests itself in the form of cultural or economic capital (Allbright et al 2003:7; Friedland 2009:902; Hilgers & Mangez 2014:6). In the findings, there is a division between those who have more capital and those who have less capital yet, those who have cultural capital about the game are often willing to share it. This sort of cooperation between players of a field is unusual because the field is about competition in order to gain a better position. Economic capital is not shared between players since money is one of the gatekeepers of the hobby. This is due to the expense of the hobby of miniature wargaming. This is not to say that players want the hobby to have such a gatekeeper. Players want more people to be able to participate in the field, to be competitors. The literature on field theory talks about how the resources available within the field are limited and that competitors have to fight over the resources the field has (Friedland 2009:900;Toft-Nielsen & Krogager 2015:58). In the case of the miniature wargaming community, I did not find that any resource was limited to anyone participating in the field.

In the literature when someone manages to position themselves high up in the field, they don't just become masters of what they have practiced. They also have a chance to influence the field and the rules. Those in high positions of the field usually try to change the field in a way that benefits themselves more than those below them (Friedland 2009:899-900; Toft-Nielsen & Krogager 2015:69). In the findings of this study, players try to change the field to something that they are more comfortable with. They claim to know the game and how it should be played, and they have decided that it needs to be changed because it is flawed in its current state. These players want to change the rules of the game into something that they have come up with, setting them up to be more successful.

In the findings of this study, players discuss playing the game. They talk about competition and practice. On the platforms, the players indeed come together because of such discussions about the field of miniature wargaming. Users discuss their own course of action that they take when they play the game, and others agree or disagree with their actions. This shows that there are rules in place by which players have to act by.

Previous research showed that the relationship that forms between people due to practices within the field helps with the reproduction of the social structure that forms (Friedland 2009:889). In my sample that I gathered for this study, users discuss practice. While users do not directly practice the game, they discuss the best ways to play the game. According to the literature, people join a field because there are goals within the field that they wish to achieve (Bottero & Crossley 2011:101). In the findings, it seems that the discussion about what goals users in the community want to achieve is split. One part of the community wishes to have a competitive game, while the other would like to enjoy a more casual setting. In order to achieve their goals, players share their experiences with the different factions and what is best to play in the current state of the game.

In the data, the struggle between players for dominance in the positions is represented by calling out other players for mistakes they make. Players question the validity of knowledge and skill of other players. Participants in the field reproduce the field, while at the same time they become masters in the field and possess or occupy a specific place within the field. There is a framework that allows players to make sense of other players' actions and how to judge them. One problem that the field of miniature wargaming seems to have is whether it is competitive or casual, bringing into question what is at stake, and how set the rules are by which the field works.

According to the literature, the more a field is let to be autonomous, the more it produces a specific language, representation and unique practices and at some point reality is looked at through a lens that applies the logic of the field (Hilgers & Mangez 2014:8). In the findings, reality is not looked at through a lens that applies the logic of miniature wargaming. What I did find was that players have produced a specific language and unique practices that one can only understand if they are part of the field.

Whether the community thinks the game itself is competitive or casual does not eliminate the fact that those who participate in this leisure activity are in competition with each other. Players practice, develop a habitus, rise and fall in the field, and try to change the field in their favor. Miniature wargaming fits into Bourdieu's theory of fields. What is unusual is the sharing of capital between players. I think, looking at it through the lens of field theory, that the players that share their capital do so because they think that they won't lose even if they give "secrets" away. There are multiple possibilities as to why they share their knowledge with others who compete in the same field. The first possibility is that players share their knowledge because they don't directly compete with the people that they share their knowledge with. They might occupy the same field, but in reality they are playing the game in different spaces. Another possibility is that they share their knowledge knowing that others won't be able to utilize the knowledge shared. Here the question becomes whether the player receiving the knowledge is able to transform that knowledge into a skill that they can use in the field. Lastly, there is the possibility that those who share the knowledge are trying to increase the skill ceiling of the field, allowing for masters to evolve even further. Whether this is the case could be a good starting point for another study that focuses on why people share their capital with others in fields.

Masculinities in miniature wargaming

Previous literature on masculinity or hegemonic masculinity has shown how men are supposed to act in society, and that masculinity has many different aspects. Masculinities are built upon cultural ideas and institutional powers, which dictate gendered social practices (Hinojosa 2010). These practices are often understood to be manhood acts. Manhood acts are actions that give masculine status to any man that carries them out. Manhoods acts look different depending on the masculinity under which they are carried out, as well as things such as occupations, and one's social class (Reid, O'Neill, and Blair-Loy 2012). All manhood acts, as we define them, are aimed at claiming privilege, eliciting deference, and resisting exploitation (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009). In my findings, there were manhood acts I found when looking at the interaction between those who participated on the online platforms. The manhood acts in the case of my findings were about establishing the sexuality of one of the participants who identified as a woman in the hobby and making sure that their own sexuality was signaled as heterosexual. These manhood acts all were aimed at taking control over the woman who had joined their hobby space. Other manhood acts were generated towards making sure to point out the mistakes others had made, especially when it came to the representation of what it meant to be a man and situating manhood. In the context of the literature, that manhood acts take on these appearances means that masculinity is part of the miniature wargaming community.

In the literature on masculinity, women cannot be better than men. Interactions between the genders are different depending on where and with whom the interaction happens. When interacting with women, men assume the role of a teacher. This creates opportunities for women to achieve something that shows off the men's skill. If the interaction is between men, then it is all about competition for standing and recognition (Giacomelli & Gibbert 2018). In my findings,

there was no issue with a woman participating in the hobby and others did not try to put her in a background place or diminish her success. Users that are suspected to be a man even asked for advice from the woman in order to reproduce the same results.

According to the literature, sexuality is important in masculinity. Heterosexuality is rewarded, while identifying as LGBQT is punished. Due to this, according to masculinity norms, boys and womens are often separated in order to make sure that boys are only exposed to masculine ideas and acts. Such acts often entail the sexualization of women as a way to signify heterosexuality, which also establishes and enforces gender boundaries (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009). In the findings, there was no separation of genders in this hobby space. Users did make sure to post that they would love to court women in order to display their heterosexuality, however.

Previous research talks about how boys are taught to be self-disciplined, being only aggressive and use anger in order to compete with others to establish dominance (Reid, O'Neill, and Blair-Loy 2012;Wolkomir 2012). Due to the method used, the establishment of emotions in my findings was limited. Users did state certain emotions directly in their posts, such as guilt, sadness, or awe. Most emotions that were displayed in such a way were actually not related to masculinity in the current literature. This raises the question: is there a form of masculinity that allows those who assume that unknown masculinity to portray those emotions? Or would that mean that certain masculine aspects are absent in the space of the miniature wargaming community? I think that there is also a possibility that men were writing emotions in their posts and comments but meant something completely different. They chose to write an emotion that is not mentioned in the literature on masculinity, while in actuality trying to say something

masculine but lacked the right vocabulary to express themselves. The emotion is simply an accessory to what they were trying to say.

In the literature, there are only two statuses for men when it comes to masculinity. Either you are part of the competition and hierarchy, or you are not. This is an insider - outsider mentality, where outsiders are often depicted in derogatory ways (Reid, O'Neill, and Blair-Loy). In the findings, there seems to be no such boundary of insider or outsider. It appeared everyone was welcome to participate and to comment on the content of a post. It does not seem to matter whether a person has actual knowledge or skill in the hobby, in order to take part in the online interaction. The only instance where anyone was considered an outsider and hostile was when some users of the platform reddit shared how their significant other had treated the hobby. Since in masculine groups it is expected that one is either part of the group or not, that this aspect of masculinity is not found in the community of miniature wargaming either means that this aspect of masculinity is ignored by the group, or that the community is not a typical masculine space.

Looking at the online space that miniature wargaming occupies, some aspects of masculinity are present, while others are seemingly ignored. One possibility is that this masculine space has evolved into something where men do not have to be tough at all times and are allowed to share emotions other than those normally associated with masculinity. One reason for this transformation could be that many different cultures and identities are able to enter the community and force a change in the practiced masculinity that was there before. The only real gatekeeper to enter the community is the amount of economic resources a person has. This change is what could have led to the community being a place where women - at least online - do not have to worry about having their work questioned. Or, there is a possibility that previous

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determinations of masculinity do not apply to this space. Instead, the space has developed its own masculinity. Could that masculinity be geek masculinity?

The literature establishes that geek masculinity is a form of masculinity that is not mainstream. While it is not mainstream, it does borrow aspects of the hegemonic masculinity that is part of society. Those who practice geek masculinity are often socially awkward and focus more on academic pursuits, to the point of assuming an academic identity (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019;Braithwaite 2016;Salter 2018). In the findings, there were some interactions between users on the online platform that fit geek masculinity. Awkwardness was found in the way users chose to express themselves. While academic identity is found in the community, there seems to be no repercussions when showing lack of academic skill and knowledge.

Other researchers find that those who assume geek masculinity also believe that manhood is superior to womanhood and that manhood consists of hypermasculine characteristics such as toughness, stoicism, and, especially, aggression (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019). In my findings, there were no particular examples of aggression, toughness, or stoicism found in any of the posts, but superiority over others is one aspect I observed. One problem with identifying aggression, toughness, or stoicism was the method used in gathering the sample data which was a limiting factor. In the instances where there is superiority over others, it is because of a disagreement in opinions backed by facts that a person has gathered. I found that there were some instances in which men did belittle the work that women had shared with the overall community. But this sort of superiority over women was just a few instances among hundreds of responses.

In the literature, there is also an assumption of victimhood to be found in geek masculinity, fearing to be persecuted by others to conform to the general ideologies of society (Chess & Shaw 2015; Braithwaite 2016). I did find self-described victimhood by users within the

community. Users described how their hobby was under attack from women due to its being an unusual hobby. Multiple users shared such experiences with each other.

The literature on geek masculinity mentions that any actions are made to establish dominance over others (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019). Dominance is established by comparing knowledge rather than physical competitions (Salter 2018). While knowledge is important, that knowledge cannot stem from academia since academia is able to see through the charade of victimhood (Chess & Shaw 2015). I found that knowledge was important to the community. Players within the community need knowledge to compete with other players. In the miniature wargaming community this knowledge manifested in knowing how to play the game correctly. One example is that players need to know how to position their miniatures on the table in order to not lose the game fast because of a blunder in positioning. While knowling is important to have, within the community people shared their knowledge willingly with those who were lacking the knowledge. Users did not use their advantage in knowledge to dominate other hobbyists.

In the literature on geek masculinity, women are said to often be excluded directly from the group, or, if included, they are put in the background of activities and some activities are automatically delegated to the background because they are gendered (Salter 2018;Martin et a 2015). I found that no woman was delegated into the background due to the activities that they performed and neither were they excluded because of their actions.

Research had shown that women's sexual appearance and orientation take precedence when it comes to whether women seem qualified to participate or not in events (Braithwaite 2016). In my findings, some comments were related to the sexual appearance of one of the women who posted content online. I found some posts that were about overall sexual interaction

that the man wanted to have with the woman, but most of them were hidden in the symbolic language of the community. This behavior of men towards women reinforces the idea of miniature wargaming being a masculine field and prevents women from enjoying the hobby because of their gender and the interactions that come from it.

Furthermore, the literature also talks about how heterosexuality is important to geek masculinity. In geek masculinity, groups show negativity toward sexual minorities and there is avoidance of femininity (Blackburn & Scharrer 2019). I found that those who posted on the platforms of dakkadakka and reddit made sure to point out that they were heterosexual when it came to interacting with women. The portrayal of heterosexuality went as far as to sexualize the women who were part of the community. Users spoke about heterosexually-based dominating acts that they would like to perform with the women on the platforms. Users hoped that showing and participating in the sexualiztion of women proved that they belonged to the group. In addition, the sexualization served as a means of reproducing masculinity within the community, which I consider to be a manhood act that the men did in order to be recognized as men. At no point in the sample was there any talk about sexual minorities. Taking into consideration what the literature says about geek masculinity, the miniature wargaming community displays some aspects of geek masculinity, which are practiced by its members and therefore establish its mascunline aspects. This, in return, does not answer the question of what sort of masculinity is actually practiced by the community, and my findings point to the fact that it is a space of multiple masculinities.

The literature on domestic masculinity concerns itself with the space that men create for themselves in their own home. How that space is constructed depends on the identity and the habitus that men wish to assume and reproduce (Moisio & Beruchashvili 2016:657). One parallel

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that I was able to draw to the idea of the man cave from the literature of domestic masculinity is that online platforms such as Reddit or Dakkadakka can serve as a virtual space that can be turned into a man cave. In the literature, this space that is created is shared with other men - women are allowed to enter the space but usually do not - in order to keep the space masculine at all times and to ensure that masculinity is reproduced that way (Moisio & Beruchashvili 2016:669). I found that in the case of the online platforms, the space is shared with anyone who is part of the hobby. Given the majority of the population of the miniature wargaming community consists of men, this would mean it is a masculine space. It is important to note that women are welcome in this space and are actively included by most of the community but are also exposed to masculine practices such as sexualization.

The literature talks about how within this space men are able to proudly show their possessions and affiliate these possessions with the masculinity of the space. These possessions have a special status attached to them, making them important to the men who own them (Moisio & Beruchashvili 2016:663). I found that people who are part of the miniature wargaming community share their possessions in this space that they have created. They share the miniatures that they own with the rest of the community. Not all aspects that the literature covers on domestic masculinity were found to be happening. Those that did show up also shared aspects of other masculinities, pointing to the idea that the miniature wargaming community and its online portals are masculine spaces.

According to the literature, militarized masculinity consists of an absence or low population of women (Heistand 1898). In my findings, two out of eleven posts were made by women. What is more, it is not just that these posts were made by women in the community, but these posts were also voted to be either the top of the month, or even top post of the year. This

would suggest that women contribute in valued ways to the community. Like with other masculinities, the literature on militarized masculinity states that militarized masculinity consists of characteristics such as being courageous, violent, aggressive, or tought (Eichler 2014:82; Decosta 2014:465; McCluskey 2019:34-40). The limitation of the method, looking for emotions in text documents, might be the reason why there were so few examples for these characteristics to be found in the sample. In my findings, there were no examples of self sacrifice or heroic actions to be found within any of the posts. These qualities are normally found in militarized masculinities. The lack of other characteristics that are normally found in militarized masculinity means that such a masculinity is not present in miniature wargaming.

Miniature wargaming as a subculture of resistance?

According to the literature, subcultures of resistance, as thought of by Marxists, create cohesion by defining themselves through expressivity and a lifestyle that is different from that of society. Such expressivity and lifestyles are often expressed through criminal and deviant activities in order to be rebellious, oppositional, and resistant to mainstream culture (Encheva et al 2014). Cohesion in Marxist subcultures of resistance is created through these acts against mainstream culture (Pfohl 2009; Jenks 2005:117). For Marxists, those belonging to a subculture are those that are excluded by the dominant (Jenks 2005:47). Finally, there is the idea that those who belong to subcultures that are excluded by the dominant resist in order to overthrow that domination (Jenks 2005:49; Terpstra 2006:84). The only instance of resistance I could identify in the miniature wargaming community was men feeling persecuted by women and their integration into the hobby. Men are afraid that allowing women into the hobby might change the general culture of the community from what it is to something more akin to normal society.

Despite this fear, men do not mind integration of general societal customs into the hobby, such as Christmas carols, which connects the subculture with the main culture. This leaves the question: is this subculture really one of resistance to main culture? Looking at the findings and how this community values knowledge over physicality for men, I would suspect that it is a culture of resistance. What does need to be considered is how society has changed with the emergence of technology and how men and their occupations have shifted in western society to a more knowledge based society - white collar - compared to what it was - blue collar.

Miniature wargaming and symbolic interactionism

Other reasons for cohesion can be found in the literature on symbolic interactionism. The symbolic interactionism literature points out that the key to understand groups as a whole is to understand the individual human action (Jenks 2005: 54). Symbolic interactionists look at the meanings that emerge from interactions between individuals found in social environments (Aksan et al 2009:902). "Symbolic interactionism addresses how society is created and maintained through repeated interactions among individuals" (Carter & Fuller 2015:1). There are multiple instances, in different posts, where users say the same thing. It is a repeated interaction that has meaning within the community. Symbolic interactionism is based on the language and symbols used in the communication between people (Chen & Duh 2007:22). In the data collected for this study, there are numerous examples of language used that is specific only to that community. Those belonging to the community use certain phrases from the lore of the hobby of miniature wargaming to convey a certain meaning to others in the community. This means, in the case of miniature wargaming, that language and symbols are combined into one.

According to the literature of the Chicago school of thought, symbolic interaction is what makes up our social structures, and it is concerned with the processes that lead to the experiences that are created through interaction. For the Chicago school, cohesion comes from the interaction between people and the language and symbols that they use to communicate. (Carter & Fuller 2015:2) The Iowa school viewed symbolic interactions as those acts that were informed by other prior events in the social sphere (Carter & Fuller 2015:3). The Indiana school on the other hand, "emphasized that meanings and interactions led to relatively stable patterns that create and uphold social structures" (Carter & Fuller 2015:4). In regards to the miniature wargaming community, my findings show that there are patterns when it comes to how those who belong to the community respond to one another. The one repeated pattern is the use of violence that is woven into the exchanges between members of the community. This violence comes from the nature of the hobby itself. Is this use of violence as a symbol in the language of the community what brings people back together? Since the field that this community belongs to is masculine, and one aspect of masculinity is violence, I argue that the violent language is part of the glue that keeps the community together.

According to Goffman, the interaction in symbolic interactionism is constructed by two things. First (1): obvious signs and expressions that are open and visible for the interaction. Second (2): symbols and signs which are hidden (Robinson 2007:96). The formation of a cohesive identity happens through the interaction with the group, but also by looking at one's self (Chen & Duh 2007:23). Due to the symbolic interaction between people in groups and through the construction of the self, the people of the group form an identity, one which they all share (Carter & Fuller 2015:9).

In the findings, there are some individual actions that are repeatedly seen on the online platforms, whether it is the use of certain language that is related to the hobby or the way people acknowledge each other. Users respond to each other with certain call signs, or use phrases that carry a meaning in the community. Interaction between players happens because of previous events and experiences that they bring to the discussion. This type of interaction builds a social structure of a community that repeatedly gets reinforced by those participating in the hobby of miniature wargaming and going online to post on platforms such as reddit or dakkadakka. Users of the online platforms use symbolic language with meanings that are only known to them to interact with others. This symbolic language, while rich with violence, builds a connection between all players of the hobby and users of the platforms. Those players that also use platforms such as reddit or dakkadakka seem to be building a community that takes part of their hobby and gives them a place to continue to interact with others. This interaction does not concern itself with whether they are new to the hobby or not. This community is outside of the usual spot where people go to meet to participate in the leisure activity of miniature wargaming.

Conclusion

Cohesion and masculinity in the world of miniature wargaming are largely unexplored concepts within academic research. This research project attempted to make sense of what masculinity is found in this unusual leisure activity and how this community comes and stays together in cohesion. The study sought to explain the cohesion of the miniature wargaming community by looking at it through the lenses of Symbolic Interactionism, Marxist subcultures of resistance, and Bourdieu's Field theory. I conducted this study with the intention of understanding why people choose to come together in such a niche hobby experience.

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Furthermore, I made an effort to narrow down exactly what type of masculinity is prevalent in the world of miniature wargaming, trying to differentiate between types of masculinity, such as: hegemonic masculinity, geek masculinity, domestic masculinity, and military masculinity. I set out to answer these questions because there are thousands of people who play miniature wargames in one way or another.

An additional question that now can and will be addressed is: how are cohesion and masculinity connected? The theoretical frameworks that I used to answer my two research questions share aspects with each other. Field theory's explanation for cohesion consists of many aspects that are shared with masculinity. In fact masculinity is a field itself with aspects such as standing, competition, the struggle to change the rules masculinity goes by, or how to perform through certain practices. All of these aspects are what makes up a field. Masculinity is not just related to field theory, but also symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism concerns itself with actions and their meanings and how these meanings are the reason why people come together. The actions in symbolic interactionism can be language or rituals. Language or rituals can be used by people to develop views about the world or simply communicate. Under masculinity men perform actions that shape the world as how men see it. Manhood acts are not just between men but also men and women. Men create identities and standing among each other. They do gender by trying to dominate women through manhood acts. It is these actions that connect masculinity with symbolic interactionism. In summary, the theories of cohesion and masculinity talk about the reproduction of certain values that keep people (in case of masculinity men) together.

The leisure activity of miniature wargaming is a complex thing that influences many people all over the globe. As a seemingly masculine space, it reproduces violent speech in those

who are part of that community. Every manner of speech is full of violence, whether it is about being pleased with what someone else did, or complaining about some aspect of the hobby.

The hobby tries to be open to anyone who wishes to be part of the community. This sort of inclusiveness is uncharacteristic when talking about masculinities. What I found was that players of miniature wargaming do not not question the skill or knowledge of others when they could in order to gain an advantage. Players are happy to share their knowledge with others who are willing to learn. While being an activity that is mostly practiced by men, women are included in the community as well, and are welcomed by most of its members. But the kind of inclusiveness women are subjected to shows just how inclusive the community really is. While women are welcomed into the community, there are people in the space who do not want that. I found that posts contained sexualization of women in almost every aspect of the hobby, whether it is users sexualizing what women are doing directly, their body, or the game itself providing sexualized images of women, offsetting the seemingly welcoming and inclusive atmosphere that the community is trying to show. The community establishes gender boundaries that those who identify as women have to overcome. Overall, the question still remains: just what kind of masculinity actually takes place in the space of miniature wargaming? The miniature wargaming community portrays many aspects of masculinity, but no masculinity is found in its entirety. My findings do support the idea that miniature wargaming is a masculine activity and that users practice aspects of hegemonic, of geek, and of domestic masculinity. As for why the community stays cohesive, I argue that the reason is most likely because of the competition, play, and practice that happens there as players are part of the same field sharing a goal.

In regard to the broader society, while this study looked at a niche space, it begins to explain what is going on in spaces where men meet, whether these spaces are the workplace as a

professional space, the bar as a social space, or the home as a private space. In spaces that men occupy, they will reproduce masculinity. Men perform manhood acts that are specific to that space, but all manhood acts share the same function regardless of how these manhood acts manifest. For miniature wargaming, manhood acts revolved around knowledge and skill in the game, as well as sexualizing women, in spaces men share their possessions with other men in order to cultivate masculinity. Furthermore, men will create boundaries in these spaces in order to keep certain people from entering, which in the miniature wargaming community were members of the LGBQT community or those identifying as women. The spaces that men occupy have their own language that is understood by those who belong into the space, just like the language of the miniature wargaming community was found to be violent.

This study examined an aspect of a rising phenomenon in society - gaming. Gaming has become a new trend within society that takes place in both the private sphere but also on the global public stage through international competitions known as E-sports. While E-sports refers to video games, miniature wargaming has also begun to have international competitions. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the miniature wargaming community closer together via the world wide web, with games now being played not at a hobby store, but on the computer against opponents from the other side of the globe. Therefore, the way cohesion and masculinity are created in this community are consequential for the broader society.

I suggest future studies should aim to look at why people share their knowledge with each other and why cooperation happens in competitive fields that are also masculine. This phenomenon is not explained in the theories on field and masculinity but was frequently happening in the community of miniature wargaming.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Table 1. Example of Codes

Code Name	Comment	Grounded	Code Groups
About hobbying	The post or comment is about hobbying in general. Whether it is the discussion of rules or lore.	615	Subculture
Conflict/Contest between another user and their comment	User has a conflict with another user and what they have written.	220	Performance/Interaction Masculinity
About playing/practice	The post is about playing the game. Whether it is just playing the game or playing for practice in order to gain more standing in the field.	219	Performance/Interaction
About painting	The post is about painting and the art of painting	201	Subculture
Symbolic Language Used	Post/comment contains symbolic language	189	Performance/Interaction
Works with what other users have said	user cooperates with others through their posts or comments. They work with the other users by agreeing and doing the same thing but its not a reproduction of masculinity or a recreation of a hobby aspect	163	Performance/Interaction
Interaction with different gender	The post or comment is about interacting with the other gender, addressing them in directly whether it is their identity on the platforms or their physical appearance that they posted.	154	Performance/Interaction Subculture
Acknowledgment of skill	User acknowledges the skill that was utilized in a post directly.	123	Performance/Interaction
Asking question	The user is asking questions because they show lack of knowledge in the field	104	Performance/Interaction

Complaining about a situation	User is complaining about a current thing in the subculture that was mentioned in either their own post or a different one.	97	Performance/Interaction
Answering Question	The user answers questions that others have	93	Performance/Interaction
Talk about capital	Talk about capital in the post. Like having something that is considered capital in the field.	88	Performance/Interaction
Academic	The identity behind the post or comment is academic. Use of book knowledge in the post.	87	Identity Masculinity
Suggestion	User makes a suggestion	72	Performance/Interaction
Changing the rules of the field	User is talking about how they or others change the rules of the field	71	Performance/Interaction
Comedy	User tries to be funny appropriate to the subculture	71	Performance/Interaction
Talk about violence	User talks about violence or something violent	71	Performance/Interaction Masculinity
Use of Capital	User discusses the use/application of capital	65	Performance/Interaction
Giving thanks	Gives tanks to others	63	Performance/Interaction
Approval	Post approves of something	62	Performance/Interaction
Disappointment	User shows disappointment in their post/comment	60	Emotions
Acknowledgement of lack of competence of someone	User acknowledges the lack of competence of someone directly by pointing out the lack of competence of someone directly.	53	Performance/Interaction
Amazement	Use is in awe	51	Emotions
Inclusion	Includes others in their post or talks about inclusion	48	Performance/Interaction
Sexualization	User sexualizes another user through their comment	47	Performance/Interaction Masculinity
Bonding	User bonds with another user through shared experiences or tries to connect to them through emotions.	45	Performance/Interaction

Questioning of knowledge	Direct Questioning of knowledge by user	45	Performance/Interaction Masculinity
Talk about sex	User talks about sex or something sexual	44	Performance/Interaction Masculinity
Love	User says they Love something	42	Emotions
Defending another user	User defends another user	41	Performance/Interaction
Masculine	User is masculine due to actions taken in the post	40	Identity Masculinity
Teaching to with comment/post	User tries to teach with their post	40	Performance/Interaction
Expecting	User is expecting something certain. Or is voicing their expectations.	39	Performance/Interaction
Relating to Main Culture	Post/comment relates to main society	37	
Increase another status through comment	Increases the Status of another user through their comment	36	Performance/Interaction
Self-promotion	User posts something for self promotion	36	Performance/Interaction
Clarifying comment	User clearifies something that was said previously	35	
Recreation of performance of culture or masculinity	The post or comment is about recreating performances of the subculture or masculinity.	29	Performance/Interaction
Puts themselves above other in the field	User states that they are higher up in the field compared to other posters	28	Performance/Interaction
Superiority	User seems himself as superior compared to others.	24	Identity Masculinity
Pleased	User feels enjoyment	23	Emotions
Cute	Cute emotion	22	Emotions
Defensive	User was defensive about their actions	22	Identity
Satire	Post/Comment contains satire	21	Emotions
Transformation of Capital	Post/comment talks about the transformation of capital.	21	Performance/Interaction
Shows lack of knowledge	User shows lack of knowledge	19	Performance/Interaction

Annoyed	User is annoyed	18	Emotions Masculinity
Feminine	User is described as feminine	18	Identity
Questioning of skill	Direct Questioning of skill by user	17	Performance/Interaction Masculinity
Sadness	User feels sadness	17	Emotions
Shaming	Shaming other users	15	Performance/Interaction Masculinity
Making fun of other comments	Makes fun of another comment. This is also decreases status	14	Performance/Interaction Masculinity
Praise	Praising something	13	Performance/Interaction
Excitement	User feels excitement	10	Emotions
Exclusion	User excludes others in his post	10	Performance/Interaction Masculinity
Happy	User is happy and states that.	8	Emotions
Motivated	User is motivated	6	Identity Masculinity
Reflexivity	Takes into consideration other standpoints	5	
Pride	Takes pride in something that was written or posted	4	Emotions Masculinity
Guilt	User feels guilty and states that	1	Emotions

Table 1. Examples of codes applied while analyzing the gathered sample. Gives the names of the code, the description, the number of times the code appeared, and the code group it belonged to.

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I am Christopher Gage. I completed my Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at The University of Mississippi in May 2018. I will be receiving my Master of Arts in Sociology at The University of Mississippi in May 2021. My research interests include culture, gender, and technology.